

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE BROMWICH JUNIOR SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104066

Headteacher: Mr I L Backhouse

Lead inspector: Mrs H Evans

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 September 2004

Inspection number: 266572

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	475
School address:	Hurst Lane North Castle Bromwich Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B36 0HD
Telephone number:	0121 747 2247
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Heywood
Date of previous inspection:	11 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Castle Bromwich Junior School is much larger than most other schools of a similar type. There are 241 boys and 234 girls aged between seven and 11. Currently about 12 per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and this is similar to most other schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below what is usually found. These are predominantly problems in literacy and writing. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also below the average national figure. The school has no pupils for whom English is not the mother tongue and the proportion of pupils from ethnic groups is low. Mobility of pupils in and out of the school other than at the normal time of admission is less than that in many schools. The socio-economic circumstances of the school are very varied with families drawn from both very deprived and affluent areas of the locality. With so many pupils in each year group the attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies between below average and well above average. Most pupils transfer from the local infant school and overall the level of their prior attainment on entry covers a spread that is similar to what would be expected for pupils of the same age nationally. In July 2004 the school suffered a severe arson attack that destroyed some classrooms, the resources for pupils with special educational needs, a computer suite and most of the stock of library books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21374	Mrs H Evans	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education English as an additional language
13706	Mrs G Marsland	Lay inspector	
15236	Mrs M Thorpe	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music
27426	Mr T Aldridge	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Special educational needs
30075	Mr M Duggan	Team inspector	English Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with a number of very good features and where there are many areas for celebration. Pupils are all valued as individuals and they achieve well. From their overall average attainment on entry most pupils make good progress in all areas of learning. Those pupils capable of higher attainment achieve very well and exceed nationally expected standards. In the most recent statutory tests in 2004, all of the lower attaining pupils, including those with identified special educational needs, achieved well in comparison to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is predominantly good. In about a third of lessons the teaching is very good and in some instances it was judged to be excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils respect the school and its very well established values and are very eager to learn. The leadership of the senior management team is good; they work well together. The procedures in place to tackle the weaknesses identified in 1999 are clear and practical and have all been effective. Standards are improving and work seen in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection indicates that pupils are on course to reach their personal targets. The average and above average attaining pupils are already well on the way to attaining or exceeding the expected levels in subjects across the curriculum. As a result of the very good management of the well-organised initiatives and the improving standards the school is judged to provide good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The above average standards in English and mathematics as shown by the most recent results in the statutory tests in 2004.
- Attainments and achievements in other subjects of the curriculum including art and design, music, history and information and communication technology exceed national expectations.
- The quality of teaching is predominantly good and is very good in classes in Year 6, as a result pupils learn well.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are very good.
- The leadership of the school and the work of the governors are good.
- The management of the school is very good as illustrated by the very positive actions following the fire at the school in July 2004.
- The targets in some individual education plans lack precision.

Since the previous inspection in 1999 the school has addressed all of the identified weaknesses successfully and has made good improvement. Teachers have improved the systems for tracking pupils' work across each year group to good effect and the work undertaken to develop pupils' personal and social development is very good. The revised process for setting and marking homework is clear and works well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	C	C
Mathematics	C	D	C	C
Science	C	C	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils claim a similar entitlement to free school meals.*

The achievement of pupils across the school is good. For the past four years, by the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science have varied but overall they have been maintained at a level that matches the national trend. The results of the standardised tests for English and mathematics in 2004 are at a level above that expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Standards in science have improved in 2004 through the increased use of practical investigations and are in line with expectations. By the end of Year 6 standards in information and communication technology are above national expectations. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is above national expectations in art and design, history, and music. Attainment in design and technology, physical education and geography is in line with national expectations. Pupils' work in religious education is more imaginative than that usually found in schools nationally and their attainments exceed the requirements set out in the locally agreed syllabus.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education including teaching, learning and curriculum provision is **good** and the care and guidance of pupils is **very good**.

The quality of teaching is predominantly good and in many classes, especially for the pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science it is very good. This is because all teachers understand the requirements of the subjects taught very well. They are confident that their planned work and intended targets will match the pupils' prior knowledge and attainment. As a result lessons are interesting, pupils learn readily and achieve well. Pupils complete the challenging work that is set for them successfully and understand how well they are doing. The curriculum provides well for all of the required subjects. There are strong links between subjects so that the structured steps for learning make practical links to work covered earlier. Pupils receive very good care and guidance.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils like school and respect the established values. They arrive regularly on time, have positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. In lessons and around the playing spaces pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils' respect for what the school is offering them is obvious in lessons and in the way they tell of learning experiences, shared values and competitions with other schools. Pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life is very good. The school is very highly regarded by the community as was demonstrated by the help that flowed in following the recent fire. These strong elements play an essential part in achieving the harmonious and well-balanced atmosphere that reflects the very positive ethos for learning in this school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, and governance of the school are good and management is very good. The headteacher leads the school by example and demonstrates a clear and positive vision for the school's future. His continued dedication and inspiration provide strong direction for the teaching and support staff as well as for the governing body. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team work well with the headteacher to ensure the continuing good of the school. Governors manage their areas of responsibility well. They actively pursue the priorities set out in the very clear detailed and structured school improvement plan. The governing body takes care to fulfil all of its legal obligations. Subject leaders are effective when monitoring and evaluating the planning for intended work by their colleagues. They have good strategies for marking and moderating completed work. The school uses the various talents of the support staff well. Everyone shares fully in the process of working to maintain the above average standards seen in most subjects across the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

At the meeting prior to the inspection and in the questionnaires parents indicate that they have positive views about the school and what it offers to their children. The only issue raised was that they would welcome more information about how their children were attaining and making progress. The school recognises that this is an area of concern to parents. Through the detailed pupil tracking process and the 'Inspire' project, regular consultation, workshops and reporting it is resolving this problem. Pupils like the school and respect the agreed values although some would like longer holidays and new toilets. Through the school council they look forward to seeing some of their ideas included in the plans for the rebuilding of the part of the school destroyed in July.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the format of pupils' individual education plans to include more precise measurable and achievable targets with clear outcomes.
- Maintain the process of monitoring the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 5, especially in science and mathematics to lift the quality of teaching overall to the level of that seen in lessons in Year 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

On entry to Year 3 there is some variation in attainment across every group. When pupils' attainment is assessed, soon after entry to the Year 3 classes, attainment levels overall are close to average when compared with pupils of the same age nationally. The levels attained in the assessment tasks in the linked feeder school in Year 2 do not always match those of pupils entering the school in Year 3. Overall, standards across the school have been maintained at a level close to or just above those seen at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the statutory tests in English and mathematics in 2004 were above national expectations. These results have not been validated and may match or exceed national averages.
- The achievements of pupils of all levels of prior attainment are good across the school.
- Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology, art and design, history and music across the school is good.
- Pupils' use of the skills learned in information and communication technology to enhance work in other subjects is well developed.

