

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARLBOROUGH INFANT SCHOOL**

Small Heath

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103232

Headteacher: Maria Gollogly

Lead inspector: Anne Elizabeth Kounnou

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 267282

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4-7  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 270

School address: Marlborough Road  
Small Heath  
Birmingham  
West Midlands  
Postcode: B10 9NY

Telephone number: 0121 464 5363  
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of Masaud Aslam  
governors:

Date of previous 10<sup>th</sup> May 1999  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Marlborough Infant School is a larger than average infant school with nine classes, serving a culturally diverse community. Pupils are mainly drawn from Pakistani Asian or Asian British backgrounds, some are Bangladeshi and others from Black African heritage; none are White British. Almost all of the pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. About half are new to speaking English when they start school. There is a wide range of ability but the attainment of most children is well below average, particularly in English, when they start. The local area is socially deprived and almost 35 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to 30 per cent. This is higher than average. Five of the pupils have statements of special educational needs. These needs include hearing and physical impairment, and some pupils have autistic traits. The number of pupils joining and leaving during the school year is much higher than average at around 22 per cent; some new immigrants are seeking asylum. A School Achievement Award for significant improvement in standards was gained in 2000. The school provides a number of innovative services to the local community including adult education in the form of English classes for parents, a drop-in advice bureau and a weekly 'stay and play' facility. The local community is involved with the school through Birmingham City Football Club and the Green Association and community service volunteers support the school. Recently a link has been established with a local special school to widen pupils' experiences.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30810	Liz Kounnou	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language
1936	Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
32827	Jacqueline Marshall	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education
24895	Kathleen Hurt	Team inspector	Provision for special educational needs English Religious education History Geography Personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Marlborough Infant School is a good school with many strengths.** Many children start school with well below average attainment. Almost all of them are learning to speak English as an additional language, and a substantial proportion are very new to learning English. Pupils achieve well in national tests in English and mathematics mainly because of the very good curriculum provided for them. This leads to very good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils achieve very well in religious education, history, and art and design. Teaching, learning, leadership and management are good overall. Governance is satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in writing and listening because they have many opportunities to develop writing skills in all subjects, and they are very interested in what their teachers say.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is a very significant strength of the school and results in an excellent climate for learning that encourages pupils to flourish and develop their own ideas; this contributes very well to pupils' good achievement.
- The school understands and values the diverse culture of the local community very highly and children achieve well as a result of the excellent links with parents, another significant strength.
- Systems for checking how well the school is doing are not effective in pinpointing what needs to be done to bring about improvements.
- Although there are some good assessments of pupils' achievement, teachers do not use the information they have gained from these well enough to plan lessons that enable the most able pupils and those with more confidence in speaking English to reach the next steps in learning.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection and standards are higher in many subjects. The school's links with parents are considerably better and are now exemplary. This has led to a good improvement in attendance and punctuality, even though the rate of attendance remains below the national average. The curriculum has improved and is now very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	E	E*	E	C
writing	E	E	C	B
mathematics	E*	E*	D	C

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

**Pupils achieve well throughout the school.** Around half the children start school speaking very little English. Pupils do well to reach these standards in national tests by the end of Year 2, and they do very well in writing. A substantial proportion of pupils reach the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics tests at the end of Year 2. Very few

reach the higher levels, and this is mainly because pupils who speak English confidently and those with higher potential are not always challenged sufficiently with the work they are given. Pupils at early stages of learning to speak English do well due to the consistent focus on developing and encouraging speaking and listening skills in all lessons. Those with special educational needs learn basic literacy skills successfully because they are supported well in small groups. Pupils achieve particularly well in religious education, history, and art and design because the curriculum provided for them is very challenging and often exciting. In information and communication technology (ICT) they make good progress. Children in the reception classes achieve well although most do not reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year given their low starting points. The very good attention to teaching personal and social skills helps young children to gain confidence in speaking a new language.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. The excellent climate for learning motivates pupils very well so that they develop very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well in and around the school. Attendance remains below the national average but is improving as a result of the good efforts being made by the school and particularly through the work of the learning mentors.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is good.** Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 1 and 2 there is a substantial proportion of very good teaching, and some is excellent. This is characterised by very high expectations and a great deal of fun. The very rich curriculum provides pupils with a very wide range of exciting activities that motivate them very well. Assessment is satisfactory overall. Assessment of pupils' achievements, for example in learning letter sounds, is thorough and contributes well to pupils' learning in this aspect of reading. However, assessment is not sufficiently rigorous to provide teachers with precise information about the skills that pupils need to learn next in most subjects. This means that many lessons are not challenging enough for the most able pupils and those who are almost fluent in speaking English.

Partnership with parents is excellent due to the welcoming approach of all the staff and their genuine wish to help all pupils and parents as much as they can. The learning mentors provide a wide range of innovative activities to involve parents in the life of the school. This work plays a very important role in helping pupils to do their best at school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked relentlessly to build up extremely good relationships with parents. They are committed to raising standards, are open to new ideas and regularly review the school's policy and practice. However, systems for checking how well the school is doing are often informal and lack rigour and do not contribute sufficiently to improving the school further. Governance is satisfactory and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents are extremely satisfied with the school; many of them regularly attend the curriculum workshops, which are great fun for mums and dads. Pupils love to come to school and enjoy all the activities. They know that staff will always help them; one girl told the inspection team, "When we want to talk to the headteacher, she is always there".



## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that the systems in place to check how well the school is doing are rigorous and help to make the school better still.
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently to plan the next steps for learning for pupils of all abilities.
- Continue to improve attendance.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

**Achievement overall is good** due to the very rich curriculum and the climate within the school which promotes very good attitudes to learning. In the Foundation Stage, children build well on their overall low attainment when they start school in the reception classes. Nonetheless, by the time they leave the reception year most have not reached the goals expected at that age. Achievement is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and very good in writing and listening. Pupils achieve very well in history, religious education and art and design, where they reach above expected standards.

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

- Pupils achieve very well in writing and listening because the school provides many opportunities for pupils to practise these skills.
- Standards in history, religious education and art and design are above average.
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- More able pupils and those who speak English with confidence are not always sufficiently challenged and could sometimes achieve more in lessons.

