

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODCOCK HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103372

Headteacher: Mr Bernard Moore

Lead inspector: Cheryl Thompson

Dates of inspection: 12 – 14 April 2005

Inspection number: 268294

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 190

School address: Far Wood Road
Northfield
Birmingham
Postcode: B31 1BS

Telephone number: 0121 475 4130
Fax number: 0121 477 9700

Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr David M Neale

Date of previous inspection: July 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Woodcock Hill is an average sized primary school serving a relatively socially disadvantaged area of outer Birmingham. In common with other primary schools in the area, the number on roll is dropping. There are 190 girls and boys on roll. The high rate of pupils joining and leaving the school over recent years has slowed over the past year. The great majority of pupils are white with their origins in the United Kingdom. There is a small number of ethnic minority pupils, mainly of mixed race. A very small number of pupils has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (39 per cent) is twice the national average, with moderate learning difficulties identified as the main cause for pupils needing extra help. Five pupils have statements of specific need. Fifty-nine per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is three times the national average. Attainment on entry is generally below average and especially so in the area of communication, language and literacy.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22822	Cheryl Thompson	Lead inspector	English Religious education Art and design Special educational needs English as an additional language
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	
18360	Cecelia Davies	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science History Geography Music
12367	Anthony Green	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a sound and improving school with several very good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher provides very clear and determined leadership. Standards are improving and pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. Very good relationships together with good teaching promote pupils' enthusiasm for school life and their very good behaviour.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In Year 6, standards are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science
- Too many pupils have unnecessary time off school and too many arrive late
- Standards are rising because teaching is good overall and very good in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6
- The school helps pupils develop into responsible and thoughtful young people
- Very good checks on pupils' learning are driving up standards
- In Reception, not enough emphasis is given to helping children develop early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- There are limited opportunities to develop reading and writing skills in other subjects

Since the previous inspection in July 2003, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in some of its work, there has been good improvement. The dynamic force behind this improvement is the significantly improved leadership and management. The school's methods of assessment, previously unsatisfactory, are now very good. Teaching was unsatisfactory overall; it is now good. Standards remain low in Years 5 and 6 but are improving across the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	E*
mathematics	E	E	E*	E*
science	E	E	E*	E*

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average, E - very low*

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall; it is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and Reception. Standards attained in Year 6 in 2004 national tests were very low in English, mathematics and science and were within the range of the bottom five per cent of schools across the country. Compared to their attainment in Year 2, these pupils had made poor progress. The history of unsatisfactory teaching noted by the last inspection, and high rate of staff changes during their time in Year 6 had a significant impact on these pupils' poor achievement and results. The school's trend for improving Year 6 results is below the national trend. Inspection evidence shows standards in the current Year 6 are low in English and mathematics, below average in science but above average in information and communication technology (ICT). Due to a history of unsatisfactory teaching at the start of the juniors, there remain significant gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge, especially in reading and writing. Very good teaching in the current Year 6 is helping pupils to catch up, as achievement in lessons is good. Standards attained in national tests by Year 2 pupils are almost always above or well above those expected in similar¹ schools. Indeed, in 2004, standards were above the national average in writing and mathematics. The school does particularly well in writing. The trend for improving Year 2 results is above the national trend.

¹ 'Similar' schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Inspection shows standards are about average in reading, writing and mathematics. School assessment information shows that a higher than average proportion of pupils is working within the expected Level 2 range. Writing remains a strength with an above average proportion working at the higher Level 3. In science and ICT, standards in Year 2 are average, and in religious education, they are above average. Standards in Reception are below those expected in basic literacy and numeracy skills and children do not achieve as well as they could. In other areas of learning, standards are about average and achievement is sound.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very positive. Relationships are very good; pupils show a mature respect for others' opinions and beliefs. Behaviour in and around school is very good.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. In spite of the school's good efforts, too many parents do not ensure their child's regular attendance and regard family holidays in term time as a right. Too many also take a relaxed approach to getting their children to school on time, which means pupils, who are keen to start work, will often lose out by missing the start of lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Good care and very good guidance mean pupils feel happy and secure in school and they have the right level of work. The curriculum is satisfactory, but the school has correctly identified that more can be done to create meaningful links between subjects. The school works hard to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning but many are reluctant to do so. **Teaching is good overall.** The best teaching is in the infants and Years 5 and 6. In these classes, teachers know their pupils' abilities and aptitudes very well and plan accordingly. They teach at a very brisk pace and use exciting resources. As a result, pupils are interested in what they learn and work hard. In Reception, teaching is satisfactory but there is not enough time and structure given to teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. Governance is satisfactory. The headteacher provides very good leadership and has high aspirations for the school's future which governors and staff share. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation with very good systems in place for monitoring the work of the school. These are used effectively to bring about improvement. The school's ethos is very good with a strong and successful commitment to pupils' personal development. Astute recruitment of new teachers and deployment of established staff have ensured very good leadership in the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The relatively small numbers of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting with inspectors say they like the school and staff take good care of their children. They find teachers approachable and know that any concerns they may have will be dealt with promptly. Pupils like school and are very happy in it. They know that they will be listened to if they have ideas or concerns to share. They like their teachers and think they are fair.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science
- Increase attendance and improve punctuality
- Provide better opportunities for Reception children to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills
- Develop more links between subjects

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

There is a very mixed picture of achievement and standards, but overall, achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2, standards are around average and achievement is good. Standards in Year 6 are well below average and pupils' achievement has been unsatisfactory over time since Year 2. However, current very good teaching ensures pupils now achieve well in lessons and achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. In Reception there is underachievement and below average standards in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematics; in other areas of learning, standards and achievement are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not yet high enough in Year 6 but have improved considerably in science and ICT
- Standards have improved in the infants and by the end of Year 2 they compare very well with standards in similar schools
- There is no underachievement in Years 3, 4 and 5; a good improvement since the last inspection
- In Reception, provision is not good enough in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development

Commentary

1. In 2004 national tests, standards attained by Year 6 were very low and in all cases lower than in 2003 and their progress from Year 2 was very poor. The trend for improvement in results is below the national trend. In comparison, standards attained by Year 2 improved considerably in 2004 and were above the national average in writing and mathematics and average in reading. Compared to similar schools, standards were well above average. The trend for Year 2 results is above the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (14.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.3 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.0 (14.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.8 (24.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	22.8 (24.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	24.5 (27.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The last inspection in July 2003 judged that pupils were *not doing well enough* in the juniors and that there was a *high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4 and 5*. The history of unsatisfactory teaching remains a factor in Year 6 pupils' well below average standards in English and mathematics. Over time, these pupils have not achieved as well as they should. But since starting Year 6, they have achieved well due to very good teaching.