Commentary

1. The results in the statutory tests in 2003 showed that pupils attained the expected levels in English and mathematics but fell below expectations in science. As a result of changes made to the curriculum and the work undertaken to improve the quality of teaching the unvalidated results in the most recent tests show improvements in all three subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that standards overall are good and that most pupils are now on course to exceed the expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In classes across the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well in all subjects. Most are working at and many above the expected levels. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing and all of the initiatives to increase the opportunities for extended writing in the past two years are working well. In lessons, the challenge for pupils of all levels of prior attainment is good. Those capable of working at a higher level are supported very well and are encouraged to succeed.
2. In all classes, most pupils, including those with learning difficulties, usually achieve their individual targets because of the process of working in matched attainment groups with carefully modified work and the dedication of the skilled teaching team, and, particularly in the classes for younger pupils, the help of the well-organised support staff. The school exceeded its agreed targets in mathematics and English in 2004 and more pupils attained level 5 the level above that expected for pupils at this age. Over the past five years the school has maintained a level of improvement similar to the national trend and overall standards are improving.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.1 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.9 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)

Science	28.2 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)
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There were 123 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In other subjects standards across the classes are above the expected levels in information and communication technology, art and design, music, and history. In design and technology, geography and physical education at this very early stage in the new term indications are that attainment levels are at least in line with those expected and regularly found in most schools nationally. For those pupils capable of higher attainment levels frequently exceed national expectations. Attainment in religious education exceed the requirements of the local agreed syllabus Overall, all pupils achieve well and many do better than might be expected. This is as a result of the interesting work provided for them, the high level of challenge and the increasingly high expectations of the teachers. The good quality teaching and the hard work put in by pupils, with the support of their families, make very positive contributions to their success.
4. A strength of the school is the way in which pupils of all backgrounds and prior attainment levels are very well supported in lessons. Pupils are helped to learn particularly well by being constantly encouraged to extend their learning by pursuing their own interests through independent research and personal study. Pupils are prepared very well for each new step and the concept of learning for life is part of all of the planned work. As a result boys and girls and the few pupils from other than White British backgrounds all do equally well.
5. Pupils listen well to teachers and to one another. By the end of Year 6 they read and write at levels that are above the national average although when speaking many still need constant reminders to speak grammatically in full sentences. In mathematics, too, standards are now above expectations. Pupils explain what they know and demonstrate what they can do very well and they use their knowledge and understanding of number without hesitation. They manipulate numbers using multiplication and division easily, confident that their understanding of the rules of mathematics will help them to find the easiest way of solving a problem. The analysis of recent test results has identified a problem in remembering and using all of the vocabulary related to subtraction and, as a result, there is now a greater emphasis on oral and practical work as part of every lesson. Pupils endeavour to find a workable solution to tasks and problems as quickly as they can and the need to work hard at problem-solving strategies is now seen as an important strand of future development. Working towards reaching the personal targets displayed in many pupils' books is an ongoing process. Checking that these targets are met is now an integral part of the assessment process shared by teachers and pupils. Through working together it is intended that pupils will plot their own way to success through knowledge about their progress supported by informed personal endeavour.
6. Standards in the tests in science were disappointing in 2003 but were better in 2004 as a result of improvements in the curriculum and the quality of teaching in Year 6 following the analysis of the results of previous years. Pupils now in the classes in Year 6 are on course to attain at a level that is above the national average because the work to help them to be scientists and learn through investigation is now very structured very well organised. Pupils' skills and confidence in planning, conducting and recording the findings of investigations were seen to good effect. Pupils now demonstrate good scientific knowledge by the end of Year 6. Across the school the completed individual and independent work in books, as well as that that displayed in classrooms, shows good levels of presentation and achievement in all aspects of science. The well-informed use of ICT lifts the presentation of some work in science to higher levels.
7. Work in ICT is interesting and challenging, as a direct result of the increased skills of the teachers since the last inspection. The loss of the computer suite in the fire in July and the

establishment of a new facility just days before the inspection has interrupted the impressive work that enabled pupils to make excellent progress. The standards of pupils across the school, from Year 3 onwards, exceed the nationally expected levels. All of the pupils are confident when using computers for word-processing, data handling or seeking information from CD-ROMs and the Internet to enhance work in other subjects. The loss of the Internet link is regrettable but it will soon be restored and it is unlikely that any skills will be lost. Across the curriculum, in all classes, the school has done well in building on much of the good work observed at the time of the last inspection. Standards have been maintained and pupils have been developed very effectively as confident, highly motivated and well-rounded individuals.

8. The attainment of most pupils identified as having special educational needs is below that expected for pupils of the same age because of the nature of their learning difficulties but their achievement is good overall. Progress is measured against the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and as part of the school assessment procedures for all pupils. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly and parents are fully involved. Targets are clearly stated but are not always sufficiently precise to make checking easy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **good**. Punctuality is **very good**. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school, which make a positive contribution to their learning.
- Behaviour in and around the school is very good and pupils get on well together.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted very well, particularly in aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is above the national average for primary schools and the majority of pupils are consistently punctual.

Commentary

9. The pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely late. Regular analysis of attendance information is carried out and, when problems occasionally arise, the school or educational welfare officer provides additional support. Certificates are awarded for good attendance and holidays in term time are firmly discouraged. Parents provide good support by promptly informing the school if their child is ill.
10. Pupils respond well because of the very good relationships they share with staff. They have positive attitudes to school, listen carefully to their teachers and maintain interest and concentration in lessons. They particularly enjoy classroom discussions during personal and social education and confidently put forward their views and ideas. Pupils identified as having special educational needs have a positive attitude to school and take a full part in all aspects of school life. Pupils behave very well in lessons, especially where teaching assistants are available. The training provided for lunchtime assistants has enabled them to follow the schools' code of behaviour very well and this high level of consistency has helped to improve pupils' behaviour and their relationships with one another throughout each day.
11. Pupils behave very well. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last year. Staff have high expectations for good behaviour and the pupils respond accordingly. The behaviour

policy is adhered to and an appropriate scheme of rewards and sanctions is used. Instances of bullying or harassment are rare and pupils and parents confirm that those that do occur are dealt with promptly. Assemblies and discussion periods such as 'circle time' remind the pupils that they must inform an adult immediately if problems arise. A minority of parents have expressed concerns about behaviour, but no bullying or challenging behaviour was observed. Racial incidents are also rare but stringent procedures are followed and all incidents are recorded.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

This work enhances their personal development.