#### **Commentary**

1. Many children begin school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected at this age and have varying levels of fluency in English. Despite this they achieve well because of the very strong focus on developing personal and social skills. Achievement in this area is very good and children develop very positive attitudes to learning. In all areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, a few children are close to reaching the goals expected by the end of the reception year and most achieve well. Some more able children with the potential to reach the early learning goals are not challenged well enough due to the organisation of groups in lessons. Children have to concentrate for too long in a large group and this limits their achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (12.6)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.5 (12.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.7 (13.2)	16.2 (16.3)

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

2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well overall. Over time, and since the last inspection, standards are improving steadily as a greater proportion of pupils reach the expected levels in writing, reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, the number of more able pupils reaching the higher levels is not rising as quickly because there is not always sufficient challenge for these pupils in lessons. During the inspection, standards seen in English, mathematics and science were below average, but this represents good achievement from pupils' starting point as they entered school. Pupils do particularly well in writing and listening throughout the school. In writing pupils achieve very well and standards are just below the expected levels by the end of Year

2. This is because teachers focus their teaching on the basic skills, such as spelling, and provide plenty of opportunities in all subjects for pupils to write at length. Lively lessons that make pupils want to listen and lots of opportunities within lessons to use their listening skills mean pupils achieve very well and reach the expected levels for listening.
3. Standards in history, religious education and art and design are above average. Pupils achieve very well in these subjects because teachers provide a very, rich curriculum that fully engages pupils and gives them experiences that help them to learn and remember well. In all other subjects seen during the inspection, including ICT, pupils achieve well and reach standards that are average due to the broad curriculum provided. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall because they are taught well in small groups by teaching assistants, learning mentors and senior teachers. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and provides a strong emphasis on developing speaking across the curriculum, ensuring that pupils learn successfully. However, not enough is done to assess pupils' fluency in English and this leads to more able and more confident speakers of English not always being challenged to achieve as well as they should.

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved and are **very good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance has improved since the last inspection but remains **unsatisfactory**, despite the school's very good efforts to encourage full attendance.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is an excellent climate in the school that encourages pupils to flourish and develop their own ideas.
- The school understands very well and values very highly the diverse culture of the local community and this has a significant impact on pupils' overall good achievement.
- Pupils behave very well in and around the school because teachers manage pupils in a very positive way.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work because the curriculum captures their interest.

### **Commentary**

4. Pupils' personal development has a very high priority in the school and staff are very successful in the way they promote self-confidence among the pupils. All staff are particularly careful to encourage pupils to make spoken contributions to their lessons, and some teachers use registration time very well to develop pupils' conversational skills. For example, after a child has said good morning they might ask a question, such as: "Did you sleep well, Miss?" Teachers show that they value pupils' questions by responding to them courteously so that they smile with pleasure. This is one of many strategies that teachers employ to build up pupils' confidence in speaking and listening to English. Most lessons are designed in a way that provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with each other. In the reception and Year 1 classes children are given a set of 'challenges' each week to build up their confidence in working independently. These range across several curriculum areas and might be sorting out a sequence of pictures that show how a plant grows from a seed, or selecting from a range of materials to make a picture of a flower. The pupils' efforts are all valued and often displayed so that they gain confidence in their ability to work things out for themselves.

5. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to school because many lessons are interesting for them. The range of things they are asked to do is very wide, from dressing up in historical costumes to using a computer to compose a piece of music. Classrooms are filled with the happy buzz of pupils working industriously. They are often asked to work together so that they learn how to work in teams, engaging in decision-making. The positive way that teachers respond to pupils' ideas helps them to gain self-confidence. Any silly behaviour is quickly and firmly dealt with, so that pupils are fully aware of the impact of their actions on others.
6. The school responds to the cultural backgrounds of the local community very well, valuing the richness this brings to the school. There are numerous opportunities for parents and pupils to celebrate and learn about their own and other cultures. For example, groups of children visited other schools to perform a Bhangra dance display, and children from another local school made a return visit to show their Irish dancing skills. An annual family visit to Blackpool cements the excellent relationships between staff and parents.

### **Attendance**

7. Learning mentors play a significant part in the school's very good approach to encouraging full attendance and good punctuality. An exciting competition is the highlight of one assembly each week. The class with the highest attendance wins a certificate. The more certificates the class wins, the greater the prize awarded. When 10 certificates have been won, the whole class can choose a treat, such as a trip to the cinema. As a result of this and many other strategies, pupils are very clear about wanting to come to school every day and the attendance rate has improved substantially. No pupils have been excluded from the school during the past two years. Despite this very good approach, attendance remains below average and still needs to improve further.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education is good.** Teaching and learning are good overall, and often very good in Years 1 and 2, where some excellent teaching was seen. The curriculum is very good and enriched by interesting activities that motivate pupils well. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils' relationships with their teachers are very good and sometimes excellent and contribute very well to their good achievement along with the excellent links with parents. Links with the local community and other schools are good, as are the care, support and guidance that pupils receive.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is often very good and occasionally excellent. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent teaching in some lessons is characterised by extremely high expectations and exciting activities that provide other teaching staff with an outstanding model of good practice.
- Pupils enjoy most lessons because teachers plan many interesting activities for them.
- There are excellent relationships in many lessons because teachers manage pupils very well in a positive and encouraging way that gives them the confidence to try out new ideas.
- Literacy skills are taught thoroughly and make a significant contribution to pupils' overall good achievement.
- There is not a clear system in place to assess pupils' stage of fluency in learning to speak English and this means that lessons are not always well designed to help more able pupils and those gaining confidence in speaking English move from one stage to the next.
- Assessment is not used effectively to guide teachers in planning the next steps for learning for pupils of different abilities in each class; as a result those pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels are not always challenged sufficiently. This was identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and there has not been sufficient improvement.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (9%)	9 (20%)	21 (47%)	11 (24%)	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.

8. Good quality teaching and learning have been maintained since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 some excellent, and a substantial proportion of very good, teaching was seen. This is reflected in pupils' work and the progress they make throughout the year. These exemplary lessons are characterised by very high expectations so that pupils are challenged very well. Throughout the school, teachers provide many exciting and interesting activities for pupils. Pupils were engrossed in their work, and parents were fully involved in some of the very best lessons seen. One lesson gave many Year 2 parents the opportunity to observe their children at work in literacy, acting out the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. They then worked alongside their children in a delightful design and technology lesson, making puppets of all the characters. This very effectively supports parents as they help their children enjoy school and achieve well.
9. All teachers use very positive and encouraging methods to praise the pupils for their efforts. This is particularly effective as almost all of the pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. They gain great confidence and trust in all the adults. As a result, pupils are not hesitant to try speaking in a new language or to try out new vocabulary. Pupils want to please their teachers and try very hard in most of the lessons. They behave very well because they are interested in the work and many lessons are fun. In the reception classes there is a very good emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills and this helps them gain confidence in a new environment where many do not understand the language that is spoken. Bi-lingual teaching assistants in each reception class make a significant contribution towards helping children settle so that they can begin to learn well in English.
10. There are a number of regular assessments of pupils' achievement in learning literacy and numeracy skills, such as their knowledge of letter sounds. Teachers keep a lot of information about individual pupils' knowledge. However, teachers do not make a clear assessment of each pupil's stage of fluency in speaking English when they start school, or track their progress as they gain fluency. As a result, lessons do not always match the varying needs of pupils at different stages of learning to speak English. In particular, those who are more fluent are not always extended sufficiently. Teachers' assessments note the topics that pupils have covered in most subjects but do not provide a full picture of the level each pupil achieves, so they do not have a clear view of the next steps that pupils need to make to improve. Consequently, they do not tailor their lessons well enough to match the needs of all the pupils. This limits pupils' overall achievement, particularly of those with the potential to reach higher levels. In the reception classes, some lessons are planned and organised in a way that is more appropriate for older children and the work that children are asked to do is sometimes much too difficult for them so that they do not succeed.
11. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in small groups; they often work effectively for short periods learning letter sounds and how to spell. Occasionally the support they receive from the learning mentors is excellent. This outstanding

practice is characterised by very high expectations, very clear communication and a cracking pace to the work. Children are delighted by the constant praise for their efforts and proudly choose a sticker as a reward at the end.