However, they have much to make up and will not have enough time to do so before moving to their secondary schools. They achieve particularly well in ICT where standards are above average. In science, standards are below average but this represents good achievement in a relatively short time. Very good teaching has been focussed on addressing the deficits in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected.

3. In Year 2, standards, as measured by average points scores, are around average. In the forthcoming national tests, a high proportion of pupils (92 per cent) is expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Less than average are likely to attain Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Writing is a strength. In Years 1 and 2, writing skills are taught very well, and sufficient time is allocated for pupils to write at length without interruption. A higher than average proportion of pupils is predicted to attain the higher Level 3 in writing. Standards in science and ICT are average; in religious education, standards are above.
4. Achievement in Years 3, 4 and 5 is at least satisfactory. Standards in English in Years 4 and 5 are currently well below average but in mathematics they are around average. Since the last inspection, the unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated. There is now a very clear focus on ensuring each pupil makes progress measured against National Curriculum levels. Very good assessment systems are in place which feed in to the school's tracking system. The headteacher and the assistant headteacher, who is responsible for assessment, can easily spot where a pupil's progress is not as good as it should be. Furthermore, checks on progress are not only rigorous but regular, so poor progress is spotted very quickly and remedial action is taken.
5. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they achieve well in relation to their starting points, and have good self-esteem. In groups withdrawn from Years 3 and 4, pupils achieve very well in literacy and mathematics.
6. In Reception, not enough emphasis or time is given to the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Consequently, children do not learn and use letter sounds as quickly as they should. Neither do they practise basic mathematical skills, such as counting and ordering, on a regular basis. Assessment is sound but it is not being used to advantage to ensure optimum progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. Behaviour in and around school is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance levels are well below the national average and punctuality is not good enough
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well in lessons and around the school
- The moral and social development of pupils is very good and spiritual and cultural development is good
- Excellent procedures are in place for dealing with all forms of harassment, which enable pupils to feel secure and happy
- Relationships throughout the school between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good

Commentary

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to school life and enjoy learning. In lessons, they are generally very interested and eager to learn. They listen attentively to teachers and each other, and even when having difficulties try hard and want to do well. Children in Reception attain the levels expected for their age in personal and social development. Pupils with emotional and social difficulties also like being at school and are eager to learn. This is an improvement since the previous report when attitudes were judged to be good and behaviour satisfactory. The pre-inspection questionnaires completed by parents confirm that pupils like school.
8. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school has very high expectations of behaviour and respect for each other and the environment. Even the most challenging pupils respond to this positively. The behaviour policy is very effective and rewards good behaviour, which results in pupils behaving very well in lessons and around the school. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when behaviour was satisfactory overall but there was a significant amount of unsatisfactory behaviour. On the few occasions, during the current inspection, where behaviour in lessons was only satisfactory it was because the task set was not fully understood by the pupils who, as a result, got restless. Boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds play well together, their relationships are very good and they care for one another well. Although some boisterous behaviour was observed, playtimes and lunchtimes are orderly occasions where pupils play very well together. The procedures for dealing with harassment are excellent and teachers and other adults continually reinforce the rights of pupils to live in a harmonious and friendly school. At the start of every term, pupils are reminded in lessons and assemblies of concepts such as friendship, equal opportunities and living together in a multi-ethnic society; these are reinforced throughout the year. The result is a strong sense of community in the school.
9. The spiritual development of pupils is good. Displays around the school are bright and attractive and celebrate pupils' achievements. Good opportunities are given for pupils' to develop an understanding of how their actions can affect the emotions and feelings of others. For example, in a very good Year 3 personal, social and health education lesson the teacher used sensitive questioning and role play in order that pupils understood the impact of bullying and being bullied.
10. The cultural development of pupils is good. For example, through music, art and design, religious education, visits and visitors, pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and the cultural values of others. They understand that cultural and religious beliefs affect the way they live. During the inspection an excellent Year 4 Bhangra dance lesson promoted the cultural, religious and spiritual diversity in the local community very well.
11. Teachers and other adults are very good role models for pupils. A 'Citizenship week' is used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of living together and includes a visit to the Birmingham City Council Chamber, where Year 6 pupils debate a topic with pupils from other schools.
12. Pupils' attendance and punctuality is unsatisfactory. There are too many absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and too many pupils arriving late for school each day. The school is very aware that irregular attendance and frequent lateness are often indicators of underlying problems within the family. The two per cent improvement in attendance since last year is encouraging and reflects the good level of support given to families by the school and the educational welfare service. In general, the procedures adopted in school to promote attendance and punctuality are good. However, not enough use is made of information in the pupils' and the governors' annual reports to emphasise to parents the problems associated with a rate of attendance that falls well below that of other primary schools. In the meantime, pupils show by their very good attitudes and behaviour that they enjoy school and like being there.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.9
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.

Exclusions

The high rate of fixed term exclusions, shown in the table for the last school year, reflects the school's very firm stand on unacceptable behaviour. The school does not tolerate physical violence or racism. There has only been one exclusion in the current school year. There are correct procedures in place and these are followed carefully.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	202	15	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Good care and very good guidance mean that pupils feel happy and secure in school, and that they have the right level of work, based on the school's very good assessment system. The curriculum is satisfactory, but the school has correctly identified that more can be done to create meaningful links between subjects to make learning more relevant. The school works hard to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning but there are many parents who are still reluctant to do so.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall with very good teaching for infants and for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Assessment is very good and used effectively to drive up standards. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory in Reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion of very good teaching, with examples of excellent practice
- Teachers set very high expectations for their pupils to behave well and work at a good rate
- Teachers use assessment very well to match work to their pupils' abilities
- Teaching assistants are a valued and valuable part of the teaching team

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly. The last inspection in July 2003 found teaching to be unsatisfactory and a serious weakness. The findings of this inspection are that there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Almost three quarters of the teaching is good or better, which is a similar proportion to that found in schools across the country. There is almost four times the amount of very good or better teaching than was found at the last inspection. The headteacher's careful choice of new staff, support and training for existing staff, combined with rigorous monitoring, have been very successful.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	12 (39%)	9 (29%)	8 (26%)	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.

