

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BUSILL JONES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bloxwich, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104146

Headteacher: Mr M Fox

Lead inspector: Mrs J E Platt

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 October 2004

Inspection number: 266545

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	260
School address:	Ashley Road Bloxwich Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS3 2QF
Telephone number:	01922 710700
Fax number:	01922 710075
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Davies
Date of previous inspection:	8 March 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Busill Jones Primary School is a larger than average size school with 260 boys and girls on roll plus 12 full time equivalent in the Nursery. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. Overall attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The school serves an area which is socially and economically disadvantaged. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible to free school meals is above average. A very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils need support because English is not their first spoken language. A small number of Traveller pupils receive support from the local education authority. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average and an above average number of pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need. Difficulties include autism, speech and communication and moderate learning difficulties. The school is involved in the Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools and plays an active part in the local cluster of schools. In 2003, the school was awarded a nationally recognised Achievement Award for improvement in national tests in Year 6.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11565	Mrs J E Platt	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education English as an additional language
9399	Mr R Watts	Lay inspector	
22740	Mrs M Leah	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services  
 Anglia House  
 Carrs Road  
 Cheadle  
 Stockport  
 SK8 2LA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>9</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>12</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>31</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an **acceptable quality of education** with some good features. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with a strength in developing pupils' positive attitudes to learning and raising their self-esteem. Overall achievement is satisfactory although standards in Year 6 are often below average. Under the good leadership of the headteacher the school has established a clear focus for future improvements. The school represents satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and in Year 6 reach the level expected for their age; pupils underachieve in writing and investigative science and standards are well below average in these aspects;
- overall progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but standards are below average in mathematics, reading and writing and well below average in science;
- provision for pupils with special educational needs and Traveller pupils is good and these pupils play a full part in school life;
- some stimulating teaching was seen which captured pupils' enthusiasm but this was not evident in all lessons;
- teachers make effective use of assessment information in mathematics and ICT but this is not the case in other subjects;
- pupils behave well and the school helps them to become mature and responsible because provision for moral and social development is good;
- governors are supportive of the school but rely heavily on the headteacher for information;
- attendance is below average.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Results of national tests in Year 6 have improved at a faster rate than the national trend especially in mathematics however, this improvement is less evident in the Infants. Standards in speaking and listening remain below average. On the other hand new resources and staff training have led to a significant improvement in standards in ICT. New planning has improved the balance of the curriculum and time is now used well. The role of subject leaders has improved especially in mathematics and ICT. Children aged under-five now enjoy regular access to an imaginative and safe play area.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	D	E	C
Mathematics	C	D	D	A
Science	E	E	D	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall achievement is **satisfactory**.

When reviewing the results in national tests the pupils' well below average starting point must be taken into consideration. Children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> make satisfactory progress although many do not attain the goals children of their age are expected to reach by the end of the reception

---

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage starts when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class.

class. Overall achievement in the Infants is satisfactory although in writing higher attaining pupils could make better progress. At Year 2, pupils' standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics and well below average in science. Although Year 6 test results in 2004 were below the national average and lower in English many pupils had made good progress compared with the standard they had reached in Year 2 national tests. Current standards show an improvement in mathematics and achievement is good with pupils reaching the level expected for their age. Overall achievement in English and science is satisfactory although standards are below average overall because pupils do not make enough progress in writing and investigation in science. A contributory factor to the current standards is the increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress against the targets set for them. This is especially the case in reading and social skills which are often targets for additional support.

Pupils' personal development is **good**. They have positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. Overall attendance is below average and not all parents ensure their children arrive punctually. Pupils' moral and social development is **good** and this contributes significantly to the school's happy atmosphere. Spiritual development and the appreciation of other cultures are **satisfactory**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Most of the good teaching seen was in Years 2 and 5 and 6 and learning is often good in these classes. These lessons are pacy and include a variety of activities that captures pupils' interest. This is less evident in other classes and leads to some pupils finding it difficult to sustain concentration. Thorough assessment procedures are in place in mathematics and ICT and this is aiding teachers to plan lessons closely matching pupils' ability. This is not always the case in other subjects and pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. In writing and science teachers are not always sufficiently challenging and fail to consistently build on what pupils already know. Lessons are conducted in an orderly atmosphere because of teachers' good management skills and focus on raising pupils' self-esteem. The curriculum covers all required areas and a good range of enrichment activities enhance what pupils learn in class. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and staff listen to and value all pupils. Care and support are good and pupils are secure in the knowledge that staff will help them with any concerns. Partnership with parents is good. Not all parents are supportive of the school. For example, in ensuring children attend regularly. Good links with other schools and the community benefit staff and pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory** with some good features. The headteacher is a good and purposeful leader and has sensitively introduced changes to establish a strong team of staff committed to raising standards. He has effectively managed the provision for pupils with special educational needs and Traveller children. Governors are supportive but are not fully involved in making or challenging decisions. Overall management is satisfactory with a strength in self-evaluation which is leading to a clearer picture of future needs. Action plans to improve subjects do not always include measurable targets.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have positive views of the school and raised no significant concerns. Parents of Traveller children are especially satisfied with the support their children receive. Pupils enjoy school.



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- raise pupils' attainment throughout the school in English, particularly their writing skills, and in science and in the Infants improve standards in mathematics;
- ensure that all teaching is of a good quality and increase the rate of learning in lessons;
- improve assessment and make better use of assessment information;
- improve governors' involvement in setting priorities and questioning decisions;
- improve attendance.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall achievement is satisfactory although standards in Year 6 are below average in science and English.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good in personal, social and emotional development and mathematics.
- Achievement in mathematics is good and pupils in Year 6 reach the level expected for their age.
- Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good and standards are average.
- Standards in writing are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6.
- Pupils' skills in investigation in science are weak and hold down standards in science.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them.

