

INSPECTION REPORT

SEVERNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103252

Headteacher: Mr C Warne

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 18th - 20th April 2005

Inspection number: 267644

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: 355
School address: Severne Road
Acocks Green
Birmingham
Postcode: B27 7HR
Telephone number: (0121) 7062743
Fax number: (0121) 7062756
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr A Sharp
governors:
Date of previous 28th June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Severne Primary School is located in the Fox Hollies ward of Birmingham and serves a local neighbourhood comprising private, rented and social housing. There are currently 355 pupils from the age of 3 to 11 on roll, which makes it bigger than most schools. However, this is changing as the roll is falling and next year the school is re-organising to one form entry.

The profile of children's attainment when they start in the nursery is well below average. Almost all pupils are of White ethnic origin but with a very small number from Asian or Black heritage. There are a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language but none is at a very early stage of English acquisition. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties; one pupil has a statement. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The level of mobility in school is similar to that seen in most primary schools with a handful of new pupils joining in most classes every year.

The school is part of an Excellence in Cities Cluster and involved in the Children's Fund initiative. In 2002, the school was accredited with an achievement award, a Football Charter Standard in 2004 and the Naace Mark awarded for information and communication technology (ICT) in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal, social, health education and citizenship
9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
20326	P Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education
30144	E Hastings	Team inspector	English Provision for special educational needs English as an additional language Art and design Design and technology
1189	S Brown	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education Music
27100	T Davies	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an **effective** education for its pupils within a very caring and supportive atmosphere. Pupils are well taught and benefit from a very exciting curriculum that includes very good use of information communication technology (ICT) to support their successful learning. Very good leadership is at the heart of the school's effectiveness. Teamwork is a significant strength and everyone at Severne shows a high level of dedication as they give of their best to the pupils. The school adds good value to pupils' life skills and gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very good leadership is behind the school's many strengths.
- Standards are above average in ICT; however, they are below average in English, mathematics and religious education by the end of Year 6.
- The school's very good approach to inclusion enables boys and girls to succeed equally well.
- The children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to the education and make good progress.
- Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs but provision is less well developed for those with gifts or talents.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well as a result.
- The school gives excellent attention to setting high standards of behaviour and this supports pupils' good behaviour and their very keen interest in their studies.
- Very supportive and respectful relationships stand out as a key feature of the school's ethos.
- The very good curriculum is enriched by well-chosen visits, a range of excellent quality activities and very good links with other schools.
- High status is given to the pupils' health, safety and welfare and the provision made is very good.
- Very good links with the wider community give extra value to the pupils' education.
- Assessment is good in core subjects but does not give sufficient emphasis to on-going learning gains in other subjects; the use of targets in marking is inconsistent.

The school has made good progress in improving the quality of education since the time of the previous inspection. The school has a good process of self-evaluation that is helping it to move forward and good capacity to sustain improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve **well** during their time at school. The results in the table below show that in the 2004 National Curriculum tests Year 6 pupils did not achieve as well as pupils nationally but overall did better than those pupils in similar schools. The trend in improvement in raising standards is above that seen nationally at the end of Year 6.

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

mathematics	E	D	E	C
science	D	C	D	B

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
 NB - Similar schools are those with over 50 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Children in the nursery start with well below average levels of skill and knowledge. They learn successfully and achieve well overall by the time they complete the Foundation Stage and are ready to transfer to Year 1. Pupils achieve well in the infant and junior stages. Current standards are broadly average in English and mathematics in Year 2 but below average in these subjects in Year 6. Standards in these subjects are rising in all years due to the school's good improvement strategies. A useful start has been made to extending pupils' writing skills but more focus is required on the use of grammar and on recording methods and presentation in mathematics and religious education. More precise use of academic targets could support even better tracking, and help the school in supporting higher-level achievement, especially in science. Standards are above average in ICT, below average in religious education, and average in science and most other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. The atmosphere in classes is settled with pupils alert and working well. The good attention paid to supporting pupils' personal development enables them to grow in confidence and achieve good self-esteem. Attendance and punctuality show marked improvement since the last inspection, and are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils are at the heart of the school's provision and the *Can Do* culture promoted helps many overcome personal barriers to learning. Though satisfactory, assessment and marking are not sufficiently focused on supporting on-going learning. The curriculum is very rich and exciting with very good use made of ICT to engage pupils in many worthwhile learning experiences. Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs, but is not as effective for those with gifts or talents. The diverse range and excellent quality of extra curricular activities helps to channel pupils' energies positively. Accommodation and resources are working to the good advantage of the pupils' effective learning. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are all very good. The school makes highly effective use of the Malachi Trust to provide weekly, targeted support for children who are in crisis. Links with the parents are good, and very good with external agencies, business and partner schools and colleges, and all work to the very good advantage of pupils of all ages.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and governance are **very good** and management is **good**. The headteacher is a caring leader who gives very clear educational direction and enables others to play a full part in moving the school forward. The deputy and senior team play a key role in developing new strategies and are instrumental in managing change. Subject leaders are up to speed with their roles and undertake their responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment. Governors reflect the school community in their make-up, are both supportive and challenging and are very good critical friends of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the quality of care given to their children and about the good family values the school promotes. Parents say their children are very happy to come to school and enthusiastic to learn. They flag the responsiveness of staff to pupil needs as a key strength. A few parents raised concerns about the head's approachability and the perceived lack of follow up to concerns they have about behaviour and bullying. However, inspectors could find no justification for this. Pupils told inspectors that they like school, have a trusting relationship with adults and can go to them if they have a worry. Playground

buddies are said to be instrumental in sorting out squabbles at break and lunchtime. Physical education and design and technology are the top rated subjects by pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the drive for raised standards with particular emphasis given to sharpening the use of grammar for writing; extending the methods, quality and range of recorded work in mathematics and religious education and widening the use of pupil targets in science to support higher-level achievement.
- Press ahead with the assessment for learning initiative, seek to use targets more in marking and establish assessment systems in the subjects where there are none.
- Tighten the assessment criteria, and make more consistent the provision for those pupils with gifts and talents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's very good approach to inclusion enables boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds and across the ability range to achieve equally well despite many having personal challenges to overcome.
- Standards in ICT are above average.
- Standards are below average in English, mathematics and religious education by the end of Year 6. Pupils' writing, recording and presentation skills are holding back a better standard being reached in these subjects.
- The children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to the education and make good progress.
- The school sets challenging academic targets in English and mathematics in Year 6 but has yet to extend this practice to other years and across subjects to better support the drive for raised standards.

