

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

West Bromwich

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103924

Headteacher: Mr I J Wright

Lead inspector: Mr D Marshall

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th May 2005

Inspection number: 267395

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	235
School address:	Anne Close Off Dunkirk Avenue West Bromwich West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Paskin
Date of previous inspection:	July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newtown School is a Community Primary School with 235 pupils on roll between the ages of three and eleven. There are eight classes including the nursery. Over 85 per cent of the pupils live in a ward that is in the bottom six per cent most deprived nationally. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is 29 per cent – well above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is low. Attendance is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic background is 13 per cent – around the national average. Currently there are no pupils with English as an additional language at an early stage of language acquisition. Pupil mobility in the older classes is higher than in most schools, with younger brothers and sisters often leaving when their Year 6 siblings go on to secondary school. The school leads the Sandwell Triad Initiative and works closely with two other schools. The school is developing a Community Learning Centre on the site to provide adult learning, family learning, breakfast, homework and after school clubs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27681	David Marshall	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology Music
19426	Christopher Farris	Lay inspector	
18935	Christopher Bolton	Team inspector	English Religious education Physical education
14976	Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	31

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Newtown is a good school. Pupils achieve well in their work and very well in their personal development. Teaching is good. Although standards in most subjects are below average levels for their age by the time pupils leave school, they all make good progress from a very low start and achieve well. The school is very well led by the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are now achieving well in English, mathematics and science due to good teaching.
- The headteacher leads the school very well and is well supported by the senior staff and governors.
- There is a high level of commitment to include all pupils in everything offered by the school, including a rich programme of visits and visitors. A good start has been made in modifying the curriculum to meet pupils' needs, but this works better in some classes than others.
- All staff know their pupils well and promote pupils' personal development very well.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- In some subjects the checks on pupils' learning are not used well enough on a day-to-day basis to raise standards for them all.
- Pupils' attendance is poor.

Since the school was last inspected the rate of improvement has been good. All the key issues from the last report have been dealt with. Assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is improving. Standards in science have been raised significantly. The provision for, and use of, information and communication technology (ICT) is now much improved and pupils use the skills they have learnt well across the curriculum. The school development plan is now a very effective document that enables subject leaders to support their areas of responsibility well. The successful work of the headteacher and staff has maintained the good features noted at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - in the top 5% of schools nationally - A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Throughout the school pupils are achieving well. Achievement is very good in the nursery and reception classes and good throughout the rest of the school. Standards when children start in the nursery are well below average and particularly low in their language development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are very well taught in nursery and reception, although

most have not caught up with the nationally set goals by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils work hard in Years 1 and 2 and achieve well. Results in the Year 2 national tests in 2004 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared to all schools. They still represent good achievement for a cohort of pupils with an above average number with special educational needs. The Year 6 test results last year improved significantly and pupils did particularly well in science. They showed very good progress when compared with their results four years earlier in Year 2. Standards in Year 6 now are generally below average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They are encouraged to help one another and show consideration for others. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They all enjoy coming to school. Relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils themselves are very good. The school's attendance rate is poor and well below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education the school provides is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers manage pupils very well through their good questioning and well-judged use of praise. They secure high standards of behaviour, carry learning forward very well and promote a really pleasant atmosphere for learning. The teaching of English and mathematics is good, and opportunities for pupils to use the skills they have learnt in these lessons in other subjects are now being extended. The school's current priority, to develop different teaching methods to cater better for the needs of all pupils, is appropriate but being implemented inconsistently. The teaching assistants, known as learning support practitioners, work very effectively, adding greatly to the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers know their pupils well. Assessment information about what pupils know, understand and can do in English and mathematics is detailed, and used well to make the work relevant to pupils' needs in some classes, but not consistently in all. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. The detail in pupils' individual education plans is good and applied well. The curriculum throughout the school is good. Although it is well planned, recent changes in the way subjects are combined are being implemented better in some classes than others. The many extra-curricular and additional activities enrich the curriculum very well. The care and welfare of pupils and the support they are given are very good. Partnerships with parents are good, and they are kept well informed of their children's progress. Through the local Triad Initiative that the school leads, they work very well with other schools and have very good links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the school is well managed. The senior staff promote an ethos that supports and welcomes all pupils and have made the school popular in the community. The staff work as a team and share a vision for future improvement, and the time and opportunity they have to monitor their subjects and guide their colleagues are effective in raising standards. Governance is satisfactory. The governors organise their work soundly, ensure the school meets all statutory requirements and contribute to school improvement. However, they take few opportunities to monitor the school's performance or the outcomes of their decisions.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high regard for the school and the place it has in the local community. Pupils enjoy school, are proud of it and enjoy the very good support they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend the way that assessment information is used on a day-to-day basis to match work to meet the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Continue to implement the new planning approaches to ensure that all classes are equally successful.
- Continue to develop ways of improving levels of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good in the Foundation Stage and good throughout the rest of the school. By the end of their reception year, children's standards are below those expected for their age in most areas of learning due to their very low starting point. Standards in writing, reading and mathematics are below average by the end of Year 2. Standards are improving and are average in mathematics and science but still below average in English in Year 6. Pupils' achievement in ICT and some aspects of music are above levels expected for their age by the time they leave the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In nursery and reception, whilst most children do not reach the nationally expected levels by the start of Year 1, they learn very well and make very good progress.
- Throughout the school most pupils achieve well in English and mathematics considering their well below average starting point.
- Achievement in ICT and some aspects of music is above expected levels by the time pupils leave the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. The provision for children in the nursery class and reception year is very good. All children make very good progress from a well below average starting point. They attain standards that are in line with those expected for their age in personal and social development and in physical development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, standards are below those normally seen for children of this age. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and were making good progress in the lessons observed. Very good teaching and curriculum planning give the school the capacity to continue its effective standard of provision for children in the Foundation Stage that provides a good start for all children.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.7 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	14.3 (17.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Although the current Year 2 is below average as a group, inspection findings confirm that seven years olds achieve well. Over the last four years the school's results in the national tests for seven year olds have shown improvement that is above the national trend of improvement. When compared to similar schools, pupils' attainments in the 2004 national tests were very low in reading, writing and mathematics. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was also well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the standards reached were still a good level of achievement for a group of children with a well above average number with