#### Commentary

1. Many children enter the Nursery with well below average skills especially in speaking and listening. Changes have been made recently in the Nursery, which is now led by a teacher supported by a teacher assistant. It is too soon to see how this change will affect standards and achievement. Overall progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children benefit from a balanced variety of activities. Despite this progress children do not reach the early learning goals<sup>2</sup>. Children's attainment in speaking and listening and literacy is especially low and this hampers children's progress as they move into the Infants. To counteract this, significant attention is given to developing children's social skills and they make good progress which helps to establish good learning habits for future education.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores<sup>3</sup> in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (13.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.0 (13.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (14.6)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The grid shows results of national tests were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Compared with similar schools results were slightly higher being average in writing, below average in mathematics, but remaining well below

---

<sup>2</sup> Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

<sup>3</sup> The average point score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades by all of their pupils with the grades attained by all pupils in another similar school as well as an average for all schools nationally. The score is obtained from the National Curriculum level attained by pupils in the national assessments. For example, in mathematics pupils are awarded 9 points for a level 1, 15 points for a level 2 and 21 points for level 3. The average score is calculated by adding up all of the points and then dividing by the number of pupils who were tested.

average in reading. The main reason for these low test results are few pupils exceed the level expected for their age and this holds down the school's overall performance. Other

contributory factors to the low test results are the above average number of pupils with special educational needs and the well below average starting point of many pupils. Overall achievement in the Infants is satisfactory. Although current standards remain below average in mathematics achievement is good and there is an increase in the number of pupils working at levels higher than expected. This has been brought about by better assessment procedures and work is more closely set to ability. This improvement is not yet evident in writing and higher attaining pupils are underachieving and overall standards are below average. Achievement for most is satisfactory in reading although standards overall are below average. The previous inspection identified speaking and listening as a weakness and this continues to be the case. The school has tackled this with more opportunities for pupils to share ideas with a partner and more discussions in class. The effectiveness of this varies between classes but most pupils are gaining in confidence although limited vocabulary often hampers progress in other subjects. The school is very aware of the shortcomings in English and has obtained resources and attended training to introduce a new approach to teaching these basic skills in the very near future. In science, standards are well below average because pupils are not taught the skills of scientific investigation effectively and are underachieving in this aspect of the subject.

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.8 (25.6)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.5 (25.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.8 (27.3)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

- More improvement can be seen in test results in the Juniors and in 2003 the school received a nationally recognised achievement award for improvement in results. The grid above shows that compared with national results standards were well below average in English, and below average in mathematics and science. However, when compared with similar school results were better and were below average in English, average in science and above average in mathematics. The trend in results over the last five years has been above the national trend. Most improvement has been seen in mathematics and current standards in Year 6 are average. Effective teaching and good use of assessment information is enabling pupils to make good progress. Overall achievement in English is satisfactory although standards in reading are below average and writing is well below average. Many pupils make good progress in reading because of the additional amount of time allocated to reading and the additional group sessions which help boost pupils who are struggling with reading. Many have underachieved in writing and are not confident with basic punctuation and find it difficult to make their writing interesting. Achievement in science is satisfactory overall. However, the current Year 6 have underachieved in scientific investigation because these pupils have experienced some ineffective teaching of these skills and teachers now have to close the gap in this aspect of the subject. Overall standards in science are below average.
- The school requested their aim *to provide education for all pupils regardless of ability* to be a focus for the inspection. It is very apparent that the school does not allow the comparison of test results with other schools to affect their determination to fulfill this aim. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress against the targets set for them. In reading, progress is good because of the additional support these pupils often receive. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress because staff have attended training and consult closely with professionals to ensure they can provide for the specific needs of these pupils. The school also works closely with the authority's support for

Traveller children and their parents expressed their appreciation of the help their children receive both academically and socially. The school carefully analyses test results and

have put in extra support for boys' reading. Current information shows no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. No pupils are identified as academically gifted. However, the school maintains records of pupils who are talented in sport and music. These pupils benefit from the rich range of extra activities provided to improve their skills.

5. Effective management has led to improved standards in ICT. Pupils now make good progress and reach the levels expected for their age. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitude to school and behaviour are **good** but their attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**. Their personal development is **good**, with strengths in moral and social development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Although the school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, overall it is below average and too many pupils are late in a morning.
- Most pupils enjoy school and work hard.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good and often better.
- Pupils mix well together and are learning to co-operate. They have a clear view of right and wrong and generally apply it.

### **Commentary**

#### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.5
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.*

6. Although the overall attendance is below the national average, a substantial improvement has been made since the previous inspection and unauthorised absence has more than halved. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance and reminding parents of the value of education to their children. As previously, some of the absence is incurred by families from the traveller community leaving the area for work in the summer. Staff work closely with this community to lessen the impact on learning, for example, by providing work to do while the child is away. They also seek to reduce the high levels of unauthorised absence by a few pupils. Another cause identified by the school is the large numbers of holidays taken in term time. A significant number of pupils are a few minutes late each morning and, although few interrupt formal lessons, they do nevertheless miss the opportunity for social interaction provided during the registration period.
7. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy school and their parents agree. In most lessons pupils are attentive and keen to answer the teacher's questions. Many pupils are receptive to new ideas and develop these on their own. They go quickly to their tasks and work hard. The higher attaining pupils persevere when they encounter problems and complete their tasks. Some pupils, however, have short attention spans and are easily distracted, particularly when asked to record answers or take the task beyond what is already provided by the teacher. This is

especially evident in pupils' skills in science. Most are eager to help, taking on responsibilities around the school, and many work hard to raise money for charities.

8. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong, well fostered by the school in assemblies and personal and social education lessons. Pupils remember those assemblies in which they were set problems involving moral dilemmas and have learned the lesson well. Behaviour seen during the inspection was good and, although there were four fixed-term exclusions last year, most parents and pupils agree that good behaviour is a strength of the school. Teachers need to spend little time in lessons correcting behaviour and they are well supported by teaching assistants who keep a sharp lookout for potential problems and promptly nip them in the bud. Pupils mix well at playtimes and parents and pupils say that occasional instances of bullying are promptly and effectively handled. No incidents of anti-social behaviour were seen. A few instances of name-calling are likewise handled effectively.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	255	3	0
White – Irish	14	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0

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

9. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are good and a pleasant rapport is experienced in lessons, providing a good atmosphere for learning. Many children enter the school with poor social skills and low self-esteem and the school works hard to improve them. These efforts are effective but lack of confidence is still a factor in limited progress for some pupils in lessons. Pupils expressed tolerance for those of other beliefs and of different races.
10. Whilst assemblies comply with requirements to have a daily act of worship, those seen were not spiritual events, often lacking a focus or time to reflect on the personal implications of the content. Pupils' knowledge of other religions is satisfactory and examples of world cultures are displayed around the school. However, pupils generally lack an awareness of the importance of other cultures in the everyday life of many Britons who are not represented in their largely white community.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are **satisfactory**. The range of extra-curricular activities is **good**. Pupils' welfare and safety are given **good** attention. Links with parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The best teaching seen is stimulating and enthuses the pupils but other lessons lack sufficient pace and pupils' interest wanes.



- Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics and ICT and these subjects are taught effectively. Teachers are not as confident teaching writing and investigation in science.
- In the Foundation Stage resources are used effectively and children are kept busy.