Commentary

1. Standards are rising due to the school's good improvement strategies. The picture in standards is more positive than at the time of the previous inspection in most respects. Very good improvement has been made to ICT where the above average standards reflect the school's concerted effort to improve provision and enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills in ICT at a good rate in all years. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in all subjects is a great strength in the curriculum.
2. Standards in English have increased every year since the time of the previous inspection. Good attention is given to supporting pupils' developing reading skills. The introduction of a home reading diary in all years is a useful way to widen parental involvement in support of their children's education. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' oral communication skills from an early age, for example such as the *talking partner* strategy, reaps dividends as they grow into confident speakers and enables them to full access to all of the subjects they study. Pupils' writing skills are improving and the introduction of regular writing assessments is a very positive feature in helping teachers and managers keep a check on the progress being made by each pupil. The school is alert to the need to tighten up on spellings, presentation and the use of grammar and these are all identified for improvement in the well-conceived subject action plan. These features in writing are currently holding back higher standards being reached in religious education too.
3. The picture in standards in mathematics has been more erratic over the last few years. However, input from the local education authority adviser to support staff development and the approaches of new subject leadership in mathematics are driving forward positive change. A good focus on mental mathematics is supporting pupils' achievements and inspectors observed well-taught lessons in which pupils made good progress. Boys and girls generally make good use of subject-specific vocabulary, to answer questions or to explain approaches to solving problems, for example, in numeracy sessions. However, not enough is expected when pupils record their work in terms both of the methods used and the quality of presentation.

4. Standards in science are very similar to those seen nationally and the good push on the investigative aspects of the subject is paying dividends in supporting pupils' successful achievement in this subject. The school uses target setting to good effect in English and mathematics but has not yet introduced this to science and this is a missed opportunity to support even better achievement, especially for those who are capable of reaching high standards.
5. Children in the nursery start with well below average levels of skill and knowledge. They learn successfully and achieve well overall by the time they complete the Foundation Stage and are ready to transfer to Year 1. Nevertheless the majority will not meet the goals expected for children of this age except in their personal and social where very good progress is made . The current intake in the nursery includes a relatively high number of children for whom English is not their first language, with most at an early stage of language acquisition. These children achieve as well as others in the class because of the good support they are given. The teaching team's very good focus on personal and social aspects of the children's development results in most making very good progress in this area of their learning. Pupils achieve well in the infant and junior stages. Current standards are broadly average in English and mathematics in Year 2, but below average in these subjects in Year 6. Standards in these subjects are rising in all years due to the school's good improvement strategies but the impact has been greater for the youngest learners.
6. The school's very good approach to inclusion enables boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds and across the ability range to achieve equally well despite many having personal challenges to overcome. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported and achieve well against their personal targets. The provision for the small group of pupils with gifts and talents is less good. However, the school has made a start by identifying those pupils with gifts and talents in each class and provides some additional challenge via the extra-curricular programme. The school has already secured training to support the development of its provision and is right to do so.
7. The table that follows shows that in 2004 Year 2 pupils reached below average standards in all tested subjects. Standards were better than those in 2003 in reading but they dipped in writing and mathematics. Standards were well above those seen in similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.9 (14.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.1 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

8. The table that follows shows that in 2004 Year 6 pupils reached standards that were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Standards were not as good as those in 2003. Girls tend to perform better than the boys in tests. However, the work that inspectors observed in lessons and in pupils' books is of equal calibre and inspectors could find no good reason for the disparity thrown up by the test data. Standards were above average in English and science and average in mathematics when compared to those in similar schools. The overall trend in improvement is above that seen nationally at the end of Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (25.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.2 (26.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.7 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

9. The proportion of Year 6 pupils currently on track to reach the higher Level 5 in their work has increased over that seen last year because of the added challenges the school is providing. Nevertheless more precise use of academic targets in years other than Year 6, and English and mathematics, could support even better achievement, and help the school in pinpointing learning spurts or dips much earlier than at present with the opportunity for much speedier intervention as required. Challenging targets have been set for 2005 and 2006 in English and mathematics with the agreement of the local education authority that show well the school's declared mission to *Aim High*.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are **very good** overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's action to promote attendance is excellent and results in attendance and punctuality levels that are well above that seen nationally.
- Relationships between pupils are very good, making school a place where children feel safe and happy amongst friends.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour is good both in class and at play.
- Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good, with a very successful emphasis on citizenship.

Commentary

10. There has been a very good improvement in attendance since the last inspection, for which the school has won a national award from government. Attendance is now well above the average found in primary schools nationally and unauthorised absence is low. These figures reflect the excellent work done by the school in monitoring and promoting good attendance by a variety of means including rigorous efforts by the administration staff and the school nurse. Parents have been made more aware of the importance of regular attendance, and have worked in partnership with the school to achieve this goal.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. A real strength of the school, and one which underpins the very good climate for learning, is the very good relationship between pupils, both at work and at play. *Talking partners* and group work in class demonstrate a commitment to inclusive teamwork which is used very well by teachers to move learning forward. In the playground pupils are friendly, if boisterous, and any small disagreements are very soon sorted out to the satisfaction of all parties. There have been no exclusions in the last three years, and the behavioural support provided by the school is very successful in supporting those with potentially challenging behaviour and in preventing issues from developing.

12. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, and respond very well to the exciting, well-planned lessons which challenge them and foster a desire to learn more. In a history lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils were breathless with curiosity as the teacher revealed from a case a real ancient Egyptian artefact. Having shared with the class the ways in which such an object could be used, they were fascinated by the description of how these people so long ago applied their make-up, and they recalled several facts which they had learned previously. From the early years to the oldest juniors, pupils show a genuine desire to learn and try hard to produce work of good quality.
13. One of the priorities tackled by the staff is the development of good self-esteem in the pupils, many of whom have low expectations when they arrive at the school. Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to encourage feelings of self-worth in pupils, and encourage them to grow in confidence whilst remaining aware of their responsibilities towards others. There is a very successful emphasis on good moral and social values, which pupils then develop further when they participate in a host of activities both in school and through the opportunities provided by the projects supported by the Children's Fund. Initiatives like the *Young Consultants* projects at local and city centre establishments give pupils a real taste of democracy and how individuals can make a difference to the quality of life.
14. Multicultural harmony is a feature of the school, and pupils are given good opportunities to develop greater awareness of, and respect for, people of other faiths and ethnic backgrounds. Through art and design, music and literature, and historical studies, they also become more aware of their own cultural roots. Overall, pupils' personal development is good, and they are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. The very relevant curriculum offers exciting experiences for the pupils with very positive enrichment. Pupils receive **very good** care and support. The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged very effective links with other schools and its community that benefit the pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching enables boys and girls of different ability to learn equally successfully.
- Very good use of ICT supports pupils' learning positively in all subjects.
- The school gives excellent attention to setting high standards of behaviour and as a result classes are happy, settled and productive places of work.
- Though satisfactory, assessment could be better focused on supporting on-going learning.

Commentary

15. Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection. This has not happened by chance but is due to a number of reasons including a highly effective programme of

staff development, the good emphasis given to shared observation and coaching that all teachers undertake, and the upbeat attitudes of the staff to work together as a well-bonded team who show a high level of dedication as they give of their best to the pupils. The headteacher has selected his staff for their complementary skills and talents and for personal qualities that include a strong determination to seek sustained improvement and a genuine commitment to improve the life chances of pupils, many of whom have very challenging barriers to overcome. Staff are reflective about their practice and ready to take on new challenges as they arise.