## The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum that captures pupils' interest. A **very good** range of activities outside normal lessons extends pupils' learning very well. There are **good** resources. The accommodation is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very wide and interesting curriculum captures pupils' interest and helps them achieve well.
- A very good range of extra experiences substantially enriches the curriculum for pupils.
- Pupils achieve very well in writing due to the many opportunities there are for them to develop their skills in work in other subjects.
- The team of well-informed and very committed learning support staff make a very good contribution to the rich curriculum provided.
- The lack of space outdoors limits the opportunities pupils have to extend their activities outdoors, particularly in the reception classes.

### Commentary

12. The curriculum has improved since the school was last inspected and is now very good. Planning ensures that pupils' experiences are relevant and very interesting, with good opportunities for hands-on experiences. For example in a history lesson, they dressed in costumes and explored artefacts that gave them an excellent opportunity to consider how people reacted in the Great Fire of London. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education that is clearly reflected in their very good relationships, attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is good, and covers all areas of learning well. The school has improved its planning and time allocations for art and music that had too low a profile last time. Standards have risen as a result. Pupils' achievements have improved in ICT because the provision of more computers and other resources means they have more opportunities to develop their skills.
13. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils have plenty of first hand experiences and opportunities to participate in a very wide range of activities. Opportunities for enrichment beyond the normal school day continue to be very good. Visits to places like Blakesley Hall, the local churches and places further away, like Blackpool and Weston super Mare, considerably extend their awareness of life beyond their local area. Football, orienteering, dance and many other clubs provide a further boost to their experiences and skills. This, and the residential visit to Bell Heath Study Centre, is not something usually seen for young pupils in Years 1 and 2.
14. Pupils have very good opportunities to extend their writing skills across subjects like religious education, design and technology and history. Very well planned activities link the skills they learn in literacy lessons with work in these subjects. The extra practice this gives in writing in different styles and for different audiences means that pupils become confident writers, often producing lengthy pieces of well-presented and structured writing.
15. Staff are well trained and teamwork is good. The team of teaching assistants and learning mentors provide very good support for teachers and pupils. They and the co-ordinator for special educational needs ensure that there are good arrangements for supporting pupils learning to speak English and those with special educational needs.



The two enthusiastic learning mentors are very effective in their roles, each using their particular strengths to good effect in areas like promoting good attendance, working with parents in the many workshops and providing a significant boost for those pupils with special educational needs in small withdrawn groups. Learning support assistants are well informed and support pupils well in lessons. Their commitment is clearly evident in the way some of these staff run clubs and have initiated and organised improvements in the school's library. Alongside all the other good resources for learning, there is now a very attractive and well-stocked area for reading and research.

16. As last time, the accommodation is adequate. The limitations noted then are still evident. Although some spaces are cramped, staff work very hard to ensure an attractive environment with a building that is well maintained, bright and alive with interesting displays. Space both indoors and outside is used well. Outdoor areas are limited, and there is no green area for sports and similar activities. The lack of a designated outdoor play space for children in the reception classes continues to restrict the opportunities they have to extend their experiences across all areas of learning through outdoor play.

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

Care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. Support, advice and guidance provided for pupils are **good**. The school seeks to involve pupils in the work of the school **well**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good relationships and the very caring attitudes of staff make pupils feel safe and happy so that they achieve well.
- Very good induction arrangements ensure that pupils settle into school very quickly and gain in confidence.
- The learning mentors provide very good support to pupils and their families that helps them to improve pupils' attendance and academic achievement.
- The systems for tracking pupils' achievement are not thorough enough and as a consequence pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Commentary**

17. The school looks after its pupils well. It is a very happy school and pupils, staff and visitors enjoy being there. An atmosphere of trust and respect throughout the school helps to make pupils feel confident and safe. Very good relationships between staff and pupils are evident and help pupils to make good progress in their learning. All the staff work well together to ensure a consistency of approach so that pupils know where they stand. Staff know the children and their families well and are quick to spot and respond to pupils' needs. Teaching assistants work well with groups of pupils and individuals and their support is sensitive and appropriate. Praise and rewards are used successfully to encourage pupils to try their best and work hard. Pupils enjoy showing what they can do and there are many opportunities for them to share their work.
18. Children settle into the school quickly and easily because of the sensitive and caring approach adopted by the staff. Staff visit families at home before children start school so that they can get to know the children and their families better. There is very good communication between staff and parents on a daily basis about how pupils are doing. The school pays good attention to the daily care of its pupils. Sickness and accidents are dealt with sensitively and sympathetically to minimise the upset for young children and the staff liaise with parents at all times. Health and safety checks across the

school site are carried out regularly and child protection issues are dealt with conscientiously and effectively.

19. Two very experienced and capable learning mentors are a real asset to the school. They provide help, support and guidance on a daily basis to the children and their families. They greet pupils on arrival each morning with a cheery welcome, making them feel wanted and valued. They work well with individual pupils and groups during the day, supporting them academically and socially. One has a significant role in trying to improve attendance, which has been very successful. They also work closely with the pupils' families, helping them with a range of problems and difficulties.
20. Pupils' academic and personal development is monitored and recorded appropriately through the year. Class targets are shared with parents at the conferences that are held each term. However, the systems for tracking pupils' achievement are not sufficiently rigorous and this means that some children are not challenged well enough in lessons and are not sure of what they need to do to improve their work. This is because the targets set are too general and not specifically related to pupils' individual achievements. Pupils' opinions are valued and treated seriously. At present these are obtained through discussions in class or assembly, but there is an intention to start a school council in the near future. This will not only ensure that pupils' views are collected more formally, it will also allow the pupils to learn about how decisions are made in a democratic way.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are **excellent**. The quality of the school's links with the local community and with other schools is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent relationships with parents due to all the staffs' wholehearted commitment to the children and families of the school community; this makes a significant contribution to pupils' overall good achievement.
- Regular high quality workshops support parents extremely well in helping their children at home.
- The school's open door policy means that all parents are happy to approach the school; they feel welcome and valued and regularly seek advice and support.