14. The best teaching and learning are in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6. In these classes the very good relationships teachers have established with their pupils are very obvious; pupils are very enthusiastic about learning and respond to their teachers' gentle humour. Teachers manage their pupils seemingly effortlessly mainly because of the high level of mutual respect between teachers and pupils. Pupils say they like their teachers and that they are fair. Teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils' needs, which is evident in two ways. Firstly, lessons are planned to give a very good balance between lively teacher input and pupils' contributions or time to work. Secondly, individuals' abilities and personalities are known very well so that they are grouped appropriately and set challenging work. In Years 5 and 6, teachers deal very well with gaps in pupils' knowledge – particularly in mathematics and English. For example, they plan for pupils to show their knowledge in ways other than writing. In Year 2, where there is a very high proportion of boys, lesson content is thoughtfully planned to include as much practical, 'hands on' work as possible. In a very good science lesson, Year 2 pupils organised their materials very well and persevered conscientiously for good lengths of time to make electrical circuits.
15. In Reception, teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. Assessment information is not being used well enough to plan and address identified deficits in children's knowledge and understanding, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development.
16. All teachers set very high expectations for pupils to get on with work and behave very well. In the main, these expectations are met very well. However, in Year 4, where the boundaries for behaviour are not so tightly defined, there is a small number of pupils who are not as well behaved as the rest of the class and consequently they do not always learn at a good rate. Inspectors were impressed with pupils' application and productivity, particularly in Year 6 classes. Productivity is related to the very high expectations, but is facilitated by the classroom layout, which was determined by the pupils. Pupils decided that they preferred to have their tables set in a large square, so that they can see the whiteboard, their teacher and each other easily. No time is wasted or concentration broken by moving about the classroom in lessons.

17. Assessment systems are much improved. From an unsatisfactory state noted in the last inspection, they are now very good. Crucially, the assessment data is analysed and used very effectively. Groups are set according to ability, and pupils' special educational needs are quickly identified. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The two special educational needs teachers provide very good support for specific groups of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils for literacy and mathematics. Small groups are withdrawn and provided with tasks and pace of work at just the right level. Consequently, pupils' self-esteem is high and they are very willing to offer ideas and opinions. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 know exactly what level their pupils are at and what they need to learn next to move them on. They let pupils know what they have to do to improve their work to move, say, from National Curriculum Level 3 to Level 4. For example, in an English lesson for Year 2, more able pupils were challenged to use 'Level 3 connectives' in their work. Teachers mark pupils' work very well, keeping the right balance between praise for effort and giving ideas for improvement.
18. Teaching assistants play a vital part in pupils' good achievement in lessons. It is clear they work effectively in partnership with class teachers and provide very good support in preparing for lessons and in working alongside specific groups. They also provide unobtrusive but very good support for pupils who find it difficult to sustain a high standard of behaviour. Consequently, these pupils are helped to learn and the brisk, lively lessons are not slowed.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum ensures that all pupils have access to a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities. It is enriched by a good variety of educational visits, visitors to the school and extra curricular activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs means that they achieve well
- The school has recognised the need to make more meaningful links between subjects
- The accommodation is spacious and resources are good

Commentary

19. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils and complies with statutory requirements. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. The school ensures that every pupil has equal access to all aspects of school life. Since the last inspection, schemes and policies have been developed, with a strong focus on assessment being used to inform planning. Assessment ensures that teachers plan work to meet the range of attainment in their classes and to avoid repetition. The school has recognised that the next stage of development is to make sure that more meaningful links between subjects are planned into the curriculum.
20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The special educational needs teachers are knowledgeable and have developed very good and profitable links with outside agencies. Resources are very good and deployed to advantage. Provision for the very small number of pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The pupil's stage of language acquisition is understood and catered for very well. Unobtrusive checks are made as to understanding of 'new' vocabulary and reinforcement provided if necessary.
21. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities including a gardening club and football. The range of visits includes a residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 so that they learn about a different part of the country. Local visits are planned and linked to topics being taught, so enriching pupils' learning experiences. The school places a high value on the performing arts and gives pupils first hand experiences, such as going to hear the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, opportunities to see the ballet and inviting theatre groups into school. Productions at Christmas are another way in which pupils' skills in music and drama are developed.

22. There is very spacious accommodation that is kept clean and tidy. Particular features are good outdoor facilities, two large halls, an ICT suite, several rooms for small group work and an attractive library that is thoughtfully organised so that pupils can easily find what they want. Library provision has improved since the last inspection. Resources of good quality and range are accessible and teachers use them well to help pupils' learning. Colourful displays of pupils' work create a stimulating learning environment and show pupils that their work is valued.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils are good overall. Pupils receive very good support for their personal needs and a very good level of academic support and guidance. Very close and very good account is taken of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are always listened to; they have trust and affection for the adults in school
- The school's tracking system is used very effectively to make sure pupils achieve as well as possible
- The school works hard to make the old prefabricated buildings safe and welcoming
- Staff are particularly vigilant about child protection issues

Commentary

23. Teachers take time to talk to pupils about their personal goals and achievements and in doing so inspire their confidence and gain their co-operation. Pupils have faith in the adults in school, and are confident that they will help them over any difficulties. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils in the opportunities it has to offer. The school council acts as a useful forum for seeking pupils' views.
24. Careful consideration is taken of the needs of all groups of pupils. The school's relatively new tracking system for checking on pupils' progress is being used very effectively. Pupils know how they are getting on. Teachers and senior staff are keen to know whether pupils are making enough progress and check to see if there are reasons for poor progress. More able pupils are challenged. Links with outside agencies are good and purposeful. Teachers have effective procedures that show how pupils have achieved and developed personally. This information is then used to target specialised support to ensure that the pupils' personal needs are met. The school capitalises on pupils' willingness to improve by providing mentoring support that successfully helps those who need it gain confidence in their own abilities. This has proved very effective with pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties who make good progress in acquiring socially acceptable standards of behaviour. The educational welfare service works alongside the school in providing good quality support for pupils with unsatisfactory records of attendance. Child protection procedures are very good; they are clear, systematic and well known to staff. All adults in school are mindful of their responsibilities towards children who may be at risk. They listen closely to what children say, and if they are at all uneasy with what they hear, they report it at once to the headteacher. Detailed records are kept of all incidents of concern. Parents are properly informed at each stage.
25. A good level of care is extended to pupils with special educational needs. Individual Educational Plans are reviewed regularly and annual reviews of pupils' statements are carried out promptly.
26. The school adheres closely to the recommended guidance for administering first aid. Well trained staff deal effortlessly and sensitively with pupils' minor injuries and know what to do in the event of something more serious. Appropriate attention is paid to identifying and

eliminating health and safety hazards in and around the school. Checks of the site and equipment are regular and thorough and due consideration has been given to improving access to the buildings for people with physical disabilities. As a result, the school is safer and more secure than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