12. Assemblies, acts of collective worship and opportunities to discuss concerns and feelings in class provide good opportunities for pupils to think about their own feelings, to develop empathy and to share their thoughts about the world around them. Pupils learn about a wide range of faiths including Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism in religious education and develop an understanding of and respect for the feelings of others.
13. Teachers promote pupils' social and moral development very well. The pupils understand the difference between right and wrong, develop a good sense of personal responsibility and learn about moral issues and choices. They work together co-operatively in lessons and support one another very well. Older pupils from the school council support the younger ones in the dining hall and playground. Many readily accept duties as monitors, providing good role models for their fellow pupils. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to learn what it means to be an active citizen and to develop effective and persuasive communication skills.
14. Pupils' cultural development is very good and race equality is promoted effectively. Educational visits in the local area encourage pupils to think about community issues. Through assemblies, religious education, visitors, supporting charities and visiting places of worship pupils learn about life in the wider world and about cultural traditions in Britain and elsewhere. Links with a school in Malawi have been developed to good effect. Subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music have also included the study of different cultures. World Music Day, instrumental tuition and school productions also enable pupils to widen their cultural experiences.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 95%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in recent years.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is **good** because in this large school the quality of teaching and learning are predominantly **good**. Curricular provision is **good** and meets the needs of pupils with a range of levels of prior attainment and the opportunities provided to enhance the curriculum are relevant to the needs of the pupils and are **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good and it is very good in English and mathematics. Teachers provide a rich and interesting range of opportunities for using skills developed in one lesson to support learning in another subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach and have very good relationships with the pupils.
- Teachers have increasingly high expectations for pupils and challenge their thinking.
- The pace of lessons is brisk and good use is made of time.
- The planning is thorough and well organised; teachers select from a good range of methods.
- The rate of learning is predominantly good.
- The overall strategies for long-term assessment are good and are working well.
- In a few lessons introductions are too long and then too little time is allowed for the evaluation of achievements at the end.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching is good overall and in lessons for English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology it is very good in classes in Year 6. As a result, pupils learn well and make clear and measurable gains in their knowledge and understanding of the programmes of work that they study. The overall quality of teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection.
16. In all lessons throughout the school, teachers' knowledge of the subjects taught is secure and the objectives set are clearly explained to pupils. Whenever possible teachers link their expectations to earlier work or to practical experiences that pupils remember. Lessons are well organised and teachers' planning is good. The methods chosen and the available resources are always suitable. Teachers are at pains to engage pupils' interest at the start of lessons; work is interesting and the pace of learning is brisk. As a result of the very positive relationships, there is a shared sense of joy and purpose in learning. Pupils across the school share their pleasure of achievement with one another, sometimes showing this by applauding when others succeed. On the first day of the inspection in a few lessons the time spent on the introduction of work was too long and too little time was allowed for the evaluation of achievements at the end. This nervous start resulted in a few well-planned lessons being graded as satisfactory. As the inspection progressed and teachers and pupils began to know one another other better after just five days in their new classes prior to the inspection, this difficulty was resolved.
17. Year leaders and subject leaders and the teachers in the classes for Year 6 pupils were observed demonstrating the best very good and excellent teaching. These teachers used time particularly well and in their lessons the pace of work was brisk; learning was very secure and every minute was packed with enjoyment. In these lessons 'time flew' as pupils of all levels of prior attainment were challenged fully and encouraged to fulfil the teachers' high expectations. Whilst in Years 3 to 5 there were many examples of good and even very good teaching although the school has identified a need to raise the quality of teaching overall to that of the best. Already the leadership team has established practical strategies to monitor teachers' planning and performance. This includes regular monitoring and feedback by the headteacher with the leadership team. Just one week into the term it was too early to see the benefits of these well-planned strategies in relation to overall standards.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	15 (33%)	22 (48%)	7 (15%)	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.

18. Subject leaders offer good support for colleagues when preparing lessons. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress, attainment and achievement are clear and manageable. Teachers follow the agreed marking policy carefully as an important strand of the shared assessment procedures. This work is greatly improved since the last inspection and enables pupils to see how well they are doing. In the best examples teachers share a dialogue with pupils, praising effort and improvement and pointing out where more thought and effort are still needed.
19. Teachers make good use of the information gathered on a day-to-day basis to refine work for the next lesson. This review is shared with colleagues in parallel classes and is managed very effectively by the year leaders. As a result, work is usually well matched to the prior attainment of the pupils. The use of regular evaluation, moderation of completed work and assessment to promote work matched to pupils' earlier learning and setting achievable challenges is seen as a vital indicator of progress. The process has already proved to be very successful in the core subjects of English, mathematics and in ICT. The extension of this work into the rest of the subjects is now assisting the process of raising standards in science and other subjects across the curriculum in all four years.
20. The systems in place for longer-term assessment are clear and practical. They provide a focus for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses and for setting relevant, measurable targets for improvement. Their use is consistent across years and classes and collected data is used to provide a comprehensive evaluation of what has been learned. The monitoring of planned work and colleagues' performance in the classroom by the year leaders, with the support of the headteacher and members of the senior management team is vital to the very effective management of such a large school. All adults are very alert to what pupils know and understand and are beginning to devise ways to enable pupils to use what they can do in other subjects in order to extend learning. This includes explaining to pupils how well they have already achieved and what they should do in order to improve. In many subjects targets are displayed at the front of books and pupils understand where they have reached and what else they need to do. Just five days into the new term some of this work was still being negotiated with individual pupils.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator provides good support for pupils with language and learning difficulties, regularly through withdrawal groups but increasingly by supporting their work within their lessons in class. Teachers and support staff ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to the curriculum. They also provide effective targeted help. In consultation with teachers and support staff the special needs co-ordinator regularly sets and reviews clear and appropriate targets although these sometimes need to be broken down into smaller measurable steps. Parents and older pupils are increasingly being involved in the process of target setting. Pupils make good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans and statements, and achieve well.

22. The partnership between the teachers and the limited but increasing number of teaching assistants works well. The shared work makes a significant contribution to the very positive ethos of the school and to the very effective working atmosphere in all classes. Homework is set at suitable levels each week. The process of setting homework has been reviewed and restructured in consultation with parents. During the inspection the review of marked homework at this very early stage in the term, just one week from entering new classes, indicated that it was proving to be a positive aid to learning.

The curriculum

The planning and content of the curriculum are **good** overall. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. Despite the impact of the fire in July the quality of the accommodation and the resources for learning are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is very good.
- The extensive range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Booster classes enhance some curricular areas, especially English.
- Accommodation and resources are good.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is broad, balanced, relevant and is planned well for continuity and progression. The policies and schemes of work are detailed, with many of them incorporating opportunities for linking subjects. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are fully met. The school follows an adaptation of the local education authority's Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The policy adopted by the school to include pupils of all backgrounds and attainment levels ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, including clubs and other extra-curricular activities. Many examples of how the policy is seen in practice were observed, for example street dancing as well as football and tag rugby for mixed groups of boys and girls.
24. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including the use and misuse of drugs, and sex and relationships education is good. Outside agencies, for example the police and school nurse, are involved extensively in the programmes of work for drug awareness and sex and relationships education. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement. The provision for personal and social development. In some classes the sensible use of circle time is having a strong and positive impact. In these sessions pupils are encouraged to share feelings and explore their emotions about relevant sensitive issues. Subject co-ordinators regularly monitor the implementation of planning. As a result the effect on pupils' work is positive and the trend in standards is upwards. The provision for additional activities to extend the curriculum is very good. In sport, clubs include football, netball, athletics and tag rugby. Participation in the arts includes street dancing and music clubs, and there are opportunities for pupils to perform at the Birmingham Symphony Hall and Midlands Arts Centre. School teams regularly take part in local and area competitions in netball and football, with varying degrees of success. The school has won the championships for Greater Warwickshire indoor athletics and for North Solihull outdoor athletics for the past three years.

The school values educational outings and pupils have access to a wide range of visits including museums, theatres, factories and places of historical and geographical interest such as Stratford on Avon, Land Rover in Solihull and the Black Country Museum. These experiences contribute positively to the pupils' social and personal development. They improve team-building skills and enhance self-esteem. In addition, interesting visitors such as theatre groups, musicians and artists add another dimension to pupils' education. These extra programmes increase pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

25. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs, especially when they are supported in mainstream lessons by teaching assistants. In English and mathematics, sets based on pupils' prior attainment in Years 5 and 6 enable the needs of pupils to be met. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' needs are also met in matched attainment groups. However, teachers' planning does not always provide specifically for the needs of those pupils identified as having special educational needs in subjects other than mathematics and English.
26. Good links between the feeder infant and receiving secondary schools ensure that transition between the phases is smooth. The opportunities for parents to become more involved in their children's learning are available through the Inspire Programme. These workshops provide very good opportunities for parents to find out what their children do and how they are making progress.
27. There is a good combination of experience and expertise in the teaching force. This means that there are sufficient teachers to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are addressed effectively. Accommodation and resources are good overall, despite the loss of resources and several teaching areas including the information and communication technology suite and the library in a recent fire. Much of the resources, equipment and furniture have already been replaced and building plans indicate that accommodation will be improved still further. The outside accommodation is particularly spacious and is very well maintained. The dedicated work of the site manager and his team ensures that the accommodation is managed very well. It is clean, bright and attractive. His prompt actions during and after the fire helped to restore order more quickly than might otherwise have been possible.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**.