- Teaching assistants play a full part in lessons and good attention is given to equality of opportunity.
- Staff have good relationships with pupils and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Assessment procedures are good in mathematics and ICT but not as securely in place in other subjects so pupils are unsure about improving their work and tasks are not always matching ability.

## Commentary

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	1 (3 %)	15 (42 %)	20 (55 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

11. During this inspection not as much very good teaching was seen as during the previous inspection. However, the unsatisfactory teaching previously observed was not evident. The best teaching is in Years 2 and 5 and 6 and most is achieved in these classes. In these lessons the pace of learning is brisk and the variety of activities sustains pupils' attention and learning is effective. For example, in English in the mixed Year 5 and 6 class pupils used the interactive white boards, read parts in a play and moved on to highlighting key points in a given text. Pupils remained interested and good learning was assured. Although teaching is always at least satisfactory in other classes a common weakness is a lack of pace. In some lessons too long is spent sitting on the carpet listening and this leads to restlessness and some lack of full concentration. Whereas, in the best lessons the focus of learning is clear this is not always the case and the overload of information and instructions clouds the focus of learning and confuses pupils.
12. Mathematics and ICT have improved since the last inspection. Numeracy is taught effectively throughout the school including in the Foundation Stage. Most lessons include practical activities and start with brisk openings involving teachers asking pupils to explain how they arrived at their answers. Consequently, pupils learn from each other and use a range of strategies to solve problems. The previous inspection identified ICT as a weakness. The school has responded well to this and additional training and resources have greatly improved teachers' confidence. Teachers use the interactive white board with varying degrees of success. When used effectively pupils are kept on their toes as they know they may be selected to show their skills and understanding to the rest of the class. Although teachers have a sound knowledge of other subjects some shortcomings exist in the teaching of writing and science. Teachers are not always building effectively on previous learning and so the important basic skills of punctuation, grammar and scientific investigation are not being fully developed.
13. The Foundation Stage has undergone changes in staffing this term with a teacher now leading in the Nursery. Further changes to the accommodation are planned as the school strives to improve the progress of children in the early years. Although the impact of these changes is not yet showing because of the relative shortness of time since their introduction the teaching has strengths in the variety of tasks and effective use of resources which enables children to extend their learning in a practical and interesting way.
14. During his three years in post the headteacher has given considerable attention to increasing the number and expertise of teaching assistants. This has been effective and teachers and support

staff work well together to the benefit of their pupils. Support staff confidently lead small groups for additional support and, especially in reading, this enables pupils in Years 3 to

6 to make good progress. As part of the school's determination to enable pupils with special educational needs to have full access to the curriculum, staff have been trained to meet their very specific needs. This enables these pupils to make good progress to meet the targets set for them. Advice is sought in meeting the needs of Traveller pupils and support assistants have worked effectively with the West Midland Education Service for Traveller Children to help these pupils establish positive relationships and grow in self-esteem.

15. A positive feature in most lessons is the warm relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils, often sharing humour. This leads to an enjoyment in learning and pupils trying to please their teachers. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils rise to this and behave well. Lessons seen were orderly and ran smoothly.
16. One of the major reasons for the improved progress in mathematics and ICT is the assessment procedures. Teachers make effective use of assessment information in planning and also set pupils' individual targets so that they are aware of what they need to do to improve. In English, teachers make effective use of regular tests to group pupils according to their ability but as yet systems to set pupils' individual targets are not in place. Similarly, because teachers are less secure in their knowledge of pupils' current ability, tasks are not always closely matched to ability. This leads to some lack of challenge especially in writing tasks for higher attaining pupils. However, the school has systems almost ready to put in place to build on the good practice seen in mathematics. In other subjects assessment procedures are not securely in place.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Provision for extra curricular activities is **good**. The accommodation is **satisfactory**. The curriculum is supported by a **good** range of suitable resources.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a lively curriculum with strengths in mathematics and ICT.
- The curriculum in English and in science does not fully match the needs of pupils.
- Good arrangements are made to ensure all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- A good range of extra curricular activities, well-planned visits and interesting visitors enhance the curriculum significantly.

## Commentary

17. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects. Since the last inspection, the balance of the curriculum has improved. Topics in the Infants are planned efficiently to give appropriate coverage to all subjects. The curriculum is specifically designed to successfully meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is now clearly planned in all six areas of learning<sup>4</sup> and the provision of outdoor play is stimulating and fully meets children's needs.
18. The organisation of the curriculum provides suitable breadth and motivates pupils to learn. The good attention given to problem solving is raising standards in mathematics. Higher attainers in mathematics attend specific booster classes to enable them to reach higher levels of attainment.

---

<sup>4</sup> Areas of learning include communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

19. The provision for ICT is much improved and is now good. Effective use is made of literacy, numeracy and ICT to support learning across other areas of the curriculum. The school's commitment to teaching pupils to swim is greater than in most schools and all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 benefit from regular swimming lessons. This term the school has introduced the teaching of a modern foreign language to broaden the curriculum. Extra lessons in dance in the Nursery and Spanish in Year 6 greatly enhance the wealth of experiences offered.
20. The overall attention now given to speaking and listening skills is good and staff promote these skills across all subjects. However, the teaching of writing is inconsistent and this is not conducive to good progress. In science, not enough attention is given to the systematic teaching of investigative skills and this hampers pupils' ability to work independently.
21. The school rightly prides itself on its inclusive nature. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers identify pupils who are having difficulties with aspects of work or behaviour as early as possible and record these observations. If needed teachers draw up individual education plans for the pupils. These plans are of good quality, with clear targets for the pupils to aim at and indicate the strategies and support which will help the pupils. Teachers review the plans each term and set new targets as necessary.
22. Particular consideration is also given to including Traveller children fully in all activities and providing good support to meet their needs. Special group activities are organised and these effectively develop friendships and build up an interest in school.
23. The good range and quality of extra curricular activities includes coaching and competitive sport, music and dance. Specialist support is provided in instrumental tuition and choral work. Residential visits in Years 5 and 6 enhance children's social skills and promote independence. Visitors and visits are especially effective in successfully extending pupils' learning of life beyond school.
24. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good. The good number of teaching assistants are well trained and appropriately deployed to meet specific requirements in school. They provide effective support for individuals and groups. All areas of the curriculum are suitably resourced. Information and communication technology resources are good including the computer suite and interactive white boards in all classes. The accommodation is spacious. A toilet is provided for pupils with physical difficulties, but access to the first floor would be difficult for pupils with severe mobility problems. The school works hard to overcome the separation into Infant and Junior buildings by holding joint assemblies and special events. However, the split site is not helpful to liaison between the two departments.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Procedures for ensuring pupils health, welfare and safety are **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** academic and pastoral guidance and support. Pupil involvement in the work and development of the school is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are especially good and the school provides a caring environment where pupils feel secure in the knowledge they can turn to adults for support.
- When children start, they and their parents are introduced into the life of the school well.
- Governors are insufficiently involved in ensuring health and safety.
- In subjects, other than mathematics and ICT, pupils do not have targets to help them improve.



