

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103241

Headteacher: Miss Sue Heptinstall

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 20th to 22nd September 2004

Inspection number: 267467

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	359
School address:	Alcester Road Moseley Birmingham
Postcode:	B13 8BB
Telephone number:	0121 4493004
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Midgley
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school which is bigger than most schools is located 3 miles to the south of Birmingham city centre and serves a socially and culturally diverse community comprising private and social housing. There is high unemployment locally. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative. Currently there are 244 pupils from the age of 5-11 on roll together with 56 children attending full-time in the nursery and 59 in the reception year. The nursery and reception years are known as the *Foundation Stage*. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the Foundation Stage is typically below average but covers a wide span of ability. During the inspection many new children were starting for the first time and some were attending part-time only. The majority of pupils are from Asian backgrounds. The school community is also made up of pupils from British, Caribbean, Asian or Black backgrounds. A number of pupils speak Urdu, Punjabi or Arabic as well as English at home and some receive specific support to help them learn English in school. A broadly average proportion of pupils has special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties; six pupils have a statement. A similar proportion to that found in many schools typically joins or leaves the school at non-standard times, however in 2004 the turnover in Year 6 was significantly higher than usual. The school has been accredited with a *leading aspects award* for the quality of its Foundation Stage provision. At the time of the inspection a significant number of new teachers had just taken up appointment in the school and there were new post-holders in science, ICT, design and technology, history, music and with the deputy care-taking the leadership of physical education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
30144	E Hastings	Team inspector	English as an additional language, special educational needs, English, geography, history and religious education.
15414	D Carrington	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, music and physical education.
8710	J Moore	Team Inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology and modern foreign languages.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Park Hill Primary is an **effective** school that strives hard to do the best for all pupils. The quality of education is good and pupils are enabled to achieve well. Teaching and learning are both good; classrooms are lively and stimulating places in which the pupils work hard and have fun. The school makes good provision for supporting pupils' individual needs and this is very beneficial to both their academic and social growth. The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages change very successfully. The school gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very inclusive in all aspects and recognises the pupils as people in their own right.
- Clear and very well focused leadership at all levels is the driving force behind the school's many strengths.
- There is a good learning ethos in which relationships are very good and underpin the pupils' good achievements.
- Standards in science and art and design are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Although average, standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) should be higher.
- The very good attention paid to all pupils' well being assists them in developing a good set of shared values, a high level of confidence and a keenness to take on roles of responsibility.
- The school has made a good start with assessing pupils' progress but now needs to widen the use of targets to support their next steps in learning across the curriculum.

The school has sustained the best aspects of the educational provision reported by the previous inspection in 1999 and has made good improvement to identified weaknesses. The school has good capacity to continue to improve. The school's self-review processes are spot on.

Pupils' achievement is **good overall**. The table that follows shows that Year 6 pupils reached average standards in the 2003 national tests in English, above average standards in science and below average standards in mathematics. The data shows that these pupils made exceptionally good progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in all tested subjects when compared to similar schools. The 2003 test results were much improved on those in 2002 and the school's trend in raising standards was above that found nationally. Following a blip in 2004 when standards were lower than expected, standards currently are back to their earlier good form. From a typically below average start, pupils learn successfully to reach standards that are at the national average in most subjects by the end of Year 6 and above average in science and art and design.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Relationships are harmonious and the school is a happy and purposeful learning community. Attendance has been very much improved and is now at the level seen nationally. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The school promotes a very good set of principles and values that help

the pupils distinguish right from wrong, nurtures social responsibility and helps them appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Classrooms are lively places in which pupils of all ages achieve well because of interesting activities that enable most to be challenged at the right level across the subjects they study. The work of support staff is very good. The natural use of the pupils' home language to help them learn with confidence is a very special feature. The curriculum offers worthwhile and exciting learning experiences with good enrichment. The very positive care and support that pupils receive helps them to learn with success. Pupils are well supported; especially those with special educational needs who have good individual education plans to support their development. The mentoring programme in place to support vulnerable pupils is of good quality. There is very good provision for pupils' personal and social development. The school has a very good partnership with parents and has forged strong and effective links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher provides clear and very well focused direction to the school's work. The leadership team of deputy and assistant heads are very effective in their respective roles and play a pivotal role in moving the school forward. The senior management team are very good role models and are leading the improvements of core subjects and major aspects of the school's provision very well. New staff have gelled well, and are very keen to get going on monitoring and evaluation work, as part of their subject management roles. Governors are committed to the school, very well informed, give very good support and apply the principles of best value very securely to all decisions.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are happy with the school and hold positive views. They hold the headteacher in high regard, particularly for the way she spends time getting to know the pupils as people in their own right. A few parents raised concerns about bullying and inspectors followed this up. The school adopts zero tolerance to bullying and the systems in place to deal with situations are comprehensive. Pupils told inspectors that when instances arise they are dealt with swiftly and effectively. A number of parents wrote to inspectors about the playground which some described as *boring and dull*. Inspectors agree with this. The governors have recently submitted a bid to seek funding for playground enhancement.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the good work to raise standards in English and mathematics, especially through the development of writing skills in all subjects taught, and with attention paid to the presentation of work.
- Extend the systems of target setting to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently to the best levels and to enable them to know how to improve their work.
- Widen the use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the subjects they study as part of the drive to raise standards in ICT still higher.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is **good** overall. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, who are represented in the full range of ability groups, share the trend of good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good in the core subjects they study.
- The school's strategies for raising standards are proving positive but managers are right to identify English and mathematics as the number one priority for continued improvement.
- Pupils achieve very well in science to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in art and design are above average by the end of school; the development of drawing skills is a particularly positive feature.
- Although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average they could be higher; limited use is made of the computers in classrooms to support pupils' learning across the subjects they study.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good provision made for them.
- Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language are achieving well because of the effective strategies being implemented including skilful bi-lingual support and pre-lesson tutoring.
- The school has made a useful start with target setting but more needs to be done to sharpen up the system to support even better achievement.

Commentary

1. Standards are broadly average and test results have risen in recent years at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils achieve well during their time at school. Most children start in the nursery with below average levels of skills and knowledge with quite a few having little English and limited social skills. The current nursery children are starting with a well below average profile in their social and personal development and language skills, although the needs and capabilities of the group are extremely diverse. The good curriculum and very effective teaching programme assists the youngest children in school to quickly settle into good routines that help them learn effectively. They get off to a flying start in their education and by the time that they are five, the majority of children have made good progress and achieve well. However, not all reach the goals expected for their age. These good beginnings are consolidated well in most other years.
2. The table that follows shows that Year 2 pupils reached well below average standards in the 2003 national tests in reading, average standards in writing and well below average standards in mathematics. Standards were in line with those reached by pupils in similar schools in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Results compared as average overall with similar schools. Standards in 2003 fell below those reached in 2002 in reading and mathematics and were virtually the same in writing. Teachers assessed science standards as well below average. The school's trend in raising standards was above that found nationally. The unconfirmed results for 2004 tests for Year 2 pupils suggest a similar picture to that in 2003. However, results show good improvement on those in 2003 at the higher level. The results are likely to compare favourably in all tested subjects with those found in similar schools. The school's strategies for improvement are making a positive difference to the quality of learning experiences and the standards being reached. For example, the targeting of specific pupils, identified by the school as in danger of underachieving, with additional support in reading and writing.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.9 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.0 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 56 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in Year 2 are currently average in all the subjects reported on by this inspection. Higher attaining pupils are doing particularly well. The school is working well to improve the reading skills of pupils through a well-conceived strategy that involves additional teaching for slower readers in Year 2 who are working with tried and tested *Reading Recovery* resources. The school has engaged parents in staying and sharing books daily in Year 2. The weekly workshops held in English and Urdu for parents and children who are at an early stage of learning to speak English are extremely beneficial to supporting good language development and in building a very good home/school partnership. In all infant classes the use of pupils' home language is very beneficial in helping them to understand what they have to do and in supporting self-confidence and self-worth and in helping the pupils to learn English quickly. The next steps in raising standards in English and mathematics are to pay particular attention to widening opportunities for writing in different subjects, to check that the quality of recorded work is the best it can be and to ensure that when pupils are withdrawn from the classroom for specific support they do not miss out on what others are learning.
- The table that follows shows that Year 6 pupils reached average standards in the 2003 national tests in English and above average standards in science and below average standards in mathematics. Pupils did exceptionally well in all subjects when compared to the standards reached by pupils in similar schools. From their starting point in Year 2 most pupils achieved very well in all tested subjects. The results in the 2003 national tests fell well short of the school's targets in mathematics but were met in English. Many more pupils reached the higher-level 5 in English than predicted. The school's trend in raising standards was above that found nationally. Standards in English, mathematics and science in the 2003 national tests were all improved on those reported in 2002. The early indications are that the standards reached in the 2004 national tests will be well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school sees this as a blip. The school's evaluations show that this group of pupils had interruptions to their learning in lower juniors due to staffing difficulties and despite the school's best efforts some pupils did not fully catch up on the ground lost earlier to reach the standards expected. There was around 29 per cent pupil mobility in this year group and a high level of absence in 2004, all of which are identified as having an adverse impact on the test results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (25.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.5 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.5 (26.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in Year 6 are currently average in all subjects except art and design and science where they are above average. Pupils were observed to very much enjoy the practical nature of these subjects; learning successfully and making very good progress in lessons from first hand experiences. Good advancement has been made in the provision for ICT which was reported

as unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have weekly lessons in the new ICT suite which are helping them reach average standards. However, there is only limited use of the computers in classrooms and far less evidence of pupils using ICT to support their learning across the subjects they experience than there should be. This is a missed opportunity to help pupils build skills at a better rate and enhance the standards they are capable of achieving.

6. The school's data of pupils' past performance identifies that girls do better in the national tests than boys and that boys from Pakistani backgrounds do not always achieve as well as others of the same age. Inspectors tracked the work of girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds and could find no significant difference in their achievement. The school is very inclusive in its practices and holds good assessment data on how well individual pupils are doing. The school is very responsive to individual needs and this works in pupils' best interests as tailor-made programmes are in place to help those who require extra support to enable them to work at the best level. The provision being made for pupils with special educational needs, including statements, is working effectively to help them make good progress against their personal targets. The setting arrangements in mathematics are a recent innovation and are a positive feature in supporting overall good achievement. However the next step is to ensure that the middle achieving group are set work that is more challenging and encourages an even better pace of learning.
7. The school is developing a system of target setting in English and mathematics that has potential to heighten staff and pupil awareness of the next steps for learning. The use of targets to show pupils where their achievement lies, and to involve them in regular reviews of their progress, would be useful action points. The targets agreed with the local education authority for 2005 are realistic but could be more challenging to better reflect the school's declared ambitions to become A* in all respects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good overall**. The social, moral and cultural development of pupils is **very good**. The school ethos is one of a multi-racial, vibrant and friendly community in which all are valued and cared for as they strive to succeed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance and unauthorised absence in the last school year were in line with national expectation.
- Behaviour is generally good, both in lessons and at play.
- Short exclusions are used sensibly to underline the school's refusal to tolerate violent or abusive behaviour.
- Attitudes to learning are good, and pupils from diverse backgrounds share an enthusiasm for doing well.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons, and that teachers are kind and helpful. They listen well and try hard to do their best in lessons, showing pride in their work.
- Relationships between pupils are good and there is a harmonious, *family feel* to the school, with a sense of value and respect for all ethnic backgrounds.

Commentary

8. The strengths in the pupils' responses have been sustained since the previous inspection. Pupils told inspectors that they like coming to school and are keen to learn. Pupils say too that they value the friendships they make here. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning. They make very good progress in independence and confidence in the early years, and grow to be considerate, tolerant and friendly children who are well prepared for their secondary education.

9. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and have improved considerably this year. Attendance was a key issue raised by the last inspection. The school has made a good effort to promote attendance, particularly through personal phone calls from the deputy headteacher to the parents of pupils who are absent or late. As a result the level of unauthorised absence has dramatically reduced to around the national average, and attendance overall has risen to a satisfactory level. Most pupils are now punctual to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.3	School data :	1.6
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

10. Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good overall, and is managed well. Pupils respond well to the range of rewards, both of a personal nature and for the class. Positive role models are well promoted and parents are involved in the behaviour programmes, for example in earning reward stamps, which convert to privileges for their children by returning questionnaires. The pupils have written codes of conduct for the playground and for the dining hall and fully understand the need for sanctions when rules are broken. Instances of bullying are very rare, and pupils feel that teachers deal with these effectively.
11. Last year the rate of exclusion was un-typically high. The school uses short fixed term exclusions on those few occasions when it is necessary to underline its refusal to accept any violent or abusive behaviour. Parents support this approach. There is good racial harmony and pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work and play happily together, with good relationships much in evidence. When minor disagreements occur, there are peer mediators who form playground teams to help sort out problems and pupils have confidence in the system.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	30	1	0
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	29	1	0
Any other ethnic group	18	2	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	11	1	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which is different from the number of pupils excluded.

12. Pupils are keen to learn and listen well in class. Those learning English as an additional language are carefully included in all lessons and try hard to make contributions as their confidence increases. In the best lessons pupils are totally absorbed and enthralled by their discoveries, and show a great deal of pride in their achievements. For example, the excitement was palpable as a Year 1 class mastered the skills to design rooms for *Goldilocks and the three bears* using the computers in the ICT suite, and a Year 6 class were equally thrilled with their efforts in mastering *PowerPoint* software to present information both visually and audibly. Pupils

say they have many favourite lessons, with science and religious education frequently mentioned.

13. The school council continues to be a proactive focus for pupils' thoughts about school improvement. Pupils value the opportunities they receive to *have a say* and the school is currently moving towards giving them a greater understanding of rights and responsibilities. For example, while the pupils were very involved in designing and redecorating the outside toilets, they are now aware of the responsibility required to keep them in a pleasant state for use.
14. Pupils' personal development is good. From their entry into the Foundation Stage, they make very good progress in developing independence and confidence and as they grow older they show consideration for others, respect for different points of view and a friendly approach to all. This stems from the very good opportunities provided by the school for their personal and social education, with a real diversity of experiences, particularly in areas of multi-culturalism and citizenship. Pupils' spiritual development is focused on self-awareness and improving self-esteem, as well as an understanding of the significance of spirituality in world faiths. In PSHE lessons pupils come to learn that they are all special, and each have an important role to play in life. Assemblies contain an act of collective worship which includes all members of the school family, but which sometimes fails to develop the opportunity for wonder.
15. Pupils respond very enthusiastically to the first-hand experiences of multi-ethnic celebrations and elementary democracy. They show respect and real interest in the ways of their neighbours, for example in the preparations for the Hindu celebrations of Divali in Year 3. In a citizenship course funded by *Excellence in Cities*, Year 5 pupils demonstrated their ability to form corporate views of contentious issues, and in the past pupils have had the opportunity to debate in the city council house. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, and by the age of eleven are socially-aware young citizens.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall. The curriculum offers **good** learning experiences for the pupils and those who need it are given good levels of support, especially those with special educational needs. The school has a **very good** partnership with parents and has forged **very good** links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, with some very good features in science that are leading to very good achievement. It is dear that the pupils enjoy their science studies because they are *learning by doing*.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Classes are happy and purposeful places of learning in which very good relationships underpin pupils' good achievement.
- The school shows very good commitment to ensuring that all pupils are given equality of opportunity to succeed.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well because of interesting activities that enable most to be challenged at the right level across the subjects they study.
- The work of support staff is very good, especially in respect of supporting dual language learners.
- There is a need to extend the use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The school has yet to introduce a system of target setting and tracking in English and mathematics that will enable a sharper view of progress.

