

INSPECTION REPORT

YEW TREE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aston, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103259

Headteacher: Mr Clive Garner

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 18 – 21 April 2005

Inspection number: 268327

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	423
School address:	Yew Tree Road Aston Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B6 6RX
Telephone number:	0121 4642967
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Avtar Singh Abrol
Date of previous inspection:	8 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Yew Tree Community Primary School is much bigger than other primary schools. There are 384 pupils on roll from reception to Year 6 and a further 78 children who attend the nursery. The school's intake is ethnically diverse, which is valued as bringing understanding, tolerance and respect to the children's experiences. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high, with the two most significant groups speaking Mirpuri and Sylheti. The level of mobility amongst the pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the usual time is above average. The socio-economic circumstances of many of the families in the community with children at the school are much less favourable than usual. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. There are no Traveller children in the school. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children in the school although attainment on entry to the nursery is very low overall. The school has identified 13 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is below the national average; most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is in line with the national average. The school gained a Schools Achievement Award in 2003 and a Basic Skills Quality Mark, also in 2003. The school benefits from inclusion in an Education Action Zone and the Excellence in Cities initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Science Physical education
19365	Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
22657	Mark Madeley	Team inspector	Foundation stage Mathematics Music
32604	Susan Manning	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education
12116	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The staff and children create a good atmosphere for learning which includes all pupils well and promotes their achievement. Children enter the nursery with very low attainment, particularly in their language, mathematical and social skills, and in their knowledge of the world around them. This acts as a barrier to learning throughout the school. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 - 6 from a low starting point but attainment is still below average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. The concentrated work of the senior staff in partnership with class teachers promotes good learning in English and mathematics skills, but this arrangement has resulted in insufficient support for other year groups and subjects during this school year. Leadership and management are satisfactory, although the governors do not have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school nor an effective working partnership with the senior staff. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Attainment is well below average by Year 2 and below average by Year 6.
- Children have very good relationships together. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Assessment procedures are good in English but under-developed in other subjects.
- The school provides good arrangements for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils.
- The partnership with parents, the local community and other schools is good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Attendance is now good. By Year 6 attainment has improved and is average compared with similar schools. Attainment overall is still below average but many more pupils reach the standard expected because planning and teaching are better. The outside play area for nursery and reception children is improved although more resources are needed.

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*	D	C
mathematics	E	E*	D	C
science	C	E	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils achieve satisfactorily through the school overall. Pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make good progress because group work and support in class is effective. In the national tests of 2004 at Year 2, attainment was average in reading and writing in comparison with similar schools but below average in mathematics. In comparison with all schools nationally, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was well below average because fewer pupils gained Level 3. In the Year 6 tests, attainment was average in comparison with schools whose pupils attained similarly when they were in Year 2, and pupils made a little more than the expected progress. In 2003, the grade E* shows that attainment in English and mathematics was in the lowest five per cent nationally. The trend of improvement in national test results is in line with the national trends at both Years 2 and 6.

In the nursery and reception classes (foundation stage), carefully-chosen activities enable the children to make steady progress. Children's attainment by the end of reception is well below average. Several higher-attaining children reach good standards through the school although some tasks do not challenge them.

In Years 1 - 2 achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in current work in reading, writing, mathematics and science is well below average by the end of Year 2 although in information and communication technology (ICT) attainment is average. Pupils from the different minority ethnic groups achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 - 2 and well in Years 3 - 6, where good teaching is informed by careful observations of their learning difficulties.

Pupils achieve well in Years 3 - 6 because good teaching is focused on building skills and understanding. By Year 6, attainment in the work seen is below average in English and science but still well below average in mathematics. The school's good emphasis on speaking and listening is having a positive impact on achievement. Attainment is average in ICT, history and in physical education. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of different world religions and religious festivals.