27. Deliberate efforts are made to employ staff who are genuinely concerned about the well-being of young people. All staff show patience, tolerance and a high degree of professionalism in their dealings with pupils and parents. Parents readily acknowledge that staff are easy to approach and talk to. The quality of relationships in school is very good and contributes significantly to the overall satisfactory arrangements for children starting school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents, good and purposeful links with the community and satisfactory links with colleges and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established a friendly, open and supportive dialogue with parents
- Co-operation between home and school is not easily achieved, but staff are developing increasingly effective strategies to strengthen the partnership
- Information on attendance in pupils' end of year reports is not directly linked to the impact on learning
- Pupils enjoy and benefit from the interesting range of local visitors who come in to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

28. The school endeavours to work with all families, but not all parents see this as a welcome intervention in their lives. Too many are still not making enough effort to get their children to school each day and on time. Nevertheless, parents do feel comfortable about approaching the staff on any matters of concern, confident that they will receive a courteous, helpful and swift response to their queries.
29. Eager to encourage better parental involvement, the school has brought together a group of parents interested in finding out more about how children learn and at the same time keen to improve the facilities in the local area. In the relaxed and non-threatening setting of an after-school creative arts club, a small group of parents work alongside their children enjoying the sense of camaraderie that shared interests bring. Considerable success has been achieved by the members of this group. About a dozen have reached a first level qualification in British sign language. A smaller number are working towards achieving a Level 3 NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) in childcare. Some, having worked alongside a local artist, have found their work good enough for public display. At their own initiative, a small core of parents has raised sufficient funds to keep the group afloat and to provide a few extra resources for the school. This is encouraging, as is the general level of interest shown in the special events that are arranged for parents, such as a health awareness session. In offering these types of facilities and services, the school has taken the first steps to becoming what is known as an 'extended school'.
30. The school seizes all opportunities to bring in resources and people from the community that will inspire and motivate pupils, parents and staff. Good use is made of the school's spacious accommodation for the benefit of local organisations. For example, the headteacher is in the process of providing a base in school for the local community street warden who is linked to housing associations. The diverse and interesting range of visitors to the school makes a remarkable impression on pupils, and a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils remember well the visits they have had from Indian dancers, Irish musicians, a Franciscan friar, authors, traffic policemen, fire-fighters and environmentalists.

31. Information in newsletters is all-inclusive. Much effort goes into explaining to parents what the pupils will actually learn from a particular activity, or why it is important that a certain school rule is upheld. Of particular note are the end-of-year class reports where pupils illustrate in words and pictures the activities, visits and visitors they have enjoyed most over the year. It follows that in the pre-inspection survey of their views, parents were firmly of the opinion that the teaching in school is good and that pupils are treated fairly and encouraged to become independent and mature.
32. More parents than was previously the case now attend the consultation evenings when their children's progress is reviewed. They know that the teachers are always willing to explain what their children need to do to achieve more. However, this helpful style of feedback is not always followed through in the formal written reports sent out in the summer term. These vary in their usefulness, particularly for pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Information here is mostly about interpreting figures rather than the negative impact that absence has on learning. As the educational welfare officers attached to the school have found, few parents automatically relate unsatisfactory attendance to unsatisfactory progress and achievement.
33. Sound links with other schools and colleges have resulted, amongst other benefits, in a shared and focussed attempt on improving attendance and in the appointment of an inclusion officer who promotes a structured approach to pupils joining and leaving the school that most parents feel happy with. Satisfactory procedures are in place for transfer to secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both good. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear sense of direction for the school
- Very good management systems are in place to sustain the good improvement made since the last inspection
- Subject co-ordinators are providing good or better leadership and are very good role models for colleagues
- The school's ethos is very good

Commentary

34. Leadership and management have improved significantly since the last inspection in July 2003. At that time it was judged that leadership and management were unsatisfactory and a serious weakness and that '*The headteacher does not give a clear enough direction for the work of the school ...*'. Governance was judged unsatisfactory and that '*... governors do not have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and some do not make enough contribution to the work of the governing body*'.
35. In less than two years, the same headteacher has demonstrated a tenacious determination to improve his knowledge and skills in these areas. He has been very successful. Valuable expertise and mentorship has been provided by the local education authority's headteacher adviser. The headteacher now provides a very clear vision for a school where pupils achieve well and develop into confident, responsible individuals. The leadership team comprises headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. They have a good overview of the infants and juniors and take responsibility for the curriculum, finance and assessment. The middle management are the core subject co-ordinators. All share the high aspirations for continued improvement in the quality of education the school provides.

36. The headteacher has created very effective leadership teams for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. Co-ordinators have a very clear understanding of standards and achievement in their subjects, the areas of strength and the areas that need improvement. They also provide very good role models for colleagues in their teaching. Leadership of the Foundation Stage (Reception) though satisfactory, lacks the crisp analyses of standards and achievement and the dynamism for improvement noted as such strong features elsewhere in the school.
37. The school's ethos is very good. There is a very strong pastoral aspect to the work of the school. Pupils say they are happy in school and know that they can turn to staff if they have problems. Staff understand that pupils may have difficulty learning if they are troubled. However, the school does not allow this understanding and care for its pupils to cloud its sense of purpose in equipping pupils with a good education. Rather, it promotes pupils' personal development very effectively, helping pupils to become thoughtful and reflective young people who enjoy learning. They are helped to deal with conflict and manage their behaviour. The school makes sure that, even though some Year 6 pupils will not attain the expected Level 4, these pupils have secure basic literacy and numeracy skills and feel confident about coping in their next school.
38. Governance is now satisfactory but it continues to be difficult to recruit governors able to devote time to their roles. The chair of governors remains very involved in the life and work of the school and has showed determination in helping the governing body develop. Governors have made a good start on analysing data provided about the school's standards; they visit school and have sat in on lessons. They receive very informative reports from the headteacher. Governors now have a sound understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to improve. They are beginning to question and challenge and are taking a lead in managing the financial implications of a falling roll.
39. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation being used very effectively to bring about improvement. Management systems are very good and are having a good impact on achievement. However, the full impact is not yet evident in higher standards in national tests in Year 6. The systems have not been a 'quick fix' reaction to the last inspection; they are well thought out, easily used and sustainable. The very good system for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school, is central to the school's very rigorous self-evaluation. The data generated by this system is analysed to see if pupils can make even better progress, or if progress is not as good as predicted. The results of the analyses are used to make changes to the curriculum or teaching methods. For example, in order to raise standards for the lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4, the special educational needs co-ordinators teach these groups for literacy and numeracy. Inspection evidence shows that this initiative is very successful. Performance management of teachers is used very effectively to keep a clear focus on raising standards and making sure pupils achieve well. Teachers' targets are very specific and easily measurable because they are based on the school's tracking system.
40. The issues of unsatisfactory teaching and assessment noted in the last inspection have been managed very well. Teaching is now good overall and assessment is very good. Many staff changes, interspersed with long term sickness covered by supply teachers, have slowed improvement in national test results. However, the headteacher and governors were determined to appoint the 'right' teachers for Woodcock Hill. The consistently very good teaching in Year 6 demonstrates their good choice. Furthermore, the temporary appointment of an experienced teacher to take on Year 3 has ensured that the good standards attained at the end of Year 2 in 2004, have been built on effectively. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and rigorously. The leadership team, headteacher mentor and subject co-ordinators have all observed lessons. This has been very profitable professional development. All staff are involved in monitoring learning by looking at standards in pupils'