Commentary

16. Teaching quality is better than at the time of the previous inspection and is improving due to the effective strategies for performance management and professional development that the headteacher has introduced. The many new teachers this term have been carefully chosen for their expertise and complementary skills to those of more established staff and all have made an effective start with their class teaching role. The sense of teamwork is tangible and the school is a happy place of work. Between them the teaching staff have many talents and all are willing to share ideas and are reflective about their practice. Morale is high and there is good determination to provide an even better education for all pupils. The school's aim of *bringing out the best in everyone* is being successfully promoted.
17. Inspectors observed 64 lessons over their three days in school and all were of at least satisfactory quality with four fifths being of good or better quality and these help pupils build their skills from strong foundations. Classes are happy and purposeful places of learning in which very good relationships underpin pupils' good achievement. The very best and most consistent teaching to help pupils build their knowledge, understanding and skills at a rapid pace was seen in English, mathematics and science. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' communication and language skills from an early age pays dividends as they grow older and also enables them to have full access to all the subjects that they study.
18. Very good lessons were observed in music, religious education, science and ICT too. Some common features were present in all of these imaginative and stimulating lessons:
 - ❑ Crystal clear explanations given to support the amount and quality of work produced.
 - ❑ Shared expectations that harnessed pupils' attention and interest from the outset and involved them in practical first hand experiences.
 - ❑ Demanding levels of challenge in the work set that was well matched to pupils' style of learning.
 - ❑ Very effective use of support staff and resources.
 - ❑ Successful use of time targets to ensure that everyone worked to full capacity.
19. An in depth look at pupils' work from last year confirmed the good quality of teaching and learning observed in classrooms. However, one area ripe for improvement is presentation. Sometimes the work in books is untidy with too many pupils not giving enough care to how they date and set out their work. Too often handwriting is not well formed and this detracts from its overall quality in terms of content. That said, pupils are being provided with good quality experiences across the core subjects they study that are enabling them to make good progress. The school is working effectively to make improvements and there are promising signs that these will add even more value to the pupils' achievements. For example, the sets in mathematics in the junior years are a good feature, though sharper focus on providing work that is still more challenging for some of the middle-achieving group is required. The teaching of ICT has much improved since the time of the previous inspection and mainly good teaching and learning took place in the lessons observed by inspectors in the ICT suite, with a few lessons of very good quality. Nevertheless, there is potential for better use to be made of the computers in classrooms and for pupils to have time and opportunity to use ICT to support their learning in different subjects.
20. The school shows very good commitment to ensuring that all pupils are given equality of opportunity to succeed. The staff in the Foundation Stage have good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery and reception classes is good. They have high expectations of both work and behaviour, and this contributes to the good achievement the children make. Pupils with special educational needs receive some very good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to these pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans. Pupils

who are learning to speak English are achieving well because of the effective strategies being implemented including skilful bi-lingual support and pre-lesson tutoring so that pupils are up to the same speed as their class-mates when the lesson starts. The natural use of the pupils' home language to help them learn with confidence is a very significant feature in nurturing the pupils' academic and social development and helps celebrate diversity.

21. Good attention is paid to sharing the lesson objectives with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what they are expected to learn. Most plenary sessions are used well to reinforce the lesson objectives, but few take stock of what has been learnt by individual pupils or look forward to enable them to identify what they need to do next to improve their work. The school is alert to the need to review teaching and learning in all subjects as part of its improvement processes. A useful start has been made in assessing the outcomes of pupils' learning year-on-year and across the subjects they study. Approaches so far have involved checks being made on progress usually at the end of topics. The school has yet to introduce a system of target setting and tracking in English and mathematics that will enable a sharper view of progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 64 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (8%)	47 (73%)	12 (19%)	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.

The Curriculum

The school's curriculum is **good** and is well matched to the needs and aptitudes of the pupils and meets statutory requirements. Extra curricular provision is good and the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity is very good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well.
- The school has yet to monitor sufficiently rigorously whether the system of withdrawing pupils for additional basic skills support including mentoring has a negative impact on their learning in other subjects.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- The accommodation is of good quality; it is bright, stimulating and well maintained in all respects except one. The playground surface is uneven and the whole area is devoid of features that would enhance positive play.
- Resources are well chosen and of good quality.
- The school has yet to promote fully the opportunities for cross-curricular use of ICT.

Commentary

22. Since the previous inspection, good improvement has been made to the curriculum, which now provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and fully meets statutory requirements. Weaknesses in ICT reported by the previous inspection have all been sensibly addressed and the ICT suite is a good resource that is used well. The next step already being pursued by the school is to add to the stock of ICT hardware and software resources and to make more effective use of the computers in the classrooms to support pupils' better use of ICT across the subjects they study. The school has worked hard to raise the profile of mathematics

in the school following disappointing national test results last year and its strategies are proving successful with still more professional development work planned to continue this year.

23. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The children have access to a wide range of interesting activities and learning experiences, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. A rich, stimulating and varied curriculum is the result. During the inspection many new children were starting for the first time and some were attending part-time only. The high level of adult support was observed to clearly add extra value to the children's learning experiences. The school has been accredited with *leading aspect* status for the quality of the Foundation Stage provision.
24. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are provided for well. The school has identified particular individuals who have specific learning needs and they may be withdrawn from their class in order to be supported singly or in small groups. The timetable of withdrawal is planned each half term so as to cause minimal disruption to pupils' learning in any one subject. However, no one monitors the class work individuals miss as a result and this requires close tracking.
25. The school is involved in a range of initiatives to enhance its provision: for example, *Excellence in Cities* provides funding for learning mentors to help support pupils in overcoming barriers to learning. Learning mentors successfully meet the diverse needs of individual pupils who are experiencing particular difficulty or are in vulnerable situations. They provide good support and make a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal welfare. The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex and drugs education.
26. The school has been successful in its implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and this is reflected in improvements in pupils' sustained good achievement. The setting of pupils in mathematics is making a positive difference to achievement but the arrangements do not serve the needs of middle achieving mathematicians as consistently as they do the lower-attaining ones. The school quite rightly has to give significant emphasis to enabling pupils to build their English skills to enable full access to all subjects and this does take time. The school is usefully looking at how the curriculum might be reshaped to focus more on skills across subjects, in the light of the good practice outlined in the government's strategy entitled *Excellence and Enjoyment*.
27. Pupils are provided with a range of good quality experience in the creative and aesthetic aspect of the curriculum that add enrichment to their cultural development, for example visits to the ballet, art gallery and theatre. A choir has recently been built following auditions. Lunchtime art and music clubs run in Year 1 and sports and arts activities in Years 2 to 6. Netball, football, golf, judo and ICT clubs that are organised enhance the physical education programme. A Sports coordinator programme is in place with the High School. A residential visit takes place to Burcot Camp that Year 6 pupils told inspectors they enjoyed participating in last term.
28. Modern Foreign Language is a good added extra that pupils in the upper junior classes enjoy. It has the advantage of enabling Year 6 pupils to meet and be taught by staff from the High School to which several transfer and this helps a smooth transition between the key stages or education. The local High School provides language tuition in Spanish and Japanese over the course of the year.
29. The resources in use in the school are of good quality and well chosen to support pupils' learning. Accommodation is good with one exception- the playground, which is an unexciting place and has a poor surface. Parents raised their concerns about the playground with inspectors before the inspection. Inspectors agree that the playground could stand upgrading as funds allow. The governors have recently submitted a bid to seek funding for playground enhancement.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care provided for pupils is **very good** and the support and guidance given to them is **very good** and contributes very well to their learning. The pastoral welfare of pupils is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attention is paid to pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- Individual needs are very well catered for, involving a range of support services when necessary.
- There is very close monitoring of pastoral needs, especially behavioural support for those who are vulnerable.
- Pupils are very involved in decisions about the quality of school life.
- Pupils' academic development is well supported and pupils find the teachers kind and helpful.

