

INSPECTION REPORT

DORRIDGE NURSERY AND INFANT SCHOOL

Dorridge, Solihull

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104045

Headteacher: Mrs. C. Llewellyn

Lead inspector: Mrs. J. Ikin

Dates of inspection: 20 - 22 June 2005

Inspection number: 266743

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	321
School address:	Station Road Dorridge Solihull West Midlands
Postcode:	B93 8EU
Telephone number:	01564 774873
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R.P. Hughes
Date of previous inspection:	20.5.1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Dorridge Infant and Nursery School is bigger than other primary schools. There are 321 pupils on roll, which includes 65 pupils in the nursery who attend on a part time basis. The pupils who attend the school come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The majority are from White United Kingdom backgrounds. Other White backgrounds, Black Caribbean and Asian, Indian, Pakistani and Chinese heritages are also represented. There are six pupils for whom English is an additional language; all are fluent English speakers. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school but overall it is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well below average, but the number with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average. These needs include social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. There is very little mobility amongst pupils. Nearly all join the school in the nursery and stay there until they transfer to their junior education at the end of Year 2. The school has an Arts Mark (2003), Healthy School Award (2000), Investors in People Award (2004), and Schools Achievement Award (2004). It is involved in the National Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools and a local authority creativity project and sport partnership programme. The school had Beacon School status from 2000 to 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3349	Mrs. J. Ikin	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Music English as an additional language
19446	Mrs. S. Wood	Lay inspector	
30439	Mr. M. Heyes	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical Education Special educational needs
24027	Mrs. B. Kutty	Team inspector	Science Religious education Design and technology The foundation stage Personal, social, health education and citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school with some outstanding features. It is very inclusive and has a very strong work ethos which is highly effective in developing pupils' confidence, self-esteem and attitudes to learning. Pupils achieve very well and standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. Leadership and management are very good overall and the leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher is dedicated to achieving the highest possible personal, social and academic standards for the pupils. The assistant headteachers, the very strong staff team and the governing body give very good support in this.
- The standards that the school achieves in national tests are consistently very high in English, mathematics and science as a result of very good planning and assessment systems and very good teaching throughout the school.
- The children in the nursery and reception classes achieve very well in all the areas of learning as a result of a very effective curriculum, which meets their needs and interests.
- Behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils develop very good social skills and thrive as a result of the excellent relationships that they have with all the adults who work in the school and the very high standards of care that they receive.
- There are very good links with parents, who support the school and their children's learning very well.
- The school has begun to promote pupils' independence and thinking skills, and their greater involvement in its work, but these developments are not yet fully embedded.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is very good. It has worked determinedly to sustain its high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science and has successfully increased the numbers achieving at the higher levels. It has set itself challenging goals for further improvement and is on course to meet them. The school has built upon the strengths identified in the last inspection and fully addressed all the recommendations made.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The results of the 2004 national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 were in the top five per cent nationally for reading, writing, mathematics and science. The findings of the inspection are that **achievement is very good** overall in relation to pupils' above average starting points on entry to the school. In the current Year 2, standards are very high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and music they are above average and achievement is good. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, higher attainers and those who are talented and gifted achieve very well. Children's achievement in the nursery and reception

classes is very good, standards are well above average overall and children are very well prepared for their work in Year 1.

Pupils' **personal qualities**, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are **very good**. Their attitudes to their work and their behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

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

Teaching and learning are **very good** overall. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. Very good planning, closely linked to precise assessment, ensures that lessons are very well structured and that learning is targeted at higher levels than those typically seen in infant schools. There are very good arrangements for ensuring that pupils who struggle are given the help that they need to succeed. There are equally good arrangements to ensure that higher attaining and gifted pupils are challenged. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils who have special educational needs and this ensures that they are fully involved in the learning process. The curriculum is good overall and it is enriched very well through additional activities which include modern foreign languages. The school's creativity research project is beginning to have a positive effect on developing pupils' independence and thinking skills but is not yet embedded across the curriculum. The care and welfare that pupils receive are excellent. Pupils are consulted on some issues but procedures to involve them in decision making are informal rather than formal. The accommodation is kept in immaculate condition and the attractive grounds support learning very well. Resources are very good and very well cared for. The school's partnership with parents is very good; there are very good links with the junior school and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management and governance of the school are **very good**.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She sets very high standards in all aspects of school life, leads by example and is highly influential both within and beyond the school community. She is given very good support by the assistant headteachers, who lead their areas of the school very well indeed. There is a very effective, hard working and committed staff team who share the headteacher's high aspirations. Very good self-evaluation procedures, strategic planning and professional development opportunities make a very good contribution to the school's overall effectiveness and ongoing improvement. Governors give very strong support to the school and ensure that it fully complies with the statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school's work and hold it in very high regard. They are generally highly appreciative of the very good start that it gives their children. Pupils are extremely proud of their school, care about it and thoroughly enjoy being there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no major weaknesses. However, to build on its work and improve standards even further it should:

- continue its work in developing pupils' independence and thinking skills, and formalise procedures to involve them in making decisions about the school's work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve very well overall. In Years 1 and 2 standards are very high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The achievement of children in the nursery and reception class is very good and standards are well above average overall. Throughout the school all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those who are higher attaining, achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and reception class are very well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- The school has consistently sustained results that are in the top five per cent nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and science over the last four years.
- Pupils achieve well in art, ICT and music and standards are above average in these subjects.
- There are very good arrangements to ensure those pupils with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining achieve very well.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	20.1 (19.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	19.4 (18.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	20.2 (19.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 88 pupils in the year group, 45 boys and 43 girls. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Achievement in the nursery and reception year is very good because teachers and the teaching assistants have high expectations of the children, know them very well and plan interesting, enjoyable activities that get the best out of them in all the areas of learning.
2. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is very good. The results of the 2004 Year 2 National Curriculum tests were in the top five per cent in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to schools nationally and to schools with similar numbers of free school meals. The results of teacher assessments for science were also in the top five per cent. The school has sustained these very high standards since the last inspection and there are early indications that it is set to achieve similarly very high results in the 2005. The challenging targets that the school sets itself each year, together with a very well planned curriculum, closely linked to very good assessment that ensures that pupils work above the levels expected for their age, are significant factors in the school's success. The inspection findings reflect the test results. All pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve very well in reading, writing, mathematics and science and standards are very high in these subjects.
3. Pupils demonstrate competence in using a broad range of ICT processes including word processing, data handling and the Internet. There is also good use of ICT to support pupils' acquisition of skills in English and mathematics. Pupils' good achievement in art is a result of

Careful planning and good teacher knowledge which ensures that the skills of using different media are accurately acquired. The school's involvement in the local authority's creativity project is successfully helping pupils to develop their own creative ideas and thinking skills, however these are not yet fully embedded into the curriculum and this is the reason why achievement is good or satisfactory, rather than very good, in some subjects. Pupils benefit from the expertise of a music specialist who teaches music throughout the school. The good opportunities that pupils in Year 2 have to learn the ocarina and the violin also contribute to the standards that pupils achieve. They acquire a good knowledge and understanding of the technical elements of music but there is less emphasis on pupils exploring their own musical ideas.