### **Commentary**

21. All staff of the school follow the excellent example set by the headteacher in making parents feel valued not only as partners in their children's education but as friends. The school is a warm and welcoming place where staff go the extra mile to help the children and their parents as much as they can. The two learning mentors greet pupils and parents as they arrive in the morning. They make everyone feel welcome and glad they came. The school's work with parents extends beyond the educational. Some families arrive at school having little or no command of English. Bi-lingual staff help these parents to understand what they need to do and reassure them that their children will be happy and safe in school. Many parents have problems in their day-to-day lives and again staff are always willing to spend time with them and to help them with whatever the problem is. Social events are not overlooked. A day trip to Blackpool for staff, pupils and their families last year was so successful that it is to become an annual event. Parents have three opportunities each year to discuss their children's

work and progress with their child's teacher. The times for these conferences are flexible to suit the needs of parents. During the meeting teachers explain things carefully, making sure parents understand. Translators are available where necessary. Teachers also explain pupils' targets and review progress against previous targets. Many pupils attend with their parents and teachers involve them in the process where possible. The annual written reports are informative but would benefit from some simplification in the language used.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

Excellent workshops are arranged to help parents understand what their children are learning and how they can help them at home. Twenty parents worked with their children to produce puppets and masks. The atmosphere in the 'Golden Room' was electric as Mums and Dads worked industriously with their children to design and make a puppet character from *Little Red Riding Hood*. Before they began work together the pupils acted out and read the story to their parents with the help of a translator so that non-English speaking parents could fully understand. There was much fun and laughter as pupils dressed in simple costumes to tell the tale. A carnival air filled the room as parents and children enthusiastically chose from a good range of materials, to select those best suited to the style of puppet they wanted to make. Pupils were able to show parents how to join the materials and many staff, including the school caretaker, chair of governors and headteacher, continually supported all the groups. This exciting session helped parents to understand how literacy and design and technology are taught in school, and further cemented the school's excellent relationships with parents.

22. The school is outward looking and has useful links with the community that make a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. A local supermarket provides opportunities for groups of pupils to visit as part of their work on food and money; regular football coaching for the older pupils is provided by staff of a nearby major football club; and visits to a local church, mosque and temple promote religious education studies. Pupils have also been involved in the refurbishing of a nearby park, including planting bulbs and flowers. Links with the local nursery and partner junior school ensure that pupils' transfer between the various schools is as smooth as possible. Pupils have started visiting a local special school and have looked at eggs in an incubator and have seen the chicks when they hatched. There are plans for some children from the special school to make reciprocal visits. These visits make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher and other key staff provide **good** leadership. Governance is **satisfactory** and ensures all statutory requirements are met. The overall management provided by key staff is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides good leadership overall and has developed excellent links with parents and the local community and an excellent climate for learning which encourages pupils to flourish and achieve well.
- Staff work very well together and are always keen to improve and do better.
- Senior managers are well aware of staff's strengths and make very good use of them in the way that they deploy responsibilities.
- School leaders are not fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses because systems for checking how the school is doing are not sufficiently rigorous.

### **Commentary**

23. The headteacher has been instrumental in fostering the excellent links between the school and parents. This relationship, between parents and school, plays a significant part in creating the excellent climate for learning that exists within the school. Her very clear vision is that the school is a place where everyone is welcomed, pupils are very effectively encouraged to want to learn and their ideas are valued. During the inspection one pupil told the inspection team during that, "When you want to talk to the headteacher she is always there", a feeling that was strongly shared by parents. This vision is shared by all staff and governors and is a key feature of pupils' good achievement.
24. The headteacher and key staff have sought to develop and foster the strong sense of teamwork observed within the school. This has created an open and professional working atmosphere. Teachers and other support staff work well together to support pupils' learning. All staff are committed to improving the quality of education provided for the pupils. They are keen to seek out new ideas or ways to further develop their own subject knowledge. Whilst the school actively seeks out new ideas and implements these, the headteacher and key staff do not always adequately check how these have improved pupils' learning or raised standards.
25. Responsibilities are delegated well and staff welcome the opportunity to make their own contribution to the school. This approach to staff management is developing leadership potential and ensuring that all staff feel part of the decision-making process. For example, because of the climate the headteacher has created, a group of teaching assistants were able to suggest the creation of a library area within school. This was agreed and, with the help of 'library monitors' from Year 2, they now run the very successful library, promoting reading very effectively.
26. The headteacher has effectively identified the strengths in her staff and uses this information very well when building teams such as the deputy head group. The deputies have time away from the classroom, which is used effectively in many ways including supporting pupils in small groups, and checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Their successful work has included working alongside staff and showing them how to teach model lessons. The school regularly reviews the quality of education provided, such as the quality of teaching and learning. However, the checks made by school leaders, including the governors, are not always thorough enough to ensure they have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and so areas for development are not always identified. Governors are keen to support the school and ensure their statutory duties are fulfilled. They ensure that the school seeks to gain best value from the financial decisions made. However, the lack of rigorous systems for checking how well the school is doing means that governors are not fully aware of the effect of their decisions, on raising standards in the school.

## Financial information

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	882,683	Balance from previous year	22,748
Total expenditure	858,928	Balance carried forward to the next	46,503
Expenditure per pupil	3,181		



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

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

27. Provision in the Foundation Stage and leadership and management of this stage are satisfactory overall. There is good teamwork in each of the reception classes that supports the children well. Teaching and learning have improved overall. Excellent links with parents help children to settle at school quickly. A very good management strategy has ensured that bi-lingual teaching assistants provide a sense of familiarity and continuity for the children. About half of the children do not speak English when they start school. Others have learned some words but are not fluent, and a few speak two or more languages with some confidence. School leaders have not put a secure system in place to assess each child's stage of fluency in speaking English when they first start school. The school tries to promote speaking and listening at every opportunity, and teachers do this well. However, the lack of information about children's stage of fluency means that this is a general approach, rather than one tailored to each child's ability. As a result, some children with very little English work in groups that are too large, and those who are nearing fluency in English are not expected to extend their skills sufficiently. The systems in place to check the impact of the school's policy to promote speaking and listening are not yet sufficiently rigorous to identify the difference in the rate of progress for children in each group. The school plans to address this by introducing the newly developed local education authority profile for all children learning to speak English as an additional language. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language has recently attended training and will help staff to use the new format.
28. Assessment is satisfactory because teachers regularly make notes of what children have experienced, particularly in language and mathematical development. Target sheets, which are regularly shared with parents, contain helpful guidance about how to help children with their learning. However, teachers' assessments of children's achievements at the end of the reception year are not checked to ensure that they are accurate. There is a tendency to over-estimate children's capabilities. For example, the Foundation Stage Profile has been completed too generously. Children have been marked as achieving the goals expected, when they have only just begun to experience them. This has resulted in an inaccurate profile of children's abilities when they move into Year 1. School leaders are aware of this and there are plans in place to check the quality of assessments more closely this year.
29. The last inspection report noted that accommodation for the reception classes was limited, with no outdoor area. This remains an issue for the school. An adequate fenced area has been created, and enhanced with a pergola and planting. However, none of the reception classes have direct access to this area from their classrooms. Currently a Year 1 class occupies the only classroom with direct access. Teachers try to address this by using the school playground once a week for outdoor learning. This places a limit on the range of resources available outside, because pupils from Years 1 and 2, and pupils from the adjoining junior school all use the playground throughout the day. Since the last inspection not enough thought has been given to overcoming the limitations of the listed Victorian building. The continued lack of opportunities to work outside throughout the day limits children's achievement in all areas of learning, as they are unable to work in an outdoor environment as recommended in the National Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All adults value children's contributions so that they gain a great deal of confidence; this is a significant strength of the Foundation Stage.
- Excellent links with parents help children to build very strong relationships with teachers and other adults.
- Teachers are very positive with children so that they behave very well.