Commentary

30. The welfare of every individual child is at the heart of the school's work. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and carefully monitored, ensuring safety at work and play, and with appropriate first aid cover for accidents. Child protection arrangements are thorough, and follow the local area guidelines. Provision for pupils' welfare from Foundation Stage through to Year 6 is very good.
31. With such a diverse intake of pupils, their individual needs are very varied, from language support to behavioural difficulties, from very little independence to educational special needs. Some are very mature when they first join and have good skills and the school has to respond to all. Very close monitoring in order to make an early assessment leads to the provision of the appropriate support. The school has very good links with external agencies and makes good use of expertise to help those who need it. Pupils are well supported; especially those with special educational needs who have good individual education plans to support their development. The mentoring programme in place to support vulnerable pupils is of good quality.
32. New children entering nursery experience a warm, calm and sensitive induction into the school, which is very flexible and copes well with their varied needs. As pupils approach Year 6, they are well prepared for the transition to secondary schools, and good links with the range of receiving schools helps to give them confidence and a surprisingly sharp awareness of the different choices available. Some pupils benefit from the extra support provided through the *Excellence in Cities* funded projects, for example the new programme for gifted and talented pupils in Year 2, as well as from the local education behaviour support unit and outreach team from St Johns and Tindal Learning Centres.
33. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the continuing monitoring of their academic and pastoral needs. Pupils feel they know how well they are doing in lessons, and are usually confident enough to seek help. However, there is room for improvement in the area of target-setting by which pupils know exactly what they need to do next to improve their work. Monitoring of pastoral needs is led by the deputy headteacher and this has had a particularly positive effect in areas of attendance and behaviour, which have both seen good improvements since the time of the previous inspection. The bedrock of the very good provision for support and guidance is the very good relationships between pupils and the team of teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors and senior staff. There is definitely a sense of all being there for each other.
34. The school is very good at involving pupils in day-to-day decisions about the school environment and quality of school life. There are suggestion boxes and two active school councils in which pupils take the lead. A council designed to look at school meals has already had input into creating healthy, and religiously acceptable menus within the framework of the Healthy Schools

standard. Other pupils have been trained to act as mediators in playground disputes and carry out this responsibility very successfully.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the local community and other education establishments are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the education provided for their children.
- A partnership approach has helped to improve attendance figures.
- Community links are very strong and help to include families from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Curricular enrichment is a direct benefit from strong educational links in the area.

Commentary

35. There are very effective links with parents, the local community and with other schools and colleges. The headteacher and key managers work hard to forge and nurture mutually supportive partnerships and teachers make every effort to be well known by the parents of their class. The philosophy of being available is very much appreciated by the parents, who support the school very well including many giving time to stay and share books with their children in the morning. A strong home/school partnership approach has helped to improve attendance figures by lowering unauthorised absence.
36. The foundation of the home-school partnership is the very good range and quality of information which the school provides including a weekly newsletter. Translators are available at meetings, and the school offers to produce documents in home languages when required. Parents' views are sought on a variety of issues, and their responses show considerable support for aspects including the behaviour policy and the form of the annual report from the governors.
37. As part of its drive to be fully inclusive, the school calls on community organisations to support and encourage its parents for whom English is an additional language. The attendance of these parents at workshops and *Inspire* sessions is very good. There are also beneficial links with local religious leaders and the local Balsall Heath Forum, who helped the school plant daffodils to usher in its golden anniversary year, this year. At the main event in June, it was clear just how much the local community value the school, as friends and ex-school members joined in a very successful series of events including a mass sponsored skip.
38. Local schools in the cluster provide considerable mutual support, and together receive the curricular enrichment available from the *Excellence in Cities* initiative. There is also a very valuable citizenship opportunity provided through links with the Lord Mayor's parlour for junior pupils and last year the school council were able to interview the Chief Education Officer. A range of high schools contribute very well to the programme of information and visits which usefully help prepare pupils in Year 6 for their futures.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very good vision for the school's future and directs its work very effectively.
- The leadership and senior management teams provide very good leadership for colleagues and have very thorough understanding of school performance.
- Governors are astute, knowledgeable and influential in ensuring the school meets its mission, aims and objectives, including its financial obligations.
- Management structures work well and there is a consistency of procedure in most areas of the school's work.
- The systems to identify how effectively pupils are achieving have been refined and have acquired increased rigour in the last year.
- There is work still to do in respect of tracking and target setting systems to ensure that every pupil makes the best possible gains in skills, knowledge and understanding consistently through the school.

Commentary

39. There have been recent major changes to the staffing of the school, with five new subject leaders, also class teachers appointed this term. New staff have been chosen carefully and the process of induction managed very effectively. The new team of staff have gelled well with longer serving colleagues and are already showing their mettle and commitment to providing the pupils' diverse learning needs. The headteacher has clearly given, and continues to give, a very good lead to staff in improving school performance and in the evaluation of its strengths and areas for improvement. She has vision and determination, and sets high standards that other staff are very well motivated to meet. This is accentuated by her wisdom in delegating significant leadership and management tasks to key staff.
40. There is a clear leadership structure in school that is inter-dependent in its effectiveness. Thus, the next tier, the leadership team, which includes the deputy headteacher, is very effective in its work to advance the strategic management of the school. This team has formed a very good partnership with the headteacher and, together, they have very good insights into the work of the school. They are influential in making improvements and show very good expectations in their work. The next tier, the senior management team who comprise core subject leaders and the manager of equal opportunities, including the provision made for pupils learning to speak English, show equal skill and energy in their work. There is strong potential amongst this group for future promotion; such is their impact on the work of the school. The good advancements being made in English, mathematics, science and ICT are strong reflections of their effective leadership drive.
41. Non-core subject leaders form the third tier. They lead their subjects successfully and most are influential and are good role models for other staff and the pupils. Some are very new to their roles and not all have had opportunity for extensive monitoring and evaluation of achievement and quality of provision in their subjects. However, they are keen to undertake such work and the climate in school for this to become a rigorous process is good.
42. The assessment systems to check that pupils' performance is of the best have been improved considerably in the last year or so, but there is need to tighten the process further. Subject leaders are working hard to enhance the target setting and tracking system across the school to ensure that all pupils maintain a consistent level of good achievement. Improvement in the rigour and impact of this process is sensibly a core priority of the school.
43. The governors are strongly committed to their work and to the school. The quality of governance is very good. Governors come from diverse backgrounds and they are working actively to ensure that they are fully representative of the community the school serves. Governors are

astute in their understanding of the school, its work and its impact. They ask demanding questions of school leaders to ensure that pupils work at capacity and attain best standards. The governors have a very well honed set of procedures and they conduct their business with increasing efficiency.