4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. All achieve the standards expected by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is as a result of the individual support that they are able to receive, very good planning for their needs and the small size of the 'nurture' group in Year 1. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well as a result of the very high expectations that their teachers have of them, the opportunity that they have to work as a group in Year 2 and the high level of challenge in the work set.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are very good, as is also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong work ethic throughout the school and pupils work very hard and take great pride in their achievements.
- The personal development of pupils is a very strong focus of the school.
- The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and procedures to prevent any form of bullying, racism and harassment are excellent.
- Pupils' moral development is excellent and they have very effective opportunities for spiritual, social and cultural development.

Commentary

5. The quality of pupils' personal development and their attitudes to learning has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They are interested in the tasks that are set, try hard and enjoy discovering new and interesting information. They listen closely to the teacher and their peers and are eager to answer questions, offer ideas and take part in discussions. They confidently share their views when working with others and talk with great pride to visitors about the work they have done. Good quality displays contribute to these positive attitudes because they celebrate the pupils' work and efforts and are treated with great care and respect by both adults and pupils. Regular 'celebration assemblies' are very effectively used to promote the high standards of academic and personal development expected by the school. When given the opportunity to think for themselves and for involvement in the school, pupils do this very well. However, these opportunities are not yet formally embedded into the school's procedures.
6. The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour and these are consistently promoted throughout the school. The one exclusion that has taken place over the last year was very sensitively dealt with and was effective. Moral development is very good and permeates the whole of school life and the school's dealings with all forms of bullying, racism and any form of harassment are excellent and highly effective. The excellent relationship that pupils have with all the staff that work with them mean that they are confident to report any incidents and know

that they will be fully backed up by all adults. Very good relationships based on mutual respect and thoughtfulness to others are increasingly evident amongst pupils as they get older and Year 2 pupils act as very good role models for the younger children. Assemblies are a calm and very well-structured time to share and think of others. For example, during the inspection the theme was ‘trust and kindness’, which focused on raising the issues of friendship and bullying. Parents state that often assemblies follow isolated incidents to reinforce the school’s very high expectations of behaviour to the pupils, and there was a very good example of this seen during the inspection. The personal, social, health and citizenship education taught in the school, along with circle times, ensures sensitive issues are raised and considered with the pupils and helps to reinforce their social and moral knowledge.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White-British	301	1	0
Other White backgrounds	2	0	0
Mixed White Asian	7	0	0
Indian	1	0	0
Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian	1	0	0
Black British Caribbean	2	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0

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

7. Pupils’ social development is very good and fostered very well through the school’s inclusive values. The personal and social development of children in the nursery and reception classes is very effective and standards are above the levels expected. Pupils are given responsibilities as monitors and helpers in Years 1 and 2, and are able to use their initiative in raising money and caring for others. Staff set excellent role models by the way in which they work with each other and treat the pupils, and relationships amongst pupils are very good as a result of this. Pupils are encouraged to help each other and to work co-operatively during playtimes and end-of-term productions as well as in lessons. A very good example of this is the way that pupils use sign language to communicate with a disabled classmate and the way in which they fully involved her in activities such as a Christmas production when they helped her onto the stage at the appropriate time and accompanied her in a dance. They also took great pride in holding up the parachute in the playground for her while she whizzed underneath it in her new electric wheelchair.
8. Pupils’ cultural development is very good and has improved since the last inspection. Themed days and opportunities to hear and speak different modern foreign languages and visits to art galleries contribute to this. There is also a good range of opportunities to learn about the art and culture of different ethnic groups such as Aborigine and Kenyan. The school encourages parents from ethnic minority groups to share their language, culture and traditions with the pupils and this also makes a very good contribution to pupils’ understanding.
9. Provision for pupils’ spiritual development is very good. The school has successfully developed a climate in which all pupils grow and flourish, respect each other and develop a growing awareness of their own talents and strengths. Teachers encourage pupils to develop feelings of self-worth and to consider and understand the feelings of others. Throughout the school day there are occasions when pupils’ eyes open wide with amazement because they have learned

something new, have accomplished something that they are pleased with or are excited by what they observe.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

10. Attendance rates are well above the national average and routines for monitoring attendance are extremely rigorous. Pupils love to come to school and arrive in good time so the school day starts promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall. The curriculum is good and the school provides an excellent standard of care for its pupils. There are very good links with parents and other schools, and good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils.
- Very good planning and assessment in English, mathematics and science are significant factors in the very high standards that the school achieves.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good overall.
- Subject specific skills and knowledge are very well taught, particularly in English, mathematics and science, but the teaching of the skills of independent learning, including critical and creative thinking, is less systematic.
- Inclusion is very good and all pupils, whatever their needs, are given the opportunity to learn and make progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	27 (54%)	13 (26%)	9 (18%)	0	0	0

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

11. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is consistently very good and occasionally excellent. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. There is very good joint planning and teamwork. Teachers have a very good understanding of the curriculum and of how young children learn best and, as a result, children get a very good start to their schooling. Teachers have very high expectations of the children and plan very effective teacher-directed opportunities for the development of children's basic skills of literacy and numeracy. When appropriate, learning objectives are taken from the curriculum for Year 1 and 2 pupils. Teachers also plan a range of practical and enjoyable play

experiences, which increase children's knowledge of the world about them and promote their personal and social, physical and creative skills. All teachers and teaching assistants interact very well with the children, participating in play and promoting learning. This was an extremely strong feature of the one excellent lesson seen. The well-trained teaching assistants give invaluable support to the children who need it, including those with special educational needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and to make very good progress. Provision for outdoor play has improved since the last inspection and the outdoor areas make an important contribution to children's learning. Assessment is very good and used very well to plan for the differing needs of the children.

12. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are very good overall, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are very good in English, mathematics and science, and good in art and design and music.
13. The very good management of the curriculum ensures that planning is very good and closely focussed on the achievement of standards that are above those expected for pupils of a similar age. It is very closely linked to assessment in English, mathematics and science and these are significant factors in pupils' very good achievement and the very high standards achieved in these subjects. Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, expect them to work hard and have developed a classroom atmosphere which is conducive to work. Marking is very thorough and gives pupils a clear understanding of what they have to do to improve their work. Time at the start of lessons is very well used to put right misconceptions and help pupils learn from their mistakes.
14. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good overall and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of their lesson planning and their interaction with pupils. Teachers in each year group share their skills and expertise to plan well-structured lessons which move learning on. They ask challenging questions which require pupils to recall previous learning and explain their ideas. Pupils respond very well to this and make very good progress as a result. Teachers' subject knowledge in religious education has improved since the last inspection as a result of the school's involvement in the development of the locally agreed syllabus. However, more needs to be done to help pupils develop their understanding of the differences between different faith traditions if above average standards are to be achieved. The school has also worked effectively to improve teachers' subject knowledge in physical education and good links with the local 'sports development' programme are contributing to this. Teachers' subject knowledge in ICT is good and this helps them to give confident and clear explanations of ICT skills and to make use of interactive whiteboards and computers to support learning in other subjects. There is very good use of a specialist music teacher, who works throughout the school.
15. The school's involvement in the local authority's creativity research project is making a good contribution to the arts curriculum and to the development of pupils' thinking skills. During the course of their work pupils are required to draw on all that they know to analyse and evaluate situations, to solve moral dilemmas and to apply their skills creatively across the curriculum. However, these skills are not yet embedded into the school's practice and in some lessons, particularly those which are satisfactory rather than good, pupils require further opportunities to think for themselves.
16. The school's organisational arrangements ensure that the needs of all pupils are very well met and that all are given the opportunities they need to succeed. The Year 1 nurture groups for English and mathematics are very good examples of this. The small size of the group means that those pupils who need help are given the individual support that they need to make progress. They very quickly succeed in catching up with their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well and all achieve standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of Year 2 as a result of the very good teaching that they receive, and some pupils exceed them.

17. The individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs are meticulously kept up to date. The co-ordinator liaises very well with all members of staff who have been designated to support these pupils, and ensures that they are well briefed on current developments and are well trained and supported. The enrichment group in Year 2 ensures that higher attainers receive the levels of challenging work that they need. Throughout the school very good assessment arrangements ensure that all pupils' individual needs are identified at an early stage and close links with planning ensure that these needs are met in lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is good and is broad and balanced. Pupils benefit from a very good range of enrichment activities to support learning. The accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the foundation stage promotes learning very well because it is so well matched to children's developing needs and interests.
- In Years 1 and 2 very good curriculum guidance ensures year-on-year progression in subject specific skills and the achievement of very high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- There is a very good programme for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education and it enhanced by the daily involvement of teachers in playtime games and activities.
- The school is very inclusive and there is very good provision for special educational needs.
- The creativity project is making a good contribution to the development of pupils' thinking skills but these skills are not yet embedded across the curriculum.
- The accommodation and resources have been developed very well to support the curriculum and learning.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced and very well planned, as it was at the time of the last inspection. A very rich learning environment has been established both indoors and out in the nursery and reception classes. Creative timetabling ensures a very good balance between all the areas of learning and a weekly 'creative day' provides very good opportunities for reception and nursery staff to work together and combine their expertise.
19. In English, mathematics and science there is very clear guidance to support teachers in targeting work at suitably high levels in Years 1 and 2. This ensures that pupils' subject knowledge and skills progress systematically year-on-year and is a significant factor in the very high standards that the school achieves. Clear curriculum guidance also supports the systematic development of skills and knowledge in other subjects. This guidance is supported by very well targeted training to ensure that it is delivered in practice, the current focus being physical education. Planning throughout the curriculum is regularly monitored by key staff to ensure its effectiveness and the school is constantly seeking ways to improve its practice. A good example of this is the school's involvement with the innovative creativity project. This is having an impact on the imaginative links being made between subject areas and the development of pupils' higher order thinking and learning skills, but these are not yet systematically embedded into the curriculum as a whole, to support even higher achievement, particularly in the creative and physical subjects. This is the main reason for the curriculum being judged as good rather than very good in Years 1 and 2.

20. The school's extremely caring ethos strongly promotes personal, social and health education. In taught sessions known as 'circle time', on themes such as 'bullying', 'friendship' and 'moving on', pupils discuss what is right and wrong and learn about fairness and rules, as well as the importance of positive relationships, related to their own experiences. Teachers and teaching assistants reinforce messages about sharing and working together every playtime, when they participate in games and activities alongside the pupils. The school has achieved the 'Healthy Schools Award'. Healthy eating and the importance of keeping well and fit are addressed in science and physical education lessons. These messages are also reinforced well by the provision of fruit at playtime and very healthy and well-prepared school lunches.
21. All pupils are valued and supported both academically and personally within a secure and extremely caring school environment, which is a significant factor in its inclusive nature. A very good range of organisational and planning arrangements are adapted to suit the needs of pupils and help them to achieve the challenging educational goals that are set for them. For example, Year 1 pupils benefit from small group work, which is adapted to meet their specific needs when they have difficulties in English and mathematics. There are similar arrangements for ensuring that higher attaining pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable in Year 2. The provision for special educational needs is very good. It is very carefully planned to meet pupils' needs in lessons or targeted withdrawal groups. The specialist needs of a disabled pupil are supported very well indeed. The school has organised a signing club as extra-curricular activities' to enable other pupils to communicate with her. Signing is also incorporated into whole-school activities such as assemblies, to ensure that she can fully participate.
22. The range of enrichment activities offered to all pupils is very good. French, German and Spanish have been introduced into the curriculum and they are enriching pupils' understanding of how different peoples of the world communicate as well as helping the children themselves to speak and understand words and phrases in a different language. The school is applying for an international award for its work in this field. Extra curricular activities include football, French club, say it in sign club, library club, tag rugby and multi-sport. These clubs are popular and well attended by pupils. The very good range of educational visits enriches the curriculum. They form a clear part of curriculum planning and offer such varied experiences as visits to a synagogue and a Methodist church; a visit to Hams Hall Environment Centre, which is linked to work in science; and a residential visit to Dunfield House, which give pupils the opportunity of musical enrichment, when working with other schools. Visitors to the school also enhance the curriculum very well. They include the local vicar, a visiting poetry performance group, and a speaker who talks about Sikhism. Themed days such as 'Spanish Day' also enrich the curriculum.
23. The school has a very effective team of well-qualified teachers and teaching assistants whose collective skills and experience match the demands of the curriculum well. The accommodation and learning resources are immaculately looked after and support the delivery of the curriculum very well indeed. There are a number of steps in the building, but the school has found ways around these to ensure that the disabled pupil has full access to facilities.

Care, guidance and support

There are excellent procedures in place to ensure the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. The school provides pupils with very good support and guidance and takes satisfactory account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils are very well cared for and the quality of pupils' relationships with the adults who teach and care for them is excellent.
- Induction arrangements are excellent and pupils are given good support when needed.
- Pupils' views are gathered and acted upon to improve some aspects of the school's work but these procedures are informal rather than formal.