### **Commentary**

30. Children achieve very well in this area, as they did at the time of the last inspection, due to very good teaching and learning. This is characterised by very positive management of behaviour. Children are praised regularly for their efforts and as a result they want to please their teachers and the teaching assistants. This reflects the school's very caring ethos. All adults make every effort to ensure that children are happy and comfortable at school. They are extremely sensitive to children's feelings, taking particular care of young children with no previous experience of education and very little English. Excellent links with parents make a significant contribution to children's very good achievement. Learning mentors are particularly active in setting up parent groups for those with pre-school children. They make strenuous efforts to get to know children who will start school in the near future and to begin building trusting relationships with parents. Children know their parents trust the adults and this makes it easier for them to settle down.
31. Special 'challenge' activities are planned each week to encourage children to work things out for themselves. During the inspection children were challenged to create a flower using a range of different materials. Activities such as these ensure that children are interested and enjoy lessons and achieve very well. They learn to work together sharing resources. A shared indoor area known as the Patch has been created to try to address the lack of opportunities for children to direct their own learning outside. Children regularly work out here but adults very heavily direct almost all the activities and this limits the children's personal development. Despite the very good achievement in this area of learning, the majority of children are unlikely to reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are plenty of opportunities for children to speak and listen that help them gain confidence in learning to speak English.
- There is a good focus on teaching children letter sounds that helps children with early reading and writing skills.
- Children are regularly encouraged to read and share books so that they gain positive attitudes to reading.

- There is no assessment of children's stage of fluency in learning to speak English and this means that work is not always well matched to children's varying stages of fluency.

### Commentary

32. The school policy to encourage speaking and listening plays a strong part in helping many children become more familiar with a new language when they start school. Despite the very strong focus on developing children's spoken English the majority of children will not reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Overall standards are well below the national average. Teaching and learning are good in this area and children do well as they did at the time of the last inspection. In some of the best lessons teachers lead play with children, for example in the 'garden centre'. This provides many opportunities for the teacher to model language for children so that they learn to ask other children questions as they pretend to buy and sell the goods on sale. The teacher encourages the children to try out new ways of speaking English well so that they make good progress. The lack of any assessment of children's stage of fluency, in learning to speak English as an additional language, means that not all opportunities for speaking and listening help children to make progress from one step to the next.
33. There is a strong focus on teaching children letter sounds to help them in their reading and writing. The learning mentors play a significant part in helping small groups of children to learn these sounds. The work they do in small groups is great fun for the children due to the very high expectations that are set, and the constant praise for children's efforts. Children are wreathed in smiles for these short sessions, which they greatly enjoy. There are plenty of opportunities for children to read, share and listen to books together. They regularly choose to use the listening sets to play a taped story. There are plenty of dual-language books available and the range of resources has been carefully chosen to ensure that they reflect the diverse cultures of all the children. During the inspection children had a lot of fun reading and acting out the story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, inside and out on the playground, and in a dark cave set up in the Patch. Teachers spend a lot of time showing children how to write, but sometimes the activities are too difficult and more suitable for older children and this limits their progress.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are a lot of opportunities for children to learn and sing number rhymes that help them learn number order.
- There is a good focus on teaching basic counting skills that helps children to gain early mathematical skills.
- Lessons are not always planned well enough to meet the needs of children of all abilities so that children of different abilities are not always working at the right level.

### Commentary

34. The focus on speaking and listening extends to mathematical development, and children are frequently heard singing and joining in with number rhymes. This good strategy enables them to become familiar with mathematical language in English.



Children join in enthusiastically and thrive under the positive encouragement they are given. Teaching and learning are good; there is a strong focus on teaching children early mathematical skills such as counting and adding numbers together. Consequently children achieve well overall. However, children often work together in large groups and sometimes as a whole class. This is not effective as children are at different stages of fluency in English and different stages of understanding in mathematics. In the large groups some of the most able children are not challenged well enough, and others find the work too difficult. This was identified as a weakness in all areas of learning at the time of the last inspection and remains an issue for the reception classes. There is a tendency to organise mathematics and English lessons using the guidance of the national literacy and numeracy strategies rather than the guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum. The strategies are not usually appropriate for the children because the majority are unlikely to reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of curriculum activities and challenges is provided that children enjoy so that their attitudes to learning are good.
- Children are often encouraged to use computers so that many use them independently.
- Some activities have limited opportunities for children to be active and this limits the quality of learning.

### **Commentary**

35. The interesting range of activities means that children enjoy themselves and achieve well, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Regular science and design and technology challenges are provided for children to work out for themselves. These make a very good contribution to children's personal development as well as their understanding of the world. In some aspects they achieve very well; for example, they designed and made a sandwich or picnic bag, first drawing a picture of how they wanted their bag to look. They then used a range of different techniques to create a sturdy bag from a box, attaching a handle securely. The colourful bags are displayed in the classrooms waiting for the day when children make themselves some sandwiches to take to the local park. These highly motivating activities are typical of those planned in this area. Teaching and learning are good overall and ensure that children develop independence as they learn about the world. Consequently, children are confident to use a computer to draw a picture and use the icons on screen to select the correct commands to label and print out their pictures. Some activities link well with other areas of learning. For example, children made and iced biscuits that were then decorated with two sets of jellybeans. There was a lot of mathematical language, such as counting and combining the sets of beans. However, an adult heavily directed the activity and this limited the opportunities for the children to be active and develop their vocabulary. Some groups of children took torches into the dark cave set up between the classrooms. When these sessions were led effectively children had plenty of opportunities to play with the torches and talk about the light and dark. In some of the sessions children spent much more time listening to an adult and this limited their progress.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

36. This area was sampled during the inspection and there is not enough evidence to make a clear judgement about the quality of provision. However, daily activities are planned that contribute well to children learning to use their hands with more control. Regular lessons in the school hall provide good opportunities for children to develop the way they jump, skip, and throw. The playground is used weekly to allow children to ride wheeled toys, but the way these sessions are planned means that there is no clear purpose for learning, so that children do not make the progress they could. The lack of regular access to an outdoor classroom severely restricts the range of activities that can be provided.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers very high expectations mean that children achieve very well in art activities.
- Regular art challenges provide children with very good opportunities to work independently.
- Teachers and other adults do not always guide children's play well enough and this limits the learning opportunities that activities provide.