16. Teaching and learning were never less than satisfactory in the 60 lessons observed by inspectors and in most were of good or better quality. Pupils are at the heart of the school's provision and the *Can Do* culture promoted helps many overcome personal barriers to learning. Good teaching is evident in all year groups and classes and includes good encouragement, pacy delivery and good levels of challenge. Excellent attention is given to setting high standards of behaviour and as a result classes are happy, settled and productive places of work. Very supportive and respectful relationships stand out as a key feature of the school's ethos and these underpin the pupils' effective learning.
17. All teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' interest and engage them in the subject content right from the outset. The good emphasis given to visual and *hands-on* learning is helping many pupils to develop their own learning style. The approach was seen to bring learning alive for some pupils who have difficulties in concentrating for prolonged periods and to give them confidence to *have a go*. It is also proving very positive in widening the understanding of those pupils who previously had only a very narrow range of educational experiences on which to base their responses.
18. The teaching of basic skills is good and pupils build their skills successfully. Teachers use questioning very successfully to elicit the level of pupils' knowledge and to engage everyone in the lesson as soon as possible. In the very best lessons, a key feature was the way in which teachers gave enough time for the pupils to consider their responses, insisted on the correct subject-specific vocabulary in their answers, and asked follow on questions that deepened pupils' thinking skills. Many lessons use *talking partners* (pupils discussing a possible solution to a problem with a fellow peer) as a strategy to involve pupils in sharing views and giving opinions.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (1.5%)	13 (22%)	45 (75%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

19. Pupils' creative writing skills are developing soundly due to the school's effective strategies, however there is room for improvement in the use of grammar, spellings and presentation. Such limitations in these areas are having an adverse impact on recorded work in subjects such as mathematics and religious education. More effective use of assessment data and widening the use of targets in marking would support the school's good drive to raise standards, especially in science. Good attention is being given to homework with challenges set in English and mathematics weekly in all years that add value to pupils' learning in school. The school runs a homework club for those who have difficulty in finding a quiet place to study at home.

20. Children in the Foundation Stage are well taught and learn successfully as a result. For many, learning is a slow process and the team of staff show immense patience in giving just the right amount of encouragement to support the children's growing independence as learners. Very firm emphasis on building the children's confidence as learners ensures that many are likely to achieve their goals in personal and social areas by the end of the reception year. However, most will not build skills and knowledge to the level expected for their age by the time they transfer to Year 1 in the other five areas of learning despite good teaching. The staff team do well to plan together and deliver a seamless curriculum despite the physical barrier of distance between the nursery and reception classes.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and given very good support to help them learn with success. Mostly they receive additional in-class support from the skilled support assistants, with well-chosen activities that match the targets on their individual education plans (IEPs). Occasionally, they withdraw from the classroom for one-to-one additional input or to work in small groups. Their progress is very carefully monitored and recorded.

The curriculum

The **very good** curriculum provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum for pupils of all ages. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum that includes very good use of ICT to support their successful learning.
- Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs but provision is less well developed for those with gifts or talents.
- Extra curricular provision is excellent and helps to channel pupils' energies positively.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is in much better shape than at the time of the previous inspection. It gives both excellence and enjoyment to pupils of all ages, meets different aptitudes well and fully meets statutory requirements. Good attention has been paid to widening pupils' experiences in art and design and music both of which had reported shortcomings raised by the previous inspection. A well-equipped art room and high quality ICT suite have been added since the time of the previous inspection and are considerable assets. A plasma screen in the foyer shows cameos of the school's life to all visitors and usefully provides news of events for parents to see. The use of interactive whiteboards in all classrooms to support both teaching and learning in all subjects has a very positive impact on the quality of the curriculum.
23. The school plans a very inclusive curriculum; equality of access is very good. Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs, including those with a statement. Individual education plans contain specific and measurable targets that enable a close focus to be given to individual and group progress. Support staff are highly effective in their roles and undertake regular assessments of individual progress that teachers use to assist in the planning appropriate work. The school has made a useful start in considering the needs of those pupils with talents. For example, pupils with artistic talents have worked with artists in residence, musicians are given the opportunity to receive free instrumental tuition and talented soccer players have been introduced and accepted by Birmingham City Academy of Excellence. Teachers have identified those pupils who fall into the category of

gifted and/or talented in each class, a policy has been written and training is on-stream to support its implementation. Currently, provision is less well developed for those with gifts within lessons. The very good provision made for those pupils with special educational needs that is tried and tested provides pointers for developing provision for this group too.

24. Within the curriculum a strong emphasis is given to citizenship and personal, social and health education. For example, the life education caravan makes an annual visit, as do other health and safety professionals, to share their expertise with the pupils. The school has been accredited with the Healthy Schools Award.
25. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum from well chosen visits, an extensive programme of visitors who come into school to share their experiences, and from very well forged community links. Very good links with the wider community give extra value to the pupils' education. Out of school activities embrace a very wide range of sports and performance arts. The school is highly successful in tapping into additional resources that benefit the pupils, for example through initiatives that include artists in residence and football coaching programmes. The school's web page has very useful tasters of what the school offers. For example, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed a history day on the Celts and Romans. A team from Birmingham's Think Tank led a science activities afternoon with the school council who then gave feedback to help the presenters refine their programme for use in other schools. Both Year 5 classes have visited Hams Hall Environmental Centre in connection with River Study work in geography. Some Year 5 pupils are also working with a composer to write and perform their own musical pieces to form part of an end of term performance at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. Year 6 pupils spent a day as historians researching World War II and both classes have visited the Nature Centre in Cannon Hill Park in connection with their work on food chains. Fifty pupils from Years 5 and 6 spent a week at Stansfield residential centre near Oxford and had a very good experience according to all accounts.
26. Resources are well chosen and support pupils' learning effectively. The building is well maintained and is generally in a good state of repair. An on-going rolling programme is in place for decoration. This is being held back currently whilst the flat roof is upgraded to stop water leaks that can be seen in damp patches on the ceilings and tops of walls in some classrooms. The school is currently involving pupils closely in plans to enhance the playground. The outdoor provision for the children in nursery is being developed with support from lecturers and students from a local teacher training college. The school has earmarked some of its savings to facilitate a nurture room that would assist its very good work in supporting the high number of pupils who are trying to overcome significant barriers to learning. However, this is very much at the drawing board stage.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. Arrangements to seek pupils' views are **highly effective**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good.
- All staff are very vigilant about health and safety, and pupils are taught safe practice.
- Pupils enjoy exceptionally trusting and mutually respectful relationships with adults in the school.
- The personal and social needs of individuals are very well catered for.
- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good advice and guidance is given for academic matters.
- Through the school council all pupils have a very real say in matters which affect daily school life.