## Commentary

25. The school has satisfactory health and safety procedures for assessing risks associated with the premises and these are generally secure. However, too much reliance is placed upon local authority inspection and this has been tardy, for example, providing an accessibility plan for those with disabilities. No governor has the responsibility for health and safety and, although safety issues are discussed at governors' meetings, they rely too heavily on staff for advice and lack the expertise to take an independent position. Nevertheless, equipment is inspected regularly and fire protection has been well assessed and brought up to standard. Risks are assessed for major off-site activities but this has yet to be extended to local trips. Child protection procedures are sound and the support given by outside agencies is seen as good by the school. The designated training needs to be updated, but staff are aware of procedures to be followed. Much is done to safeguard pupils' welfare. Learning to swim is given high priority because of the close proximity of the canal. Similarly, cycle proficiency is promoted and a risk assessment carried out if a pupil wishes to cycle to school. Staff give good attention to pupils who have accidents at school.
26. Staff know the pupils well and pass on information as required to the next class at the end of the year. Those teaching assistants with responsibilities for individual pupils are enabled to give informed help, for example, they take part in review meetings to discuss progress and the next steps. All support staff are very supportive of those pupils with special educational needs. Traveller children and their families get good advice and guidance from staff and the local authority. Some joint initiatives have been very successful. Parents were eager to discuss the writing of a book and making of a compact disc which has gone a long way to raise pupils' self-esteem. The use of assessment to set individual pupils targets so that they know what to do to improve is well established in mathematics but not in other subjects, notably where it is most required, in English.
27. When children start in the Nursery, staff visit the child and parents at home to smooth the introduction to school. Staff establish a good relationship with parents and assess how much the child has already developed. Parents meet with staff to talk about the way the Nursery works and how they can help at home. Children are phased into the class two at a time so that staff can concentrate on settling the newcomers in. This is done very successfully, with few, and short-lasting, tears.
28. The school has consulted pupils about issues, such as healthy food in the tuck shop, and about how they feel they learn best. Personal and social education sessions are used to bring up issues which have arisen with pupils. Those in the Junior department can access advice from the anonymous *wise owl* via the *listening tree* letterbox. The school plans to extend consultation and involvement shortly, through starting a school council and system of pairing older and younger pupils as *buddies*.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the community. Liaison with other schools is **good** and provides support for staff and pupils.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed with good quality information.
- The school and its pupils contribute well to local community life.

- Not all parents are as supportive as they could be especially in ensuring their children attend regularly and arrive on time.
- Co-operation with other schools gives support across several areas of the curriculum.



## Commentary

29. Parents are kept in touch with what is happening in the school through good quality weekly newsletters and also have the opportunity to talk informally to staff if they have minor problems. Annual reports generally contain good and honest information about pupils' progress, particularly in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science. Comments on personal development are perceptive and give a personal feel to the reports. However, they often lack clear targets for improvement written in such a way that the parents can help at home. Formal meetings with teachers are held each term and parents find these useful, although attendance is not always high enough. Those parents who have difficulties with written communication are well supported by staff, who sometimes hand deliver letters to explain their content. Parents feel that they can always approach the headteacher to try and resolve problems, such as bullying, and are pleased with the school's response to their concerns. The school has consulted parents formally on several occasions, both on general issues and on more specific concerns, such as ways of raising boys' achievement.
30. The school has started several projects to involve parents more in their child's education, as they have found that more traditional workshops to explain teaching methods are not well attended. When their children start school, parents are given a good introduction to what they will be doing and generally how they will be taught. A few parents of Infant pupils attend the weekly *Share* classes where they learn to help their child at home. Adult classes for parents of Junior pupils were not well attended and have been discontinued. This reduction in parental interest as pupils get older is a feature of parental involvement in the school. However, several other parents come to weekly computer lessons. Not all parents are giving enough attention to their children's attendance and ensuring they arrive punctually.
31. The school has good relationships with the community it serves. Pupils have been involved in planning a traffic scheme for one local estate and this has enriched their geographical skills as well as their environmental awareness. The school works hard to foster the sense of community in the area. For example, by canvassing local organisations for worthy recipients for harvest festival produce and then delivering it by hand. Pupils also deliver over 1000 school Christmas cards to the areas surrounding the school. The demand for tickets to the school productions outstrips the supply. The school has successfully fostered good relationships with the traveller community so that they see Busill Jones as their school of choice.
32. The school has good and productive links with other schools, including schools for pupils with special educational needs. Staff exchange skills and this is most helpful for staff who support pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, autism and speech and language problems. The teaching of Spanish, ICT and physical education benefits from liaison with other local schools and work is afoot, in co-operation with an adjacent primary school, to develop a full children's centre at Busill Jones School.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory** with some good features. Leadership from the headteacher is **good** with some very good features. Governance is **satisfactory**. The overall effectiveness of the management of the school is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is keen to develop the managerial roles of other staff and involve all in the future development of the school.
- The governing body is supportive but governors rely heavily on the headteacher for information.

- The roles of subject co-ordinators of mathematics and ICT are good and they are having a significant impact on standards in their subjects. Other managers are having less effect on the subjects they lead.
- The headteacher has carried out the role of co-ordinator for special educational needs effectively.
- The school development plan has good priorities for the school but action plans for subjects do not always have a clear link to raising standards.
- Financial management is good.