### Commentary

37. Children created very good quality drawings of flowers using oil pastels after some very good teaching in small groups to show them what the pastels would do. Children were carefully taught how to look closely at the plants before they started to draw. The work was of a very high standard. Children achieve well because teaching and learning are good overall. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when children's progress was unsatisfactory. Despite the good provision the majority of children will not reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Classrooms are set up with areas for children to play together in pretend situations. There is a 'garden centre', a 'hairdresser's' and an 'office' to play in. These have the potential to improve children's confidence and imagination in addition to their vocabulary. Too often children do not have a clear purpose for learning in the role-play areas. This is mainly because teachers' planning sets out the activities that children are going to do rather than what children will learn each day. As a result teachers do not usually guide children's play well enough. The limited opportunities to work outside also limit children's overall achievement. The regular 'challenges' that are set up for the children each week make a very good contribution to their achievement, in creative and social skills among others. Children are very comfortable with the idea that they have to work things out for themselves and this encourages them to experiment.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

### ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in writing and listening because there is a very good emphasis on developing the basic skills through writing in all curriculum subjects and pupils are very interested in what teachers say.
- Many opportunities for speaking and listening, and the way that adults value what pupils have to say, mean that pupils gain confidence and achieve well in developing their speaking skills.
- Pupils are eager readers and achieve well because there are a very wide range of interesting reading resources and very good opportunities to practise their skills.
- There are good assessments of some aspects of literacy, but this lacks rigour in other important areas, and teachers do not always use the information well enough to set short-term targets for pupils and to plan their lessons.

## Commentary

38. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with test results rising recently. The teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Although standards are below average, pupils achieve well overall in view of the high numbers of pupils who enter the school with limited skills in speaking English. Pupils' achievements in writing are very good due to some very effective teaching and ample opportunities to develop their writing skills in all curriculum subjects. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in recognising and spelling basic words, learning letter sounds and developing their handwriting, gives pupils confidence when they write. The way pupils in Year 2 extend, structure and present their written work is sometimes impressive. Pupils adapt their writing well for different purposes because teachers seize every opportunity in subjects like history. Pupils take pride in presenting their work well as teachers remind them to check their work, praise them when they do it carefully and display it attractively for others to see. Creating a class newspaper and other activities mean that pupils learn to process their work on a computer, experimenting with different fonts, styles and sizes to add greater impact to their reports. Most pupils reach, or come close to, the levels expected for their age, but too few reach the higher levels. This is mainly due to limitations in their vocabulary that hamper their use of expressive words and phrases when writing. Teachers could do more to identify the skills they need and plan activities in lessons that challenge these pupils to work at higher levels.
39. There has been good improvement since the last inspection due to a high priority on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Most pupils are at some stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils' listening skills are good and they achieve very well. Lively introductions, exciting activities and very well managed discussions mean that they listen intently to what others have to say and remember it well. Teachers are relentless in their efforts to extend pupils' vocabularies, making sure that they understand the new words they meet in their reading and in other subjects. There are plenty of opportunities to try out their speaking skills when sharing ideas with their class, and also in larger groups during assemblies. Pupils regularly discuss their ideas together with their 'talk partners' which prepares them well. Teachers' skilful use of questions and the way they praise and value what pupils have to say, give pupils confidence so that they achieve well in speaking.
40. The school has invested heavily in its reading resources and these are now very good. There have been substantial improvements in the library. Well organised and attractive, it contains a good book stock and additional resources like magazines that

attract pupils' interest. Homework tasks provide a good boost to reading. Pupils are eager readers who confidently have a go at reading anything and achieve well. Classrooms are a rich source of literature with attractively displayed words, captions and labels produced by pupils and teachers that make pupils want to read. Teaching is often very good. Lessons move at a brisk pace with good examples and questions that are pitched at the right level for pupils of differing abilities in discussions. Teachers have high expectations and make sure that pupils use their time very well. Pupils often work in pairs so they help each other and concentrate well as they read the wide range of material on display. Teachers provide books that pupils find interesting and praise them when they read well. Their understanding of English develops well due to the effective way teachers question and encourage them to think hard about what the text means. However, in spite of good gains in their language, pupils often find it hard to interpret and explain what they understand so that few pupils reach the higher levels in reading.

41. Teaching assistants, learning mentors and other staff are well deployed to work with groups or with individual children with special educational needs. Their encouragement often prompts otherwise quiet pupils so they speak more confidently and fully. Teachers do not take enough account of pupils' different stages of fluency in learning to speak English when planning activities because the school does not have a clear system to assess each pupil's stage of fluency in learning to speak English, both when they start school and as they begin to gain more confidence. Consequently, the opportunities provided are not always well matched to their abilities. Sometimes the most able pupils are not challenged enough and do not always achieve as well as they might. Although pupils are well motivated and keen to do as well as they can, their progress is slowed because they are unsure about what it is they need to do to improve.
42. Leadership and management of English are good. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for others in her enthusiasm and own teaching example. School leaders have a clear vision and are ambitious for their pupils. There is a strong partnership with parents that gives them valuable skills in helping their children at home. The systems for checking on pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. There is good and rigorous assessment of spelling, recognition of basic words and knowledge of letter sounds, but checks on pupils' progress over time are not rigorous enough. This means there is sometimes a lack of clarity in teachers' planning about what individual pupils need to do to improve and how they will go about it.

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

43. This is an area of strength in the school. A wide range of rich opportunities provides a significant boost to pupils' language and literacy skills across all subjects of the curriculum. History work is a good example. Pupils develop their reading and writing skills well as they write manuscripts reporting on the Great Fire of London, and seek out information using computers, displayed information and reference books. Interesting topics and good use of visits and resources stimulate speaking and listening particularly well. Pupils' skills develop well in discussions in all subjects, like the way pupils eagerly talk about their visit to the local church, its 'special' features and the artefacts they examine in religious education lessons.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because of the excellent climate for learning in the school.
- The strong focus on teaching basic skills means pupils use these confidently to solve problems.
- Assessment is not always used effectively to let pupils know how to improve.

## **Commentary**

44. Standards have improved since the last inspection and improvement overall has been good. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in mathematics because they are motivated to learn by the activities and experiences staff plan in lessons. Standards seen during the inspection were below average overall in Year 2 because few pupils are currently working at the higher levels in mathematics. Nonetheless, a substantial proportion of pupils will reach the expected level for their age. This represents good achievement from their starting point when entering school.
45. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers concentrate on developing and consolidating basic mathematical skills and, as a result, pupils use these confidently when solving problems. Developing pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary is another of the school's strong priorities. Because teachers consistently use mathematical terms and explain their meaning throughout lessons, pupils successfully use the correct language in their own discussions and answers. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English. They provide plenty of practical opportunities to use new mathematical language. Those pupils with special educational needs, and those learning to speak English as an additional language, make good progress in lessons because of this effective support. Pupils are motivated by the wide variety of strategies teachers use to introduce and teach new ideas. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the interactive whiteboard was used very effectively to allow children to identify different coins and model to the rest of the class how to make different sums of money and what change to give.
46. Where teaching is very good, all pupils are extended by teachers' very well targeted questions, and teachers model different methods of calculation and encourage pupils to share their explanations and ideas. There are times, however, when checks on pupils' progress to adapt work for lessons and to let pupils know what they need to do to improve are less consistent. Some pupils could do even better in some lessons if more opportunities to extend and challenge them were planned. This particularly affects the most able pupils. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. Whilst the subject leader has been effective in bringing about improvements since the last inspection, checks on pupil progress and the consistency of teaching throughout the school are not yet rigorous enough to identify all areas for improvement.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

47. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects are satisfactory and evident from displays around the school, in pupils' work and teachers' planning. Pupils have used timelines in history, measured how many centimetres their bean seedlings have grown and in one class are encouraged to use money to buy items as part of their role-play area which is set up as a cafe.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Scientific vocabulary is promoted very well.
- Pupils achieve well because of the very rich curriculum and experiences, which deepen their understanding.
- There has been good improvement in the overall provision for science since the last inspection.
- Assessment is not always used sufficiently enough to inform teachers' planning and challenge more able pupils.