Commentary

27. The great majority of parents share the opinion of inspectors that this is a very caring school which leaves no stone unturned in ensuring pupils' welfare. Health and safety procedures are very good, including comprehensive risk assessments and pupils are taught safe practice. The arrangements for child protection are rigorous and well embedded in school routines.
28. The school justifiably prides itself on a house style in which there is mutual respect between all adults and children. The success in achieving this aim is illustrated by the excellent, trusting, respectful relationships which pupils enjoy with adults in school and which underpin all aspects of their care. This begins at induction when newcomers, be they in nursery or late joiners in other classes and sometimes from very difficult backgrounds, receive warm, consistent guidance on how to behave, and how to do their best. All adults provide very good role models, and use praise and encouragement very effectively. There is valuable support for those with special social or behavioural needs provided by workers from the Malachi Trust and the Children's Fund. The system is very effective in reducing the need for any formal intervention, as pupils learn to adopt self-restraint and live within normal school rules.
29. Guidance and support for academic development is good overall, and very good for those with special educational needs. There is inconsistency in the way in which all pupils receive clear, diagnostic guidance in teachers' marking, so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve and this requires review. Also the provision for those pupils with gifts and talents is not as focused and as challenging as it should be.
30. The school council is a well-organised, autonomous body with a good track record for making a difference. Pupils throughout the school are well used to having a say and a vote in school affairs. This has been a particular focus of the school's success in achieving a Healthy School Award, particularly through pupil suggestions about healthy lunches and playground *buddying*. Pupils use the suggestion boxes with confidence and are generally happy with school life.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is **good**, with some real strengths. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very proactive in drawing parents in as active partners in support of their children's education.
- The curriculum is greatly enriched by the wide variety of links with the local and wider community.
- Partnerships with other local schools further enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- The school is a very successful partner in teacher training initiatives.
- A few, vocal parents have still to be fully convinced by the school's aims.

Commentary

31. Links with parents are good overall, and reflect the high priority the school places on informing and involving parents in school life. Parents enjoy a wide range of occasions in which they can visit and participate, from the three annual parents' evenings to class assemblies, *INSPIRE* workshops and special activities run by the play leader. Parents respond very well to these invitations, and their support is commendable. For example, all classes hold an annual *INSPIRE* workshop to develop parents' awareness of how they can support mathematics and literacy skills, and at one seen during the inspection, almost every child in the class had an adult family member in attendance.

32. Communications with parents are good and include regular surveys which are acted upon; as for example with the parents' request for compulsory school uniform. Annual progress reports are not sufficiently clear about how well a child is achieving in comparison with national expectations, but parents do have an opportunity to discuss the details further. The school is aware that, despite its good links, and the support shown by parents which underpinned its success in raising attendance, there remains a small minority of parents who do not feel fully embraced by the partnership approach.
33. Links with the community are very good; extremely varied, and make a strong contribution to the rich educational and developmental opportunities provided for the children. These links include valuable shared projects with local primary schools and receiving secondary schools, and provide access to extra facilities. There are support programmes funded by the Children's' Fund which extend pupils' experiences far beyond the normal school day, and their local environment. Also the school is perceived to be very community-friendly by the world outside, and hosts a multi-agency local support group involving housing, police, council, school and play-leaders, as well as meetings for debt counselling and holiday play schemes.
34. Overall, through bringing in specialists in various subject areas, through experiencing new teaching approaches in partnership with training institutions, and through tapping into the opportunities available for citizenship work, the school gives its pupils a very rich and challenging time at school with a clear relevance to life in the outside world.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership is at the heart of the school's effectiveness.
- Very good attention is paid to equality of opportunity and everyone holds high expectations for each pupil's academic and social growth.
- Accurate self-evaluation underpins the good management.
- Governors and managers are prudent in all matters related to finance; the school gives good value for money.

Commentary

35. Very good leadership by the headteacher is at the heart of the school's effectiveness. Strengths in the quality of education flagged last time the school was inspected have been sustained and weaknesses eradicated. The headteacher is a caring leader who gives very clear educational direction and enables others to play a full part in moving the school forward. The deputy and senior team play a key role in developing new strategies and are instrumental in managing change. Subject leaders are confident in their leadership roles and undertake their management responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment. Governors reflect the school community in their make-up, are both supportive and challenging and act as very good critical friends of the school. The school's development plan quite rightly identifies the raising of standards and improving key skills as the key priorities, though it would benefit from more explicit criteria being identified to assess the impact of the action taken. Within its context, the school adds good value to pupils' life skills and gives good value for money.
36. The school has a diverse range of pupils to educate, some with very challenging behaviour and others who have a lot of problems that sometimes get in the way of their effective learning. The school knows pupils as individuals and is very responsive

to needs. Parents recognise this as a key strength. Teamwork is a considerable strength and all staff show a high level of dedication as they give of their best to the pupils. Very good attention is paid to equality of opportunity and everyone holds high expectations for each pupil's academic and social growth.

37. High calibre leadership has resulted in an effective school and one that is continually striving to improve. Accurate self-evaluation underpins the good management. Thorough analysis of test data is undertaken by the deputy headteacher, and this is used well to support improvement in teaching and learning and assist in the allocation of resources. There is a close link between performance management and professional development. Individual needs are self-assessed and staff undertake the training they need to meet these. Through a process of appraisal discussion all staff share in working towards the school's main objectives, especially in respect of improving pupils' progress and raising standards.
38. Between them the staff have many skills and competencies. They present themselves as very positive role models for the pupils. The coaching that involves all teachers and takes place as part of the school's monitoring activities, is a very effective vehicle for teaching skills to be shared. The focus on teaching quality in the lesson observations carried out thus far have made a huge impact on ensuring consistency. The high proportion of good or better quality teaching observed during this inspection is testament that the approach is working well. However, there is not the same level of attention given to learning outcomes in the school's recorded evaluation of lessons. This is a missed opportunity to track pupils' progress and assess on-going learning across years and subjects.
39. Governors and managers are prudent in all matters related to finance. There is good control and very efficient day-to-day oversight of the budget. The very large carry forward figure shown in the table below has arisen due to astute financial management and additional income generated by the school's own endeavour and successful bids for innovative projects and pilot strategies. The planned savings are to fund earmarked projects that include the provision of a nurture room, refurbishment of the flat roof, and development of the outdoor play area by the nursery. A large element has been set aside with agreement of the local education authority to enable the restructuring of staffing in the light of the projected budget deficit in 2006/7 due to the falling roll situation.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,138,722
Total expenditure	1,278,418
Expenditure per pupil	3,391

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	389,744
Balance carried forward to the next year	250,048

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn successfully and achieve well in the nursery and reception classes.
- Teaching is consistently good with examples of very good teaching seen on occasions.
- The staff team plan together well and deliver a seamless curriculum despite the physical barrier of distance between the nursery and reception classes.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The outdoor provision for the children in nursery is being developed with support from lecturers and students from a local teacher training college.

Commentary

40. Children receive a good start to their education in the nursery. This is built upon successfully in both reception classes. Teaching is consistently good with examples of very good teaching seen on occasions. A good curriculum is provided which ensures a good balance between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. There is a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills, particularly language, with good cross-curricular links made to other areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good with outcomes used effectively to inform future planning. Support staff make a good contribution to children's learning.
41. When children start in the nursery, standards are well below the expected level in all areas of learning. Speech and language skills are low as are personal and social skills. Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes as a result of good teaching. Nevertheless, the majority are unlikely to achieve all of the goals identified by the end of the reception year. The current intake includes an increasing number of children for whom English is not their first language as well as a significant number from families in crisis. Of the twelve children with English as an additional language, eight are at an early stage of language acquisition. These children achieve as well as others in the class as do those children with special educational needs. The range and quality of resources for learning are good except for outdoor provision, which is adequate but large equipment is old and worn and the outdoor area rather barren. However, a project with Newman College is underway to improve the outdoor provision, which is a priority in order to meet the physical development needs of children effectively in this area of learning. Leadership and management are effective in enabling good and improving provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and the reception class and children achieve very well.
- Class routines are well established. Children develop good levels of independence.
- Personal, social and emotional development underpins all class activities successfully.