## Commentary

33. A strength of the school is the leadership of the experienced headteacher who is well respected by parents, staff and pupils. He has high aspirations for the school and has put many changes in place to redress previous weaknesses and has a good understanding of what needs to be done in order for the school to move forward. Since his appointment, the headteacher has very sensitively adjusted staffing levels to ensure the needs of the pupils are more closely met. A good example of this is the appointment of a teacher to the Nursery in an attempt to improve achievement in the Foundation Stage. The impact of some changes is starting to raise standards in the Juniors but is less evident elsewhere because of the shortness of time since their introduction.
34. The governors, many of whom have had a long association with the school, are supportive of its aims. They meet regularly to discuss the business of the school and have been involved, for example, in difficult decisions over staff redundancy. The chair of governors, in particular, provides a very good link between the school and the community. The governors ensure, with the advice of the local authority, that they meet their statutory obligations. However, they do not have sufficient first hand knowledge, either through training, or seeing for themselves, to challenge the school's decisions, particularly in educational matters. Too few have taken up specific interests in the life of the school, for example, there is no health and safety governor. As a result, they rely too heavily upon the headteacher for information.
35. The headteacher has focused on empowering subject co-ordinators and the impact of this can be seen most in the leadership and management of mathematics and ICT. Changes introduced in these subjects have been closely monitored to check on their effectiveness. Although other subjects are soundly led the lack of rigorous monitoring has made it harder to ensure that changes are effective and that all teachers follow the agreed policies and procedures. As a result, weaknesses identified in the previous report remain. This can be seen in speaking and listening where useful strategies have been identified but these are not always being applied effectively in lessons. Monitoring of teaching is carried out by the headteacher and members of the senior management team. This has been effective in adjusting staffing and deploying staff to make best use of their skills. The absence of monitoring by subject leaders has led to some lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and in the sharing of expertise.
36. The role of assistant headteacher has been strengthened by the very recent delegation of responsibility for special educational needs. However, the assistant headteacher does not play a full part in other management decisions and the school lacks a person with sufficient expertise to manage the school in the headteacher's absence.
37. Leadership and management of special educational needs provision are good. The headteacher has held this position until recently and has established good procedures to ensure the needs of these pupils are fully met. Procedures include working very closely with class teachers in

drawing up pupils' individual education plans. Very good links exist with relevant outside agencies. A consultant paediatrician holds a very worthwhile half termly clinic

for certain pupils. The school ensures that teachers and learning support assistants receive specific training so that staff confidently support pupils with a range of difficulties. This enables the school to fulfill its aim of supporting all pupils and ensuring they have full access to the curriculum.

38. The overall quality of strategic planning is satisfactory. A good feature managed by the headteacher is the streamlined school improvement plan which is aiming to sharpen the focus on raising standards in key areas, such as speaking and listening. The strengths in this are clarity of areas for improvement. These are guided by the headteacher's very detailed analysis of test results and effective use of the ensuing information to monitor the school's performance and set priorities for future development. To ensure other weaknesses receive attention subject co-ordinators draw up subject action plans. These are clearly set out and identify costing and monitoring procedures. This aspect of management is very new to some staff and a weakness in plans is they do not always make it clear how identified actions are to raise standards. Targets are sometimes too general and consequently it is difficult to measure success. A strength in all of these action plans is the review of all aspects of the school and this makes a good contribution to the school's self evaluation process. As a result, the school has an informed and accurate view of its strength and weaknesses.
39. Control of the school's finances is good. The headteacher and bursar plan to spend the money provided in line with the priorities identified in the school development plan. The current position is monitored carefully. The budget is set initially with a small surplus but this increases through the year because of the headteacher's skill in searching out additional funds. As a result, the school has moved from a deficit budget to a healthy surplus. The school has clear plans to spend this money and the current budget is to reduce this to a more prudent level. The school plans finances, as far as it can, five years ahead, taking into account pupil and staff changes and the planned expenditure on resources and maintenance. When making spending decisions the headteacher gives due consideration to how these will raise standards. This is especially the case with recent staffing changes to improve provision in the Foundation Stage.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	825,784
Total expenditure	754,541
Expenditure per pupil	2,789

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	74,173
Balance carried forward to the next	71,243

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision is **satisfactory**. Leadership and management are **good**. The curriculum co-ordinator has led the school effectively and resolved weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. In particular, children under five now benefit from daily use of an attractive outdoor area, and teachers' planning is now securely based on the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. Very recently staffing has been enhanced by the employment of a teacher in the Nursery. The early signs of improvement have yet to impact fully on standards.

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Children of all abilities achieve satisfactorily from well below average attainment when they start in the Nursery. Overall, they are not on course to reach the early learning goals in any areas of learning by the time they leave the reception classes.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff establish a calm supportive learning environment where children settle happily into school life.
- Children develop a sound awareness of other cultures through lively practical topic work.

#### **Commentary**

39. Teaching and learning are **good** and children achieve well from particularly low starting points.
40. All staff present a consistently welcoming approach which enables children to feel secure. They use praise and encouragement effectively to promote confidence. Even so, many children continue to lack self-esteem and are wary to take initiative for themselves, or express their own ideas. In the Nursery, in particular, children find it difficult to select activities independently and to maintain concentration for long. Relationships are good. Reception children are becoming keen to be chosen as class demonstrators because they are confident that their efforts will be rewarded with praise from the teacher and from the class. During the Foundation Stage, children are gradually made aware of other cultures through imaginatively planned celebrations such as the Chinese Moon Festival, or the French Day which make learning fun.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The promotion of speaking and listening skills is rightly given high priority.
- In the reception class, a structured approach to teaching letter sounds promotes early reading skills satisfactorily.
- Group tasks do not always reinforce learning efficiently.

## Commentary

41. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** and children achieve satisfactorily from particularly low starting points. Training of teaching assistants in a form of sign language is put to good use in successfully communicating with Nursery children whose verbal skills are poor. As a result, children are drawn into Nursery routines where speaking and listening skills are fostered effectively. Appropriately short, focused story time sessions hold Nursery children's attention successfully and promote interest in books. However, the understanding of many children is poor. In the reception class, teachers use questions skillfully to help children extend their ideas verbally. Despite frequent, interesting opportunities to practise, listening skills continue to be poor with many children still unable to follow simple instructions accurately. The structured approach to learning letters and their sounds has enabled some children to begin to recognise several letters by shape and sound. The higher attainers (in the Reception/Year 1 class) recognise one or two high frequency words, for instance, copying *I am John* correctly in their sentence. Group work is not always planned effectively to follow up the teaching points of a lesson successfully and children are sometimes distracted from the main purpose by over complicated activities.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of interesting resources are used effectively to provide lively practical learning opportunities.
- Staff give clear demonstrations which support learning well.

## Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are **good** and lead to good achievement.
43. In Nursery and reception classes staff organise a good range of practical resources effectively so that children become increasingly adept at counting, matching and sorting. In the Nursery, most children are beginning to count to two with help and some are successfully learning to recognise and name numerals 1 and 2. Practical play activities, for instance, around the story of *Snow White*, are used very successfully to promote the concept of 7 with reception children. Higher attainers count out seven items accurately but many children are unsure in counting one-to-one or in applying their knowledge. With help, reception children follow the teacher's clear demonstration to recite numbers backwards and forwards to 10 along an attractive number line. Information and communication technology, including the interactive white board is used well to promote counting skills. The outdoor area is carefully organised with number lines and shape displays. As a result of clearly focused outdoor games several children can name and match circles, squares, triangles and rectangles correctly.

## KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and visitors are well chosen and widen children's experience successfully.
- Some investigations lack sufficient focus.



## **Commentary**

44. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**.
45. A series of topics, often backed up by visits or visitors, promotes learning well. For instance, children learn much about people who help us when the local fire service visits and a trip to the woods widens children's appreciation of the world of nature. Children explore through their senses with growing confidence, but are not good at asking questions for themselves. They have a growing understanding of different senses including touch and smell. When investigating the sense of sight, most children recognise the importance of being able to see and how items, such as binoculars, enlarge items. However, because set tasks are insufficiently focused, children do not realise the real benefit of using magnifiers for close inspection. Many reception pupils use the computer with confidence. They are adept at using the mouse to control objects on screen.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Use of the school hall provides good opportunities for children to develop skills of control and co-ordination.
- Not enough attention is given to the systematic development of physical skills in outdoor play.

## **Commentary**

46. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**.
47. Teachers manage children well in physical education lessons in the hall. They give clear demonstrations and choose children sensitively as demonstrators so that all know how to improve their work. Reception children control their bodies successfully to walk, run, slide, and crawl between and around physical education equipment. They are beginning to climb and balance independently. In the outdoor area, pupils control large toy vehicles with growing sense of space and of others. Outdoor play, however, is not always planned to promote the step-by-step development of physical skills and so children are not always challenged to learn as well as they can.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

A secure judgement on provision cannot be made because of insufficient evidence. Scrutiny of children's work from last year indicates that the curriculum is organised successfully towards the early learning goals. The weekly dance session, provided by a specialist instructor, enhances the curriculum for Nursery children.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are below average in Years 2 and higher attaining pupils underachieve.
- In Year 3 to 6 pupils make good progress in reading although standards remain below average. Pupils underachieve in writing and standards are well below average.
- There are encouraging signs of improving standards in speaking and listening.
- Teachers make effective use of ICT to support learning.
- Assessment is helping to identify pupils for extra help but pupils do not have targets to show them how to improve.
- Teaching assistants are used well in lessons and with small groups enabling pupils with special educational needs to make good progress against the targets set for them.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory but co-ordinators are not checking that agreed changes are being consistently applied.

## Commentary

48. The school is well aware that writing is a weakness in the school and the new literacy programme soon to be introduced is an endeavour to tackle this problem. Pupils start school with low literacy skills and in the Infants achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average. Most learn their letters and sounds well and use them to read and write new words. A common weakness is in their ability to structure their sentences and use basic punctuation correctly. Higher attaining pupils are underachieving because tasks are not always enabling them to make full use of their developing skills. Many pupils underachieve in writing in the Juniors and standards are well below average. Pupils do not write neatly with a joined-up style of writing because teachers are not always insisting they do. A common weakness in much of the writing seen in Year 6 is the lack of ability to write imaginatively and to engage the reader's interest. Punctuation remains a weakness with Year 6 teachers facing the daunting task of instilling in many pupils the correct use of basic punctuation.
49. More attention has been given to reading and standards are starting to rise although remain below average. In Year 2, many pupils tackle their reading books confidently and show an understanding of the text. Comprehension develops in the Juniors as pupils have daily time to read and share their books with another pupil or adult. However, a lack of enthusiasm for reading a wide range of books exists throughout the school. In the Infants, especially, pupils had limited knowledge of books other than those in the school's reading scheme.
50. The previous inspection identified speaking and listening as an aspect requiring attention. The school has put measures in place to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of planning specifically to extend these skills and there are signs of improvement although standards remain below average. It must be taken into consideration that many pupils have poor communication skills on starting school and overall achievement is satisfactory. In the Infants, teachers often include sharing ideas with a partner. The effectiveness of this technique is variable. It is best when the discussion point has a purpose but occasionally this is not the case and pupils exchange one word responses which do not extend their skills. More debate and class discussion are included in the Juniors. Pupils in Year 6 were eager to talk about their work and a small group was enthusiastically preparing a small drama to perform in front of the whole school.
51. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Strengths are especially in Years 5 and 6 where teachers match work closely to ability and the pace of lessons is brisk and sustains pupils' interest. These teachers are very sure about what they want pupils to learn and follow

clear steps to achieve this. For example, in learning about the key features of writing a newspaper the teacher included a review of examples, use of ICT and focus on key features and this enabled pupils to understand how to write their own articles. This clarity of what pupils are to learn is not always as obvious and in a few lessons seen the introduction

was too long and this, combined with too many teaching points, confused pupils and hampered their learning. Teachers are using ICT effectively to add interest to lessons. This was very evident in the Year 5 and 6 English lesson when pupils were selected to show others on the interactive white board how to change adjectives to adverbs. This activity led to good consolidation of prior learning. Teachers are using assessment information effectively to group pupils and this is especially raising standards for pupils who receive support from the well trained support staff. Assessment is not always used effectively to indicate to pupils how they can improve and this leads to pupils not fully consolidating basic skills before moving on to new learning. As yet, pupils do not have individual targets and when asked few had a clear idea about the next steps they need to take to improve.

52. Leadership and management are satisfactory but, since the last inspection, insufficient attention has been given to checking that introduced changes are having an effect on standards. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory although results in national tests have remained stubbornly low in the Infants. More improvement is evident in the Juniors especially in reading and speaking and listening. The headteacher has focused on extending the management role of subject leaders and some improvement is evident. The action plans to lead the subject forward show that useful evaluations of all aspects of the subject have been carried out. They carefully identify spending priorities but success criteria are not always easy to measure to get a clear picture of success.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

53. The promotion of language and literacy in other subjects is good. Teachers are aware of the need to encourage discussion and in science, for example, encourage the use of technical vocabulary. Writing is also developed and in science pupils record their results of investigations and in history record their feeling as evacuees during the war.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection.
- Standards by Year 2 are below average.
- Good teaching is enabling all pupils to achieve well.
- Leadership and management are good and are a significant factor in raising standards.