work across a given year group. This strategy sharpens teachers' assessment at all levels and gives them a good overview of the standards achieved in the school. The results of monitoring are shared. Points for praise and improvement are noted.

Financial information

The school is managing a falling roll efficiently with the help of the local educational authority's financial services department. Maintenance of the large, old buildings is a constant drain on resources. Long term plans are in hand for rationalising the use of buildings.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	799101
Total expenditure	880205
Expenditure per pupil	4682

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18880
Balance carried forward to the next	-62224

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) is **satisfactory** overall. It is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Children enter school at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five. Attainment on entry is below average especially in communication, language and literacy. Achievement is satisfactory overall, However, children do not achieve as well as they should in the areas of communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. The planning for these areas of learning is not clearly focussed on making sure children acquire these skills systematically and cumulatively. There is spacious accommodation and a good range of resources. Attractive displays stimulate children's interest and reflect all areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children share resources well and settle to tasks without fuss
- Good relationships make sure that children feel confident and happy
- Some children persistently call out when adults are talking to the whole class

Commentary

41. Teaching is satisfactory and children are on track to meet the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year. Adults are kind and caring, ensuring that children settle quickly into school. Children share resources well and work well together in small groups, and are beginning to learn how to work independently. They are not always expected to clear up after themselves. Although the majority of children are well behaved, there are some children who persistently call out when adults are talking to the whole class. This disrupts learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic literacy skills such as letter sounds are not taught well
- Although there is a good range of books, there are too few opportunities for children to share and enjoy them
- There is a well resourced role play area

Commentary

42. By the end of their time in Reception, the majority of children will not achieve the expected standards. The school has identified that children start with low levels of vocabulary and have limited knowledge of books and stories. However, not enough is done to address these identified deficits. Though teaching in the session observed was satisfactory, the general provision in this area of learning is unsatisfactory and children do not achieve as well as they could. Two main reasons hinder progress and achievement: not enough time is allocated to developing children's language, communication and literacy and there is not a systematic and cumulative way of teaching phonics (letter sounds) to help children develop reading and writing skills. Children are not always encouraged to share and enjoy books. For example,

during a literacy lesson, those children not working directly with adults did not choose to look at books. The role-play area, is well resourced and children love using it but opportunities are not planned for adults to engage in the play, and help to develop specific vocabulary. A range of mark making tools encourages the development of writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attractive displays stimulate interest
- Teachers do not always sufficiently challenge high attaining pupils
- There are not enough opportunities for direct teaching

Commentary

43. By the end of Reception, children's attainment in mathematical knowledge and understanding is likely to be below those expected. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Comprehensive records of children's knowledge, understanding and skills are kept but they are not always used productively to structure learning to suit individuals. Many children recognise numbers to 10, with about half reliably counting to 10. They name some two and three dimensional shapes but many are not yet able to use the expected range of mathematical language or to develop mathematical ideas independently. More able children are beginning to explore the idea of 'more than and less than'. Insufficient time is allocated to direct teaching, therefore children do not achieve as well as they might. Attractive displays, such as Miss Muffet, counting the spots on the spiders, and the clocks for a Hickory, Dickory Clock picture, stimulate children's interest.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to explore and discuss their surroundings
- Opportunities are planned for children to observe and investigate

Commentary

44. A satisfactory range of experiences help children learn about the world around them. Overall, standards in this area of learning are average and children achieve well because they are encouraged to explore and discuss their experiences. Teaching is satisfactory. The use of ICT is well integrated into activities and skills are developing appropriately. Children use the mouse confidently. Within the classroom, there are opportunities for children to observe and investigate. For example, children are growing bean and sunflower seeds. They enjoy investigating materials that are attracted to magnets. Children are excited when looking at different fruits that many had not seen before. There is good development of children's language as they are encouraged to describe the shape, taste and smell of different fruits. Opportunities are missed for closer observations.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

45. No lessons or outdoor activities were observed. Consequently it is not possible to make a secure judgement on standards or teaching. The good accommodation means that children have easy access to the playground and indoor climbing apparatus. Children are making good progress in the development of their manipulative skills by handling brushes, a variety of mark making material, scissors and manipulating small construction equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

46. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this area of learning. Work on display covered a wide range of media such as free painting, collages and models in clay.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the infants
- Standards remain well below average at Year 6
- Good leadership together with very good assessment is ensuring steady progress through the juniors
- Teaching is good overall with very good teaching for Year 2 and Year 6
- For pupils who do not manage to read at home, there are too few opportunities to practise reading in school

Commentary

47. When children start at Woodcock Hill, a high proportion have under-developed language and literacy skills. Inspection evidence shows that not enough is done to address these identified deficits in the Reception class and children do not make enough progress in this area of learning. However, in the infants it is a different story. Teaching is of a high quality, based very firmly on extremely thorough assessment and knowledge of individuals' learning styles helps pupils achieve well. In Year 2 there are 18 boys and eight girls; teaching in this class is planned very successfully to keep a good balance of teacher input and pupil activity in order to keep pupils' attention and interest. Pupils achieve well and are very proud of their work. Writing is a strength. Pupils enjoy writing and are keen to record their ideas. Basic spellings are secure and handwriting is satisfactory. Standards are around average with teacher assessment showing a high proportion of pupils likely to attain the expected Level 2 in the forthcoming national tests.
48. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. The history of unsatisfactory teaching particularly in Years 3 and 4 noted by the last inspection is still evident in the standard of the current Year 6 pupils' work. As Year 2 pupils, their attainment in writing was average and in reading well below. However, they did not build on this achievement in Years 3 and 4 with the result that a high proportion of pupils still lack basic spelling and punctuation skills and reading skills are limited. Achievement over time, therefore, has been unsatisfactory. The current very good teaching is helping pupils catch up and consolidate skills. Importantly, pupils are confident 'to have a go' at writing and, whilst it is evident that some get very frustrated with their weak spelling ability, they try hard to use imaginative vocabulary in their stories and poetry. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows a good improvement in vocabulary, the structure of written work and the amount produced. Standards of handwriting are improving but are generally below those expected; few use joined up writing as a matter of course.