### **Commentary**

48. The science curriculum provided by the school is very rich in first-hand experiences that are exciting and promote a desire to learn. As a result pupils achieve well. A significant proportion will not reach the expected standards by the end of Year 2 so that standards are below average. Nonetheless, almost all make good progress, building up their skills well from the time they start school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because standards have improved since then and pupils make better progress.
49. Effective leadership has had a significant impact on raising standards. The subject co-ordinator recognised that the majority of pupils are unfamiliar with scientific language when they first start school, and so they find it extremely difficult to explain their work in English. In addition, some of the home languages do not always have an equivalent word or phrase for those used within lessons. Consequently pupils were not able to find support at home. Action was taken to tackle this and now the school plans a wide range of activities and opportunities to improve pupils' understanding and their ability to explain what is happening. There are now plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active in lessons and observe scientific changes over time. This extends their learning very successfully. For example, as part their work on plants pupils have had the opportunity to grow many different kinds of seeds rather than just plant one type and to study the seeds they found in fruit at first hand. Displays in classrooms are full of photographs, objects and pupils' work, all with lots of labels to read and reinforce new vocabulary.
50. Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively in discussions to deepen pupils' understanding. In lessons pupils have many opportunities to discuss their ideas and explain why and how they think things have happened. For example, Year 2 pupils explained what they thought had happened to different foods when they were cooked before having the chance to investigate by themselves by cooking their own cakes. Opportunities to record their thoughts in many different ways further develop pupils' literacy skills and contribute well to their very good achievement in writing. Teachers know how well pupils achieve because at the beginning and end of each block of work they make good checks on pupils' understanding. However, teachers' planning is not always clear enough about how more able pupils will be challenged and extended and in some lessons they could make even better progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- ICT is used well across the curriculum to gain pupils' interest.
- Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use ICT in different situations so that they make good progress.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership overall, but the school does not have a clear system for finding out how well all the pupils are doing, and identifying any areas where pupils are not making as much progress.

## **Commentary**

51. Teaching and learning are good overall so that pupils achieve well. Some excellent teaching was seen, when pupils used the interactive whiteboard to compose in a music lesson. The very high expectations led pupils to work out for themselves how to use the technology to best effect. Pupils are confident to explain how to edit their writing on a computer and how to search the Internet for information that will help them in their work. ICT is not often taught separately, but features in lessons across the curriculum. This helps pupils to see the relevance of using ICT but does not ensure that all pupils are taught to develop their skills at a good rate.
52. Leadership and management of ICT are good overall. There has been good support for staff learning to use the new interactive whiteboards, and there are good systems in place for teachers to swap classrooms to give more pupils access to the new technology. Resources have improved considerably since the last inspection, but the school is still struggling to keep pace with national investments in ICT. As a result not all classes have an interactive whiteboard to supplement the computers. The school has enhanced classroom resources for ICT since the last inspection. This means that pupils use ICT in many lessons. The co-ordinator has drawn up clear guidance for staff to show them what is expected at each level of achievement. There is a good system for assessment overall. Good assessment sheets, containing 'I Can Do' statements, illustrate the skills that pupils need to learn in all aspects of ICT at each level. Currently, teachers complete these and pupils have no opportunity for making an assessment of their own ability and this means they are not fully aware of how to improve their own skills. School leaders have not put in place a system to use assessment information to check how well pupils are doing in ICT overall. The number of pupils achieving each level in each year group is not known, and so there is not an accurate way to check if pupils are making the progress they are capable of doing in ICT in every class.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

53. ICT is used very well across the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to pupils' good overall achievement. Pupils have used ICT in subjects such as history to research topics, for instance the life of Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. This has helped them gain skills in using the Internet, and a search engine to find information. Great care is taken to ensure that children access the Internet safely. In mathematics, pupils have created graphs to illustrate such topics as pupils' favourite yoghurt flavours. Pupils are particularly confident at editing their writing on a computer and know how to save and print their work. Art has played a very strong part in developing design skills with computer software. Pupils are very familiar with some graphics programs and enthusiastically explain how to make the most of them. This very good range of curriculum activities motivates pupils very well so that they enjoy their lessons and make good progress.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious education**

Provision for religious education is **very good**.

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

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are above those expected.
- Very good teaching means that pupils enjoy their lessons and work very hard.
- There is a very rich curriculum due to very good leadership of the subject

#### **Commentary**

54. Pupils continue to achieve very well in religious education as they did when the school was last inspected. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the topics covered and the way they interpret these makes a significant contribution to their very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
55. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and their teaching is very good. Very good relationships and behaviour mean that teachers manage their pupils very well. This is important as teachers make lessons fun, with ample opportunities for discussion where everyone wants to talk. It means that pupils listen hard and confidently contribute their own ideas. Teachers welcome these, using praise and questions effectively so that pupils explain fully. Pupils show high levels of interest when learning of different faiths. Through careful questioning that draws on their good knowledge of different faiths, teachers make sure they appreciate the similarities between them. A good example was when they pointed out similar features in the special books, celebrations and worship in their own Muslim faith and Christianity.
56. Very good leadership in the subject means the subject is promoted very well in the school. The curriculum is rich and vibrant so that pupils are eager learners. Visits, like the one to the local Catholic church, provide good first-hand experiences that pupils remember well. Back in the classroom pupils examine high quality resources like a christening robe, rosary beads and special bibles that add further to their appreciation of what it means to be a Christian. Assemblies make a strong contribution to religious education, like the dramatic reading of the story of Moses leading his people out of Egypt that reinforced a theme of 'we can all make a difference'. There are some good opportunities for writing, particularly in Year 2. These are most effective when they challenge pupils to reflect on topics and interpret them in their writing. Some of their thoughtful writing about the Nativity, bravery in an Islamic story and feelings of anger and happiness helps them develop good interpretation skills that add significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very occasionally, the over-use of worksheets limits pupils' responses to new learning.