### **Commentary**

54. By Year 2, all groups of pupils achieve well. Nevertheless, standards are below average. The pupils are making good progress from a well below average base on entry to the school and standards are beginning to improve especially for higher attaining pupils. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good and standards in Year 6 are broadly average, which is a good improvement since the previous inspection. These rising standards are the result of good teaching leading to effective learning. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
55. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils make quick mental recall of number bonds, but lower attainers are much less confident. Basic numeracy skills of the latter are weak. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, many pupils confused the addition of 1 with adding 10. Higher attainers solve

simple problems involving money, whilst others find this much more difficult. The pupils measure classroom objects in centimetres, but not always accurately. They make sound use of their computer skills to generate accurate pictograms of their favourite foods and of the ways by which they come to school.

56. By Year 6, pupils' skills in basic numeracy are satisfactory. They use all four number operations to make quick mental calculations. They use written methods satisfactorily to add and subtract three-digit numbers, but they are less confident with multiplication and division. Lower attaining pupils find it hard to apply their skills to solve real life problems. Weak literacy skills hinder their understanding of what information is being provided and what exactly they have to find out. This also hinders pupils' ability to explain their methods clearly. Many pupils find it difficult to retain what they have learnt previously. The pupils measure angles, although not always accurately. They represent data by means of accurate graphs and diagrams.
57. Teaching and learning are good. A strong focus is placed on developing the pupils' ability to make quick mental calculations. Teachers give clear explanations and use questioning well, in order to make pupils think carefully. Problem solving is better because of teachers' strong emphasis on developing these skills through practical activities. Teachers organise group work efficiently, matching tasks closely to pupils' differing needs. This is helped by teaching Year 5 and 6 pupils in groups according to their ability. A lesson observed for the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 really challenged their thinking skills in work on decimals and learning was most effective. Teachers deploy assistants effectively and this helps lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress. Information and communication technology is used very effectively as an aid to both teaching and learning. In a Year 1 / 2 lesson, this helped the pupils to consolidate their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and in lessons in Year 5 / 6, it impacted well on the pupils' understanding of equivalent fractions and of the relationship between fractions and decimals. Plenty of practical apparatus helps lower attaining pupils to understand concepts. The teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and tasks set build well on previous learning. Plenary sessions successfully recap learning and teachers use them effectively to assess progress and to set regular homework. Teachers mark pupils' work positively, often suggesting ways in which work could be improved.
58. Leadership and management are good and are a significant factor in raising standards. More improvement has occurred in mathematics than other subjects because of the good procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. This information is used effectively to plan the next steps in learning and to target groups of pupils who need an extra push to improve. The co-ordinator checks carefully the quality of colleagues' planning and pupils' work, so as to gain an overview of standards, but she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate line graphs to show the insulation properties of different materials, pupils in Year 4 use clear Venn diagrams to sort materials and pupils in Year 3 draw accurate bar graphs of the absorbency of different types of paper. In ICT work, pupils in Year 5 / 6 equip a bedroom within a specified budget and in geography they generate accurate pie charts showing the results of a local traffic survey.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Standards in investigational science are weak throughout the school.
- Overall achievement is satisfactory.
- Teachers do not make enough use of assessment to match work consistently to pupils' needs.
- The monitoring role of the subject leader is insufficiently developed.

## Commentary

60. Current standards in Year 2 remain well below average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In Year 6, standards remain below the national average, although test results show satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection especially in the number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. When test results are compared with similar schools they are close to average. Overall achievement is satisfactory but many pupils have underachieved in their ability to predict results or suggest how to set up investigations. From a low starting point pupils make steady progress but this is not enough to enable all pupils to catch up to average levels. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively in class and make satisfactory progress alongside their peers. Good arrangements are made to include Traveller children so that their progress is also satisfactory.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Relationships are good and teachers praise and encourage pupils so that they enjoy the subject. Teachers are skilled in a range of management techniques and are successful in establishing a calm, purposeful working atmosphere, which successfully supports learning in class. Although teachers cover all aspects of the curriculum they give insufficient focus to the teaching of investigational science. As a result, pupils do not always learn skills effectively. Pupils in Year 6 have difficulty in planning an investigation, for instance, in articulating exactly what it is they need to find out. They are unable to organise their ideas and select appropriate equipment or data. Teachers use questions purposefully to extend pupils' thinking and also to assess what they know. There is, however, no consistently used whole school system for assessment. Whilst there is a good example in Years 5 and 6, where the teacher clearly builds on what pupils already know, assessment is not used routinely to plan new work. Neither does the marking of work in books show pupils how to improve. Consequently, clear individual or group targets are not set, and tasks do not always challenge pupils to make good progress.
62. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has a sound overview of the school's performance but is more effective in the Juniors than in the Infants. The monitoring role of the subject leader in order to pinpoint areas for development is not fully developed.
63. Links with literacy especially with speaking and listening are well developed in frequent planned discussion and in the attention given to correct use of subject specific vocabulary. Information and communication technology, for instance, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras and sensors and monitoring equipment, is used effectively to support learning in science. Mathematical skills in drawing graphs, tables and learning the importance of accurate measurement are also promoted successfully.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the previous inspection and this is leading to rising standards.
- Teaching is good overall and this enables all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Good leadership and management are a significant factor in improved provision.
- An Award Scheme provides a good system for motivating the pupils and for assessing their progress.





## Commentary

64. Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards are average, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This results from improved resources and good quality teaching.
65. By Year 2, the pupils confidently change colour using the keyboard accurately and in manipulating the mouse. They alter the size, style and colour of font to suit their writing. With adult help, they print, save and retrieve their work. With similar help, they access the Internet and CD Rom to find information about various topics. They move images around the screen to create effective pictures and patterns on a number of themes, such as *environments around the world*. They devise accurate instructions to move a floor robot.
66. By Year 6, the pupils access the Internet to research information in a variety of subjects. They bookmark their favourite websites and they use hyperlinks to search out other sites. The pupils show satisfactory word processing skills in producing accounts of school visits, combining text and graphics imaginatively. They use spreadsheets accurately to enter, analyse and retrieve data. In art, the pupils make effective use of digital cameras on the theme of 'a sense of place' and in science, they use sensors to monitor changes in water temperature and to log data about insulation. Most pupils create satisfactory multi-media presentations on topics of their own choice. They happily communicate by e-mail.
67. Teaching overall is good and leads to effective learning. Teachers' expertise with ICT has improved since the previous inspection and this is helping to develop the pupils' confidence. In a Year 1 / 2 lesson, for example, this helped the pupils in using an art program effectively to generate portraits of their partners. The balance between instruction and hands on experience is good and sustains pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject. The organisation of lessons is good in the ICT suite with staff circulating well to ensure all understand and are able to complete their tasks. Assessment is good and this is enabling teachers to have an informed view about the skills needing more attention.
68. Leadership and management are good and are a significant factor in rising standards. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work, in order to gain an overview of standards, but she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. Very good procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are in place, including an innovative Award Scheme of certificates, linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Planning has improved and the teachers ensure that ICT is used effectively to enhance teaching and learning in many other subjects. Pupils in Year 5 / 6, for example, access a website to compose their own music, complete with video effects, and, in history, they access the Internet to research information about life during the Second World War. Learning in mathematics lessons, in particular, is enhanced by effective use of the interactive whiteboards.