Commentary

24. Pupils and parents say this is an area of strength in the school and the inspection team agrees. High standards of care and welfare have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils feel very confident that they can approach any adults with concerns and worries due to the excellent nature of the trust between them. Pupils are listened to sensitively and problems are dealt with very quickly and effectively. There are excellent procedures in place for the health, safety and the welfare of all the children, which are supported by rigorous child protection procedures. This ensures an extremely caring and safe environment in which pupils can learn and develop into mature young people. Pupils are extremely well known to all staff and their personal circumstances are very well provided for. Those with special educational needs are regularly monitored and their individual needs met very well. The school has developed very good links with a range of external agencies to give the children and their families the support that they need. All of these factors contribute to pupils' well-being and this makes a significant contribution to the standards that they achieve.
25. There are excellent systems to ensure children's introduction to the nursery and their smooth transition between all year groups. Home visits and visits to the nursery by children and their parents ensure that the youngest children are sensitively introduced to nursery life. Nursery children join reception children for creative days to help prepare them for the change in classroom routines. They stay for lunch during the summer term, preparing them for the full school day. Likewise for reception to Year 1, pupils work alongside their older peers prior to the end of the summer term. Systems are in place and followed to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils from other schools mid term and they are partnered with a 'buddy' to help them settle to the new routines of their school. Very good links with the junior school ensure sensitive transition at the end of Year 2. Adults in school are sensitive to the individual needs of all its pupils and work hard to ensure that they are fully met.
26. Pupils receive very good guidance to support both their academic and personal development. Teachers know their children very well and support their learning through marking and commenting on work during the lessons, targets set in annual reports to parents and weekly recognition in the regular celebration assemblies. Marking celebrates pupils' achievements and includes very helpful comments to enable them to move on to their next stage of learning.
27. Questionnaires are given to pupils to enable the school to gather their views and act upon them where relevant. Also time is given in circle time to collect their views and opinions. For example, pupils were asked about their ideas for playground equipment and the designs for the markings on the playground surface, and their ideas were taken seriously and acted upon. However, procedures to ensure pupils' regular participation in decision making are not yet formalised.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents and other schools. It has good links with the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information that the school gives to parents is of a very good quality.
- Parents play an influential role in the work of the school and support their children's learning very well.
- The school is outward looking and some effective links have been developed with the community.
- The school has a very active partnership with the neighbouring junior school.

Commentary

28. The school has an open door policy and works hard to encourage parents to take part in its life. Regular newsletters, the parents' notice board, the school prospectus and other information inform parents about routines and events in school very effectively. Parents are given information on the curriculum being taught in each class alongside homework expectations. This enables parents to support children in their learning. Parents are regularly invited into school to see their children at work as well as their involvement in productions and assemblies, which are very popular and much appreciated. Parents receive informative annual written reports, which have been recently updated to make them even more informative and helpful. In addition to the three parent teacher consultations a year, parents are able to speak to staff any time to discuss any queries or concerns. A significant number of volunteers help in school regularly, hearing children read or helping with activities such as cooking and the preparation of resources. Their help and support is greatly appreciated by the school. Dorridge Nursery and Infant School Parents Group are a very hard working group who arrange a wide range of social and fundraising events for parents and the local community. They have recently held a fun day, fashion show, quiz night and a spring ball, all of which were a great success. From these considerable fundraising activities they have provided the school with outdoor equipment storage, the library furnishings, interactive whiteboards and the playground markings. Their dedication and continuing support are very much appreciated by the school.
29. The school has developed good links with the community and local churches. Walks around the village and visits to the church buildings help pupils develop an understanding of their own cultural heritage. Visitors talk to the children about life in the past and the school takes part in local events such as The Arden Music Festival.
30. There are very good links with the neighbouring junior school on site. This makes a significant contribution to the smooth transition that pupils make from one school to the next. There is a joint governing body and this further enhances the very good links between the two schools. The school takes part in inter-school sports activities and the productive links that it has with the local secondary school enrich the curriculum well, for example, through the provision of teacher expertise in modern foreign languages.
31. There are very good links with parents of children who have special educational needs. They are kept fully informed of their child's needs and progress. They are invited to reviews and meetings when their children's individual educational plans are being discussed. There are also very good relationships with external agencies such as the learning support service, educational welfare officer, and educational psychologists.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the assistant headteachers give very good support. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's outstanding leadership, along with the very strong support she receives from senior managers and the governing body and the staff team, is a significant aid to the school's efforts to sustain high standards and continue its improvement work.
- The school's systems for managing the curriculum and assessment are very secure and a key factor in the standards that the school achieves.
- There are very good links between performance management, the training that all the staff receive and the school's priorities for improvement.

- The budget is very well managed and there is very effective day-to-day administration.

Commentary

32. The headteacher is dedicated to achieving the highest possible personal, social and academic standards for pupils. Her extremely high aspirations for pupils are a driving force for the school's ongoing improvement and are a significant factor in the very high standards that the school consistently achieves. Academic achievement and pastoral care are given equally high status and, as a result, the children know that they are in school to work and they do so because they are very well supported, confident and happy. Her very strong presence in the school and her educational vision and values are evident in all her actions as she works with pupils, staff, parents and governors. She is held in extremely high regard by all members of the school community. Her influence spreads beyond the school to others in the area, where she contributes to school improvement issues as part of her role as a consultant headteacher.
33. The assistant headteachers are fully involved in all aspects of the leadership and management of the school. The management of the curriculum and assessment is very good and their work is integral to this. Curriculum planning is clearly focussed on the achievement of standards above those typically expected. Pupils' progress is very carefully monitored against the targets they are expected to reach and if they are falling behind, questions are asked and remedial action is taken. These continual fine adjustments to teaching and organisational arrangements, based on pupils' achievement, are important factors in the progress that pupils make and the standards that the school achieves. The assistant headteachers lead their respective teams very well, ensuring that they understand what is expected of them and giving support where it is needed. This makes a substantial contribution to the very good quality of teaching that is evident throughout the school.
34. There are very thorough induction procedures for new members of staff and newly qualified teachers and all staff are given very good encouragement in the development of their roles. Innovative practice is encouraged where it can be shown to be beneficial to pupils. The school's involvement in the local authority's creativity project is a good example of this.
35. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities very well and make a substantial contribution to the effectiveness of the school. They govern both the infant school and the neighbouring junior school and this arrangement benefits the curriculum links between the two schools and contributes very effectively to the continuity of pupils' education as they move from one school to the next. Committees and meetings are very well organised and attended and issues are very rigorously debated prior to decisions being made. Governors take an active and pragmatic part in school life. They ask probing questions and visit it regularly to observe its work, meet with subject leaders and keep up to date with all policies and procedures. As a result, they have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this knowledge makes a substantial contribution to the school's improvement efforts.
36. Inclusion is integral to the school's ethos and every pupil is given the chance to succeed. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Administrative tasks are carried out efficiently and funds targeted for special educational needs are spent appropriately.
37. There are very strong links between the school's systems for checking its work, performance management, planning for improvements and training. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and of the areas where it needs to improve. This is because there is a very well planned programme to enable senior staff and subject leaders to analyse teaching, learning and standards, and all are involved in thorough annual reviews of the school's work. The resulting priorities for improvement are written into a very clear development plan in a procedure which

ensures the involvement of all members of staff and the governors. These priorities currently include developing pupils' independence, thinking skills and greater involvement in its work. The performance management objectives of staff are all linked to these priorities together with the training and support that is needed.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	707 367
Total expenditure	667 481
Expenditure per pupil	2 232