44. Governors also ensure that financial management is prudent and wise. The system of budget control and management is effective and the day-to-day oversight of finance is efficient. The school gives good value for the money that is spent on providing an effective education for the pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,384,870	Balance from previous year	91,023
Total expenditure	1,327,096	Balance carried forward to the next	57,774
Expenditure per pupil	2,942		

Modern Foreign Languages

45. Spanish is a regular part of the school's curriculum. A visiting teacher from the local secondary school takes a weekly lesson in conversational Spanish with older pupils. Lessons get off to a brisk start, focusing on greetings, with pupils clearly doing their best to use good diction. Pupils respond well to the teacher's crisp style, and learning moves forward at a good pace. No time is wasted. In the lesson observed, every pupil conversed in Spanish, and the teacher's good use of praise was an effective motivator for pupils of all capabilities. Pupils rise to the challenges set for them with alacrity and enthusiasm. Achievement is good.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Commentary

46. During the inspection many new children were starting for the first time and some were attending part-time only. Children have a good start to their education in both the nursery and reception classes, as they did at the last inspection. Children are from a very wide range of ethnic backgrounds and a high percentage of them have not had any pre-school experiences away from their home. At the start of this term their skills and their attainment are well below average when compared to most other children of similar ages in the country. Teaching is good in both the nursery and reception classes and staff are very aware of the children's many and diverse needs. Activities are well planned and are based on the appropriate curriculum for the age group. Progress and attainment are well documented and systems are thorough and detailed. However, the lack of a composite class record at the end of the nursery year limits the amount of information that is available to staff when they are identifying trends in children's learning across the whole year group. The children get off to a flying start in their education and by the time that they are five, the majority have achieved well. Teachers are well supported by nursery nurses and the good levels of support enable all the children to learn productively. This includes children who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. The new leader of the Foundation Stage guides a strong team and she has made a good start to her leadership role. Parents are very pleased with the nursery and the reception classes, and they are keen to support their children so that they do well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This aspect has a strong focus and it underpins every element of day-to-day life in the nursery and reception classes.
- Relationships are very good and this helps the children to grow into confident and independent learners.
- Teaching is good and leads to children's good achievement.

Commentary

47. There are effective systems for introducing children to the nursery class and these help them to adjust to nursery life away from parents and carers. Parents rate this aspect of the school's work very highly. The work of bi-lingual staff adds extra value to supporting both the children and their parents and builds a very strong home partnership to the benefit of the children. Well-planned routines help the children to settle in quickly, for example at snack time when they are sitting in a circle waiting their turn for their drink and their fruit. A good range of well-planned tasks encourage the children to *have a go* themselves. This boosts their confidence successfully as they choose their own activity or work with an adult. These experiences are successfully extended in the reception classes, where children choose their tasks with confidence, taking turns on the outdoor equipment, organising themselves into different roles in the Doctor's surgery and dressing and undressing without support. Effective teaching means that children are interested in their tasks, they are keen and eager to learn and their achievement is very good over time. By the end of the reception year most children have reached the goal expected for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff in the Foundation Stage concentrate on developing the children's spoken English. They are successful, and the children speak and understand English with growing confidence and self-assurance.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Books and stories are enjoyed and early writing skills are developed well.
- Children's achievement is good, however potentially high-attaining children are not always challenged enough in reception.

Commentary

48. Many children have very limited speaking skills when they join the nursery. A significant number do not speak English at all. High value is placed on the children's home language, which is spoken alongside English to help the children learn quickly and with confidence. This was observed to work very effectively to support two boys playing in the Doctors' surgery. The teaching assistant spoke to them in both Urdu and English, asking them to talk about what they were doing. The staff miss no opportunity to promote purposeful talk and this is very beneficial to the children. Very good progress is made in speaking and listening so that by the end of the reception year children's achievement is very good. Reading has a high profile in both the nursery and reception classes so that by the time that most children leave reception their reading skills have been advanced well. The best readers could be challenged more and this is one area for improvement. The children's writing skills are slower to develop. The children in both the nursery and reception have many opportunities to write during the course of every day. They work hard to improve their skills and most make good progress. Although achievement is good, there remains some way to go however, before they reach the goals expected for their age in reading and writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus on developing children's mathematical language successfully aids their understanding and helps them make gains in knowledge.
- Achievement is good because children have a wide experience of practical activities, as well as benefiting from good teaching.

Commentary

49. Staff are adept at making the wide range of mathematical activities challenging and interesting for the children. This holds their attention well ensuring that children want to learn, as when the nursery children were making a colourful shape picture. Every opportunity is taken to count and to order number, with any spare time devoted to counting rhymes and number games. These activities help children to make sense of numbers. Stories such as *The Three Bears*, aid the children's understanding of comparative size. These early skills are built upon and developed in the reception classes. By the end of the year the children can count to 10, with the higher attainers counting larger numbers. Some of the average attaining group can create a simple repeating pattern using different size and coloured beads. Many reception children have an appropriate vocabulary that allows them to name basic two-dimensional shapes, but most have difficulties in describing these shapes because of their limited knowledge of English vocabulary. Teachers provide children with a good variety of mathematical tasks and games that help them to develop their knowledge of number, shape and measures, and that extend their English

language for example when children role-played being *fireman putting out the fires in high-rise blocks of flats*, built out of large plastic bricks. The good emphasis given to visual learning helps the children understand the concepts such as *height* much more readily and is a positive feature of the good teaching and learning. Most children are likely to reach the goals expected by the time they complete the Foundation Stage.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children gain great pleasure from this area of their work. Their natural curiosity is challenged ensuring that they want to learn.
- A good range of indoor and outdoor activities that are well taught promote effective learning and good achievement.

Commentary

50. The good teaching provides an exciting and stimulating range of experiences that enable children to make good gains in their knowledge about the world. Staff judge, rightly, that this area of learning can arouse children's interest very successfully. Planting seeds in their garden, growing sunflowers and potatoes, caring for their plants and the school environment, are all activities that are enjoyed greatly by the nursery and reception children. Individually, reception children were making a wormery. Their concentration was very good as they searched for worms, taking great care to treat them safely as they placed them in the wormery. Observational skills are developed well as the children learn to care for other creatures, as well as learning the importance of having worms in the garden. From the start of their time in nursery the children are introduced to the computer. They achieve well, so that by the end of reception they can control the mouse and use their programs successfully. Through stories and assemblies the children learn about celebrations in different cultures which are sometimes shared in home languages as well as English. Visits, for example to the airport, and visitors such as people who help us, extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively. In circle time sessions, the children learn about things special and important such as people in their families. In spite of good gains in their knowledge and understanding about the world, many will not reach the goals expected by the time they start in Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in both the nursery and reception have constant access to good quality outdoor areas.
- Tasks are planned at the right levels so that children's physical skills are developed well and their achievement is good.
- Good teaching is helping the children achieve well.

Commentary

51. When children join the nursery the data shows that many of them have limited physical skills. Staff plan and prepare an appropriate range of indoor and outdoor activities so that the children can become aware of the capabilities of their bodies. Good progress is made in their co-ordination as they run, jump, throw and catch by the end of the reception year and reach the goals expected. Children practise their finer skills regularly as they learn to draw, paint, cut and stick. These activities are a great challenge for many children, but most of them concentrate hard and they are successful. The wheeled toys such as bikes and trikes are enjoyed by all the

children, and they demonstrate growing confidence when climbing on the frame, or playing in the garden house.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because the children are provided with rich and exciting experiences and taught very well.
- Their creative, artistic and aesthetic skills are developed progressively as they move through the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

52. Teachers and teaching assistants complement each other very well in supporting, encouraging and attempting to stimulate the children's imagination as they work creatively. Painting is a new experience for many nursery children. Some of them remain apprehensive but others are keen and eager to join in and to have a go with a paintbrush to paint a bear's face on their paper plate. The staff provide an exciting range of media and experiences, enabling children to explore and experiment. Role-play areas provide good opportunities for imaginative play and contribute very effectively to literacy and mathematical skills. Role-play is enjoyed, and reception children quickly step into the role of doctor or nurse in the surgery. Their spoken language skills are developed well during these activities. Singing is enthusiastic and the reception children were keen to have a go with the chime bars, triangles and bells. Music making is fun. Nearly all children are reaching the early learning goals in this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising in English due to the school's good improvements.
- Good quality teaching enables effective learning to take place.
- There is effective and purposeful leadership and management of English.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good provision made for them.
- Pupils who are learning to speak English are achieving well because of the effective strategies being implemented including skilful bi-lingual support.
- Presentation skills are not given sufficient attention.
- The school is developing a system of target setting in English that has good potential, however the targets agreed with the local education authority for 2005 should be more challenging.