Pupils receive **very good** support, guidance and advice. Involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views through the school council is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know their pupils very well and promote their personal development successfully.
- Very good procedures are in place for induction into Year 3.
- Pupils' opinions are listened to and valued.

Commentary

28. The school provides a safe and caring environment. Access to areas damaged by the recent fire has been secured to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff. Pupils are very well supervised around the school and lunchtime routines are firmly established. Potential hazards are swiftly identified and remedied. The school also accommodates a club for before and after school care that provides a safe and secure environment where the pupils can share in varied activities until

they are collected by their parents at the end of the day. Arrangements for child protection are very good and fully meet the requirements of the local area child protection committee. All staff, including administrative staff, classroom support assistants and lunchtime supervisors receive regular training.

29. Staff know their pupils well and have a high level of concern for their well-being. Pupils who are in need of additional help are identified swiftly and high quality support and guidance is provided to aid their personal development. The teaching of personal and social development is now firmly established and timetabled for each class. Teaching about the rules of life, feelings and emotions also takes place discreetly in assemblies and lessons such as religious education and science. Health professionals and the police officers support some of these sessions. Pupils negotiate their personal targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy with their class teachers to enable them to assess their progress and identify what they must do to improve their work. The care, guidance and support for pupils identified as having special educational needs are good. All pupils identified as having special educational needs have individual plans and targets. Pupils with statements of special educational need are fully supported and their requirements are met.
30. Very good induction procedures enable the pupils to settle swiftly into the school. Visits and meetings are arranged for parents and pupils. Links with the local infant school provide the opportunity for pupils in Year 2 to come to the junior school for physical education sessions and to watch school productions. Staff liaison and curriculum links are in place to ensure continuity of learning.
31. The school council meets each week to discuss issues and ideas of interest to pupils. Members are easily recognisable by their blue sweatshirts and have been involved in peer mediation training to support others. The council actively supports charitable causes and a recent sponsored event has also raised funds to provide new play equipment for the school. Pupils know their views are taken seriously and often acted upon. They were consulted when planning for the new play area took place. They are pleased that their views are now being taken into account as the school plans how best to replace the lost facilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains **good** links with parents. Links with the community are **good**. Links with the local high school are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive very good quality information about their children's progress and the work and life of the school.
- There is a good degree of mutual support between parents and the school and regular consultation takes place.
- The 'Inspire Workshops' enhance parents' understanding of their children's learning.
- Good links with the community enrich the curriculum and support the pupils' personal development.
- Very good links with the local high school aid transition to secondary education.

Commentary

32. The quality of information for parents is very good. The prospectus and governing body's annual report are attractive and informative. Regular letters provide all the key information and news that is required. Parents also receive year group newsletters that explain about the curriculum and what their child will be studying each term. Workshops have also been held to explain the National Primary Strategies for literacy and numeracy and how to help those pupils who are preparing for statutory tests. The pupils' progress reports are good. They contain all the required information and clear targets to inform parents how their children can improve their work.
33. The school listens to the views of parents. The headteacher is available in the playground each morning should parents have a concern. The school has recently issued a questionnaire to ascertain their views on school issues and has previously sought their opinion about homework. The majority of parents hold the school in high regard and volunteer to help with school activities and educational visits.
34. Links with parents of pupils identified as having special educational needs are good. Parents are regularly invited to special educational needs identification and review meetings and are involved in the setting of targets. Parents receive a copy of their child's individual education plan. There are good links with a wide range of outside agencies that are involved with pupils identified as having special educational needs. These include links with the emotional and behaviour support services, educational psychologist, speech and language therapists and others.
35. The 'Inspire Workshops' are being developed to include all year groups. They provide an opportunity for pupils and parents to work together to enhance parents' understanding of learning. Grandparents, classroom assistants and members of the governing body also participate to ensure that each pupil has a partner to work with. Mathematical games are shared in school and at home and parents are informed of the level at which their child is working. A minority of parents have expressed concerns regarding the frequency of information on their children's progress and this initiative is seen as a way of helping to keep them informed. The school also holds three parents' consultation evenings each year and members of staff are friendly and accessible.
36. The school has good links with the community and makes good use of community resources. This contributes to the pupils' understanding of the wider context of their learning. For example, the school choir entertains the elderly at the local day centre. Educational visits and visitors such as the clergy and the Park Ranger support the pupils' academic learning and personal development. Extending community links is seen as an area for development but the community were an invaluable source of support following the fire.
37. There is purposeful positive liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinators and other members of staff from both schools as pupils from the infant school join the juniors. This is intended to ensure good continuity in all subjects including history and geography. Later on strong links with the local high school ensure a smooth transition from primary to secondary education. Pupils have the opportunity to sample a 'taster day' of lessons at the high school and tutors visit the junior school. Earlier visits are instigated through sporting activities and school productions hosted by the high school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good** overall. The headteacher and the key staff offer **good** leadership, the governors provide a **good** level of support to the head and his team and the management of the school as typified by the swift and very effective action following the fire is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very clear vision and high aspirations for all aspects of the school's development.
- The deputy headteacher and the leadership team work effectively to support the headteacher.
- The governing body is successful in helping to shape the direction of the school.
- The management of the deployment and workload of staff is very effective.
- Very good financial management helps the school to achieve many of its educational priorities.

Commentary

38. There has been good improvement in the leadership, management and governance of the school since the last inspection. The headteacher, governors and staff have a well-focused commitment to educational improvement that drives the school forward. The headteacher provides very good educational direction. Initiatives are rigorously kept on course and are not allowed to drift or lose impact. This is a particular strength of the leadership and management of the school. The senior management team and subject leaders ensure that agreed strategies for teaching and learning are followed; there are very good opportunities for subject leaders to manage their subjects. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have been particularly successful in the management of the recruitment, deployment and workload of staff. They have a very high level of understanding of recent legislation concerning a fair balance and workload of staff. The staff refuse to allow any of the barriers to learning such as pockets of low expectations in some places and the ongoing battle to improve the standards of pupils' speaking and writing to deflect them from their commitment to working towards the highest possible standards.
39. The quality of the leadership is good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with the assistant headteacher form an extremely strong team. They have very successfully involved all subject leaders in the commitment to raising standards and providing a good education for all pupils. They have very high levels of commitment to the school's vision of providing an inclusive and wide-ranging curriculum to meet the needs of pupils of all backgrounds and levels of prior attainment. They make decisions based on evidence gathered through the monitoring process that are in the best interests of pupils and colleagues. The staff share a high level of commitment to the school's vision of providing a strong educational and inclusive ethos based on the agreed values that underpin all of the school's activities. The strategic planning, responses to the key issues from the previous inspection and the school improvement plan have been very well developed over the past four years. The school improvement plan is very well focussed on the identified needs and is an easily managed document.
40. Subject leaders are given very high levels of responsibility for developing the work in their subjects. They have well-established and rigorous curricular development plans and reviews. The procedures for assessment, monitoring, moderating and tracking are good and the school is in a stronger position to improve the achievement and attainment of pupils than it was at the previous inspection. There has been a greater emphasis on the foundation subjects, especially the humanities, music and art and design. The effectiveness of the subject leaders has a strong

influence on the quality of teaching and the cohesive nature of this large school. They have a very good understanding of strengths and areas where change might be necessary.