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24 211
Balance carried forward to the next	64 097

38. The large carry over in the school budget includes capital funding reserved for the building project to improve library, entrance and office facilities, and this has now been spent.
39. The school's budget is very well managed over the long and short term and the principles of best value are applied very well so that the highest value is obtained for the lowest cost. Budgeting priorities are firmly based on the educational needs of pupil and are strategically planned for. The very good use that the school makes of all its allocated funds makes a very significant contribution to the curriculum, the learning environment and to the standards that the school achieves. The school not only manages its funds prudently, but it also looks after the equipment, books and the improvements in the accommodation that are purchased very well. They are kept in very good condition for a long time and the pupils get the very best use from them. The work of the parent teacher association makes a significant contribution to the school's funds. The day-to-day administration of the school is very good and this enables the school to run smoothly.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. The school has maintained the high quality provision reported in the last inspection with standards of attainment continuing to be well above the expectation of the early learning goals. The provision overall is very good.
41. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are very good. The high quality provision in foundation stage is a direct result of the very strong teamwork that exists between all staff. Together they provide a safe, secure and exciting learning environment where children are happy and settled. Children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. There are three reception classes taught in three learning zones most of the time, with a teacher in charge of each zone. Attainment on entry to nursery is generally a little above average. Children in both nursery and reception classes learn and achieve very well as a direct result of the high quality teaching that exists throughout the foundation stage which is never less than good, often very good and on one instance excellent. Very rich and relevant hands-on experiences are provided to make learning fun for young children. However, occasionally too much adult intervention restricts opportunities for children to find things out and think for themselves. Observation and assessment information are used well to plan for the next step in children's learning and this helps all children to make very good progress. There are excellent induction arrangements. Innovative methods such as the creative days, in the second half of the summer term, are helping both the nursery and reception children to form friendships and gain confidence. There are very good links with parents and other early years providers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The expectations set by staff are high and children receive very good care and support.
- Children are very well behaved and are very supportive of one another.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning in this area are very good, children achieve very well and standards are well above average by the time they leave the reception year. Expectations are high and children quickly learn to share and take turns. The very good organisation of resources and the well thought out activities, both indoor and outdoor, help children to be independent and take charge of their own learning. The nursery children are very confident to try out new things. In one of the sessions observed, one little boy plucked up the courage to get dressed in the space suit for the first time and the others supported him well as he explored the 'space centre' for the first time. The children's confidence is further extended in the reception classes, for example, where they are encouraged to look after and sensitively care for the needs of the nursery children when they join them for a 'creative day'.
43. Children in both nursery and reception classes are very well behaved as they move around within their areas and in and around the school. The excellent induction arrangements between home and school further enhance children's sense of security and confidence, together with the additional excellent arrangements to introduce children to the reception class.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good and standards are well above average.
- Children's reading skills are very well promoted.
- There are a range of interesting opportunities for children to develop their writing and handwriting skills.

Commentary

44. Most children enter nursery with skills that are slightly above those expected of their age in all aspects. The stimulating environment and the very good teaching enable all children to learn and achieve very well. Children in the nursery are beginning to talk confidently to adults and to their classmates. Adults extend their vocabulary by asking probing questions, such as when talking about their bubble prints or discussing how the caterpillar turned into a butterfly. Reception children show a greater awareness of the need to listen to each other's views as they engage in class discussions. Children in both the nursery and the reception classes develop a positive attitude to reading because adults set very good role models by demonstrating their own enthusiasm for stories and books. Early reading skills are systematically and regularly taught in ways which interest children in learning. The majority of children in the reception class can read simple text fluently and use their knowledge of letter sounds and picture clues well to make sense of the text. The well thought out role-play and writing areas enable children to develop a sense about writing for different purposes and promote the use of language for thinking well. The older children in the nursery use letters and words as they take details of people coming to the 'space centre', whereas children in reception classes use simple sentences to write what they have experienced or stories they have heard. They show a growing awareness of the use of full stops and capital letters. The higher attaining children are beginning to use describing words as they write about their favourite characters. Opportunities such as the 'book character day' and the 'write dance' project add excitement and enjoyment to learning to write. Opportunities to learn a few words and phrases in French, German and Spanish enrich pupils' communication, language and literacy skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative teaching catches children's interests and helps them to develop their early numeracy skills very well.
- Children are confident to explore numbers and patterns.

Commentary

45. Children achieve very well and standards are well above average. Teaching and learning are very good. In the nursery number rhymes, games and real life situations are used well to learn about numbers and number sequencing. This makes learning enjoyable for very young children. This is further extended in reception through well thought out practical activities where children are encouraged to apply their knowledge to solve simple problems such as sharing the socks

between the teddy and the monkey to learn about number bonds to 10 and 20. Adults in both nursery and reception classes use the outdoor area very well to develop and extend children's mathematical vocabulary and their awareness of direction, space and distance. These skills are also developed well by opportunities to play with small, programmable toys. Computer programs are used as part of every session to reinforce and apply what children have learned. Opportunities to play with sand and water support the development of children's early understanding of shape, measure and capacity.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The rich and stimulating curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all children.
- Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well.

Commentary

46. Children achieve very well and standards are well above average. A wide range of opportunities are given to enable children to explore the world around them. Teaching and learning are very good and the children are given a very wide range of opportunities to explore the world around them. All the adults who work with the children interact with them very well and this is very effective in engaging children's interest and encouraging them to talk about what they observe. Nursery children are excited to talk about the different animals they have observed, for example, and in the reception classes children were keen to talk about what happened to different objects when they dropped them in water, using language such as floating and sinking. Children in the reception classes are gaining a sound sense of the passing of time by sorting teddy bears according to whether they are old or new. Computers and programmable toys are used very well to learn about different aspects of the curriculum. Children in both the nursery and the reception classes are very confident in using them. Although there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities, there were occasions where too much adult direction denied children the opportunity to try things out for themselves. Events such as the Spanish day and celebration of festivals help children to gain a good understanding of the lives and cultures which are different from their own.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Both indoor and outdoor areas are used well to develop children's physical skills.
- The children develop their manipulative skills very well.
- There are very good opportunities for children to move, dance and use their imaginations in response to music and story.

Commentary

47. The wide range of activities coupled with the very good teaching ensure that children achieve very well in relation to their broadly average starting points on entry to the school and reach

standards that are well above average. Children in reception and nursery show very good control of small tools such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes and this supports their work in other areas of the curriculum very well. Children in both nursery and reception classes have daily, well planned opportunities to develop their control and co-ordination outside, using wheeled toys and other out door equipment. Teaching and learning are very good overall. There are some exciting opportunities for children to develop movement and dance skills through well thought out music and movement times. In one such session observed children from both nursery and reception classes used their imagination very well to create different animal movements as a result of the very good encouragement that they received and the excellent modelling of the movements by their teacher.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school fosters the development of children's imagination very well in music and dance and they children respond very well to opportunities to sing and make music.
- The children have good opportunities to explore colour, shape and texture and to create pictures.