Pupils say they enjoy reading, and inspection shows teachers ensure that individuals have interesting, up-to-date books at a suitable level. The problem that limits progress is the amount of reading many pupils manage to do at home. Across the school, there are many pupils who do not have the opportunity to read regularly at home. The special needs teachers do their very best to hear these pupils read but often this is only once per week, which is not enough to ensure good progress.

49. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall with very good improvement in the quality of teaching and assessment. The deputy headteacher was noted as providing good leadership for the subject at the last inspection. Since then, she has undertaken rigorous monitoring and used the results to change and adapt planning, teaching and resources. She has provided a very clear sense of direction. For example, the whole school focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is paying dividends. The great majority of pupils know they are expected to respond to questions with a whole sentence and are reminded to do so by teachers. Older juniors are developing a good sense of audience.
50. Due to the long term absence of the co-ordinator, the assistant headteacher has taken on the role and is providing good, temporary leadership by maintaining the momentum for improvement. Assessment is very good and is being used very effectively to raise standards. All teachers have a crystal clear picture of pupils' National Curriculum level and what needs to be learned to move a pupil to the next level. These targets are shared with pupils. Targets are set for end of year attainment and reviewed each term. Pupils who do not make the expected progress are targeted with extra help. More challenging targets are set for pupils who have made good progress. The co-ordinator and headteacher check teachers' assessments and ask relevant questions if progress is not as good as expected. Also, to keep a tight focus on raising standards, teachers have performance management targets related to groups of their pupils' attainment and progress.
51. The headteacher has endeavoured to ensure that the current Year 3, who did well in their Year 2 national tests, build on their achievement. A teacher with experience of the age group has been employed for one year to take the class. Data provided by the school shows these pupils are consolidating their skills thoroughly. Standards have not slipped and achievement is at least sound. Indeed, around a quarter of the pupils have made good progress. Standards in Year 4 are wide ranging but, overall, well below average. Their attainment in Year 2 tests was low. However, from scrutiny of work and lesson observation, achievement is at least satisfactory. In both Year 3 and Year 4, pupils with special educational needs do particularly well when groups are withdrawn to work with the special needs teachers. Standards in Year 5 are, again, very wide ranging and overall well below average. These pupils made little progress in their Year 3 and still have much to make up.
52. Teaching in Year 6 is very good. Pupils are grouped according to ability and taught in two classes of around 15 pupils in each. Pupils with special educational needs have good additional help from the special needs co-ordinators who address their specific needs. As a result these pupils achieve well. In the lower ability group, the teaching assistant provides proficient support. The good adult to pupil ratio in this group gives many opportunities for individual help and encouragement which enable pupils to succeed and learn at a good rate. Teachers use lively methods to capture their pupils' imagination, such as 'hot seating'. In the lessons observed, achievement was always good because pupils had listened intently and wanted to get on with the interesting tasks; they all worked to capacity albeit slowly. Marking is very good and pupils know what they have to do to improve. Teachers are aware of keeping the right balance between encouraging pupils to write what they want to say, and making comments about incorrect spelling and punctuation. They encourage pupils to read. The school has recently purchased a range of highly interesting books, which are not too difficult to read. These have been appreciated by teachers and pupils. Pupils also say that '*... we're really pleased we don't have to write those reviews, it puts you off reading*'.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Speaking and listening skills are developing well due to a whole school focus. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their ideas prior to writing. Year 6 have a good understanding of taking turns in discussions, and putting forward their ideas succinctly. Across the school, all pupils are keen to write. Pupils make appropriate use of their literacy skills in other subjects but the low standards in the older junior classes sometimes prevent pupils from showing exactly how much they know and understand. The school has recognised that it is at a point when it can start to teach literacy skills through other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 6 are well below average
- Teaching is good overall. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is very good
- Assessment and marking of pupils' work is very good
- Pupils' attitudes are very good
- Leadership and management are very good

Commentary

54. Standards by the end of Year 2 are average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. By Year 6 standards are well below average and the achievement of Year 6 pupils is unsatisfactory over time. The decline in the performance of the present Year 6 pupils since they were in Year 2 is because of unsatisfactory teaching in the past. However, since the previous inspection, teaching has improved to good overall and this is having a positive impact on standards and achievement resulting in average standards and good achievement in Years 3, 4 and 5. Although standards are well below average in Year 6, consistently good teaching results in good achievement in lessons. No differences were observed in the achievement of boys and girls.
55. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection when it was satisfactory overall, though ranging from unsatisfactory to good. Teaching is very good in Years 1 and 2, and one excellent lesson was observed. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall with no lesson observed less than satisfactory. The majority of lessons have very good pace, which ensures pupils remain motivated and on task. Throughout the school teachers manage their pupils very well. This, and the appropriately matched work, results in the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, who want to learn and who co-operate very well. The overall good teaching is raising standards, though not sufficiently for Year 6 pupils to make up lost ground. Teaching assistants, learning mentors and the special needs co-ordinators give good, and often very good, support for lower attaining pupils either in class or in groups withdrawn from classes. As well as having a good impact on achievement, this support has a very good influence on behaviour.
56. Very good use is made of assessment and marking to ensure work is well matched to the needs of pupils and to track pupils' progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when assessment and marking were only satisfactory overall. Teachers begin their lessons by sharing the learning objectives or targets, so that pupils know what is to be learnt. The majority of teachers use the end of lessons to recap on lesson objectives so that pupils can assess whether they have been achieved. In addition, teachers mark pupils' work against the objectives so pupils know how well they are achieving. Pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, know their group or individual targets and so are also able to track their own progress over time.