special educational needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (25.1)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.8 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.2 (27.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. When compared with national results at the end of Year 6 in 2004, pupils' standards in English were average, below average in mathematics, but were well above average in science. When the results are compared with similar schools based on how well these pupils had achieved at the age of seven, they show standards were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and very high in science. These pupils had made very good progress overall. Targets for achievement in English and mathematics tests in 2004 were exceeded. The targets set for the current year by the governors are challenging and high. Inspectors judge that there has been a good improvement all round in the performance of pupils so far this year and these targets are attainable. The success of focused teaching has led to these targets being achieved and this is largely the reason for the school gaining Achievement Awards in 2001, 2002 and 2003.
4. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average overall in English. Inspection evidence shows that standards in speaking and listening rise from well below average on entry to the school to above average by the time pupils leave. Most pupils speak with confidence and they show great willingness and spirit when answering questions in all classes in the school. Standards in reading in Year 6 are average, and have improved this year, because of the good teaching of basic reading skills. Pupils now read a good range of books and keep clear records of their reading. Writing is now progressing well and standards are also rising but standards are currently below average. The standards of spelling and punctuation have risen but are also below average.
5. Standards in mathematics have risen well throughout the school. In previous years, standards by the end of Year 2 have generally been well below the national average. Work seen on the inspection in Year 2 was below average and reflects the improvement that the innovations in the curriculum have achieved. By the end of Year 6 standards in mathematics are average. This is because of the good teaching in Years 3 to 6 that enables pupils to achieve well overall after entering the school with well below average standards. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is good. Both boys and girls do equally well in all strands of the subject although using and applying mathematics in other subjects could be better.
6. In science, standards in school have risen despite pupils' well below average attainment on entry. Pupils achieve well because the teaching and learning in science are good throughout the school. In 2004 over 90 per cent of pupils in Year 6 achieved the expected level for their age in science; this was well above that found nationally. The numbers achieving the higher level 5 were also well above the national average. Standards in school currently are below average by the end of Year 2 and average in Year 6.
7. The consistently good teaching and good cross-curricular planning in ICT ensure that pupils achieve above expected levels in word processing, data handling and multi-media presentations. In music pupils achieve good standards in singing and composing. This is mainly due to the outstanding contribution made by visiting teachers from the Greets Green Vocal Project. In

history and religious education pupils achieve well and standards are in line with expected levels for their age by the time they leave school.

8. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. The good support that pupils receive builds pupils' confidence and secures good achievement. Achievements are particularly good in numeracy and reading. There are good individual education plans which set appropriate targets for improvement in these subjects. The good support from the learning support practitioners ensures good progress. The school's ethos of including all pupils and the values that underpin its approach to teaching and learning help ensure that the needs of pupils are identified early and met by teaching and support staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their learning. Their personal development, especially their moral and social development, is also very good. As a result, pupils behave very well, both in lessons and at playtimes. Attendance is poor and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, to which they respond very well.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.
- The provision for moral and social development is very good.
- Procedures to monitor and follow up on absenteeism are very thorough; despite this pupils' attendance rates are well below the national average.

Commentary

9. The school promotes moral and social development very well, with the result that pupils at the school are self-confident, respect each other's viewpoints and clearly enjoy very good relationships with each other and with adults. They are happy pupils, enthusiastic about their school and keen to learn. All extra-curricular activities, whether music, sports or ICT, are well attended. The school expects its pupils to behave very well. The pupils have worked with all staff to draw up a system of rewards and sanctions for behaviour. As a result they have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and behaviour is very good both in lessons and at lunch time and play time. In the playgrounds, the pupils play well together. Older pupils help younger ones with their games. The play times are well supervised and pupils and parents are confident that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. The pupils feel safe and secure.
10. Assemblies are used well to raise moral and social issues, as well as to provide time for reflection and spiritual development. In one assembly, for pupils in Years 3 to 6, the headteacher used the Bible to initiate a lively discussion about taking responsibility. Pupils were then invited to provide their own thoughts; these could then be used at subsequent assemblies. In the weekly 'celebration' assemblies, pupils enjoy sharing their achievements with others.
11. Pupils enjoy a good physical environment at school. The grounds are extensive and well maintained. Classrooms and internal spaces are full of vibrant and stimulating displays. This all helps to provide for the spiritual development of pupils, which is good. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities in lessons to reflect on the world around them and on the work of famous artists. They often consider and discuss the meanings of texts they are using and are

encouraged to exchange their thoughts and ideas with others. In religious education lessons and in assemblies they consider their own beliefs and those of others.

12. The moral and social development of pupils is very good. There are clear expectations of very good behaviour throughout the school and pupils show a strong understanding of how to conduct themselves. Pupils are taught to respect their school and its property. The school council comprising pupils from all year groups from Years 1 to 6 has played an effective role in helping to establish rules for good conduct. Teachers and other adults provide good examples in their relationships with the pupils and with each other. The display of awards, sanctions and class rules, together with celebration assemblies, encourage the very high standards attained. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and to take responsibility by helping others in group and paired work. Pupils behave very responsibly as they move around the school individually and in groups. There is a strong sense of community in which pupils and adults, including teachers, support staff and parents, work very well together. It is a tribute to the school's hard work that there have been no exclusions in the last two years.
13. Pupils' cultural development is good. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in art, drama and music and to develop an understanding of the work of famous artists. The work of famous people and their example is often referred to in assemblies and history. Pupils study different faiths and produce some work such as Rangoli patterns, which are related to other cultures.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2	School data	1.4
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.

14. During the last reporting year attendance was 92.4 per cent, which was similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. This was well below the national average and was poor. Attendance fell following the previous inspection but steps taken since then led to a sharp reduction in absences and the figures for the current year show a further good improvement in attendance. Unauthorised absence figures are also well above the national average but this is due in part to the school classifying all holidays in term time as unauthorised – with the underlying unauthorised absence figures nearly doubled as a result. The school has good procedures in place to promote and monitor attendance and all unexplained absences are chased up promptly on the first day. Most pupils arrive punctually and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Activities provided to enrich the curriculum are very good. There is very good provision for pupils' support, care and guidance.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Assessment is sound overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers motivate and manage pupils well, promoting very good relationships and behaviour.
- Lesson planning is detailed and thorough, giving most lessons purpose and drive.
- Assessment procedures are detailed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but the use of assessment on a day-to-day basis requires improvement.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this promotes good achievement.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (7%)	15 (50%)	11 (37%)	2 (7%)	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.