Commentary

48. Teaching and learning are very good. Children achieve very well in relation to their starting points on entering the nursery and standards are well above average. Singing is a very well established part of classroom routines in the nursery, where they learn the tunes and words to a wide variety of songs and join in with movements and actions. Reception aged children are also given very good opportunities to explore musical instruments and sounds and sing a wide range of songs through well thought activities as well as through specialist teaching. They use their imaginations well as they move in time to music and express their ideas of how it makes them feel through their actions. Well thought out role-play areas such as the 'passport office' and the 'pirate ship' in the reception classes and the 'space centre' in the nursery help children to develop their own imaginative ideas and storylines. However, there were missed opportunities where appropriate adult support and guidance could have helped children to extend this further. The children enjoy exploring a wide range of materials and media to express their creative ideas. For example, in the reception class they showed a good understanding of colour and shape, as they made pictures in the style of Mondrian.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is very good; standards are very high when compared to national averages.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and very high expectations of their pupils.
- Very good curriculum planning and assessment arrangements ensure a clear focus on high attainment and are significant factors in the consistently very high standards that the school achieves.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject leader ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- The development of pupils' thinking skills is being promoted very well through a local authority creativity project, but these skills are not yet embedded into the full curriculum.

Commentary

49. The school consistently achieves national test results in reading and writing that that are in the top five per cent nationally and also in the top five per cent when compared to similar schools,. The results for 2004 were no exception and there are early indications that the results for 2005

will follow a similar pattern. The findings of the inspection reflect these results and are that standards are very high in reading, writing and speaking and listening. This is very good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points on entering the school. The school's high standards have been sustained since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good because of early differentiated support for their needs, and they achieve the standards that are expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils also achieve very well, often working well within the levels expected for pupils in the next stage of their education. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well.

50. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and extremely high expectations of pupils are evident in their planning and the very good quality of the interaction with their pupils. Very good schemes of work which give very clear guidance on where pupils need to be at each stage in order to achieve levels above those typically expected for their age give very good guidance to teachers. Ongoing assessment and very good marking help pupils know what they have to do to improve and this, together with very good encouragement, ensures that pupils are constantly striving to do their best. Pupils learn to read extremely well and enjoy reading and talking about their favourite authors. They are able to work out unfamiliar words when they read independently because of the systematic way that phonics is taught from an early stage. The teachers' own enthusiasm for books, the very good emphasis that is placed on developing higher order reading skills in the course of whole-class lessons and group reading sessions, and the very good support that parents give to their children all make significant contributions to pupils' achievement in reading.
51. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their writing skills by applying them in a variety of styles such as narrative, information text and poetry. In the main pupils' writing is organised, imaginative and clear. They develop the skills they need to extend their sentences and to use interesting vocabulary and other strategies to make their writing interesting to the reader, as in the extended stories written by Year 2 pupils. There is very good attention to teaching the basic and technical skills that support good written work. Consequently the basic grammatical structure of the sentences that pupils use is usually correct, and punctuation and spelling are generally accurate. Their handwriting and presentation skills are very good. Pupils make good use of word processing software to support their writing skills.
52. Teachers know exactly how well their pupils are doing because they regularly assess the progress of individual pupils against the targets that are set for them. When a child is not doing as well as they should the school has very good strategies and organisational arrangements to help them to get back on track. In Year 1 pupils work in a small 'nurture' group where they receive a great deal of individual attention and support. In Year 2 their needs are specifically identified in planning, and activities to support their learning are clearly identified. Higher attaining pupils are given all the support and encouragement that they need to succeed at the higher levels through extension work in Year 1. In Year 2 they work together in a small group which specifically caters for their needs.
53. The subject leader provides very good leadership and management and sets a very good model by the quality of her teaching. She keeps a very good overview of teaching, learning, standards and achievement through regular planning meetings, observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of assessment results. This makes a considerable contribution to the maintenance of high standards because it ensures that when any difficulties occur they can be dealt with and put right at a very early stage.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good. Opportunities for pupils to read, write and discuss in other subjects make a good contribution to the standards that pupils achieve. There is very good attention to the development of subject specific vocabulary and to incorporating opportunities to write in a range of different styles, such as instructional writing in design and technology, and accounts of visits in history and geography. The school's involvement in the local authority's creativity project is enhancing the links between English and other subjects of the curriculum very well and also making a significant contribution to the development of pupils' thinking skills. However, these new developments have not yet had time to be fully embedded into the curriculum. The school introduced pupils to modern foreign languages such as French, German and Spanish, and this enriches pupils' language and communication skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high standards are consistently maintained by the school.
- There is very effective planning for the delivery of the subject, alongside very clear systems and procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements in lessons and over time.
- The leadership and management of the subject by the co-ordinator are very good. Very careful analysis of pupils' results in standard tests results in successful action to bring about improvements.
- The overall quality of teaching is consistently good; teachers' take account of all pupils' needs in lessons, and they achieve very well as a result.
- There is a good balance between explanation, discussion and practical activities, alongside the effective use of time and resources.

Commentary

55. The school has maintained test results that are in the top five per cent for schools nationally over the last four years, and indeed since the last inspection. The results are equally high when compared to those of similar schools. There are early indications that the 2005 results will be equally high, with even more pupils achieving at levels above those typically expected for their age. Standards seen during the inspection reflect these results. Pupils achieve very well and in Year 2 standards are very high. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and achieve or exceed the levels that are expected for their age group. Higher attaining pupils and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve very well.

56. The main reasons for the school consistently achieving very high standards are the very good leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator and very effective subject guidance, clearly targeted at high achievement. This is used very well to inform lesson planning, together with very clear systems and procedures to track, assess and monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning very carefully on a half-termly basis, monitors pupils' work and interviews them to assess their development needs. This is further supplemented by lesson observations of her colleagues teaching the subject. Pupils' responses to questions in standard tests are very carefully analysed; this year more emphasis on pupils undertaking 'jottings' in problem solving are being used to help pupils tackle oral questions. Very good organisational arrangements also contribute to pupils' very

good achievement and have a direct impact on the standards they achieve. There are 'nurture' group lessons for pupils who need support in Year 1, for example, and 'extension' lessons for more able pupils in Year 2. The subject is very well resourced.

57. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good; some teaching was very good. Planning is very detailed and caters very well for the needs of all pupils, resulting in good learning for all pupils. All teachers give careful thought to how they will explain ideas and use well-prepared resources to help pupils understand. This was seen in a very good Year 1 lesson, when very good open-ended questions encouraged pupils to think for themselves. Pupils were asked to show their calculations on a whiteboard and were involved in evaluating the processes to see if they were correct. There are brisk starts to lessons, with lively oral warm-up sessions that capture pupils' interest well. For instance, Year 2 pupils could make different number sentences from different numbers given by the teacher. Higher attaining pupils could make a correct number sentence for 158, whilst lower attaining pupils could make one for 26. There is a good balance in lessons between explanation, discussion and practical activities. This helps retain pupils' attention, and enables them to consolidate their understanding and to practise what they have learnt. This was seen in a Year 2 extension class, when pupils were given the opportunity of working independently to consolidate their understanding of using multiplication when solving problems. A feature seen in all lessons is the development of mathematical vocabulary such as 'even', 'odd' or 'cube'.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Mathematics is applied well across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy skills in most subject areas. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, pupils have produced a graph showing how many letters were used in a word. They also estimate and measure in their scientific investigation and display results graphically.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and teaching and achievement are very good throughout school.
- Assessment information is used very well to track pupils' progress.
- The hands-on experiences make learning about science fun for pupils.

Commentary

59. The results of teacher assessment for 2004 are in the top five per cent compared to similar schools and other schools nationally. The 2005 teacher assessment and the inspection evidence point to a similar picture. The school has maintained the high standards reported in the last inspection. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 undertake a range of activities related to the different aspects of science. Investigations are well planned. Pupils can pose questions and make simple plans to investigate them. For example, they find out, 'What happens to the bean when kept in different conditions?' or 'How far the vehicle can travel on different surfaces and angles?' Pupils in both year groups can evaluate and record their results through tables, simple graphs and using ICT. The very well thought out curriculum planning, organisation and delivery ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are more able, achieve their full potential.
60. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. Interactive discussions with pupils are managed very well and involve challenging questions about topics being studied. Pupils

respond to these challenges confidently, whether they are about the habitat of minibeasts or about the sources of light. The hands-on experiences that they are given add excitement to learning in most lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils were eager to discover what was hidden inside the boxes as they experimented with a torch. The expressions on their faces as they spotted the objects painted a very good picture about the excitement and enjoyment in learning. A very lively discussion followed as to the effect of light and colour. The brisk pace in teaching and learning ensures that pupils achieve very well. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. There are some very good examples of the use of ICT to enhance learning, such as the use of sensors to measure temperature.

61. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. There has been a renewed focus on scientific investigation this year which is beginning to have a direct impact on the development of pupils' thinking skills and skills of independent learning. The policy is currently under review. The resources are very good and they are put to good use by both staff and pupils. The good links with the Kinetic Theatre and the Wildlife Trust further enhance learning in science. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and her leadership and management of the subject are very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use computers competently and confidently to support their learning.
- The subject is well led and the co-coordinator has well-documented plans for moving it forward.

Commentary

62. The achievement of pupils throughout the school is good and standards are above average in Year 2. Pupils who have special educational needs, higher attainers and those with English as an additional language also achieve well. Above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection as a result of a well-planned curriculum which ensures that the basic skills of ICT are systematically developed.
63. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and very closely linked to the school's scheme of work. The interactive whiteboard within the computer suite is used very well to demonstrate how to use particular programs and, together with very clear instructions, this ensures that pupils have a very good understanding of tasks that are set. Effective ongoing support to individuals from the teacher and the ICT technician is well focussed and is a significant factor in the good progress that pupils make. When pupils use computers it is nearly always under the direct supervision of the teacher or ICT technician. There is less emphasis on pupils using them independently as a tool for learning in the course of their work. Most pupils have good access to computers at home and the school has capitalised well on this. For example, it has held an information evening for parents on how they can help their children to develop their ICT skills at home.
64. Resources are good and they are very well maintained. The school has a well-equipped computer suite and there are computers in every classroom. Each year group has access to interactive whiteboards which are used well as an aid to learning and there are plans to extend

provision to every classroom. There is regular use of the computer suite, mainly by groups of pupils working on specific ICT skills or programs. The school benefits from the services of a computer technician who ensures that the whole system is regularly maintained and updated.

65. The subject is well led and managed. The co-coordinator has a very clear overview of teaching, learning and standards in the subject and has well-established plans to promote even more use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum. There are good assessment procedures which ensure that teachers know how well their pupils are doing. The co-ordinator monitors assessment outcomes and analyses them carefully, making good use of the information to plan for further improvements in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Pupils' use of ICT in other subjects of the curriculum is good. They use ICT to present their findings in mathematics, for example, in the form of block graphs or pie charts. They enter, save and retrieve their work and record it in different styles, colours and sizes of font in English. They give instructions to small robotic toys to make them move in different directions and older pupils are beginning to make their own musical compositions using ICT. They also compose their own pictures and designs using a program called 'Dazzle and Revelation Natural Art'. They quite confidently access the internet to find information, for example, about the Crimean war in history, and have the skills to send and receive emails to people they know within the school community.

HUMANITIES

Religious education, history and geography were sampled.

67. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' previously completed work reveals that there is an appropriate coverage of National Curriculum requirements in both **history and geography**. This is further reinforced with the displays seen in both subjects, for example, in a Year 1 classroom a geographical display on a 'Traffic count in Dorridge', and in a Year 2 classroom an historical display on 'The Fire of London'. Also visits such as the one to the Black Country Museum help enhance the profile of both subjects.
68. It was only possible to observe one lesson in **religious education**, which was in Year 1. A thorough analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils' knowledge and understanding of learning from religion are much stronger than learning about religions. This was very clear in the discussion with pupils. Pupils are confident in exploring and relating the experiences and emotions of the people in the stories they have heard to their own experiences and emotions. Year 2 pupils' work shows how they have explored the teachings of the Ten Commandments to make their own class rules. They could name some of the religions they have studied but they were not in a position to talk about these faiths or beliefs with any degree of confidence.
69. Teaching and learning in the one lesson seen were good. The teacher used her knowledge about the subject very well to extend pupils' understanding about how St. Cuthman must have felt when people laughed at him. Pupils talked confidently about the feelings and emotions and demonstrated their respect for others views which were often different from their own. Year 2 pupils' works show that they have studied Sikhism and Judaism apart from Christianity. In the discussions with pupils in Year 2, pupils talked about their visit to the synagogue. The higher attaining pupils could talk about some of the symbols and practices but others needed a lot of

prompting. This indicates that pupils are not fully retaining their knowledge of different religions, including Christianity.

70. Good leadership and management in the subject are resulting in improvements in the curriculum for religious education. It is now well planned and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is clarity and purpose in teachers' planning and the follow-up activities have a clear religious education focus. These are improvements since the last inspection, but they have not been in place long enough to impact on standards. Visits and visitors are used well to give pupils the opportunity for first-hand experiences and there are some examples of good links with other subjects, such as art and design. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal, social education and citizenship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and music were inspected in full and are reported on below. Design and technology and physical education were sampled.

71. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning for **design and technology** indicate that all aspects of the subject are covered well. Pupils are given the opportunity to use a wide range of materials and techniques. Pupils in Year 1 were keen to talk about how they made a model playground. Year 2 pupils are excited about the model television they are making and talk about how they planned their designs. With a little bit of prompting they could talk about how they made a winding mechanism and what they need to do to change and improve them.
72. The leadership and management of **physical education** are good overall. The curriculum post holder is doing a good job of broadening the curriculum, linking with local sporting initiatives and improving teachers' knowledge. All staff are currently undergoing professional development to improve their skills and to ensure that lessons are physically challenging and appropriate for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is being enhanced by links with local schools and visits from specialist secondary teachers.
73. In a very good games lesson, which focussed on the development of football skills, Year 1 pupils responded very well. They are able to kick, dribble and control a soccer ball in a sequence of movements to a high standard. However, in a gymnastics lesson, which was judged to be satisfactory overall, direct and precise instructions about the balances and movements that all pupils were to follow in a sequence reduced opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and to work at levels that were best suited to their needs. All teachers seen in lessons dressed appropriately and showed enthusiasm for the subject, which sets a good example to pupils.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The skills and techniques of art and design are well taught.
- The school's involvement in the creativity project is making a good contribution to art and design.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Commentary

74. Standards of work seen in art and design were above average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, achieve well. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
75. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils have a good range of experiences in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, craft and design work, and use a good variety of materials and tools. The teachers' very good subject knowledge ensures that pupils acquire an accurate understanding of the skills that they need to work in different ways with different media and this lays the foundation for later creative work. For example, during the course of the inspection pupils were being introduced to a range of printing techniques, including screen printing in Year 2. They also draw on a range of different artistic traditions, including those of the western world but also those from further afield such as Africa and Australia. This makes a substantial contribution to pupils' cultural development. The subject also makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development as they learn to appreciate the work of other artists and to reflect on the deeper meaning conveyed in pictures. During the inspection pupils also expressed wonder and delight as they slowly peeled back paper to reveal the results of their printing efforts. Teachers ensure pupils take time to carry out and evaluate their work, often over a series of lessons. There is also good emphasis given to the planning stage of art and design and pupils make good use of sketchbooks to explore and record their ideas and try out different techniques.
76. The school's involvement in the creativity project is making a very good contribution to standards and achievement and to the development of pupils' creative thinking and independent learning, although this work is not yet embedded into the whole-school curriculum. The use of an artist in residence further enhances provision for art by extending the expertise that the school has available to help pupils learn. The subject is also enriched well by themed days, such as a recent Spanish day, when pupils looked at the art and culture of different countries. The subject is very well led and managed led by a knowledgeable and skilled subject leader who sets a good example through the quality of her own teaching.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching provided by the specialist music teacher is very good and pupils learn very well in lessons because of this.
- The curriculum is good and the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The subject is currently without a subject leader but it has been well looked after by the senior staff to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and standards has been maintained.

Commentary

77. Pupils achieve well in music and standards are above average. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The school makes very good use of a specialist teacher to teach music

throughout the school. Opportunities for all pupils in Year 2 to learn to play the ocarina, and to access peripatetic tuition for the violin, further enhance provision.

78. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher's enthusiasm for music is infectious and is reflected in pupils' enjoyment of music and in their confidence in singing and performing. Throughout the school, pupils sing well, with accuracy of pitch, rhythm and phrasing. Their technical knowledge of music develops very well as a result of regular opportunities to listen to and analyse a wide range of music and to follow musical notation. Opportunities for pupils to explore their own musical ideas, for example, by creating their own musical ideas using percussion and computers, are satisfactory, but there is less emphasis on this element of music during the relatively short period of time that the music teacher has with each class. The teaching of music is mainly confined to the regular weekly sessions by the specialist teacher, however, during the inspection it was also promoted very well as part of classroom routines in a Year 1 class. A well-chosen piece of music was the signal to tidy up and the teacher then developed pupils' knowledge of the piece and of the musical elements by skilful questioning in the minutes that they prepared for lunch. This short and regular session provided a calm and purposeful end to the morning as well as making a significant contribution to pupils' knowledge and appreciation of music. Gifted and talented pupils are given good opportunities to develop their skills and to work at an appropriately challenging level, particularly when playing musical instruments. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in music lessons and grow in confidence because of the opportunities that are given for them to succeed.
79. The curriculum is well planned to ensure a year-on-year increase in pupils' knowledge and skills in all the musical elements. The teacher draws on a wide range of different musical traditions, both modern and traditional. Pupils immerse themselves in the moods that are created by the music that they listen to and are very sensitive to the feelings that music evokes. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
80. Although the subject is currently without a permanent subject leader because of changes in staff, it has not been neglected. The senior managers of the school have ensured that it has a high profile within the curriculum and that above average standards are maintained. The leadership and management of the subject are judged to be good because of this. A newly qualified teacher with an interest and expertise in the subject has been shadowing her senior colleagues and she will take on the role in the next school year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship is embedded in the life and ethos of the school.
- Assemblies and lessons are used effectively to explore specific issues and to share pupils' feelings and concerns.
- The school is highly successful at promoting pupils' health and well-being.
- Although pupils are given the chance to develop an understanding of their responsibilities within the school and the wider community, opportunities are missed to involve them in the school's decision making processes.

Commentary

81. The school's arrangements for personal, social and health education and citizenship are very good, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are very good overall and the curriculum is very well led and managed. Pupils' achievement is very good and they reach well above average standards in their personal and social development. The very inclusive atmosphere in school helps pupils to respect and care for each other. Staff know their pupils very well and they treat them and their views with respect. The excellent relationships that pupils have with their teachers are evident not only in lessons but also at playtimes, when staff can be seen participating in games alongside their pupils, encouraging fair play and participation. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence. Assemblies and specific lessons such as circle times are used very well to explore issues and feelings. In one of the lessons observed, pupils in Year 2 shared their feelings about going to the junior school. Careful questioning by the teacher enabled the pupils to change some of their negative feelings into positive ones. Pupils were very supportive of one another in such discussions, reassuring one another and having real empathy for each other's feelings.
82. Pupils are taught from a very early age about healthy eating and this is reinforced by the school's healthy snack policy at playtimes, when a range of fruit is provided, and the healthy and very well prepared school meals that are available in the school.
83. Visits and visitors are used well to learn about how to care for other people and animals. Pupils are taught to respect differences. All pupils learn sign language as part of their ongoing support for a disabled pupil. It is used effectively in assemblies to greet everyone and to sing hymns and songs. Pupils are developing their citizenship skills well as they learn to respect each other and are encouraged to be aware of their responsibilities towards others, whether in the school, the local community or in the wider world. Opportunities to develop an awareness of how democracy works, for example, in reaching consensus about playground equipment, are currently informal rather than formal.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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