Commentary

42. When children start in the nursery, skills are well below those expected for children of this age. Children quickly learn classroom routines. The adults work consistently to develop children's confidence and independence. Attitudes to learning are positive. Children enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Through very well planned opportunities they learn to share, take turns; work in groups and exercise independence. Children listen carefully to the adults and follow instructions obediently. They develop an understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions because adults provide very good role models and are consistent in their approach. Relationships are very good. The adults have high expectations of good behaviour. Children respond and behave well. Very good teaching ensures that achievement is very good and most children are likely to achieve their goals in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well, however standards are below the level expected for children of this age at the end of the reception year.
- Good opportunities are provided to help children build their literacy skills.

COMMENTARY

43. When children start in the nursery, skills in this area of learning are well below average, with language skills particularly low. Good teaching throughout the nursery and reception classes enables children to improve their skills and achieve well. However, the majority are unlikely to achieve all of their goals in this area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Children listen well to the adults. They enjoy stories, songs and rhymes. In the nursery they role-play mini-beasts, singing songs and performing actions in the outdoor area. In the reception classes they listen with enjoyment to the story about the *Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Well-structured role-play engages other children in acting out the story using masks to help their characterisation. The Garden Centre role-play areas provide further opportunities for speaking and listening skills to be developed as the children purchase plants to grow in the garden. The adults engage children in purposeful conversation at every opportunity. Higher attainers are beginning to read simple texts, write sentences independently and re-tell the stories they hear. Nursery children are not yet able to cope with self-registration but children in the reception classes do so confidently. Most children in the reception classes recognise their name and the majority can write their first name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well.
- Standards are below average at the end of the reception year.
- Mathematical vocabulary is reinforced well in lessons and number rhymes and songs help to consolidate basic number skills.
- Role-play contributes well to mathematical development.

Commentary

44. Mathematical skills are well below average when children start in the nursery. They achieve well as a result of good teaching in the nursery and reception classes. Activities are well matched to the needs of the children. They quickly learn a range of number rhymes and songs, consolidating their knowledge of number skills. Mathematical language is reinforced well in lessons. Learning is consolidated well through a good range of practical activities such as sorting, matching and ordering. Role-play contributes effectively to learning as children handle money and count items in the Garden Centre. The few higher attainers count reliably beyond 10. They write and order numbers to 10 and make simple addition sentences. A good number recognise and name two-dimensional shapes such as circle, square and triangle. In a lesson observed in the reception class, many found it difficult to count backwards. Children in the nursery create a simple pattern, many with help. In the reception classes many can continue a simple repeating pattern independently. Whilst higher attainers are likely to achieve their goals by the end of the reception year, the majority of the children are unlikely to do so.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- Standards are below average at the end of the reception year.
- The good quality learning environment enhances children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Cross-curricular links are a strength.

Commentary

45. Children enter the nursery with standards well below the level expected for their age. Teachers provide a good quality experiences that enable children to make good progress in their knowledge about the world. Lessons are very well planned and cross-curricular links are a strength, particularly between language and mathematics. Children in the nursery investigate mini-beasts, grow edible herbs, plant bulbs and flowers and learn about the seasons and weather. They know something about celebrations such as Chinese New Year. They are developing confidence with the computer, creating simple pictures. In the reception classes, children map their route to school. They learn about people who help us, explore materials for clothes in cold weather and name different parts of a flower. They extend their skills with the computer creating Rangoli patterns, dressing the teddy and painting pictures. Role-play areas extend learning well. Visits and visitors support learning effectively. Good

teaching enables children to achieve well, although the majority are unlikely to achieve all of their goals for this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- Standards are below average at the end of the reception year in aspects of physical development.
- Outdoor resources are adequate but worn and unexciting. The outdoor area is barren.

Commentary

46. When children start in the nursery their physical skills are well below average. Good teaching and well-planned activities enable children to achieve well in this area of learning. The adults make the best use of an 'unexciting' and tired outdoor area that lacks a grassed area and shade as well as stimulating resources to inspire learning. The outdoor provision for the children in nursery is at the early stage of being developed with support from lecturers and students from a local teacher training college. Children have access to trikes and scooters but a significant number lack confidence and skill when using these. The majority use the large outdoor equipment with confidence although a good number are less confident when balancing. Reception children have regular access to the outdoor area. Children have access to the hall but this was not observed during the inspection. The adults work hard to help children develop control of small manipulative skills but many find pencil skills and brush control difficult. Good opportunities are provided for children to practice cutting, sticking, painting and drawing skills. All adults have high expectations of children's independence. Children dress and undress with little adult support. Despite the good provision, the majority of children are unlikely to achieve all the goals for physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- Standards are below average at the end of reception year.
- Children enjoy the good range of activities provided and attitudes are positive.

Commentary

47. Skills in creative development are well below average when children start in the nursery. Good teaching and good support enable children to achieve well in developing their creative skills. Teachers provide a wide range of good quality activities in drawing, painting, collage and modelling. A significant number of children have difficulty with pencil and brush control. Children enjoy the activities provided. Good use is made of the role-play areas and well-timed intervention extends the play well. Cross-curricular links are a strength in this area of learning. Children enjoy a

range of songs and rhymes. They receive a generous input from a visiting music specialist giving high quality experiences in music in the nursery and reception classes. In the lesson seen, children in the nursery enjoyed listening to the saxophone and keyboard. They clapped out the sounds of mini-beast names, identifying loud/quiet and high/low notes and moved their bodies to the rhythm of the beat. The teacher built well on this lesson during snack time as children listened to music composed by Beethoven. Children sing with enjoyment and enthusiasm. The majority of children are unlikely to achieve all of the goals for creative development by the end of the reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, though learning is a slow process for some who start from a very low baseline.
- Standards in English are currently below average by the end of Year 6.
- Still more improvement is needed in the use of grammar for writing.
- Teaching is of a consistently good quality.
- There is insufficient use of targets in marking.
- Subject leadership and management are very good.

COMMENTARY

48. Since the time of the previous inspection, standards in English have risen annually. Standards in the 2004 National tests compare favourably with those found in similar schools. Standards are continuing to improve and by the end of Year 2, pupils currently attain broadly average standards in reading, writing, and in speaking and listening. There are signs of positive improvement filtering through the school. Standards are broadly average in speaking and listening by the end of Year 6, however, standards are below average in reading and writing. The school is making great efforts to raise standards, and this is having a positive effect considering pupils' well below average starting point.
49. Reading skills are being given good attention and show improvement. There is good use of guided reading activities to support the progress of pupils of all ages and good use of targets to support older pupils' sustained application. The introduction of a home-diary system is a positive feature alongside other challenges set in English in all years that add value to pupils' learning. The English curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and genres, but a narrow vocabulary and grammatical inaccuracies affect the quality of their work. Teachers pay reasonable attention to this but still more needs to be done if standards are to be lifted. Handwriting skills also require more focus as there is a lack of correctly joined and fluent writing. Good attention is paid to spelling on a regular basis.
50. Very good relationships between staff and pupils, the good quality of teaching and the interesting and stimulating curriculum very much underpin the pupils' good achievement. Pupils are well motivated and all groups make good progress, including those with special educational needs because of the good provision the school makes for them through the deployment of skilled teaching assistants. Similarly, pupils whose

first language is not English, are also helped to achieve well in their time at school because of the good match of work provided to meet their needs. The highly inclusive nature of the school ensures very good provision is available for all.

51. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school and staff know their subject well, and strive to make it relevant and enjoyable. This leads to good levels of learning by pupils. Lessons are well planned, and build sequentially upon pupils' previous learning. They are enjoyable experiences and teachers involve and engage their pupils very well, giving many opportunities to take part in discussion with their partners, and provide good levels of challenge. Very good use of interactive whiteboards helps to engage the pupils' early involvement in lessons and helps them to focus and remain on task. A wide range of programs and ICT resources contribute to the development of literacy skills, knowledge and understanding. High standards of behaviour ensure there are few obstacles to learning in class. Consequently, skills, knowledge and understanding are acquired at a good rate with pupils showing how well they can apply themselves productively. Their capacity to work both independently and with others is clearly a strength. There is good practice in the regular assessment of writing ensuring pupils know how well they are doing over time. Short term targets appear in all pupils' books but there is insufficient reference to them by teachers in marking.
52. The two subject leaders provide very good quality leadership and management. They clearly have a mission to raise standards and to provide the very best they can for their pupils. Constantly searching for ways of improving provision, they introduce and use new resources and strategies, and carry out regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure an effective quality of teaching. The school is alert to the weaknesses flagged by this inspection and these are all identified for action in the well-conceived subject action plan. There is good capacity for English to improve.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

53. The development and use of speaking and listening skills through *talk partners* is now widely used in a range of subjects to good effect. The school has identified the need to develop writing skills in other curriculum areas, including religious education, and this is currently in the early stages of development. Good attention is paid to spelling on a regular basis in English but not in all subjects. Pupils' past work shows that some do not copy headings or subject-specific vocabulary accurately, for example in mathematics where spellings and presentation are not of the best.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good overall.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good; consequently most pupils learn well.
- There is good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics.
- Recent improvements in performance data analysis have given the school a more accurate picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leadership and management are both effective, but more rigour is required in monitoring activities to ensure that the methods and range of recorded work are widened, particularly to support higher levels of attainment.

Commentary

54. Standards have fluctuated in mathematics since the time of the previous inspection. However, overall improvement has been positive and this is reflected in pupils' good achievement. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils the standards reached were well below the national average. However, when compared with results found in similar schools, standards were above average. Inspection evidence from classroom observation clearly reflects that standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average and at the end of Year 6 below average, with standards in the current Year 5 broadly average.
55. Lesson observations and the sharing of best practice through the school's coaching system have gone some way towards identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, not enough attention has been paid to evaluating the standards achieved or the rate of progress made by pupils of differing abilities. Recent changes in planning systems that allow greater blocks of time to be spent on a particular mathematics topic before moving on have helped to consolidate pupils' new learning and levels of achievement well. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that the school has rightly focused on improving pupils' basic numeracy skills and this development has been well supported by a local education authority adviser. However, the quality of recorded work remains patchy, often reflecting a rather 'matter of fact' approach. Work in books shows that only limited opportunity is given for pupils to record work using their own methods. The quality of presentation in some mathematics books is untidy with key words spelled inaccurately.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Relationships and attitudes to learning are very good. Lessons across the school are consistently well planned and structured to build upon previous learning. A consistent element is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils in their class. Pupils are also very supportive of each other. In one Year 3 class there was a gasp of anticipation and excitement when a child realised her mistake when answering a multiplication table problem but was able to correct the mistake herself. A less successful feature of otherwise good lessons was that the teachers were too controlling and gave too little opportunity for pupils to develop their own strategies for recording problems or moved the lesson on too quickly, failing to ensure that pupils clearly understood what they were required to undertake. In the upper juniors where pupils are withdrawn for additional focused support, leaving higher and lower attaining pupils to work alongside each other, classroom observations indicate that while lower attaining pupils received very good support and achieve well, this is often at the expense of the higher attaining pupils who mark time waiting for their peers to catch up before moving on.
57. The best lessons get off to a very lively start and move at a brisk pace with teachers using questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and responses. For example in a very good Year 5 lesson, the class teacher successfully modelled problems associated with the use of decimal currency and all groups were productively challenged by interesting, very well planned problem-solving tasks in real life situations. Lower attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language are assisted very well by supporting adults and achieve as well as their peers.
58. Assessment procedures are good overall and this helps pupils achieve well. Nevertheless more precise use of academic targets in year groups other than Year 6 could support even better tracking and help the school pinpoint precisely learning

peaks or dips much earlier. Work in books is regularly marked for corrections, but often fails to suggest how pupils can improve and there could be more opportunities for them to self-assess their work in lessons.

59. The school is now well placed to achieve greater effectiveness in future years due to the positive leadership and management of the subject. The school has set challenging targets for 2005. These targets reflect well on the school's ambition to drive forward continued improvement in mathematics. A good action plan has been in place for the last year and a useful start has been made in tracking achievement. There are some very good examples of pupils using ICT to support learning in mathematics, for example producing data for analysis, and this is a growing strength of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in all classes. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects, thus developing an appreciation of the practical use of these skills. For example graphs and tables are used in science to record observations. However, opportunities tend to be incidental rather than planned as part of ongoing mathematics topics. As such, planned opportunities remain a continued area for development. Good attention is being given to homework with challenges set in mathematics weekly in all years that add value to pupils' learning in school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil achievement is good.
- Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with an emphasis on practical, investigational work.
- Science is well led and managed.
- Insufficient emphasis is given to target setting and tracking as a means of challenging pupils to higher levels of achievement.

Commentary

61. There has been steady improvement in science since the time of the previous inspection. Last year, the standards reached by Year 6 pupils were below average in the National Curriculum tests, although results were above average in comparison with similar schools. Current standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. The achievement of boys and girls is good in science. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the very small number who are learning to speak English as an additional language, achieve at the same good level as their peers.
62. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall with some very good features. Lessons are well planned and support staff are given clear guidance on working with their groups. It is obvious that the teachers enjoy teaching science and this is reflected in the classroom environment created and the response of the pupils who have a very positive attitude to learning. Initiatives, such as *talking partners*, allow

pupils to share and communicate scientific ideas and vocabulary, and pupils develop high levels of both individual and collaborative investigational skills. The introduction of interactive whiteboards in many classrooms is a very positive feature in engaging pupils' productive learning in science.