15. The very good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage reflects a very good understanding of how young children learn best, and skilled management. The teachers and assistants provide a very broad, interesting curriculum that engages children effectively. They draw on their great experience and detailed knowledge of the individual children to ensure that learning is relevant to the children's developing needs. Expectations in terms of learning and social skills are high, resulting in good progress overall and challenge for all children, including the most able. Classroom support is very effective and well organised. This helps to ensure that the least able children also progress very well and gain satisfaction from learning.
16. The good teaching throughout the rest of the school turns pupils' interest to good account, due to the very hard work, enthusiasm and experience of the teachers and support staff. Carefully targeted questioning and good use of praise motivate pupils and carry learning forward well. For instance, the good questions posed in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on how to collect data and analyse it using Venn and Carroll diagrams enabled pupils to take a great deal of responsibility for their own learning. The high level of pupils' interest and enthusiasm was particularly evident in some lessons where the teachers had spent a great deal of time planning sessions where different aspects of the curriculum were being covered in one project. The best example of this was in Year 4 where the work on World War II was coming to a conclusion in a project on keeping safe. The task to do with Anderson Shelters effectively took in six of the subjects of the National Curriculum and provided opportunities for pupils to use their own strengths to best effect. This type of very effective provision is not yet consistently implemented in all classes.
17. Teachers make great efforts to raise the self-esteem of their pupils, making good use of praise and creating a good atmosphere for learning. The learning environment is particularly rich, where some classrooms are a treasure-trove of learning materials and displays and as a result pupils work in rooms that are highly stimulating. The pupils learn from the very good example set by adults in the school. For instance, pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson were challenged at just the right level and were quick to praise their friends' efforts in producing correct answers. The atmosphere was one in which the pupils felt confident to respond. Teachers manage pupils very well, insisting on and securing high standards of behaviour. In a Year 1 art and design lesson, the teacher really encouraged pupils to think for themselves and suggest to her how they could make their three-dimensional work better regardless of their level of ability.

This was a good example of teachers' caring attitudes and commitment to include all pupils in all activities. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

18. Teachers plan lessons carefully, ensuring that lessons challenge pupils' thinking well. For example, in a Year 6 lesson based on a visit to the Black Country Museum, pupils were quickly engaged in question and answer session that really made them think. The teacher soon established the process as "question → answer → detail → source". This led to a very structured and informative discussion with pupils, which quickly enabled them to identify key ideas. As a result, they were excited to plan and carry out their own tasks. Classroom assistants, now known as learning support practitioners with additional responsibilities, work very effectively in all classes, valuably enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This was evident, for example, in a very good lesson in Year 5 in the computer suite where, again, several subjects were being combined to solve a challenging problem relating to traffic flow and pedestrians. The teacher and two support assistants circulated very well to make sure that the very different responses from pupils were brought to a good conclusion.
19. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall. Teachers draw in pupils by including them in questioning, and make sure they succeed in front of their peers. Assessment within special needs is good. Good day-to-day planning generally provides pupils with challenging tasks based on the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Teachers work very well with their learning support practitioners, enabling them to give good support to pupils with special needs. The school has developed an appropriate range of diagnostic tests to help it identify pupils who have special educational needs.
20. All assessment issues from the last report have been tackled. Some good progress has been made. For instance, there are now good systems for checking how pupils are doing in English and, from these, pupils are provided with good individual targets for improvement in reading. The school is now working on ways to make sure all subjects are included in these processes. All teachers use informal assessments to gauge all pupils' understanding in lessons. The information from these checks on pupils' progress is not, however, used consistently by all teachers to modify the plans for the next lesson to meet the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. As a result lessons are not always sufficiently challenging for all pupils. There is a good school policy for marking pupils' written work that encourages the frequent use of feedback to pupils, which is related to the aims for learning in the lesson. Teachers mostly mark pupils' work carefully, giving each pupil clear advice on how to improve. When these arrangements are used they motivate pupils, encourage positive attitudes to learning and promote good progress. However, this is not seen consistently in all classes. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' progress throughout the school

The curriculum

The curriculum provided is very good in the nursery and reception and good across the rest of the school. There is very good enrichment through activities that extend pupils' experiences outside normal lessons. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. Resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes produces a very good basis for the children's learning and affords them a good start to their education.
- The exciting recent innovations in the planning of the curriculum are not yet being applied equally well across all subjects.

- Very good opportunities are provided to enrich the curriculum so that pupils are well motivated and keen to learn.
- The accommodation is used well and the good resources enhance learning.

Commentary

21. The school has made good progress in continuing to improve the curriculum since the previous inspection and, as a result, provision is now better in science and ICT. Better provision has resulted in higher achievement in these subjects. Provision for personal, social, and health education is good with pupils coming together to share ideas about such matters as health and safety. Curriculum provision in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Children achieve very well from a very low starting point because of the many real experiences offered and very well planned opportunities to work and play together. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and promotes good achievement because the staff know what pupils need to work on next and adapt work to meet individual needs.
22. Teachers work very hard to make their lessons effective and interesting. English and mathematics are priorities, but there is now a strong emphasis on providing a wide and varied curriculum in other subjects. Music, for example, is a strength and pupils perform very well. Some, but not all, teachers have implemented the innovative whole-school approach to teaching and learning to further meet the needs of pupils in the school. This is leading to some inconsistencies in the planning of the curriculum across classes. The school is well aware of this and is monitoring the situation closely. There are some very worthwhile links between subjects, for example mathematics and geography. These links make effective use of curriculum time.
23. The curriculum is made richer by a very good range of extra activities and experiences. The school welcomes and makes effective use of a number of visitors. Visits to a museum and art gallery, for example, give pupils well-planned cultural experiences. Out-of-school clubs, such as sports coaching and music workshops, all contribute to pupils' interests and enjoyment. There are very good links with the community. The good links with local schools ease the transfer of pupils to their next school.
24. At the time of the last inspection the school's accommodation was found to have weaknesses. These have now been rectified and the accommodation is satisfactory with some strengths. The school makes very good use of its accommodation for the benefit of its pupils. The spacious outdoor area, including adventure playground, multi-sports area and tranquil wild-life garden, is very well used and gives pupils valuable learning opportunities. Teachers present pupils' work attractively which adds to the welcoming atmosphere of the school. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The building of an ICT suite and computerised issuing of books for research in literacy are examples of such improvement. There are sufficient teaching staff, who are well qualified, and a very good number of teaching assistants well deployed across the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school very effectively promotes pupils' welfare in a caring environment. Their personal development is very well supported and pupils are happy and thrive well in a safe and secure environment. The school is good at taking pupils' ideas and opinions into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff look after the pupils very well and provide good support as they grow in confidence and experience.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Procedures to manage health and safety and child protection are good.
- Children are very well supported as they start school.
- Pupils know that their views are listened to and that they have a part to play in school development.