Commentary

53. There has been some fluctuation of results in the national tests in English in Year 6 over the last few years. This is due largely to variations between the different groups of pupils. For example, last year there was a higher proportion than usual of boys with specific needs in the class and mobility was running at 29 per cent. A high level of absence, some because of exclusion for unacceptable behaviour, was also identified as having an adverse impact on the test results. Preliminary interpretation of the 2004 national test results in Year 6 suggests that the standard attained in English was well below the national average, which was lower than the result in 2003.
54. Current pupils are on track to reach standards that are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, in all aspects of English. This represents good achievement when taking into account these pupils' below average starting point. Higher attaining pupils are doing particularly well in English because of the good attention paid to providing them with work at the right level of challenge. The school has embarked on good strategies for improvement that are making a positive difference to the quality of learning experiences and the standards being reached. For example, the targeting of specific pupils, assessed as in danger of underachieving, with additional support in reading and writing.
55. Standards are much improved compared with those attained at the time of the previous inspection and there is good capacity for 2005 results to show good value being added to the pupils' achievement in English. The school's data of pupils' past performance identifies that girls do better in the national tests than boys and that boys from Pakistani backgrounds do not always achieve as well as others of the same age. Inspectors tracked the work of girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds and could find no significant difference in their achievement.
56. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively in lessons and are keen to respond to questions often giving clear explanations when expressing a point of view. At times a narrow range of vocabulary prevents them from giving more elaborate responses. They participate enthusiastically in oral activities such as role-play and *hot seating*, and this has a positive effect on their learning.
57. Reading standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to read independently, and to share reading experiences with parents as well as in guided groups. Most read at home, and talk enthusiastically about the range of books, genres and favourite authors. Guided reading sessions are supported with good quality reading books encouraging pupils to read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. However, book corners in

classrooms generally need to be made more welcoming. Reading standards could be higher but are hampered by pupils' lack of understanding of vocabulary. The subject leader has introduced systems to develop and improve their skills in reading for inference and for information by Year 6. Also, in Year 2 *Reading Recovery* resources are being used to raise the standards of the slower readers, and parents are invited in each week to share a reading session with their children. This is having a positive impact on children's motivation and raising the value of reading to parents and children.

58. Writing standards are now much improved compared with those reported at the time of the previous inspection. This is due to a whole school focus on improvement. Regular assessment of pupils' writing development is carried out each term and progress is carefully monitored. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, and are in line to achieve average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They now need to improve their handwriting skills and the quality of presentation. Spelling is also an area for improvement. The school has already identified the need for improving these aspects, however the quality of teachers' own writing on chalk and white boards is variable and not always the best role model for pupils to replicate. There is limited use of ICT to support recorded work in English. The school is aware more focus is required in what is planned and provided.
59. The teaching of English is good and teachers know their subject well. Pupils are engaged in worthwhile activities that meet their individual needs and they learn well as a result. Effective methods are supported by the good use of resources to make the classroom an interesting and challenging place to be. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, ensure pupils interest is maintained and that they achieve well. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution, especially to those pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress with their individual targets. Bi-lingual staff make very effective use of pupils' home language and this is a strong feature in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in lessons. There is also very good provision for the new arrival of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Intensive and personal support ensures that they make rapid progress in the acquisition of English. Weekly workshops using English and Urdu held for parents and children are helpful in supporting English language development, and enabling parents to better understand how they can support their children's learning. The good quality of relationships underpins the successful teaching of all groups of pupils, and ensures that they all have very good opportunities to succeed.
60. Leadership and management are highly effective. Regular monitoring activities give the subject leader a very clear overview of standards in English, and timely action is taken to remedy areas of weakness or need. The subject leader demonstrates resolution in her efforts to raise standards and has ensured all the key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. The subject leader is developing a system of target setting in English that has potential to heighten staff and pupil awareness of the next steps for learning. The use of targets to show pupils where their achievement lies, and to involve them in regular reviews of their progress would be useful action points. The targets in English agreed with the local education authority for 2005 are realistic, but could be more challenging, to better reflect the school's successful drive for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The school rightly sees literacy as the key that unlocks the curriculum for its pupils. Teachers promote pupils' language skills well in class discussion. Classrooms and shared areas use displays creatively to support pupils' written work and to stimulate their ideas. An in depth look at pupils' work in English from last year confirmed the good quality of teaching and learning observed in classrooms. However, one area ripe for improvement is presentation. Sometimes the work in books is untidy with too many pupils not giving enough care to how they date and set out their work. Too often handwriting is not well formed and this detracts from its overall quality in terms of content. That said, pupils are being provided with good quality experiences to write

for different purposes across the core subjects they study that are enabling them to achieve well in this key skill. There are fewer opportunities for extended writing in subjects such as religious education and history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising in mathematics due to the school's good improvements.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Mathematics is very well led and managed.
- Middle achieving pupils require greater tracking to ensure their achievement is consistent.
- The school is developing a system of target setting in mathematics that has potential to heighten staff and pupil awareness of the next steps for learning.
- The targets agreed with the local education authority for 2005 are realistic but could be more challenging.

Commentary

62. There has been some fluctuation of results in the national tests in mathematics in Year 6 over the last few years. This is due largely to differences in the background of pupils in successive years. For example, last year there was a higher proportion than usual of boys with emotional and behavioural needs in the class and mobility was running at 29 per cent. A high level of absence was also identified as having an adverse impact on the test results. Preliminary interpretation of the 2004 national test results suggests that the standard attained in mathematics was well below the national average, which was lower than the result in 2003. The school's data of pupils' past performance identifies that girls do better in the national tests than boys and that boys from Pakistani backgrounds do not always achieve as well as others of the same age. Inspectors tracked the work of girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds and could find no significant difference in their achievement.
63. This year the pupils in Year 6 are achieving well. This is shown by the work they completed during their time in Year 5. The good expectations of teachers and the productive rate of working by all pupils in the year group contributed significantly to this good achievement. The setting of pupils in these oldest years is undoubtedly having marked positive impact on achievement, though the range of attainment in the middle sets requires careful monitoring to ensure, for example that the top attainers in the middle set are achieving as consistently well as their peers who are amongst the lower attainers in the top set. School managers are alert to this need and accept that tightened systems of monitoring and evaluation and target setting and tracking will go a long way to ensuring all pupils achieve consistently successfully.
64. Good achievement is also the general trend in other years. Standards are average in Year 2, as they are in Year 6. The evidence available shows that standards are lowest in the current Year 4, where they are well below average. Some challenging targets have been set to raise the standards in this year group. Over the longer term, the trend in school is positive in that pupils start with well below average levels of skill and knowledge and they achieve well, leaving school with average standards in mathematics.
65. Mathematics is a well-taught subject, which encourages much enjoyment and hard work from the pupils. There is need for some tightening in lesson planning to ensure the skills, knowledge and understanding to be learned by different groups is identified specifically. Strengths of teaching include the insistence on high standards of behaviour, motivating methods and the very effective contribution made by teaching assistants. Pupils learn well and benefit from a good

curriculum that focuses appropriately on basic numeracy but also covers the other strands of mathematics effectively. Pupils who are learning to speak English are achieving well because of the effective strategies being implemented including skilful bi-lingual support and pre-lesson tutoring so that pupils are up to the same speed as their class-mates when the lesson starts.