41. The management of the school is very good. The positive, calm and committed manner demonstrated by the headteacher, his deputy and the assistant headteacher with all staff have resulted in all pupils being taught in an attractive environment with high quality resources in spite of the devastation caused by the recent fire. The exceedingly meticulous management strategies, so typical of this school, were brought into play together with outstanding concern for the safety of pupils and yet commitment to pupils' right to access a high quality education. In other words "The show must go on" was apparent in all aspects of the management and organisation. This organisation was a sensible balance of an awareness of safety with the need for the continuity of education. The fact that pupils are now working in very attractive settings and safe classrooms reflects the methodical approach shown by the headteacher, the leadership team and all teaching and non-teaching staff and governors. The school should be congratulated on this outstanding level of success.
42. The quality of governance is good overall. The governing body provides very good support and has good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and plans for development of the school. The chair of governors ensures that all members are very well-informed about all aspects of the school's development. There is a governor with responsibility for each subject and a good committee structure. The governing body monitors the work of each subject and area of responsibility in working party groups in order to ensure a well-balanced and accurate interpretation of strengths and identified areas for development. The system works well and is highly valued by the teachers. They monitor test data meticulously and respond promptly to any negative trends. The governors make many decisions concerning financial planning, personnel and resources based on accurate interpretation of information. The governors display a total commitment to staff development and to improving standards. The processes in place for the performance management of staff are thorough and are tracked carefully through the school improvement plan.
43. Although the main priorities included in the useful school improvement documents are initially identified by the headteacher in consultation with senior staff, the governing body supports and, when necessary challenges anything that is included and always makes decisions in the light of available finance and gathered information. In this way it has a good understanding of standards and achievement as well as curriculum and monitoring. The governing body has addressed the minor inaccuracies in the annual report to parents and the school now meets all of the statutory requirements in all areas. The governors have the necessary detailed financial information in order to plan, prioritise and hold the school accountable for expenditure, achievement and results. The school is now in a better position to improve and develop than at the time of the previous inspection.
44. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The school currently substantially supplements the special educational needs budget. The special needs co-ordinator ensures that individual education plans and statements are regularly reviewed and teachers, support staff and parents are fully involved. Although this work is carried out meticulously some of the targets are too broad and small improvements are difficult to track. Support assistants attached to those pupils with statements are deployed effectively. The role of the special needs co-ordinator is currently under review. At present she withdraws groups of pupils identified at School Action and School Action Plus in order to assess their needs but increasingly it is intended that these pupils will work in their designated attainment groups with specifically targeted support. Currently, most individual action plans are handwritten.

Following the loss of information and resources it is planned to provide a new laptop in order to make the task of managing the individual education plans easier to manage.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	840,796	Balance from previous year	76,880
Total expenditure	839,286	Balance carried forward to the next	78,390
Expenditure per pupil	1,767		

45. The administrative officer makes a very welcoming first point of contact and is very efficient. Working with the finance officer work she has established a very effective team while each one retaining their individual responsibilities. Very detailed and up-to-date accounts are maintained and information from the school is very well supported by the Local Education Authority financial advisers. The administrative staff has continued with the very effective systems for placing orders, checking purchases and balancing the various accounts. The school ensures that specific grants, for example those for information and communication technology, are correctly spent. All expenditure is carefully tracked in line with principles of best value and the budget is updated continuously to show the current state of the school's finances. The apparent high amount of the balances at the end of the financial year is money committed for planned activities in the summer term and earmarked for improvements and decoration planned for the summer of 2004. Some of these plans will now have to be reviewed in the light of the devastation and the insurance settlement. Unit costs are low and the school provides good value for money.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above the national average.
- The focus on writing is producing improved standards and attractive work.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Setting according to the levels of prior attainment is having a positive impact on standards.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The introductions to some lessons are over-long.

Commentary

46. An analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicate attainment to be above the national average by the end of Year 6. This is similar to the findings in the previous report. Since 1999 the results of the Year 6 National Curriculum tests have fluctuated, dipping below the national average in 2002. Since then the trend has been upwards, with 86 per cent of pupils reaching the expected level in 2004.
47. The overall good teaching and time invested wisely by support staff, especially in Year 3, have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. The teaching of English is a strength across the school and is a good indicator that less strong areas will respond to the planned interventions. This, combined with the pupils' own willingness to learn and improve, ensures that all, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Learning is enhanced further by the setting system, especially in Year 6, where work is matched meticulously to the pupils' capabilities. A pleasing feature is the strong promotion of descriptive and creative writing throughout the school, which is improving standards steadily. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups, all of whom speak English as their first language also do well.
48. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 demonstrate skills in communication, language and literacy above expectations for this age group. They are becoming confident communicators, seen to good effect in an outstanding Year 3 lesson on comparing and contrasting two poems. They show good listening skills when using specific language to explain the probable feelings of characters in the text 'The Mouth Organ Boys', in response to the teacher's questions, as observed in a good Year 5 lesson. Pupils in Year 6 discuss in reasoned terms their views and opinions, clearly demonstrated in a very good lesson where they analysed features in the dilemma section of a story.
49. The standard of reading throughout the school is good overall, due to it being promoted strongly. The close liaison between parents and school through reading diaries is an added benefit. Consequently the enthusiasm of all pupils to acquire a love of books begins early. Younger pupils are taught strategies to decipher meaning. Group reading and writing sessions are teaching key skills at the right levels. In Years 5 and 6, pupils read fluently and with

expression which reflects the meaning of the text, exemplified well with a group of Year 6 pupils reading with an inspector books such as 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' by J K Rowling, Dick King-Smith's 'Funny Frank' and 'Fighting Fit' by Annie Dalton. The 'Catch Up' programme and Boys' Reading Class are also having a positive effect on improving reading standards. Whilst the average and higher-attainers use the context of the story to figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words, less able pupils find this a more difficult task.

50. Overall, the quality of pupils' creative and descriptive writing is good, especially in Year 6. The effective intervention strategies such as extra booster lessons in this and younger year groups are now reaping rewards. In the older classes a good depth of reading experience is reflected in their written work. By Year 6 the majority uses exciting language to develop ideas, convey meaning and hold the reader's interest. For example, pupils studying suspense in the text 'Stone Dead' included in their own independent writing sentences such as:

'I stared at the cave. Confused but anxious I cautiously crept up to the entrance. On entry I took a deep breath but a ripple of fear passed through me.'

In the same year group vivid descriptive lines often emerge, for example:

'The bees were in a swarm, elegant and graceful but also very protective.'

Younger pupils are also adept at using words to describe scenes and feelings. Examples include:

'As the sun rose little birds fluttered happily out of their nests and began singing as sweetly as a princess.'

And:

'It was raining the day of my school trip. When I got to school I was drenched and felt like an ice cap.'

51. Pupils through Years 3 to 6 show a systematic, growing grasp of punctuation and spelling, and write effectively in different styles. The standard of handwriting in all classes is good overall and many pupils write very well. By the time they leave school most write in a neat, joined-up style.
52. In all the lessons seen the pupils' attitudes were very good. They behaved and learned well, due to the good overall class management and teaching. In the best lessons, which always included good pace and challenge:
- Effective questioning skills help to extend the pupils' thinking and understanding; therefore learning is on-going.
 - There is good intervention and assessment by teachers to look for gaps or gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding and as a result set a new task or re-adjust the original to ensure suitable challenge.
 - Learning intentions are shared clearly with pupils and therefore they know what is expected, why and how to do it.
 - Resources are used well to stimulate pupils' interest, and therefore they want to succeed and learning accelerates.
53. As a result of the work of the senior leadership team with the newly appointed co-ordinator the subject is now led and managed very well. Staff deploy the personnel and services to analyse test results, set targets and track pupils' progress effectively, as well as monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school. This is an appreciable improvement since the last inspection.