Commentary

25. The pastoral support provided by the staff is very good and the pupils recognise and appreciate this. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. The school is a warm and friendly place in which pupils are happy and secure and can enjoy their school life. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils make it easy for pupils to share their troubles, knowing they will find a sympathetic ear. Personal development of the pupils is well promoted through the curriculum, responsibilities, individual support and the high expectations that teachers have. Older pupils have a good range of responsibilities including helping younger pupils to play constructively. All this significantly boosts their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who are members of the school council feel that they have a real part to play in the running of the school and this, together with the individual class councils, enables the views of all pupils to be taken into account in school developments. The academic development of children in the Foundation Stage is well supported through good assessment procedures and there is good academic support for pupils with special educational needs. However, for the remainder of the pupils, assessment information, although satisfactory, is less effectively used to move pupils on in their learning on a day-to-day basis.
26. The physical well-being of pupils has a high priority. Child protection procedures are securely in place and any concerns are highlighted so that early support can be given. Health and safety are well managed and safety inspections are properly carried out. Risk assessments are undertaken for activities both in and out of school and these are regularly updated. Fire procedures are all in place and portable electrical appliances are tested annually. First aid arrangements are good, with staff having had specialised training in dealing with asthma and diabetes emergencies. Notes are sent home in the event of a bump to the head or other more serious injury. Safe practices are followed during lessons, especially where health and safety could be an issue, such as physical education, science and design and technology, and there are strict rules about safe access to the Internet.
27. Children starting in the Foundation Stage enjoy a smooth and confident start to their school life because of the good support given by the staff. Home visits are made and almost all children quickly settle in to school life. Pupils who join the school at times other than the normal are well supported by staff and by their classmates so that they quickly become familiar with school routines. Pupils' transition to secondary education is well supported through the close links that the school has with the receiving schools and with the extensive preparatory dialogue that takes place.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents in general are very happy with the education provided for their children.
- Information provided to parents is good overall.
- The school works hard to further the very good links that exist with the local community.
- The school has very good links with other schools.

Commentary

28. Parents' views as reflected by the responses to the questionnaire and the parents' meeting are extremely supportive of the school and most are very happy with the education provided for their children. The responses are significantly more positive than those at the time of the previous inspection and reflect the efforts put in by the school to involve parents more in their children's education. Parents see their children liking school, being treated fairly and encouraged to become independent. They believe the school is well led, with good teaching, and the pupils are encouraged to work hard and try their best. The inspection findings wholly endorse these views. There were very few negative views expressed with no strong disagreements to the statements in the questionnaire.
29. The school provides parents with good information about their child's progress and about matters of general interest. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both informative and meet statutory requirements. Each term there is a newsletter and curriculum letter and other notes are sent home on specific issues. Pupils' annual reports are of high quality and meet statutory requirements. They give very good details of pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects, together with targets to help the pupil improve. Parents' views are regularly canvassed both generally and on specific issues. There are two consultation evenings, with generally good attendance, and parents can discuss any issues or concerns with the class teachers on a daily basis.
30. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. The headteacher firmly believes that parents have a vital role in the education of the child and seeks to involve them at all levels. The 'Compass Project' has helped train parents to support pupils' studies at home and has raised parental involvement. An increasing number of parents help their children at home with reading and other homework. A regular group of parents work in the school and provide valuable additional support. The school lends lap-top computers to families without their own and this enables both pupils and their families to learn computing skills. The Parent Staff Association has been in abeyance for some time but is currently being re-established.
31. There are very good community links. The school has a major involvement with a number of local bodies and has benefited significantly as a result. These include Click Greets Green, which has underpinned the major development in ICT resources. This has had a direct impact on the ICT curriculum and pupils' computer skills. Involvement with the Children's Fund has enabled the school to expand out-of-school activities. Involvement with Greets Green NDC is providing the funding for the Community Learning Centre. All these activities benefit the learning of the pupils and their families and reflect the enthusiasm of the headteacher and governors in seeking to widen the school's impact within the community and so benefit the pupils' learning.
32. The school has very good links with other schools. As the co-ordinating school taking part in the Sandwell Triad Initiative, staff have been able to share experiences and best practices with staff from other schools and this has enhanced their teaching and managerial skills. This has had a very beneficial impact on the learning of the pupils. Links exist with another local primary

school with improvements in literacy, especially writing activities for younger pupils, as the objective. There are strong links with the two main secondary schools that most pupils transfer to and, as well as taster visits, pupils take part in bridging projects and a range of other curriculum activities. These help to smooth the pupils' transition to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the Triad Initiative of local schools by the headteacher is very good. The school is committed to inclusion. Finances are organised and managed very well. Governance is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The whole school shares the headteacher's commitment to inclusion and works hard to make sure this happens.
- There is a strong partnership with two other schools.
- Finance is managed very well; best value is always sought.
- Although governors work well with the school, they should challenge senior managers more rigorously.

Commentary

33. The headteacher, who has been in post for several years, is a very good leader, with particular strengths in his interpersonal skills. This shows in the way he is committed to the local community, and all who live there, who greatly respect his determination to make sure everyone is valued, respected and included in all aspects of school life. All who work at the school support him strongly, so that the school is a warm and welcoming workplace for every individual, adult and pupil alike. The headteacher is also the leader of the Triad Initiative, whereby three schools work together on common developments. He leads this very well, and as a result teachers and support staff have benefited from further high quality professional input to their training. It has led to increased confidence, better teaching and improved leadership skills, which have begun to raise standards in the school. The financial planning, and focused use of the extra funding for this project, is very carefully done and it is clear the money is spent well.
34. The whole staff work as a united team. There is an effective consultation process, which includes parents, governors and school staff to identify what the school needs to do to improve further. Data is analysed very closely to see how each pupil and each year group is progressing and how these results compare to similar schools nationally. The headteacher and senior staff monitor teaching in every classroom, discuss ways to improve it, and then provide extra help to bring this about. Thus the provision for pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. It is organised efficiently by the special educational needs co-ordinator, and put into practice well in all classrooms, especially in mathematics and English, where pupils' individual education plans are used well and their progress monitored.
35. Learning assistants, known as learning support practitioners, are a very important part of the good teams in every year; they are monitored in the same way as teachers, given extra training, and they then take on further responsibilities such as the induction of students on teaching practice, or phonics development in literacy. All of this feeds into a much improved school development plan that sets clear targets for further improvement in a well-organised way. The school administrative staff make a very effective contribution to the management of information and to the smooth daily running of the school. The well-respected site-manager plays a key role

in the day-to-day running of the school. This includes safety management, with regular checks of playground equipment. The very well maintained building and grounds are evidence of the close attention she, and her colleagues, give.