66. Leadership and management of the subject are strengths. The subject leader is very committed to his work and has undertaken a thorough review of provision in mathematics. He has identified a number of aspects for further improvement, including more effective use of ICT and the development of the target setting and tracking process and is leading this work very effectively. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Because mathematics is in very capable hands, there are very positive prospects for the future.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. There is some good use made of mathematical skills in other subjects, chiefly science and design and technology. Such practice is giving pupils opportunity to consolidate and extend their skills and knowledge and appreciate the diverse uses and applications of mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average for the eleven-year-olds, and their achievement is very good.
- Very good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, means that achievement is accelerated and standards are moving upwards.
- Pupils' progress and achievement are well charted. Results are carefully analysed and any gaps in learning are identified and tackled successfully.
- A small minority of junior-age pupils are not clear about how to set up a *fair test* when planning their science investigations.

Commentary

68. There have been very good improvements made to science since the last inspection in 1999. Standards, teaching and learning are all much stronger than they were. The rise in standards is due to a number of key factors;
- Very good management of the subject, especially in the early days after the last inspection.
 - The rigorous analysis of all the data about the school's performance in science and the ability to take appropriate action.
 - Effective training for all staff, which has improved their knowledge and understanding of the most effective ways to teach the subject.
 - Significantly improved teaching, especially at the upper end of the juniors.
69. Teachers assessed science standards as well below average in Year 2 in the 2004 national tests. Standards at the end of Year 2 currently are broadly average, but work remains to be done to ensure that more pupils attain the higher level 3. This is the next stage in the school's development, so that when pupils join Year 3 they are off to a good start at the beginning of the junior phase. Standards in science are likely to be broadly average in the 2004 national tests for Year 6. Standards in Year 6 are currently well above average. Pupils start the school with a low level of scientific knowledge and skills, and a considerable lack of English language skills and comprehension which are vitally important to supporting scientific studies. The achievement of almost all pupils of different abilities and ethnic background is very good because of the strong focus on promoting subject specific vocabulary and because of the focus given to practical

activity. Pupils with special educational needs learn successfully because of the good support they are given. Pupils who learn to speak English as an additional language, do as well as their class-mates in science and are represented in all ability groups.

70. Pupils are well motivated. They are keen and eager to learn, putting forward their ideas and suggestions as they did in a Year 3 lesson about the importance of a balanced diet if they are to stay healthy and well. Teaching is good in Years 1 to 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. Tasks are pitched at the right levels because there are accurate systems for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding about their science work. In the stronger lessons, for instance in a very challenging Year 6 lesson on *food chains*, the teacher used very effective questions to check out pupils' understanding, as well as extending their thinking skills. In this example a higher attaining pupil gave a clear explanation of the link between the rabbit and the fox expanding this to describe what would happen if one link in the chain disappeared. Words such as *herbivore*, *carnivore* and *omnivore* were used spontaneously, highlighting very good levels of understanding about the whole process of *food chains*. The very good pace of the lesson resulted in very good gains being made in pupils' knowledge which was very effectively secured by the teacher's highly skilful teaching. Pupils are kept well focused during the introduction to lessons and when the learning points are highlighted at the end, making sure that they all achieve highly, whatever their capability.
71. The emphasis on science investigations means that the majority of older pupils have a good understanding of what is meant by a *fair test*. The majority are aware of the importance of distinguishing between those factors that remain the same, and those which vary, and are accurate when carrying out their investigations. A small number of pupils are less secure about this and this is an aspect for more in-depth attention over the term.
72. A new subject leader was appointed this term. She has already made a very good start, identifying the next areas for further work, which will continue to push up standards across the school. Her own teaching is of high calibre and she is a very good role model for others.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good.
- ICT is a well-taught subject; this leads to good learning.
- Leadership and management of ICT are both good.
- The cross-curricular use of ICT varies from class to class and subject to subject.
- The quality of resources and accommodation is very good and this impacts positively on pupils' achievement.

Commentary

73. The school has overhauled the hardware and software for ICT in the past year and now has a very good resource in its ICT suite for teaching classes up to about 30 pupils. Work to maximise the impact of intensive use of this resource continues. Currently, the teaching of ICT as a subject is good and staff confidence and experience is much improved over past levels. However, the use of ICT across the curriculum is an aspect that school leaders have identified for improvement and are right to do so.
74. Standards are currently average in Years 2 and 6. There is evidence to show that in the past, the standards attained were restricted by the lesser quality of the resources. For example, last year the oldest pupils in school compiled some good quality presentations using very basic software. This year the school has added professional quality presentation software to its stock and there

is already firm evidence of pupils exploring the use of additional features such as animation and audio tracks to add quality to their work.

75. All pupils have regular ICT lessons, many of which are of good quality and this assists good achievement. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good, with some very good teaching observed during the inspection in Year 6 as pupils worked to develop the use of the presentation software discussed above. Learning is well focused on the development of skills and knowledge, it is conducted at a good pace in orderly fashion and teaching assistants give very good support to their pupils. All pupils, regardless of gender and background, are provided with the opportunity to do well in ICT and they respond positively, working enthusiastically and productively.
76. Leadership and management of ICT are in transition at the moment. The subject leader joined the school just over a fortnight before the inspection. It is evident that she has the enthusiasm and experience to lead the subject effectively and has personal ambition to build on past successes. Previous to this year, a committed and effective leader, who worked in tandem with the deputy headteacher, headed ICT. Between them they oversaw the considerable improvement of resources and accommodation for the subject and put in place an effective programme of staff development. ICT provision is in a strong position to build from current strengths.

ICT across the curriculum

77. The curriculum for ICT as a subject is good and in ICT lessons, skills and knowledge are built well. In subjects such as art and design and science, and skills and knowledge are consolidated and extended well. However, this is not consistent and the increased use of ICT in subjects such as English, mathematics, geography and history is included as a core priority in the school's current improvement plan.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership has led to good improvement since the previous inspection when there were reported weaknesses in standards and provision.
- Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Good teaching is enabling good learning and good achievement.
- The school has yet to ensure that pupils in all years have sufficient time and opportunity to write at length about some of the things they learn about, or draw from, their experiences in religious education.

Commentary

78. The effective leadership of religious education has ensured that all areas of weakness identified by the previous inspection have been addressed, and good improvement has taken place. Standards, teaching and learning are all much stronger than they were. This is due to a number of key factors;
- ❑ Effective training for all staff, which has improved their knowledge and understanding of the most effective ways to teach the subject.
 - ❑ A programme of work has been developed and an appropriate time element allocated to the teaching of the subject.
 - ❑ Pupils' progress is assessed each term, and the quality of teaching and learning are beginning to be monitored by the subject leader.
79. Religious education fully reflects the pupils' own diverse cultural and spiritual backgrounds, and makes a strong contribution to their personal development and to promoting tolerance and understanding. In discussion, Year 6 pupils showed maturity in reflecting on how their studies of major world religions had led them to develop respect for those with different beliefs. They showed a depth of understanding about the similarities and differences of the various religions that they practiced and a genuine belief that their experiences could help shape their communities and the wider world.
80. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are now in line with those required by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions and faith groups that currently represent British society today. These include Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam. A good range of artefacts enriches the curriculum; some classroom displays add value to the learning experience; and a series of planned visits to different places of worship within the locality offers learning at first hand. This helps pupils to develop a wider understanding of different faiths, and to know what is regarded as important to them.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall, and enables pupils to develop clear knowledge and understanding. Pupils are confident to share their own religious experiences with others in the class, and to take part in discussions with assurance. Exciting and stimulating experiences are provided in some lessons. For example, in a very good lesson designed to develop an understanding of the purpose of Diwali a wide variety of activities were provided, and all pupils, whatever their racial or ethnic background were enthralled by the opportunities they had to share and understand more about this important Hindu festival.
82. Leadership of religious education is good and management is satisfactory. Although assessment is used on a half-termly basis to check on pupils' understanding and to inform report writing, the tasks have not been developed to include the assessment of skills. The subject leader in the good action plan has also identified the need to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms as a key management target.