57. The school has identified subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions and decimals as a weaknesses in pupils' mathematics. Throughout the inspection week examples were observed of pupils being encouraged to solve mental and written subtraction and multiplication problems and problems with fractions and decimals. Teachers use pupils' errors and misconceptions well as teaching points to share with the class and to encourage pupils to explain their strategies. This contributes well to pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, in the satisfactory lessons, pupils' personal strategies and explanations are not always discussed.
58. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and have improved since the previous inspection when they were judged to be only satisfactory. The relatively new co-ordinator is a good role model for the teaching of mathematics. He monitors planning and analyses school and national results to identify strengths and weaknesses. He has the opportunity to work alongside colleagues to monitor and support teaching. Good use is made of ICT to support mathematics., for example through the use of spreadsheets and graphs.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is good and is having a positive impact on standards. Teachers plan activities in subjects such as science, ICT and history, which consolidate and develop pupils' mathematical understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils construct line graphs and bar charts of the results of science experiments, Year 5 use spreadsheets to show the patterns in times tables and Year 2 use computers to generate symmetrical patterns.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership by the co-ordinator
- Standards are below average by the end of Year 6
- Assessment systems are developing well and are being used effectively to identify gaps in pupils' learning and to inform planning
- There is a strong emphasis on practical and investigative activities and the use of scientific vocabulary
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use mathematical skills and ICT to support their learning

Commentary

60. National teacher assessments in 2004 showed standards attained by pupils in Year 2 to be below average when compared to all schools but above average when compared to similar schools. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 6, results were well below the national average. Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are beginning to rise across the school. They are currently average in Year 2, and below average in Year 6 because these pupils have significant gaps in their scientific knowledge because of weak teaching in earlier years. This year, they have benefited from very good teaching. They are taught in two small groups according to ability and they have achieved well.
61. In the work scrutinised and in lessons, there is strong emphasis on practical and investigative work. Pupils in Year 2 are enthusiastic and keen to investigate how to make an electrical circuit and light up a bulb. In Year 3, pupils investigate how shadows are formed, making generalisations such as when the light source is directly above an object then the shadow will be small. In every lesson, there is a strong focus on using scientific vocabulary with pupils

becoming increasingly confident in using this to explain their thinking. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and collaborate well when planning and carrying out experiments. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress.

62. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Overall, teaching is good with very good teaching observed in Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching is well planned to cover the curriculum systematically and to take account of any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers use imaginative methods and strong visual reinforcement of vital information to stimulate interest. They provide pupils with ways of accessing information and recording their work that take account of their literacy skills. Teachers ask challenging questions and manage behaviour very effectively in most lessons. Pupils achieve well in lessons because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for them. A brisk pace in lessons and very good relationships help pupils of all abilities to achieve well.
63. Computers are used purposefully to tabulate, analyse and graphically represent data from investigations. Pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills; for example, in reading thermometers and measuring liquids when investigating materials as insulators.
64. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. In less than a year she has improved assessment procedures and performance tracking. Very rigorous assessment procedures are now in place and, as a result, the school is very well aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Evidence of individual pupils' progress enables teachers to plan according to ability. Formal monitoring takes place and teachers are well supported with planning, guidance and resources that lead to a consistency of approach across the school. Stimulating displays and a recent 'Science Week' have helped to raise the profile of science. The clear educational vision of the co-ordinator and her commitment to improving provision are contributory factors in the very good improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6 standards are above average
- Teaching is good overall
- Pupils work very well together and enjoy the subject
- The links between ICT and other subjects of the curriculum are good
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good

Commentary

65. By Year 2 standards are in line with the national average. By Year 6 standards are above average. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with the national average by Year 2 but below average by Year 6. Pupils are confident when using computers and have good keyboard and mouse skills. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils are suitably challenged to improve the quality of their work. As a result, by Year 6 pupils show a high level of confidence and understanding when using ICT.
66. No direct teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good, with one excellent lesson observed. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall. Teachers set interesting tasks and, as a result, pupils are motivated and show very good productivity and application in their lessons and behave very well. Pupils are very interested in their work. They expend considerable effort when working independently, and co-operate and support each other very well. For example, in the excellent lesson observed, pupils worked very well

together in small groups using a video camera to record a role-play interview with an expert scientist, to be used as a science revision film. Pupils build effectively on their skills through a range of activities often linked to other subjects.

67. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the subject. These are identified in the school development plan. The ratio of computers to pupils is better than the national recommendation. A spacious suite supports the teaching of ICT well. However, when teachers demonstrate to the whole class, monitor screens are too small for those at the back to see clearly. When working in pairs, the worktops are too small for all pupils to work in comfort. As well as being used regularly for class lessons, the suite is used at lunchtime for computer clubs. Pupils are trusted to use the suite at lunchtime with minimum supervision. They respond very well to the trust given, which enhances their personal and social development. However, classroom computers are not fully utilised to support learning throughout the day.
68. Internet use is monitored and filtered to ensure that only appropriate sites are accessed. The school has a policy for the use of the Internet only by responsible adults and pupils. A technician is shared with other schools in the area and provides technical support one day a week.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their skills in a range of subjects through ICT. This support is demonstrated most effectively in English, mathematics, history and science. For example, in geography they produce word processed fact-sheets of a country studied, which include photographs imported from the Internet, in history they produce slide presentations of the Tudors, and in mathematics they use and manipulate spreadsheets handling football results. In an excellent dance lesson, pupils were given the responsibility of photographing and videoing activities. These opportunities not only develop pupils' ICT skills but also put its use into meaningful situations.

HUMANITIES

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching is particularly effective in helping pupils learn from religion
- Well planned scheme of work
- Very good resources

Commentary

70. Standards are above those expected for Year 2, and in line with those expected for Year 6. There has been an improvement in standards in Year 2 since the last inspection – from average to above, while Year 6 standards have remained the same. Leadership and assessment have improved, both these areas are now good. The co-ordinator is new to the role but is already building on the previous very good leadership which organised the scheme of work, improved resources and raised the profile of the subject.
71. The scheme of work follows the locally agreed syllabus and ensures pupils build cumulatively on their knowledge and experiences of the religions studied.
72. Teaching is good overall with very good teaching noted in Years 2 and 6. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons, listen attentively and contribute to lively discussions. An impressive feature noted in all lessons was pupils' ability to apply what they learn to their own

lives. For example, in Year 4, pupils could discuss what Martin Luther King believed in and could discuss what they believed in. Pupils in Year 2 could identify the 'atmosphere' conducive to prayer. After a trip to various local places, such as the hairdressers, grocers and pet shop, pupils were asked what they felt about the atmosphere of the buildings they had visited. They were adamant that a cinema would not be a place to go to say your prayers. *'You would need a calm place to go'*. They went on to say that if you were a Sikh you would go to a gurdwara, a Jew would go to a synagogue and a Christian to a church as these were all calm places. Pupils in Year 6 have a very clear understanding of the difference between their rights and responsibilities and can discuss these at length. In their written work, pupils write thoughtful poems about racism and prejudice. Whilst their spelling and punctuation skills are lacking, their ideas are mature.