63. The curriculum for experimental and investigational science has been strengthened to provide more opportunities for pupils to learn from first-hand experiences. This is helping pupils to raise achievement and has contributed well to an improvement in standards. In a Year 1 lesson pupils investigated magnetic and non-magnetic materials. They were able to predict outcomes for different materials and test the accuracy of their predictions. Year 5 pupils explored how sound travels through solids, liquids and gases, creating their own experiments to ensure a fair test. Progress for boys and girls is similar and pupils of all abilities are generally well supported. However, there needs to be a greater focus on opportunities for potentially high attaining pupils to excel in science.
64. Assessment and target-setting systems require much further development. The quality of marking of work is variable and pupils' assessment of their own work is an area for improvement. The procedures for assessment in science are sound, but there has yet to be sufficient emphasis given to assessment that will support on-going learning. Few targets are set for individual pupils or groups that allow the school to track progress from year to year and therefore challenge pupils to higher levels of achievement.
65. The leadership and management of science are good. The subject leader is well established and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of science within the school gained through a strong programme of monitoring, review and evaluation. This allows the subject leader to make a positive impact and be influential in school improvement priorities for science. She has introduced many initiatives to encourage pupils' interest in science; such as the *science bags*, which provide home based activities for parents of younger pupils in Year 1 and 2. Visits for older pupils, such as to Millennium Point, also help to foster a greater fascination and enjoyment in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are of good quality overall with some very good features.
- ICT is very well managed and very well resourced.
- The ICT suite is a very good asset.
- There are some very useful cross-curricular links, which enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

66. ICT provision has continued to improve since the last inspection and the school has kept pace with the fast moving developments in technology, curriculum and teaching methods. The school was recently awarded the *Naacemark* for ICT. The achievement of this national standard is evidence that the school places a great emphasis on maintaining and developing a very high level of ICT resources, teaching knowledge

and skills, and curriculum support. The school has created a well-equipped ICT suite for the focused learning of skills and knowledge in the subject. Provision has been further enhanced by the employment of a teaching technician/assistant to work with groups of pupils in the suite or in their classrooms. The introduction of interactive whiteboards in many classrooms is a further indication of the school's pursuit of very good quality provision.

67. Standards are above average throughout the school and pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy ICT and demonstrate confidence, enjoyment and an enthusiasm for learning. The skills of individual pupils are building well. Children enter Year 1 able to program commands in control technology and have a basic understanding of mouse and keyboard skills. By Year 2 pupils can word process, create images using graphics software and use the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information. At the end of Year 6 they can produce multimedia-rich projects, use spreadsheets and write programs to control objects onscreen. Pupils also collaborate on larger projects and investigations, such as in Year 5 where they used publishing software to prepare a presentation on how to clean water.
68. Staff expertise has developed well since the time of the previous inspection and this is translated into their teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and in some lessons seen, very good. Planning and assessment is effective although opportunities for pupils to self-assess their work in lessons could be developed further. When teachers plan they are very aware of how they can use a wide variety of software features to enhance learning for all pupils. Teaching assistants provide good quality support for pupils' learning, particularly for those with special educational needs. Pupils respond to the learning opportunities and quality of teaching provided for them through very positive attitudes towards ICT and all its applications.
69. The leadership and management of ICT are very good. The subject leader has managed the development of resources to the very good level of provision observed during the inspection. There are strong systems in place to ensure that ICT priorities identified by the subject leader are recognised at whole school level. Monitoring, review and evaluation are all good. Target setting for ICT has yet to be developed to ensure that every pupil is achieving as well as expected. The resources and accommodation for ICT are extensively developed and well-used. Extra curricular opportunities, such as an Animation Club, allow pupils to further develop their skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Information technology is used extensively to support learning across the curriculum. Interactive whiteboards in the classrooms allow both teachers and pupils to record data and display pictures and information. Typical examples are a Year 3 class who were checking pictures of Egyptian artefacts and a Year 4 class who used a film clip to illustrate a moral dilemma in a personal, social and health education lesson. Elsewhere in the school ICT was observed being used for word-processing literacy work in a range of subjects, for digital art in Years 1 and 2, and in Year 6 science where the class were using heat sensors to log temperature change. In an *INSPIRE* workshop for Year 3 pupils and their parent guests, pupils were able to use the interactive whiteboard for word search and directional games.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average.
- Religious Education contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Opportunities for pupils to write at length in the subject are limited.
- There are few opportunities for visits to places of worship.

Commentary

71. Standards in religious education are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection. The subject has been low priority in recent years and has had several changes of leadership. The amount of recorded work suggests that time for the subject has not always been sufficient. These factors may well have impacted on the fall in standards, however, the situation is changing and the picture more positive. Sufficient time is now allocated to the subject. Lessons are carefully planned and reflect the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve as well as others of the same age. Pupils for whom English is not their first language are also given good support and have full access to the curriculum for religious education. In class discussions, these pupils make a useful contribution when they share their knowledge of their own religion and beliefs with others.
72. Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, during the inspection good teaching and learning were seen with very good teaching seen for some of the oldest pupils. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives shared meaningfully at the lesson outset. Pupils are keen to engage in discussions, as in Year 1 when pupils shared their experiences of Baptism and in Year 6 where pupils shared what they had learnt about rules in the Jewish community and compared these with their own lives. In all lessons seen, teachers make good use of strategies such as *talking partners* to encourage pupils to share ideas and contribute orally in lessons. Pupils have a sound knowledge of stories from the Bible such as *Moses' flight out of Egypt* in Year 2 and the *Creation story* in Year 3. They are familiar with the Muslim version of the *Creation story* in Year 5. However, cross-curricular links with other subjects are at an early stage of development. Class teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboard, for example, to tell the story of Moses' flight from Egypt, holding pupils' attention well. However, the use of ICT to enhance learning in religious education is more limited than in other subjects. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in Years 3 to 6. Recording is limited in Years 1 and 2 with much of the work based on oral discussions or the use of photocopied resources.
73. Religious education contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and to their personal development as they explore Islam and Judaism, for example. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning, such as in Year 6 when pupils consider the importance of rules. Through such opportunities, they are beginning to learn from religion and relate this to their own life.
74. Whilst the curriculum is satisfactory at present, it lacks enrichment through visits to places of worship and visitors to school. The subject leader is aware of the need to

explore and develop such links. Resources have been improved since the last inspection. In particular, those for supporting work on Judaism have been extended and are now of good quality. Assessment of pupils' learning in religious education is undertaken on an informal basis at present. The lack of a whole-school approach to tracking progress is a missed opportunity to help raise standards.

75. The subject leader, a recent appointment, provides sound leadership and management. She has good subject knowledge and commitment to the subject. She is well aware of the areas to be developed in order to raise standards and is supporting colleagues to raise their confidence in teaching the subject.

Geography and History

76. These subjects were sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. A range of evidence shows that standards are broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6.
77. Lessons are well planned and capture pupils' effective learning. Pupils work very well in pairs and groups during lessons. Lessons are relaxed with a purposeful atmosphere in which good relationships result in very good behaviour. Very successful was a lesson linked to Birmingham Museum's Ancient Egypt section that sparked high levels of interest and anticipation. The use of *talking partners* clearly enhanced pupils' social and speaking skills as they shared observations from photographs depicting life in Ancient Egypt and comparing it with life in 2005.
78. Teachers follow National Curriculum guidance, adapting planning to the needs of the pupils. However, rather too many photocopied work sheets are used in some years and this requires review. A very good range of planned educational visits and activities enhances the curriculum for geography and history. For example all junior pupils were recently taken to see the exhibition of large-scale photographs of the World from Space in Birmingham. Pupils also undertake visits to Blakeley Hall to re-enact life in Tudor times. Digital cameras are used extensively to record pupils' participation and enjoyment. Assessment in history and geography requires further development in order that teachers and pupils have a clear view of progress made in skills, knowledge and understanding. Across the school there are some missed opportunities for promoting writing in both history and geography, although there are some good examples of extended writing in Year 5 related to detective work associated with the design features of houses built during Tudor times.
79. The use of ICT to enhance pupils' developing skills is a real success story. There is very strong evidence that ICT is used for research in both history and geography, clearly reflected in the good quality informative displays of pupils' work. For example a Year 6 multi media presentation related to work on issues concerning the preservation of existing rain forests.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
- Achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are both good.
- The school provides a very good programme of enrichment.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