She is well aware of the areas where strengths and weaknesses occur, and is determined to raise the standards, especially in writing, even higher.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Throughout the school pupils' literacy and language skills are being used effectively and improved constantly in other subjects. Examples include listening to and carrying out instructions in physical education, and use of specific vocabulary and layout in writing up science experiments, as evidenced in samples of Year 4 and 5 work. In history and geography there are good opportunities to develop skimming and scanning skills, as observed in a Year 5 geography lesson on identifying river features, while mathematical problem-solving engages fully the thinking processes. Overall the provision for language and literacy is good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall and helps pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Standards are steadily improving because of effective monitoring of teaching and learning and evaluation of test results.
- Assessment procedures are good and provide the school with a wide range of information and this is used effectively to track pupils' progress and develop group targets.
- The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic subject leader.
- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons.
- There is insufficient emphasis on problem-solving and using and applying mathematics in every day situations.
- In a few lessons, the final session is too short and is not as effective as it might be.

Commentary

54. From the analysis and scrutiny of pupils' work, talking to pupils and lesson observations, standards in mathematics in Year 6 are above the expected level. It is already evident that a significant number of pupils are on course to attain standards above the expected level 4 by the end of the year.
55. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, pupils achievement was broadly average overall but was better than the previous year when they were below average. The most recent results for 2004 that have yet to be validated indicate further improvement. Overall, the school does well for its pupils, with all groups making good progress and achieving well. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and achieve as well as others in their class. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also do well. Although 2003 test results indicate that boys perform better than girls, this was not evident during the inspection. Setting by attainment levels in Years 5 and Year 6 provides well for pupils with different attainment and increased challenge for those pupils capable of attaining higher than expected levels. All pupils are fully included in all activities. Over the last two years the school has worked hard to raise standards in mathematics although the main emphasis has been on raising standards in English. Efforts are now beginning to reap success in raising standards in mathematics.

56. Progress since the last inspection has been good overall. The National Numeracy Strategy and monitoring and tracking procedures are firmly established, making effective use of improved assessment arrangements. Monitoring the quality of mathematics across the school, a major weakness at the time of the last inspection, has been fully addressed. The subject leader is now fully involved in checking the overall quality of mathematics work across the school through regular monitoring of teaching and learning. This process is designed to support all of the teaching staff by developing all teachers' personal skills in order to raise the quality of teaching across this large school to that found in the best lessons seen in Year 6 classes. The quality of teaching has improved, along with the quality and quantity of resources and use of information and communication technology.
57. From lesson observations, looking at work samples, talking to pupils and looking at teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is good overall. Of the 11 lessons observed eight were deemed good or better, and three were very good. Most teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge, which is used well to develop pupils' understanding. Lessons are carefully planned using national guidance and with clear learning objectives. These are usually clearly shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons so that they know what they will be learning and doing. Relationships and behaviour are good and often very good so that pupils try hard in lessons and are well behaved. Good emphasis is placed on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and words are displayed well in classrooms to act as re-enforcement. Most lessons proceed at a good pace although in a small number of lessons the initial mental/oral activity does not always challenge pupils sufficiently. Although questioning is used to make pupils think, in a few lessons, teachers only take answers from pupils who raise their hands, which means that not all are fully involved and there are no follow up questions to challenge others. Few opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss questions with a partner to develop speaking and listening skills and develop a deeper understanding of mathematics. Occasionally teachers talk for too long during the introduction, which means there is less time for pupil activity. The final session, when pupils have the opportunity to discuss what they have been doing, is often well planned although occasionally rushed so that pupils are not sufficiently involved. The quality of marking is variable and does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use and enjoy their mathematical knowledge in challenging and relevant problem-solving activities and this is an area recognised by the school for development.
58. The enthusiastic subject leader provides good leadership and management and leads by example. There is good involvement in regular monitoring of teaching, learning and standards to identify strengths and weaknesses across the school. The subject leader has worked effectively with consultants to develop guidance for teachers on calculation so that there is a whole-school approach. A good range of termly and annual assessments are undertaken and are carefully evaluated. This work provides a range of information to monitor and track pupils' progress, group pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 by their attainment level, and provide group targets. However, it is not always used with sufficient precision to provide individual targets to further raise standards although plans are in place to develop this. The subject leader is developing year group folders of assessed and moderated work to aid teachers with assessment. Useful booklets for parents have been produced outlining key number skills so that they can give support at home. Resources are of good quality and quantity and have significantly improved since the last inspection despite some losses during the fire. The subject leader produces a clear action plan after consultation with staff that provides an effective tool for future developments. This work includes a maths week planned for later this term. The school has identified mathematics as a key area for development in the school development plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in science, develop timelines in history and measure materials in design and technology. However, opportunities tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of the systematic planning and development of mathematics skills. This part of the work across the curriculum has been identified as an area for development in the action plan.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the subject is good and the management of strategies for improvement is very good and these factors contribute effectively to high levels of achievement.
- Pupils in Year 6 are well placed to achieve standards that are above the national average by the end of the year.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and consequently pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have good opportunities in most classes for planning investigations.
- Science makes a very positive contribution to pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle and their personal and social education.

Commentary

60. Standards overall in Year 6 are above national expectations and at this early stage in the term a high percentage of pupils are well placed to exceed national expectations by the end of Year 6. This reflects the standards achieved in the last academic year and in some previous years although standards were not as high in 2003. Pupils achieve well in most classes, especially where there is a strong influence on investigation and challenge for pupils of all attainment levels, especially for the higher-attaining pupils. In all classes pupils use accurate scientific terminology and understand that scientific investigations are written in different formats from other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils across the school including those with identified special educational needs and the few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well.
61. In Year 6, pupils have progressed to understanding the location and purposes of the major organs of the body. They understand the purposes of the skeleton and muscles and know how the many organs of the body work. Pupils understand the differences between solids, liquids and gases and apply their knowledge to practical applications. They understand how animals adapt to different environments and can explain how forces such as magnetism, gravity and air resistance impact on movement. Pupils were involved in very challenging investigations when they predicted, tested and recorded their observations.
62. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the lessons observed they varied from excellent to good. The analysis of work shows a wider variation in achievements between different year groups. Overall, pupils in Year 4 have not achieved as well as those in other year groups. The highest quality of work was found in Year 6. In Year 4 there was insufficient difference between the work planned for higher-attaining and lower-attaining pupils. During the inspection all lessons observed in this subject were well-planned and allowed opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to make good progress. Resources and pupils were managed well and

with apparent ease as a result of impeccable planning. In most lessons the different approaches used made the speed of learning brisk and pupils were very well motivated. Teachers questioned pupils very skilfully and encouraged them to solve problems and demonstrate their understanding of scientific concepts.

63. A wide range of opportunities for investigation enriches the broad and balanced curriculum. Whenever possible visits are arranged to facilitate first-hand experiences. The topics on food, health and the environment aid pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the need to care for the planet.
64. The subject leader provides good leadership and manages the subject very well. She has been extremely successful in developing the investigative elements of science. She has a very good awareness of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. The assessment, monitoring and tracking of the subject are very highly developed and consequently she has a good understanding of the many strengths and also the areas for development and what is to be done to improve them. There is a key science teacher in each year group and, as a team, they ensure that the curriculum is well covered.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The knowledge and understanding of the teachers, supported by classroom assistants, is good.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good so that pupils' interest, confidence and skills are also very good.
- The quality and range of the hardware and software are good.
- The use of ICT by teachers and pupils to support other subjects is developing well.