Geography and history

83. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Three lessons were observed in history and only one lesson was seen in geography. From the evidence seen standards are broadly average in history and geography in Year 2 and Year 6.
84. In geography, the programme of study is appropriately based upon national guidelines. Work completed in pupils' books shows good coverage of the geography curriculum, and some effective use of the Internet as part of research activities. The local environment is used for a number of purposes, and a comparative study of Moseley village and villages in Pakistan and India enables pupils to identify major similarities and differences and draw from personal

experiences. Some good quality work on rivers and mountains in Year 6 enables the pupils to achieve well, though the plans for a visit to a local river planned this schools year has the potential to make the learning experience even more relevant. Pupils carry out a self-assessment activity each half term based on the topics completed. This is a positive feature enabling them to know how well they are doing and to flag up for teachers where there are perceived strengths and weaknesses. The geography programme of study makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

85. The history curriculum also follows national guidelines in what is planned but provides a somewhat narrower range of experiences, particularly at Year 5. There is limited display of history work around the school. However, a programme of planned visits this year has the potential to support the curriculum well. Although a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates their knowledge and understanding to be sound, their writing skills are the weaker element. Presentation is not always of the best and spellings and punctuation are areas for improvement. In addition, too many worksheets are being used in some years that cap opportunities for personal writing, including independent research.
86. Both subjects have new leaders this term who are keen to make improvements. Both are sensibly taking stock of the qualities in provision as the basis for future action.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology

87. These subjects were sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Only one lesson was observed in each subject. From the evidence seen on display, in lessons and in talking to staff and pupils it is clear that standards are above average in art and design by the end of Year 6 and average in design and technology. This position reflects sustained improvement since the last inspection.
88. In both subjects pupils' skills are promoted well, enabling them to produce quality pieces of work.
89. Pupils take much pride in their final pieces of artwork and in their finished models in design and technology. Pupils' awareness of space and perspective are developed well as they create pictures, posters and drawings. Pencil shading is used to good effect, as in some Year 5 figure drawings in different poses. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with different techniques such as sketching different views of objects and developing a wide range of appropriate shade and tone into their painting. Pupils' work demonstrates good progress in the development of pattern and design.
90. This is a large multi-ethnic school and pupils' different cultural backgrounds are well represented across the art curriculum. Computers are used effectively as work in the style of Mondrian and Kandinsky is produced and displayed to good effect. Pupils' work is valued and the high quality displays around the school serve to focus everyone's attention on what it is possible to achieve.
91. In both subjects pupils spend some time planning their ideas and putting them into practice. Sketchbooks and evidence folders show many good examples of pupils developing their ideas through a range of visual and other information. For example, very detailed chalk drawings of various parts of a flower on black paper have helped Year 5 pupils learn key scientific vocabulary such as *stamen* and *stigma*. The pupils are adept at making thoughtful observations about their own and others' work and they make good suggestions about what needs to be done to improve. Pupils' achievement is assessed regularly in both subjects. Teachers have a very secure insight into how well their pupils are doing, and this guides their future planning successfully.

92. There is a well-planned progression in pupils' learning as they plan their designs using different mechanisms when making working models. Many Year 2 pupils explored different structures, making axles, pulley wheels and winding handles. These skills were then used very successfully in a range of situations when the pupils made a winding toy featuring *Incy, wincy spider*. Year 6 pupils are using their planning and design skills to make cushions that are to be used for different purposes. In one lesson they approached their task methodically, developing different styles that suited their designated purpose. Pupils showed enjoyment in the subject and they worked creatively and with patience to achieve a quality product.
93. Both subjects are led and managed effectively. The leader for art and design has a very clear understanding of her subject and she knows what has to be done to move the subject forward. Design and technology has a new leader too who has expertise in the subject and has identified that a whole-school audit will be her first job this term.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are effective and are rooted in a good curriculum.
- Music is well led and managed.
- The good quality accommodation and very good resources positively influence pupils' achievement.

Commentary

94. Standards in music are average through the school and pupils achieve well in lessons. In fact, there is evidence of standards that are above average and of very good achievement in some lessons. During the inspection, for example, Year 1 pupils showed this pattern in their work as they explored the use of instruments to create sound effects to match the theme of the weather. Rather than hammering the percussion instruments for all their worth, the pupils listened, thought and then performed in a reflective way to produce a composition that accurately mirrored the weather. Thus, sunshine was more serene than wind in their portrayal and there was considerable variation in the overall effect from group to group.
95. Most music is taught in the rather isolated and outwardly uninviting music room. However, this provides a useful resource for the work, which is enhanced by the good quality and range of the musical instruments used. Staff have good knowledge of the subject and teach it with confidence. Learning is brisk, well focused on the development of skills and knowledge and music of different cultures and traditions is promoted well. Teaching and learning are of good quality and draw upon a good curriculum for their positive impact.
96. Music is well led and managed by a very recently appointed enthusiastic and committed leader. She has aspiration to make music the best-taught and learned subject in the school and forms a good role model for other staff and pupils in her advocacy of music as an enriching subject. A new choir has recently been auditioned and there are plans to increase instrumental tuition, for example guitar. Prospects for further improvement in music are positive because of this determined lead.

Physical education

97. This subject was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Two dance lessons were observed in physical education and both showed pupils in Years 3 and 4 reaching average standards for their age. It is evident from planning, the subject leader's evaluation of provision, a portfolio of photographs and school

records that the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils talk enthusiastically of their work in the subject and appreciate the opportunities provided for extra-curricular activities. Golf taught last year was much enjoyed. At present, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have swimming tuition at a nearby pool. However, for cultural reasons, some parents withdraw their children from such lessons. The school is currently consulting with parents about the provision of single gender swimming tuition for pupils in Years 5 and 6 in order to ensure that all pupils have a basic level of water safety and can meet the required 25 metre swimming standard by the time they leave school. The deputy headteacher is currently care-taking the leadership of physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a happy and very caring community in which all pupils are given equal status and show consideration and respect for one another.
- Pupils are making gains in their knowledge about how to keep safe and healthy because of the school's good approaches and they grow as responsible future citizens.

Commentary

98. The parents rate highly the way in which the school recognises the pupils as people in their own right. This is very evident from first contact. Displays by the front door painted by the pupils tell the visitors that everyone is welcome - even crocodiles! Signs and messages are written in a range of community languages and this helps give value to the spoken word of all. The very good role models provided by staff and governors support positively the very well-bonded relationships so evident in school.
99. There is a very good programme of PSHCE which is delivered well and starts by ensuring personal qualities are addressed. Very effective strategies are in place for increasing pupils' self-esteem, including a weekly achievements assembly and merit system that recognises hard work, good manners and effort. Circle times are in place to support pupils' personal development plus workshops for parents to discuss shared approaches to positive behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they feel their voice is heard in school, for example there is an ideas box for pupils to write down their views about *How to care for each other*. The multi-cultural aspects of citizenship are a strong theme of the PSHCE programme. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have visited the Council House to participate in mock debate as part of finding out about the local democratic process and have been part of the Lord mayor's appeal. The school *Food Committee* regularly liaises with the school cook to help decide the menu-quality and variety of food prepared which includes meat, vegetarian and halal options to respond to the needs of cultural and faith requirements.
100. The school pays good attention to health aspects. Younger pupils benefit from fruit provided daily and are learning about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and mentally alert. Pupils learn about keeping safe in the playground and when out in the community, for example the need for road safety. The support provided from the local education authority's *Citizenship team* is valued highly by the school. Pupils gain significant benefit from the specialist input, for example as when they are encouraged to be their own *keepsafe team* as they grow into responsible young adults.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average; 5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low