## HUMANITIES

70. No judgement is made on the overall provision in **history and geography**. It was not possible to observe any lessons during the inspection, with the result that these subjects were sampled.

71. A review of pupils' books shows that pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand how things change over time and how they need to look for clues about the past. Higher attainers make sound use of their literacy skills to describe how seaside holidays have changed over the

years and to write about some famous personalities of British history, such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. In geography, pupils understand the idea of a map or plan as a view from above and they draw simple plans of their bedrooms and classroom and of their route to school. They know about people in the community who help them. They understand how we must adapt to differing types of weather throughout the year. They name some of the physical features seen at the seaside.

72. By Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of life in Tudor and Victorian times and of life during and after the Second World War. Their learning is enriched by visits to Oak House, the Black Country Museum and the Museum of Cannock Chase and by a very stimulating school museum. Higher attaining pupils make good use of their literacy skills to describe their school visits and write effective letters in the role of a Victorian child working in the coalmines and of a wartime evacuee. The weak literacy skills of lower attaining pupils hinder their progress here. In geography, the pupils investigate local environmental issues, such as traffic problems in Ashley Road and Bloxwich High Street. They have a satisfactory understanding of the water cycle and of the changing nature of a river and its valley from source to mouth and they investigate the speed of flow of a stream on Cannock Chase. They are aware of environmental pollution and of the need for conservation and recycling.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The stimulating displays of artefacts in the school and photographs of visits show the school's emphasis on making these subjects interesting for pupils. Subject leaders have managed the organisation of the curriculum well to avoid any duplication or repetition in the mixed age classes. Their role in monitoring teaching and learning is not yet fully developed and the lack of detailed assessment information makes it difficult for co-ordinators to gain a clear picture of provision in the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
- The subject contributes positively to the pupils' personal development.
- Weak literacy skills hinder progress of the lower attaining pupils.

### Commentary

74. Insufficient lessons were observed during the inspection to judge the overall quality of teaching. However, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that, by Year 2 and Year 6, all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, which is good improvement since the previous inspection.
75. By Year 2, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the idea of belonging, whether to a family, school, club or church. They are familiar with some Bible stories, including the miracles of Jesus. Higher attaining pupils make sound use of their literacy skills to write about these stories, though others find this much harder. The pupils understand why the Cross is special to Christians. They are familiar with some of the festivals of Hinduism and Judaism.
76. By Year 6, the pupils discuss feelings and they understand how people express their faith through the arts. They know how certain books are sacred to various religions. The pupils visit

local churches to learn about the significance of various features. They are aware of the multi-cultural nature of British society and of the need to develop tolerance and respect for people of differing faiths. They know about some aspects of the world's major religions.

Higher attaining pupils, for example, use their literacy skills effectively to write about Muhammad's early life. The weak literacy skills of lower attainers hinder their ability to record what they know.

77. The subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator has successfully increased resources for teaching and learning. The monitoring role needs further development. A lack of whole-school procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to gain a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Learning is enriched by visits to local churches and by visiting speakers.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Design and technology, art and design, music and physical education**

78. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Only one lesson was seen in art and design, music and physical education and two in design and technology. Evidence from teachers' planning and from samples of work indicates that topic work follows national guidance and that statutory requirements are met. Leadership and management by the subject leaders are satisfactory but their roles in monitoring standards, teaching and learning are not fully developed. Formal assessment systems are not in place to measure pupils' progress as they move through the school.
79. In **art and design** the standard of work on display in Years 2 and 6 is similar to that seen in most schools. In Year 2, pupils make pencil sketches in preparation for painting portraits. Their work shows careful observations of detail, in painting features of the face and mixing shades of colour for hair and skin tone. In Year 6, pupils have worked carefully with control to translate a digital image of their chosen place in a range of media including line drawing, pastel, watercolour and collage. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Relationships were good and instructions clear so that pupils were confident to explore materials and ideas. The pace of the lesson was disrupted by too many breaks for discussion.
80. In **design and technology** limited evidence was available because it was so early in the school year and pupils' work from the previous year had been taken home. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Teachers showed good knowledge and understanding of the designing and making process and gave due attention to encouraging pupils to evaluate their work. Organisation of pupils and resources was not always efficient and some time was wasted in queuing for tools.
81. In its determination to expand pupils' self-esteem the school has put additional funds into extending pupils' **musical experiences**. A music specialist teaches most lessons and in the lesson seen in Year 2 teaching was good. Pupils understand how to respond to symbols representing long and short sounds and select suitable instruments to play. The school also funds a specialist to organise the school choirs. These are enriching the curriculum as well as extending the singing skill of those who opt to join. The Junior choir is especially challenged with good use of musical terminology and testing activities which they perform well.
82. In the lesson seen in **physical education** in the Infants teaching and learning were good and enabled pupils to work at standards higher than usually seen for this age range. The teacher has high expectations of performance and many pupils link movements together in a short sequence and adapt their movements to a partner. Pupils are eager to evaluate and improve their work.

They have a good knowledge of the benefits of exercise on the body because the teacher has explained this in science and reminds pupils during the vigorous warm-up that starts the lesson.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

83. No lessons were seen during the inspection and so it would be inappropriate to make an overall judgement on provision. Nevertheless, the subject receives good attention in the school and every class has a lesson dedicated to developing pupils' personal, social and health education. As an introduction Circle Time<sup>5</sup> is timetabled in the Infants and then longer lessons for the older pupils include more focus on relationships and how to handle difficult situations. A review of displays shows these topics are often covered in imaginative ways. For example, the teacher in Year 3 used a puppet to encourage pupils to talk about bullying. This enabled them to talk about how it feels and how to deal with any problems. This was followed up effectively by using ICT to make anti-bullying posters. In art and design, pupils have painted portraits of relationships and these show an understanding of the closeness between friends and family. It has also led to discussions about feelings, such as anger and sadness.
84. The school has recently adopted national planning guidelines to help teachers. Whole school activities also contribute to pupils' personal and social development. For example, they raise money for various charities and so learn about their contribution to helping others less fortunate than themselves.

---

<sup>5</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk free from any interruption by other children.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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