Commentary

65. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by the end of Year 6 are already at least in line with national expectations. The attainment of many pupils already exceeds national expectations with more than half of the pupils already working within Level 5, a level above that expected nationally. The skills of this group of pupils help some lessons to move at a fast pace when they readily help their friends. The well-equipped computer suite that enabled staff to extend the range and scope of their work into more advanced areas was totally destroyed in July. The newly established computer suite was established just two days prior to the inspection and is still lacking some facilities that had been taken for granted in the recent past. Although the new computers are networked there is as yet no Internet link and many stored resources have been lost. The staff share a high commitment to moving on and have a clear view about how to build on what they now have and return to their former extensive provision as quickly as possible.

66. All staff members have undertaken recent training and they are ready to share their individual expertise with colleagues to good effect. Recently the subject leader was seconded to the local authority to help schools with less expertise and she provides very good support to colleagues. The well-structured scheme of work is interesting and comprehensive and enables all of the aspects of the curriculum to be taught.
67. Pupils joining the school in Year 3 understand the various forms of communication such as tape recorders, text and photographs. They readily use computers for word processing, using the mouse confidently, and find their way around the keyboard and use the familiar icons without difficulty. They readily demonstrate how to log on, edit text, save their work and log off. This confidence provides a good springboard for the school to extend learning in other subjects using ICT.
68. By Year 6 most of the pupils are confident and competent users of computers. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. Pupils readily collect information and present it on spreadsheets, bar charts and pie charts. They enter the results of investigations into their personal files and then select from a range of options the display that best suits their purpose. Their printed work available in a comprehensive file of moderated and annotated work shows how they have made good use of a secure search engine to access websites on the Internet. Their skills in control technology are already well established although the range of this work is suffering at this early stage in the redevelopment process. The school has retained access to a good range of relevant software. A growing skill for pupils in Year 6 is the development of programs about their work in history using a multi-media program introducing sound and text to explain and share the work that they are enjoying.
69. Teaching is very good overall. The use of skills learned in ICT lessons is having a positive effect on raising the standards in other subjects for pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs learn well often supported by their friends as well as by the teaching staff. Teachers have good subject knowledge and present their requirements to pupils with confidence. Lessons are very well planned and all learning objectives are made clear. This results in good learning and a positive atmosphere where pupils achieve well. Pertinent questioning extends pupils' learning. Extra help is provided for any who find tasks difficult. Pupils' very good attitudes to one another and work as well as their exemplary behaviour are fundamental to the fast pace of work in lessons that result in achievement and attainment being at levels that enable many pupils to exceed national expectations.
70. The subject leader is skilled and very knowledgeable and supports her colleagues very well. She has a clear overview of provision and standards across the school. Practical assessment systems are used well to monitor the skills acquired, chart progress and to enable teachers to provide relevant follow up work. Individual targets have been established and pupils now share in evaluating their personal progress and establishing what they need to do next to extend their expertise.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The use of ICT across the curriculum is being used to increasingly good effect in many subjects. It has been developed purposefully systematically and successfully and teachers expect to be able to follow the usual pattern in the very near future. Teachers' work for other subjects frequently identifies opportunities for its use. Pupils use computers as much as possible to enhance the presentation and interpretation of their work. In ICT lessons teachers and pupils support work in other subjects using their computer skills. Literacy skills are

enhanced through the pupils' proficiency and confidence in word processing and by the use of the available software programs to improve their skills in reading and spelling. Older pupils are confident when using the Internet for personal research in other subjects such as history, geography and science. The Internet link will soon be re-established so that this work can continue. Data handling in science, using computer skills, is seen in books and this enhances the presentation of work. This strand of work has been interrupted but the determination and ingenuity of the staff and pupils indicates that it will not be long before established skills are being used again to good effect.

HUMANITIES

Geography

72. Only two lessons were observed in geography, both in Year 5. It is therefore not possible at this early stage in the term to make a definitive judgement about provision, leadership or management. However, an analysis of pupils' past and present work and discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils, especially in Year 6, indicates that attainment is at least in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. An analysis of the pupils' past work confirms that all the topics outlined in the scheme of work have been covered. In the lessons observed, which involved the study of river features, teaching was satisfactory overall with some good elements. The pupils were attentive, well-behaved and all of them, including those with special educational needs, made sound progress and achieved satisfactorily.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high.
- Teaching is good.
- Good use is made of primary and secondary source materials.
- Information and communication technology skills are used well for research.
- The subject makes a good contribution to social, moral and cultural development.

Commentary

73. Lesson observations and an analysis of the pupils' current and past work indicate that by the end of Year 6 attainment is above national expectations. This is similar to the last inspection. The pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs, is good. They also achieve well due to good overall teaching and effective use of primary and secondary source materials, which stimulates interest. A prime example was observed in a Year 6 lesson on researching evacuation during World War Two, using authentic photographs and copies of Civil Defence bulletins. The subject, which is taught in blocks alongside work in geography, is led and managed well. In the best lessons teachers use the targets set in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs but in other cases, although work is well supported, modified intentions are not made totally clear at the planning stage.
74. Pupils build their sense of chronology from an early age. Starting in Year 3 by studying the Ancient Greeks, they begin to realise how different types of democracy evolved and how the original Olympic Games influence the current organisation. Pupils in Year 4 during their study

of Ancient Egypt learn about the importance of burial customs, the function of gods and use of pyramids. Previous work by Year 5 pupils, now in Year 6, indicates good development of research and interpretation skills while studying the Tudors. During the inspection classes in this same year group participated in high level discussions concerning the social and moral issues of World War Two. Their study of history is enriched by frequent educational visits, for example to local churches, the Black Country Museum, Mary Arden's House and the Land Rover factory. History is enlivened further by visitors to the school such as Professor McGinty to dramatise scenes from the Elizabethan and Victorian way of life. As a result of these experiences, history comes alive and the events of the past are more meaningful. This was exemplified well in a Year 6 class where pupils were dramatising aspects of the evacuation during World War Two.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and promote a strong interest in the faiths and traditions of others.
- The school is alert to the opportunities to learn from experts in their own faith and to use the skills available to increase the pupils' knowledge.
- The values of the school are an important part of the planning for all lessons.

Commentary

75. Attainment levels in this subject exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Across the school religious education is taught in accordance with a scheme of work developed from the locally agreed syllabus by the subject leader and the local adviser. It is imaginative and practical and pupils achieve well. The provision is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils learn about the Christian, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, and Sikh faiths and make visits to different places of worship locally. Much of the work is based on experiences and discussion. The work in pupils' exercise books and in carefully moderated portfolios of completed work shows that they are developing an understanding of the traditions, customs and dress of different cultures and faiths. In the past two years pupils have compared the similarities and differences between the major world faiths. Teachers draw out the similarities between Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism carefully with regard to the sacred texts, rules for living, customs and prophets of each tradition. From time to time teachers incorporate the skills of experts and professionals from a number of faiths and traditions to extend the range and scope of the work for pupils to very good effect.
76. In the few lessons seen the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers use work in the subject very sensitively to contribute to pupils' personal as well as academic development. Pupils know many stories from the Old and New Testaments and from the sacred books of traditions other than the Christian faith. The Jewish and Christian rules as shown in the ten commandments were linked very successfully with the school's values that include of honesty, co-operation, trust and responsibility that are part of all planned work and that are featured in murals in the entrance hall and along the long corridor.
77. Teachers' files show that lessons are carefully planned. The subject leader is on leave during this term and her work is being covered by the deputy headteacher during her absence. There is

good evidence to show that as well as developing a more stimulating approach to the subject she has managed the subject very well and the resources available are plentiful and of good quality. All of the teachers are supported well and have been very well informed about the content and purpose of the planned work. Steps have been taken to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the scheme of work. As much of the work is oral the pupils' work relies less on targets in their individual education plans than in some other subjects. Assessment opportunities are simple, effective and practical. Religious education is strongly linked to work in pupils' personal and social development and together these subjects make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a wide and enriching curriculum.
- Teaching, learning and achievement throughout the school are good.
- Pupils' work is highly valued and is well displayed.