80. The quality of provision in art and design is much improved on that seen at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils achieve standards securely in line with the national average by the end of both Years 2 and 6 as a result of an enriched curriculum, improved teaching and learning, and increased opportunities and resources.
81. Pupils achieve well in lessons and demonstrate good levels of concentration. They enjoy their involvement in art and design activities, and this was particularly evident when Year 1 pupils were exploring the expressive qualities of clay, and were developing their observational skills to produce three-dimensional animals. Clay tools were handled confidently to create pattern and texture to match their good quality designs. Similarly, Year 6 pupils demonstrated their skilful drawing of parts of the school environment using a viewfinder frame. They showed how their skills have developed over time through the use of pencil sketching to indicate light and shade, texture and pattern, paying good attention to detail.
82. Teachers' subject knowledge of art and design is now quite extensive, and they are adept at providing the appropriate level of challenge to advance the development of pupils' art skills and knowledge. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively as a resource to stimulate pupils' interest, and provide opportunities for them to see visual images that assist in developing their own creative art skills and experiences. The good quality of relationships underpins the effective learning and progress being made. The promotion of subject specific vocabulary features prominently, with the expectation that pupils will start to use it in their discussions and responses.
83. A very good programme of enrichment supplements the well-planned art and design curriculum. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to collaborate with artists in residence, and teacher-training establishments to produce some landmark works of art and sculpture that are in prominence in the school. Much of this work is on a large scale and in three dimensions. Often there are specific links to other areas of the curriculum, such as the mythical Greek creatures, and ornate Greek shields. The giant bug project linked with the work of Roald Dahl, and there is work linked to the poetry of Spike Milligan. These and other projects give pupils a wide experience of working with different media for art and design purposes, and the opportunity to work collaboratively in creative activities.
84. The subject leader demonstrates good leadership and management, and has been instrumental in bringing about the improvements since the previous inspection. She has a clear view of the subject through her monitoring activities, and the provision of a specific art room has helped to raise the profile of art and design in the school.

Design and technology

85. This subject was sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. Pupils work from a worthwhile curriculum in design and technology and standards are average at the end of Year 6. The school has chosen to

design its own scheme of work with input from the local education authority and has organised a curriculum map that shows the themes to be covered and skills developed each year. Cross-curricular links are in place to make design and technology relevant and interesting. For example, in Year 6 pupils have made hats that the characters from *Alice in Wonderland* might wear. Work in display and in the sample provided by the school shows that pupils are receiving opportunities to plan, make and evaluate products. They have designed their own products including musical instruments, soft toys, soup that an elderly person might enjoy, mittens for young children and a family board game.

Music

86. This subject was sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus and discussions with staff and pupils that work planned in music is both interesting and varied. Good improvements have taken place since the last inspection, including increased specialist input and increased confidence in staff subject knowledge. The new scheme of work provides exciting opportunities and experiences. Standards in the work seen are broadly average.
87. Music enriches pupils' lives through the good range of experiences provided and the opportunities for pupils to perform together for an audience. They listen well, showing respect for each other's performance. Music contributes very well to pupils' cultural development, self-confidence and personal esteem. Examples of this were seen when Year 3 performed a Chinese dragon song, with choral speaking supported by music and percussion, while Year 6 pupils explored the cultural tradition of the New Zealand, *Haka*. An infant choir enables younger children to participate in addition to the junior choir. Cross-curricular links through music are a strength, with dance, art and literacy evident in pupils' weekly *Performance* sessions. Composition work is satisfactory. Recording of compositions and the use of ICT in music are areas for further development.
88. Good links have been established with City of Birmingham Contemporary Music Group which have led to participation in two major projects. Links with local secondary schools and Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre have involved pupils in musical projects and performances. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the guitar, steel pans, percussion and to sing in the choirs with specialist tuition. A steel band and percussion group have been established since the time of the last inspection.
89. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader regularly monitors planning and pupils' performance. He provides good direction for the subject. However, formal assessment procedures have yet to be established.

Physical education

90. This subject was sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. The very wide range and high quality of extra curricular activities in physical education helps to channel pupils' energies positively. Records clearly indicate that the majority of pupils reach the nationally expected standard in swimming by the time they complete their primary education.
91. In the very small number of lessons of physical education seen during the inspection, pupils enjoyed their experience and reached the standards expected for their age. Good use was made of opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work, but not enough

focus was given to matching tasks to pupils' widely varying abilities. The school has begun to consider the needs of those with sporting talents through the extra-curricular programme but not in lessons and this is an acknowledged next step for improvement.

92. A real strength of the school is the excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities in physical education and this has been acknowledged by a number of high profile awards, including the Football Association Standards Award for high quality football coaching. The school is the only school in South Birmingham to hold this prestigious award. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in locally based sporting activities and are encouraged to attend challenging outdoor activities. Pupils also participate in many professional coaching sessions and sporting festivals provided by the community partnerships. These have given pupils the chance to gain skills in tennis, basketball, rugby, cricket, judo, gymnastics, athletics and hockey whilst at the same time providing effective training opportunities for staff. These activities are very popular with the pupils and contribute very well to pupils' personal, social and moral development because of the emphasis on taking part. Pupils benefit from having a spacious hard surface playground. Assessment is an aspect of provision that requires review to ensure that physical activities are matched to the needs of all pupils.
93. ICT successfully contributes to the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Regular use is made of film and digital cameras to celebrate sporting success. Well-displayed photographs of respective teams and after school clubs are clearly evident in corridor displays. For example, a film taken at a recent competitive school football match was being shown on the plasma screen in the entrance area. Discussions with pupils clearly indicated their enjoyment and participation in a range of sporting activities and, in their opinion, this is a real strength of the school. The school's very good approach to inclusion enables boys and girls to succeed equally well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes highly effective provision through the use of its own and external resources that results in pupils developing very good personal skills.

Commentary

94. The school places pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) at the heart of its work, and rightly sees this the foundation of all other learning. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is also successfully promoted through the PSHCE programme. Through a varied approach which is often cross-curricular, specific lessons, assembly themes, circle times, visits and visitors are used to deepen pupils' understanding of the life skills they need as future citizens. Teaching is consistently good and pupils make very good achievement often from a very limited starting point.
95. The programme consists of four inter-related sections on developing confidence and responsibility; preparing to play an active role as a citizen; developing a healthy safe lifestyle; and developing good respectful relationships with others. Calling on those with specialist expertise is a feature of the programme, especially the school nurse who has developed a comprehensive approach to sex and relationships education. Drugs awareness and healthy living are features of the *Life Caravan* which calls every year, and have been the focus of the successful bid for Healthy School status. The real strengths of the programme are the clear

emphasis on good moral and social development which are then extended by a range of opportunities to demonstrate what it means to be a worthwhile young citizen.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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