#### **Geography**

57. No geography lessons were seen so that no overall judgements can be made. Examination of pupils' work in their folders indicates that the subject is taught in line with the school's planning and that standards are broadly in line with national expectations. However, the sample of work is sometimes thin, and pupils' progress is sometimes limited by the use of relatively unchallenging worksheets.



## History

Provision in history is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding opportunities to investigate historical events lead to very good progress in some lessons and are good fun.
- Very good use of literacy skills in history increases pupils' achievement overall.

### Commentary

58. Only one lesson was seen in history but there was much other evidence to show the very good quality of education, which has improved since the last inspection. The good range of work, on display and in pupils' history folders, shows that pupils achieve very well and standards are above average. There is evidence of very good teaching in the work seen. Good use of displayed information, opportunities for Internet research and other resources mean that pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of their history topics. Because topics are covered thoroughly and imaginatively, pupils are good at remembering the dates of events and why they happened. Effective planning links history work with other lessons like literacy, for example, where pupils use the reading and writing skills they are working on to sequence events and raise questions about the Great Fire of London. Teachers in Year 2 are good at setting written tasks that challenge pupils to use their knowledge of topics and interpret them in their own way, like their writing about what life was like for Florence Nightingale. The one lesson seen was excellent. A collection of artefacts challenged each group of pupils to identify a character in the Great Fire of London and then prepare a list of questions to ask when a pupil later took on that character's role in a 'hot seat' session. The teacher's very high expectations of pupils in terms of speaking and listening, work rate, concentration and behaviour coupled with praise when they got it right meant that there was a breathtaking pace to the lesson. The way it developed their investigation skills was outstanding. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about leadership and management of history.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

### Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations so that pupils succeed in reaching above average standards.
- The wide variety of art work motivates pupils very well.

### Commentary

59. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils achieve very well in art and design now due to very good teaching and learning. The whole school reflects the very good quality of pupils' work in vibrant displays in classrooms, corridors and the school hall. Teachers are very clear about the skills they want pupils to learn in

each unit of work and as a result standards are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils are particularly good at using colour well to enhance their painting, collage, and drawing. They have plenty of experience at working with different shades so that they know how to mix colours for best effect. Pupils often evaluate their artwork, which helps them to see how well they succeeded from their original design, and provides good motivation for developing writing skills. There is a good range of artwork on display, from three-dimensional sculptures made from pipe cleaners that represent human movements, to clay models of favourite animals. Collage work using a wide range of materials features widely around the school. Leadership and management are good because care is taken to evaluate how well pupils succeeded in each unit. Staff bring their plans and some examples of work to a staff meeting where teachers discuss how effective the plans were. As a result, plans are regularly modified to improve pupils' achievement even further.

## **Design and technology**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are excellent opportunities for parents to work alongside their children learning basic design skills.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to evaluate their designs so that they know how to improve their work
- Design and technology 'challenges' regularly enhance the curriculum and provide opportunities for pupils to practise their skills.

### **Commentary**

60. Pupils achieve well in design and technology given their low starting points, because they follow a thorough curriculum that ensures they cover all aspects of the subject. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Staff use simple writing frames to prompt pupils to evaluate their work by answering simple questions. As a result they know what they need to do to improve their designing and making skills next time. The curriculum is very broad and motivates pupils very well. Year 1 pupils are proud to explain how they designed special houses for their favourite characters, and why each house has individual features in the design. Year 1 pupils regularly work at design and technology challenges to help them practise basic making skills. During the inspection they made a fruit mobile by joining fruit shapes together in a long chain with split pins. Pupils had to work out by themselves how they were going to join the fruits together and how each one would look. This was a very good opportunity for pupils to develop independence and for speaking and listening about their ideas with their friends.
61. Leadership and management of design and technology are good. An excellent feature of the inspection was a design and technology workshop for parents, when Year 2 pupils worked with their parents to make puppets of the characters from *Little Red Riding Hood*. This extremely lively session helped parents to understand the curriculum very well.

## **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is well promoted throughout the school.
- The wide range of instruments available makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils are keen to learn because of the exciting activities provided.

## Commentary

62. Pupils enjoy music and the school provides plenty of opportunities for them to take part and listen to music. Lessons are lively and taught with good subject knowledge that has been developed through recent staff training and the introduction of a new scheme of work. In assemblies music plays as pupils enter and they sing enthusiastically, all joining in with actions during the songs. During the inspection the chosen music was by Lennon and McCartney; staff had shared their favourite songs and as a result pupils were keen to listen to their choices. The greater emphasis placed on music has led to good improvement since the last inspection.
63. Pupils achieve well in music throughout the school and standards seen during the inspection were broadly average. Teaching is good overall, and sometimes better. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, pupils made significant progress in understanding how musicians use musical notation to know when to play their instrument. Pupils were highly motivated by the extremely effective use of a music program on the interactive whiteboard. This allowed pupils to compose their own rhythms and watch and listen as the computer played them.
64. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about leadership and management of music. Longer-term planning has recently been reviewed and now ensures that pupils build progressively upon their knowledge, skills and understanding. They have lots of opportunities to sing and compose their own music, and contribute both independently and collaboratively. In lessons seen during the inspection pupils listened attentively, and learned and recalled sounds well. For example, effective modelling by the class teacher meant Year 1 pupils were able to learn and sing a new song using their arms and whole body to represent pitch. Pupils learn very effectively about music from other cultures. There is a wide range of instruments, many from different parts of the world, and the links teachers make for children between these and similar instruments found in the pupils' own cultures are good.

## Physical education

65. During the inspection no **physical education** lessons were observed and therefore no judgments can be made about the provision for physical education. Teachers' planning and discussions with pupils confirm that an appropriate range of physical education opportunities is provided, including gymnastics, games skills, dance and swimming. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and the after-school opportunities the school provides. A wide range of good quality resources is available for use in lessons and Year 2 pupils benefit from regular coaching by Birmingham City Football Club. Good links are made with science and pupils' personal, social and health education so that pupils know that 'warm up' and 'cooling down' sessions make an important contribution to their overall health. The school makes good use of the available space using a local park to provide a grassed area when necessary.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- This has a very high priority in the school and plays a considerable part in pupils' good overall achievement.

### Commentary

66. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is very well embedded in the school ethos and is very well supported throughout the curriculum and school life. Through their science work and physical education pupils learn to appreciate the need to eat healthily and to exercise sensibly. There are good strategies that help pupils learn to deal with difficulties in the playground like the availability of Year 2 'playground pals' who befriend others. There are good opportunities in religious education where pupils learn to appreciate and respect the different qualities of others and to value their beliefs and ways of life. This prepares them very well for life as citizens in a multi-cultural world. In English, activities like the effectively used role-play and discussion about the story of the *Gingerbread Man* mean that pupils develop a good understanding of right and wrong. This example also stimulated their skills of honesty and friendship as they offered advice about the best thing to do to each of the characters. Although there is no school council, pupils take on responsibilities for tasks around the school and in the playground. Their voice is heard in assemblies and class discussions where teachers and other adults always take time to listen and value what they have to say.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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