36. The school is reviewing and re-organising its approach to the curriculum, having started initially with Years 5 and 6. It is looking at the teaching and learning in each subject, how they might be linked and how best the school day may be planned. It is seen as the next very important step in the school's development. An enthusiastic start has been made by all involved, which pupils and teachers enjoy greatly. However, this has led to an inconsistency in the planning and recording of pupils' work and its use for assessment. More could be done therefore to improve the management of this major change to make sure there is a consistent approach in all classrooms, central to which is the way pupils' work is recorded.
37. The governors work closely with the headteacher and the school staff; they are dedicated to the school and enjoy the trust and confidence of all who work there. They give sound support in making sure the strengths and weaknesses of the school are recognised and that the school fulfils its statutory duties. A particular strength of the governors is their wholehearted commitment to the well-organised inclusion of all pupils who live in the area. However, the governors now need to bring more rigour to their committee structures, and in the way they challenge the school as it changes, to make sure, for instance, that major curriculum initiatives are being effective. Responses from the governors show that they are aware of this weakness and are already taking steps to remedy it.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	781759	Balance from previous year	49452
Total expenditure	765427	Balance carried forward to the next year	65784
Expenditure per pupil	3399		

38. The school manages its finances very well. The very efficient finance manager works in close partnership with the local authority, the governors and the headteacher and is successful in all she does. Best value is always looked for in goods and services. The school has built up a strong reserve fund for which it has very clear plans. The immediate financial future of the school is very secure.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Most children begin school with knowledge and skills that are well below average for their age. All children, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and ensure that all staff members are well supported and work as an effective team. There is a clear view of what the Foundation Stage should be, with very strong support and teamwork of an experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. The teaching is consistently very good in both the nursery and reception classes. There is a rigorous approach to monitoring children's progress on a regular basis. Assessment is used effectively to identify children's needs and for tracking their progress.
40. Children achieve very well in both classes, but do not reach all the goals expected and their attainment is often below average in speaking and listening, knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical development and creative development at the end of the reception year. Staff plan carefully together, thus ensuring progression of skills and continuity. They plan a great variety of directed and free choice activities according to the children's needs. Very good links are made between all areas of learning so that children are constantly practising the wide range of skills they need to develop academically and socially. The provision for children's learning is very good overall, with access to a secure outdoor area being a very good improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults provide so well that children are confident, interested and excited about learning.
- Children form very good relationships with staff and other children.

Commentary

41. The very good teaching and learning in this area of development are based on adults' very high expectations of politeness and good behaviour that are constantly reinforced. Children's independence progresses very well, as does their ability to work and play alongside others. The whole area has a warm, welcoming, atmosphere in which young children feel safe and secure. Nursery children very quickly learn to abide by class rules and to follow routines. Children's confidence develops very well so that by the time they enter the reception class most are ready to develop their learning further.
42. Children's confidence continues to develop very well in the reception class so that by the time they start in Year 1, most will have achieved the early learning goals for their age in this area. A very wide variety of activities are provided so the children are excited and motivated to learn. Opportunities such as keeping chrysalises and watching them hatch into butterflies engage the children's interest and develop their enthusiasm. The moment during the inspection when one butterfly was released was a highlight for all concerned.

43. Children learn to help each other well; they work together to create a rocket so they can 'travel' to their chosen planet. Children are very well prepared for the next stage in their schooling because they are very well behaved and ready to listen. Relationships at all levels are very good. Staff have high expectations that the children learn to develop their own independence and give them choices to enable them to achieve a suitable outcome.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Due to very good teaching children learn to communicate well with staff and with other children.
- Very good support means that children make a strong start in their reading and their writing is developing well.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In both the nursery and reception classes the very good teaching is characterised by a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and the very well organised and exciting activities that motivate them. Staff have built very good relationships with the children and so children talk and listen well with them, extending the children's thoughts and ideas. Children take their reading books home so parents can be fully involved in the children's learning. Despite this very good provision the majority of children will not have achieved the early learning goals for their age by the time they go into Year 1 because they have so much catching up to do.
45. Children learn to read instructions, for instance for making simple cakes. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to understand the early elements of writing. They are being encouraged to write their names and form letters correctly. Through interesting activities, such as writing postcards, the children are learning to use writing for a purpose. By analysing the children's learning, staff have been able to increase children's achievements in understanding the sounds that letters make. Teachers record the children's progress, give them individual targets and provide direct teaching to specific children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide very good opportunities for children to use numbers in a range of contexts.
- Teaching and learning are very good and so children show considerable interest in number activities.

Commentary

46. Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and learning. However, most children will not have reached the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class due to their low starting point. Good emphasis is placed on using numbers in practical situations; for example, they discuss the number of children present and absent. Consequently the children are learning about using mathematical language as a meaningful activity.
47. In both the nursery and reception classes children learn to say and use number names and rhymes to five and enthusiastically sing their favourite rhymes and songs, and this reinforces

their learning. Children investigate the properties of, and learn about, different shapes. In the reception class some children already know the names of most shapes. For example, they can recognise coins and use them in their role-play when giving change at the vegetable shop. Children use their investigation skills well as they order vegetables by their length. Group activities relate particularly well to number work as well as other aspects of the curriculum. Mathematical language is emphasised and is woven into everyday activities as adults support children's learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children achieve well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Children are provided with a wide range of experiences to explore and investigate the world around them.

Commentary

48. Children achieve well because both teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan activities that engage and sustain children's interest. Children go on walks to note signs of change in the world around them. They plant seeds and watch these grow. These activities are well led and children are fully focused on developing their knowledge, understanding and the use of related vocabulary. Children enjoy learning and remain totally absorbed in the range of activities inside and outside. Children's use of 'senses' is very well developed to enhance their understanding of things around them. A wide variety of interesting activities are planned for the children to investigate and explore, such as growing grass in the shape of caterpillars and observing butterflies develop.
49. The children use a large range of construction toys, which is used effectively by the children to initiate their own learning. Several computers are available in the classroom and the children enjoy using them to search the Internet and to print out their own drawings. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good and children enjoy an extensive range of experiences, but most will not reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside environment is used regularly and effectively for physical activity.

Commentary

50. One of the strengths of the Foundation Stage is using the outside as a learning environment. It is well planned not only for physical development but also in supporting other areas of the curriculum. This enables children to use both large and small equipment on a regular basis, ensuring they develop their co-ordination and control. Children learn to control wheeled toys along the road track and develop their imagination by experimenting with ways of moving on the permanent climbing equipment. The school hall is used to teach skills in a more directed

way, such as climbing on benches, ladders and through tunnels. Consequently, children are learning a sense of space and move with growing confidence. Children use a selection of simple tools and small equipment to develop their fine manipulative skills effectively. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in this area of learning and all children make very good progress and most will achieve the standards expected for their age by the time they go into Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children work in a well-ordered environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued.
- Teaching is very good, providing many opportunities for children to develop their creative skills.