73. The previous co-ordinator ensured the school was fully resourced with high quality artefacts to support the teaching of the full range of religions as required by the locally agreed syllabus. The cost of transport to specific places of worship limits the number of visits made, but the school works hard to encourage members of the local community to come in to school to talk about their cultures and religions.
74. In **history** and **geography** work was only sampled. No lessons were seen in either subject. It is not therefore possible to give an overall judgement about provision. In both subjects, information comes from pupils' work, school documents, displays and discussions. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly typical of those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6.
75. Pupils' work in **history** shows a sound knowledge and understanding of past events, people and changes in the past; for example, Ancient Greece. In Year 5, pupils draw conclusions from a range of evidence about invaders and settlers. Pupils in Year 1 compare old and new toys. Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of chronology develops well through the use of timelines.
76. A strong feature of pupils' work in **geography** is the use of questions to compare and contrast different locations. Good use is made of maps with mapping skills developing appropriately as pupils get older. In both history and geography, good use is made of visits to enhance learning. For example, pupils in Year 5 visit Selly Manor Tudor House; younger pupils visit the park and carry out traffic and weather surveys locally. They study the local environment accompanied by the ranger from the local nature centre.
77. ICT is used well by pupils; to find information, for example, information about the Tribes of Mali and about Anglo Saxon life. Assessment is used to track pupils' progress in both subjects. Subject co-ordinators have clear ideas for the developments of the subjects, and there has been good improvement since the last inspection,

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78. In **art and design**, no lessons were observed so it is not possible to make a definitive judgement about provision. From scrutiny of work and displays, what can be said is that pupils are provided with a good range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities. Discussions with pupils show they like art and design and take pride in their work, and admire and respect the work of others. Relevant links are made between subjects, such as history. Staff work very hard to make sure classrooms, corridors and the halls are filled with pupils' vibrant work. Thus, achievement is celebrated and inspiration provided for others. Discussions with the co-ordinator, and school planning, show that the issue of repetition of work raised by the last inspection has been resolved effectively.
79. In **music**, only one lesson was observed so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about standards and teaching. Pupils were heard singing in hymn practices. Pupils have very positive attitudes because of the very good role model provided by the co-ordinator. Pupils sing tunefully and with great enthusiasm. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

At the start and end of assemblies, pupils enjoy listening to music by a range of composers. They identify instruments that are being played and often find out more about 'the composer of the week' in their own time. Pupils have opportunities to learn the violin or keyboard if they show aptitude and interest. Every pupil has the opportunity to take part in Christmas concerts. These provide a good opportunity for them to perform in front of an audience. The brass group from the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and folk musicians have visited the school. Pupils have also had opportunities to go to concerts. These visits and visitors give enjoyable first hand experiences of hearing live music and have raised the profile of music in the school.

80. Since the last inspection, a new scheme of work has been introduced, providing good support for all staff who are now more confident about teaching the subject. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly. The co-ordinator has an appropriate action plan for the development of music in the school and provides good support for colleagues. New percussion instruments from a variety of cultures have been bought. These good resources contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment.
81. **Design and technology** was not a focus of the inspection and so no lessons were observed. There is, therefore, insufficient evidence on which to base reliable judgements about the quality of teaching and learning or standards and provision. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator, scrutiny of teachers' planning, assessment records, displays of finished work and pupils' design and technology books indicate good coverage of the curriculum and that skills are built upon from one year to the next. Finished products show that a good range of materials are used in a variety of contexts. Pupils' work is finished to a good standard. Links are being made with other subjects to make the curriculum more interesting and relevant. For example, Year 2 pupils design and make moving vehicles as part of a topic on transport, Year 3 pupils make packaging for Easter eggs, and Year 6 pupils design and make full size slippers, which many want to wear in the evenings during their residential visit.
82. At the time of the previous inspection, the subject was not a priority for the school. Since then the very good leadership and management of the co-ordinator has ensured that a scheme has been implemented, assessment is used to inform planning and resources have improved. Plans are also in place for a purpose built cookery area for food technology.
83. **Physical education** was not a focus of the inspection. Only one lesson was observed and so there is insufficient evidence on which to base reliable judgments about the quality of teaching and learning or standards and provision.
84. In the one dance lesson observed in Year 4, taught by a visiting expert in Bhangra drumming and dancing, the excellent, stimulating and very well paced teaching inspired the pupils who, by the end of the lesson, were able to confidently perform a Bhangra dance celebrating harvest and the festival of Vaisakhi. Discussion with the subject co-ordinator and scrutiny of planning and assessment records, show that pupils are involved in a full range of gymnastic, dance and games activities. Swimming is taught to pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 at a local public swimming pool. By Year 6 the majority of pupils are able to swim the minimum expectation of 25 metres. An annual residential visit includes outdoor and adventurous activities.
85. The previous inspection judged that there was a lack of clear direction by the co-ordinator and that poor planning and assessment adversely affected the progress of pupils. This has been addressed very well. Leadership and management by the co-ordinator are now very good. She monitors and supports teaching and learning, has introduced good assessment procedures and has developed good sporting links with other primary schools, the local secondary school and professional players who support the teaching of football, tag rugby and junior golf.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good** and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places great emphasis on pupils' all round development
- Teaching is good overall

Commentary

86. At the start of every term stereotyping and bullying issues are discussed by the whole school. During the inspection, pupils from Years 3 to 6 shared their feelings in assembly about going into new situations, making new people welcome and what they could do to encourage friendships. Pupils have regular personal, social and health education lessons each week and a Citizenship Week is organised each year. The chair of governors plays an important role in this special week when pupils prepare and deliver a speech on a given subject. Sex and relationship education and drugs awareness are addressed well through the personal, health and social education and science curriculum and taught in the context of a healthy life style.
87. In specific lessons teaching is good overall. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils were totally involved in the 'hot seating' activity asking searching questions of the 'bully' and the 'bullied'. The class teacher extended pupils' thinking by asking thought provoking questions. Pupils were able to empathise with the bullied person and also understand the reasons why people are bullies.
88. In lessons generally, teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to take responsibility and make appropriate choices. In a very good religious education lesson in Year 6, pupils were asked to evaluate their 'good points' and say what they would like to do with their lives. Pupils gave great thought to their personalities and how these would fit in with their chosen career path. *Very sensibly, they evaluated their class teacher's personality and fitness to teach them, finishing with 'You'll be so pleased to say you taught us when you see us achieve what we set out to do'.*

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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