Commentary

78. By the end of Year 6 pupils attainment is above the expected level. From the lessons observed, the wide range of pupils' work displayed and discussions with pupils, achievement throughout the school is above the expected level. Pupils in Year 6 are well placed to exceed the standards expected in this subject by the end of the academic year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop all aspects of their artistic skills well. During the inspection pupils in Year 4 created landscapes and compositions in the styles of Paul Klee and August Macke. Their high quality of painting shows good observational skills, awareness of tone, shape and perspective and good evaluative skills. Pupils in Year 5 produced tones of colours based on aboriginal art and showed good understanding of key elements of this culture.
79. Pupils are surrounded by many examples of high quality art from many styles and cultures. They benefit from close links with a local art gallery. The richness of cross-curricular planning is reflected in superb work in art and design associated with their studies of ancient Egypt. Last year pupils designed and made masks to reflect emotions and feeling to support their work in extending their personal, social and emotional development.
80. Despite the loss of the special studio for art and design, pupils in all classes were able to work in their classrooms with newly provided equipment. The order of planned work had been modified in some cases as a result of the loss of the computer suite. This loss had inhibited some intended work by preventing the use of resources provided by the Internet.
81. The good leadership and management by the subject leader contribute well to the good progression of skills and effective use of resources. Although this inspection took place early in the school year, displays from the previous year reflect the use of a wide range of materials and styles and the influence of art and design on other areas of the curriculum. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their awareness of multicultural issues.

Design and technology

82. It was possible to observe very few lessons in this subject and therefore no firm judgement has been made about provision overall or the quality of teaching. The design studio and most resources have been destroyed and the school has replaced only enough for the immediate needs of staff and pupils. All of these are however new and of very good quality.
83. In the few lessons observed the quality of teaching was good and pupils' achievement and attainment was at least in line with national expectations at this early stage in the year. The few remaining examples of completed work from previous terms were finished to a high standard. Files showing photographic evidence of earlier work showed that there was good coverage of the subject. Pupils' design books showed good evidence that the planning stage of all projects was well-organised and showed how work had been planned thoroughly and evaluated and modified sensibly during the making process. In food technology, pupils researched the content, appearance and presentation of prepared sandwiches in a project linked to their work in science. Pupils devised imaginative and attractive ways of recording their ideas and findings and, although the teacher offered advice and suggestions, it was pupils' own research and ideas that led the work to a successful conclusion. Pupils are eager to share their work with others and are keen to explain how they had developed their earliest ideas through to completion.
84. The monitoring of planning, teaching and completed work is good. The subject leader is knowledgeable about the range and scope of the scheme of work and offers good practical support for colleagues. The system for assessment is straightforward and manageable and indicates where pupils' skills are very secure and where further work is required.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve high standards in all aspects of the subject.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership and management.
- Music makes a very good contribution to all aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils benefit from the support given by visiting specialist teachers.

Commentary

85. Pupils' attainment in music exceeds national expectations by the end of Year 6. Provision for the subject has greatly improved since the previous inspection. From the lessons and the musical activities observed, pupils' achieve high standards in singing and have a good knowledge and understanding of music from a wide range of styles and cultures. They have many opportunities to play a wide range of instruments and compose. Pupils have many opportunities for performing during collective worship and in concerts both in the school and the community. The most recent production was a very high quality performance of "The Wizard of Oz". During their studies of African music they produced and sold copies of a compact disc entitled "Music for Malawi" and the proceeds were used for a charity in that country.

86. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 sang in parts with a very good feel for the style of the music and an exceedingly wide range of dynamics. They responded very well to the conductor and showed very positive attitudes throughout the lesson.
87. Teaching and learning are very good overall; teachers have very good subject knowledge and manage pupils' behaviour and learning very effectively. Pupils' achievements are valued and there is a good balance between praise and demonstrating areas for improvement. The leadership and management of the subject are very good; planning is monitored and pupils benefit from a structured and enriching curriculum, which contributes to very high levels of achievement. Assessment and monitoring are securely built into all lessons and are very well-developed and specific to each aspect of the subject.
88. Pupils benefit from specialist instrumental tuition and class teaching. This further enriches their curriculum and is a very effective method for professional development of class teachers.

Physical education

89. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or teaching and learning as not enough lessons were observed. In the four gymnastics lessons seen, teaching was very good in one, good in two and satisfactory in the other. In most lessons, pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, achieved well. Teachers displayed good subject knowledge and were well prepared. Lessons were well planned and proceeded at a brisk pace so that pupils were kept fully involved. All pupils were suitably dressed and clearly enjoyed the lesson, trying hard and displaying good attitudes and behaviour. Relationships were good because activities and pupils were well managed by the teachers, who gave appropriate praise. However, in all but one lesson too few opportunities were provided for pupils to discuss and review their performance and that of others.
90. The school has adopted a commercial scheme for planning physical education lessons which provides good coverage of curriculum requirements. Teachers use this guidance effectively to plan lessons in year groups so that all pupils receive similar experiences. Leadership and management of the subject are good overall. The experienced subject leader provides good support for colleagues, has undertaken some informal monitoring of teaching, and produces an annual action plan. Extra teaching support is provided from various coaches through organisations such as football in the community, who provide specific sports expertise. Resources for the subject are of good quality and range, well organised and readily accessible. Facilities for physical education are good, with a spacious hall, which is well equipped for gymnastics and dance, and extensive hard play and grassed areas for outdoor activities. There is a good range of sports clubs and activities to support the subject and regular competitions and links with other primary schools in the area. These opportunities successfully promote pupils' personal and social development. Swimming lessons are provided for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and most of the pupils swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with improved curriculum planning, resources and links with other schools. The school has identified the need to develop whole school assessment procedures and this is a feature of the current action plan.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for work supporting pupils' personal and social development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Commitment to supporting the agreed aims and values of the school.
- The work and positive effect on pupils' self-esteem of the school council.
- The promotion of healthy eating as part of the healthy schools campaign.
- Sensitive handling of drugs awareness and sex education issues.

Commentary

91. This aspect of the work of the school has been an important strand in extending pupils understanding of issues related to their personal development. It is covered in specially designated lessons as well as through a cross-curricular approach. In subjects such as science, religious education, health education and specific lessons for the subject known as circle time, this aspect of the pupils' life underpins much of every lesson in a supportive way. In the analysis of work and in some lessons, pupils' understanding in this area is very well developed. The school considers that pupils' personal development is at the heart of all of its work. Within the science curriculum there is good provision for health education, including teaching about sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. Many moral and social issues are explored in religious education and in discussions in English, history and geography. In this work pupils' spiritual development is a central part of their progress through the school. Pupils' understanding of working together in a safe environment is being fostered through the ongoing work of the school council and through class discussions. Conversations with pupils demonstrated how well they consider themselves to be involved and included in the decision-making process of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