Commentary

51. The outside area is used particularly effectively to develop the children's imagination. The environment is designed to encourage children to make up their own scenarios; they can act out the entire situation of going on holiday. In doing so, children expand their language, for example making up conversations on the phone. They learn to explore their senses; through very good adult support the children learn to compare the different sounds of the permanent musical instruments displayed. They create large constructions from boxes and bricks and make pictures from a variety of media. By giving them interesting experiences, children are able to express their thoughts and feelings in various ways. Children extend and develop their skills as they play on the large equipment and ride their wheeled toys. They develop their manipulative skills as they handle dough, scissors and small toys. Staff carefully develop children's fine manipulative skills. In both classes teachers give children many opportunities to work with a wide range of tools. The quality of teaching is very good. However, many children are not likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, which leads to pupils' overall good achievement.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Pupils' learning builds well from that in reception.
- In some classes and subjects, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply their writing skills.

Commentary

52. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in speaking and listening, average in reading and below average in writing. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in speaking and listening, average in reading and below average in writing. From a very low start, achievement throughout the school is good for virtually all pupils, although progress in some aspects of writing is not as good as the very good achievements in speaking and listening and in reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive in reading and writing. Progress since the last inspection is good because teaching is now good as opposed to satisfactory at the time of the last report.

53. By Year 2 pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. They listen well but some struggle to find the right words to express their ideas. By Year 6 pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. Pupils listen carefully to what teachers and other adults have to say and pay close attention to the contributions to their classmates. As a result they understand the information and know what they have to do. Teachers carefully consider pupils' views and take every opportunity to extend and reinforce their vocabulary in all subjects. In Year 6, a very good religious education lesson helped pupils explore the meanings of 'trust', 'respect' and 'responsibility'. Strategies such as 'talking partners' are successfully used to help pupils share ideas and learn from each other. Many pupils are articulate and speak confidently.
54. Pupils achieve well in reading by Years 2 and 6 to reach similar standards as pupils in most schools. Guided reading and opportunities for individual reading are very well organised. The school has a thorough management system for developing pupils' reading, which includes the very good support of learning support practitioners. Pupils who are not achieving enough are quickly identified through the good assessment procedures and given good quality extra support. Pupils in Year 6 of average and above average attainment read a good range of books fluently and understand the content very well.
55. Standards of Year 2 and 6 pupils' writing are below average. When pupils start Year 1 their early writing skills are below average and teachers build upon pupils' prior attainment well. Good attention is paid to developing grammatical skills, spelling and handwriting. The display of a range of class and individuals' work provides good writing models for pupils. Teachers take care to provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a wide variety of contexts that are meaningful to the pupils. For example in a Year 4 lesson the teacher set up an 'incident' in the wildlife garden and the pupils were inspired to take notes and understand ideas such as evidence and facts. There are some good examples of pupils writing in other subjects but this is inconsistent across classes and writing is underused, for example in geography and history.
56. The quality of teaching is good across the school and has improved since the last inspection. Teaching probes pupils' thinking through well-directed questions at just the right level. This was observed in a good Year 2 lesson, when the teacher led pupils to read into the meaning of text they were studying through questions such as "Can you explain why the character behaved like that?" and "How can you tell what he was like?" The teachers manage pupils very well and this has a positive effect on the work produced. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a very good contribution to the development of the pupils' literacy skills.
57. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Thorough analysis of pupils' achievements, and monitoring and evaluation of lessons and planning have improved teaching. There are good examples of teachers' marking that shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work, but this varies from class to class.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Provision is satisfactory, and improving. There is clear evidence that the modified curriculum is encouraging better use of language and literacy across the curriculum. Through the good opportunities they are given, pupils are particularly skilful in using their ICT skills for research purposes and in word processing. Teachers are adept in ensuring that pupils have very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in all lessons. However, the quality of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills is still more variable in the broader curriculum than in English.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards continue to rise because teaching is good.
- Classroom organisation helps pupils of all abilities; every effort is made to include all pupils in learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners; they work hard and behave well.
- Progress since the last report has been good.
- More could be done to improve target setting and the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work.

Commentary

59. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are below average whilst those in Year 6 are now in line with those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. Pupils' achievements since they started school are good because many begin in the Foundation Stage with very low levels of mathematical knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special needs make good progress because of the very effective support of classroom assistants. There have been good improvements in the subject since the last report because standards have risen, teaching is better and pupils now progress at a faster rate.
60. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 build on their very good start in the Foundation Stage by following a progressively planned series of practically based activities. The setting of targets in each lesson and the detailed assessment and marking of pupils' work in Year 2 are very good, and an example to follow for other teachers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on this well and pupils' work shows progression from year to year. It is organised well for lower attaining pupils and for pupils with special needs, who have work matched to their ability well, together with extra adult support. However, on some occasions there is too little difference in the work given to pupils of middle ability and higher attaining pupils. This is because target setting and the marking and monitoring of pupils' work are inconsistent and still being developed.
61. In Year 6, pupils now experience a different learning style from at the time of the last inspection, using a more cross-curricular approach to mathematics to develop their mathematical skills better, based on a purposeful problem-solving approach. The dynamic lesson seen during the inspection shows the real potential of this approach. In discussion higher attaining pupils had good knowledge of number, averages, and measures such as metres/centimetres/millimetres and readily converted one to another using decimal equivalents. Additional thought and organisation are now being given to this innovative approach to ensure pupils record work in a systematic way and that this is readily available for marking, assessment of progress and further target setting for individuals and groups.
62. The working atmosphere in all lessons is good because teachers and pupils get on well together. The lessons are lively as teachers push the lessons along at pace, using a judicious mixture of questions, explanations, praise and encouragement to maintain pupils' interest at a high level. Pupils respond to this very well; they work hard, listen, share ideas, behave sensibly and are enthusiastic learners. Learning support practitioners are a valuable part of the teaching teams and work confidently with individuals and small groups. Teachers have good mathematical knowledge, plan lessons carefully and organise resources to match the needs of particular groups of pupils. In the best lesson in Year 2 work was matched to the full range of ability so

that all pupils made good progress and there was a clear and significant difference between the pupils of middle ability and the highest attaining pupils.

63. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. He is committed to improving standards and works hard with other members of the leadership team to achieve this. He is focused on making sure that as changes take place in the school's approach to learning there is a consistent and systematic approach with a strong focus on target setting, marking and pupils' well-presented work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. There are good examples of problem solving in numeracy lessons across the school. In some subjects in some classes there are good opportunities to use mathematics more widely, for example in the use of ICT to represent data in Year 5 as part of street surveys and in Year 6 when data from the 1837 census was used to compare pupils' heights then and now at different ages. It is part of the school development plan to provide systematic planning of mathematics into the wider curriculum so that pupils are able to use their skills learned in numeracy lessons more often to solve problems. In some classrooms a good start has been made, but it is not consistent.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and attain average standards by the time they leave.
- There is a very good focus on investigations so that pupils understand the importance of scientific enquiry.
- Teaching is good, built around very good planning. Pupils are very good learners.
- Pupils with special needs make good progress because of the effective support from learning assistants.
- The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable co-ordinator.

Commentary

65. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special needs make very good progress as they are usually supported by learning support practitioners. Good emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry by all teachers has ensured pupils become confident at planning and carrying out investigations. Almost all pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching which is built around very good planning. Work is often set carefully at different ability levels for small group work, and therefore not only do pupils with special needs progress well but those of higher ability pupils are challenged well too.
66. Pupils attain below average standards by the end of Year 2. Many pupils enter school with well below average knowledge of the everyday world around them. Some find it hard to describe what they have seen or found out. However, pupils make good progress because of the effective teaching and by the end of Year 2 they provide explanations about their observations and use scientific language with confidence. By the time they leave in Year 6 almost all pupils are confident scientists in all investigations, and they reach average standards in all different aspects

of the subject. They record results well because of the good guidance given by the school's recording sheets, developed by the co-ordinator. Work is always very neat. There are good links with literacy, which help to raise standards in writing. Pupils know about the importance of a fair test, select and use apparatus intelligently and exchange ideas happily, using a wide scientific vocabulary.

67. Teachers use national guidance well and match the majority of work successfully to pupils' needs and abilities. Teachers manage pupils effectively by using a judicious mixture of questions, praise and encouragement. Relationships are very good and as a result pupils are highly motivated, enthusiastic learners. This was particularly evident in a very good Year 2 lesson about the development of a fair test on growing plants. The use of the large, TV screen, magnifying glass, to see the growth of shoots made the lesson very exciting.
68. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator provides good guidance. She monitors plans, analyses results and advises teachers on the best way to tackle investigations. This has enabled the school to make good progress in the subject since the last inspection when it was a key issue for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, and pupils are achieving well.
- There is good leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator.
- The school has improved resources, and there is now good quality hardware and a growing amount of software.
- Staff have become more confident, and direct teaching of skills is improving.
- Each class has time each week in the ICT suite which helps develop their skills.

Commentary

69. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make very good progress. All aspects of the subject are covered and the subject continues to develop well.
70. Word processing is used confidently and competently by most pupils. Pupils use the computer's tools to create, amend and improve their work. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 class where pupils were combining text and graphics to 'draw' a plan of the school with their planned improvements shown. In Year 6 pupils experimented using the repeat function and procedures to make patterns in a lesson linked to tessellations in mathematics. All pupils completed their task, and were able to predict the results of their decisions to explore patterns using these models. There was a good additional challenge for the more able involving the use of fill and paint. This is an example of the good links made with mathematics. In Year 1, pupils were learning how to create a pictogram. With their computer partners, pupils opened the program and created a pictogram to represent the data for the number of legs on creatures or of sides on a shape.
71. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and teach it well. They confidently and competently use their interactive whiteboards and this gives all pupils access to the curriculum and the teaching of basic skills. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners and use computers sensibly and with developing skill. The more able pupils help their less confident classmates and this develops a sense of responsibility. Teachers teach the beginning of their ICT lesson in classrooms and then the class moves to the computer suite for pupils to do their tasks. This works well as the pupils listen well in the classroom and the unconventional shape and decoration of the suite are not a distraction.
72. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator is very effective and has a clear understanding of how to improve standards further, and the school's e-learning mentor makes a very valuable contribution to planning and access for all pupils. There is a good scheme of work which supports planning, teaching and learning and a suitable policy for Internet use. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and pupils' work and assesses strengths and weaknesses. Teachers use ongoing assessment against the learning intentions in lessons well and this informs the planning for the next lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good and developing well and teachers are becoming more aware of its use in other subjects. The co-ordinator has identified the use of ICT in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science, to improve the impact the subject has on pupils' learning, as a development for the subject. ICT is used in science, as pupils create a poster for healthy teeth, in mathematics to enhance the learning of shape and in English when word-processing text.

HUMANITIES

Geography

74. No lessons were seen in geography. Consequently it is not possible to make the fullest judgements about provision in the subject, the standards achieved by pupils, or the quality of teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and school documentation, together with interviews with teaching staff, shows there is satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum in geography.
75. The approach to geography is changing because of the developments in the curriculum, where good links are being made between different subjects to relate pupils' experiences more to the world around them. A very good example of this was the question 'Should Bridge Street be closed to traffic?' in Year 5. Pupils surveyed traffic and shoppers' opinions, discussed the idea with an expert planner and used ICT very well to represent some of their findings. The pupils' writing about this gave them a good opportunity to use their literacy skills in a purposeful way.
76. The leadership of the subject is good because this new approach is motivating the pupils well and developing their geographical skills. However, more needs to be done to ensure this approach is planned for in a consistent way throughout the school, and at the same time organise better ways for pupils to record their work so their progress can be monitored.

History

The provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good; learning support assistants are an effective part of the teaching partnerships.
- Visits and visitors enhance learning very well.
- Pupils enjoy history and work hard.
- Displays are attractive and well organised.
- More could be done to ensure a consistent approach to planning the subject and the ways of recording pupils' work.

Commentary

77. The standards of pupils' work in Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with expectations for their age in history. Pupils' achievements are good because many begin school with a well below average understanding of the wider world beyond their immediate home and family. Pupils with special needs are supported effectively by well-trained teaching assistants and make good progress as a result. Developments since the last report have been good as pupils with special needs now make better progress and the quality of teaching has improved.

78. There are good examples of work in all classes, particularly in the well-organised and very attractive displays, which add colour and vibrancy to the learning atmosphere. They illustrate the progress pupils are making well. For example, in Year 2 the pupils' work about the Great Fire of London confirmed good historical knowledge of a main event in London's past. These displays often contain details of well-chosen visits, such as the very good work based on Victorian life in Year 6 linked to a visit to the Black Country Museum. Pupils know historical language such as 'urbanisation', 'board schools' and 'orphanage' and use these to describe features of the 19th century.
79. The quality of teaching is good; teachers have good subject knowledge and a very enthusiastic approach. They convey their enthusiasm to the pupils, who respond with a lively interest in return. Behaviour is good because teachers manage pupils skilfully, with a judicious mixture of sharply posed questions to challenge pupils' thinking, followed by praise and encouragement for their answers. There is a lively pace to lessons as a result. Pupils work hard and pupils with special needs benefit from the thoughtful support from learning assistants. Links to other subjects are being developed well, seen in the Year 4 work about World War II, when pupils designed and built shelters (design and technology and art) as they hummed and learned the period songs playing in the background (music).
80. The leadership of the subject is good. However, there is a changing approach to history, which started in Years 5 and 6, and is used on some occasions in some other classrooms. Consequently, there is an inconsistency in the planning of the subject, the way pupils record their work and how teachers are then able to use this to assess pupils' progress. Care by the co-ordinator is being taken to ensure more consistency as this new approach to history develops further.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the age of eleven and achieve well.
- Good teaching leads pupils to deeper understanding of their own and other views.
- Resources, visits to places of worship and visitors help pupils understand the major world faiths.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory, although improvements are being implemented.

Commentary

81. Standards of attainment at the age of eleven are at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' work, including that of pupils of special educational needs, shows good achievement. Teachers base their planning effectively on the locally agreed syllabus. This enables pupils to extend their knowledge of different religions as they move through school. They learn the traditions and beliefs of major religions including, for example, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A good range of planned visits to places of worship broadens their understanding of similarities and differences between major world faiths. Parents and religious leaders are invited into the school to talk to pupils about their own particular religion and as a result pupils talk openly about their own beliefs.

82. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is conveyed sensitively to the pupils. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils examined an abstract picture, which led to a number of questions being raised as to why it had been painted and what it represented. This, in turn, gave rise to a thoughtful discussion about the differences between faith and belief. Pupils discussed these profound ideas with a very good level of maturity showing respect for each other's views. Teachers manage pupils well. They treat them with respect and value their contributions. As a result pupils pay attention to their teacher and listen carefully to one another.
83. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator provides good leadership as he has a real interest in the subject and monitors teaching well. However, assessment of what pupils need to do to improve their knowledge and understanding of religious education as they move through the school is still developing and this limits pupils' progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and Design and technology

84. Not enough lessons were seen in **art and design** and in **design and technology** to make the fullest judgements on overall teaching, learning and provision in these subjects. However, an examination of pupils' work, photographs, displays and planning, together with discussion with subject co-ordinators, confirms that there is a suitable range of activities in every classroom and pupils achieve well. Pupils have regular opportunities to use their ideas and imagination, to develop skills and to work with a range of materials and media.
85. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 produce bold, imaginative work in printing and collages. The display of 'Textures from Buildings' is clearly based on artists' use of colour, shape and pattern that the pupils have been shown. The really eye-catching 'Fire of London' display in Year 2 showed good design and technology and art work to represent Stuart houses. Pupils' work in design and technology, making creatures with a lever and pivot to create movement, gives them a good opportunity to use tools such as scissors, fasteners and a hole punch. During the inspection pupils in Year 4 completed a number of tasks related to World War II. In particular they were making Anderson Shelters that had to have a light that illuminated the inside. This co-ordination of the two subjects with science worked very well. There are good opportunities to use computer-aided design in both subjects.
86. Both subjects are well led and managed. The Creative Arts co-ordinator is enabling the school to focus on the wider curriculum to raise standards and to extend pupils' creative opportunities. Design and technology and art and design have theme weeks from time to time and teachers are beginning to use blocks of time on other occasions to provide further, more extended, opportunities for creative work.

Physical education

87. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Therefore, no judgments are made on provision and standards. No comparisons can be made with the previous inspection. The full range of activities in physical education is well planned for. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the pupils took part in a range of dance activities, linked to their current topic on 'The Seaside', which they enjoyed. Good use of teacher demonstration helped pupils to improve their skills and to exercise

safely. Older pupils benefit from a very good range of after-school activities that include coaching in football, cricket, 'tag rugby' and gymnastics.

88. The leadership and management of physical education are good. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She actively seeks links with other schools and organisations to enhance the physical education curriculum. The monitoring and assessing pupils' achievements across the school, however, are at an early stage of development. Resources for physical education are good and the school makes full use of its excellent outdoor facilities.

Music

The provision for music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are above the expected levels, especially by the time pupils leave the school.
- The opportunities for performance by pupils are good.
- The quality of extra-curricular activities, including peripatetic tuition, is very good.

Commentary

89. Pupils achieve well and attain above the standards expected for their age and enjoy the many music-making activities provided for them. This reflects the many changes and improvement since the last inspection. The tuition provided by the visiting teachers for singing and the visiting instrumental teacher in brass adds a great deal to the good provision throughout the school. The school choir further enhances the provision for older pupils. This enables the more able pupils to achieve well. The pupils who play musical instruments attain particularly good standards in their ability to read and play music.
90. Throughout the school pupils have many, good, musical opportunities and they achieve well. The provision of an extended session each week for all pupils from the Greets Green Vocal Project has boosted pupils' understanding and enthusiasm for music very well. The way Year 5 and 6 pupils responded to the excellent teaching from one of the visiting teachers to build up an understanding of a new song, and the ability to sing in two parts, incorporating a key change, was very good. The pupils showed a good understanding of rhythm and were able to maintain the shape of the melody very well. Pupils in Year 1 were deeply absorbed in a very good lesson where they were composing tunes to fit the picture of a wave they had been shown. They showed a very good understanding of music and how it can be played to express a mood. These two lessons clearly demonstrate the overall very good quality of the teaching of music.
91. The subject is very well managed and monitored by the Creative Arts co-ordinator who gives unstintingly of her time to record the progress of pupils and to help to provide suitable further challenges. Her work with the visiting teachers enables her to monitor the progress and achievement of many pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92. Owing to inspection priorities, no lessons were observed and therefore no overall judgements can be made about teaching and learning. Evidence from discussions with pupils and staff suggests that provision has many good features. The positive care within classes and by

teaching staff contributes well to the security and welfare of all pupils and plays a strong part in developing positive attitudes towards school and towards one another.

93. Informal support for personal and social development is embedded in the school's day-to-day life. All staff set a good example and encourage pupils to think about how their behaviour affects others and to develop a sense of responsibility. All classes have incorporated a daily lesson when they sit and discuss with their teacher a current personal and social issue and a weekly circle time session as a means of improving relationships and pupils' sense of citizenship. Evidence from planning and discussions with the headteacher and co-ordinator indicate that the school judges these to have been successful initiatives.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).