Pupils have good personal qualities, such as their friendships which promote racial harmony. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Overall, pupils demonstrate good behaviour and attitudes to work, which act as a strong influence on learning. Pupils' personal development is good. Teachers keep good discipline and use good methods on the few occasions where pupils behave inappropriately. The level of attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory, with some good features. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the foundation stage, satisfactory provision and teaching enable children to gain a wide range of early skills, although the unsatisfactory level of resources limits some aspects of learning. Teaching is also satisfactory overall in Years 1 - 2. Good features, such as the emphasis on spoken language and practical experiments in science, extend pupils' ability to explain their ideas. Teaching is good in Years 3 - 6 and has a good impact on learning, so that literacy and independent learning skills are better. The commitment of the senior staff to supporting English and mathematics in Years 3 - 6 is contributing to improved attainment but has resulted in some reduction in support for the other year groups, subjects and assessment procedures. Good marking and self-assessment arrangements help pupils to improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The present emphasis on English, mathematics and science means that most other subjects have had less time allocated for development. There is a good range of physical education activities; and pupils benefit greatly from the expertise of visiting specialists. The school provides good care and welfare for the children. There are good partnerships with parents, the local community and nearby schools which enhance pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff give good direction for specific priorities, such as in literacy and investigational science. They are less effective in providing vision and support in some other aspects, such as the foundation stage and other subjects. The governors have not established an effective partnership with the senior management team nor a helpful system of school visits to ensure they understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and to inform them in making decisions. As a result governance is unsatisfactory. The governors ensure that the school meets statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a good opinion of the school and think their children receive a good education. The pupils think the school is a good place to learn and that they have good friends, and the inspectors agree.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the governance of the school by establishing an effective partnership between the governors, headteacher and senior staff.
- Review the deployment of senior staff to ensure support and development for all year groups and subjects, including an increase in resources for the foundation stage.
- Extend the existing good assessment practice in English to all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall and for pupils in Years 3 - 6 it is good. Standards on entry to Year 1 are well below average overall. Standards are well below average by Year 2 but improve to below average overall by Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' weak basic skills, particularly in speaking, writing and mathematics, are barriers to their learning throughout the school.
- Teachers' good emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills in Years 3 - 6 is effective in raising achievement.
- There is a good practical basis to science so that pupils achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery class is very low compared with that expected nationally. Their attainment in communication, language and literacy skills, in mathematical skills, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world is weak. The children's poorly-developed language skills act as barriers to learning across all areas, and this continues throughout the school. Over half the children enter nursery with no English and with under-developed language skills in their home language. Achievement is satisfactory because teaching and provision are satisfactory, although there are several examples of imaginative and well-structured activities which promote good achievement. Several children are on course to reach the early learning goals in all areas by the time they enter Year 1 but, for the majority, their language and mathematical skills remain very low. This continues to cause difficulties for pupils' learning throughout the school: in understanding the ideas being taught, in taking part in discussions and in recording their work in all subjects. These very weak skills also hinder pupils in their ability to reason and explain.
2. Children who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress because a focused programme designed to promote spoken English is effective. Pupils move from an initial group to an intermediate and then advanced group as they develop familiarity and confidence. Activities are structured well to provide the language necessary for classroom activities. There is good school evidence to show that several pupils with EAL and who joined recently have made considerably more than the expected progress. Pupils from different minority ethnic groups achieve as well as each other and their peers once they have gained sufficient English to understand the tasks. Pupils from all the minority ethnic backgrounds help each other and explain the work, which itself helps to consolidate understanding. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive sensitive support which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Their achievement in Years 3 - 6 is good since here the setting arrangements enable teaching and support to be closely matched to their learning needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (12.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.2 (12.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.3 (13.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards in the national tests at Year 2 in 2004 were well below the national average in each of reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels was close to the national figures but many more pupils were at Level 2C and fewer reached Level 3. These figures reflect their well-below average attainment on entry to Year 1. In comparison with similar schools, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 was well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. Standards overall, in comparison with similar schools, were average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. The trend of improvement in the school's national test results has been broadly in line with the national trend over the past four years. The results for each test indicate good improvement since 2003. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests have been maintained since the last inspection in relation to the national average, although the percentage of pupils gaining Level 2 has increased by around 20 per cent between 1998 and 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (22.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.8 (23.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.5 (25.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Standards in the national tests in Year 6 were below the national average in English and mathematics, and well below in science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were broadly average in each subject, which matches pupils' current good achievement, although several pupils continue to find speaking and writing difficult. On average, by Year 6 pupils made a little more than the expected progress compared with their results when they were in Year 2. The results for each test indicate good improvement since 2003 because the senior staff have worked in close partnership with class teachers to identify weaknesses and improve learning. Standards in the national tests in English and mathematics have improved since the last inspection, and the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 has increased by around 30 per cent between 1998 and 2004. Standards in the national tests in science have been maintained since the last inspection, and the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 has also increased by around 30 per cent. The trend of improvement in the school's national test results is broadly in line with the national trend. In order to maintain consistently high expectations in all year groups the school has set very ambitious targets for the end of Year 6, which are more than the progress expected nationally.
5. In Years 1 - 2, achievement is satisfactory. Standards of current work are well below average in English, mathematics and science indicating a lowering of standards since that reported at the last inspection. Evidence shows that more children are at an early stage of English language acquisition than at the time of the last inspection and that attainment on entry to the nursery is lower. Teachers and other adults give a good emphasis to spoken language, often supporting the lower-attaining pupils in groups to promote better understanding. Teaching is generally pitched at raising standards to the national level so that the higher-attaining pupils are sometimes not fully challenged.
6. In English, by Year 2 pupils' reading skills improve so that many are able to recount the main events of a story although they are less skilled at interpreting text. For many pupils writing skills are weak, although there are several examples of pupils with EAL whose writing skills show good improvement through the year. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are generally weak. Only the higher-attaining pupils are quick and confident with mental calculation. The general lack of number resources and emphasis on specific methods does not give a strong push to numeracy skills. In science, there is a good emphasis on practical investigation so that pupils achieve well in lessons. Most pupils, for example, understand how to record the results of a healthy food survey onto a tally chart. Standards in the other subjects, where it was

possible to form a judgement, are broadly average. In physical education, for example, pupils achieved well in dance lessons because good teaching encouraged them to use their imaginations and to respond to the music.

7. In Years 3 - 6, achievement is good because the support and development promoted by the senior staff are effective and teaching is good. Standards of current work are below average in English and science but remain well below average in mathematics. In English, pupils' reading skills improve so that pupils are more fluent readers and understand the context. The standard of writing is also better and pupils use a greater variety of expressive language, although for many the use of standard English is not yet fluent. The emphasis of teaching is to enable pupils to reach Level 4 in the national tests. Higher-attaining pupils are usually challenged, for example through the more demanding work presented through setting arrangements, but this is not fully consistent and fewer pupils than nationally are on course to reach Level 5. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are weak, for example in calculating the average of three numbers. Pupils are not skilled in recording their calculations or confident in applying a good method. In science, pupils achieve well through the impact of the teachers' good emphasis on practical investigation. Pupils collaborate well during planning, for example to test how sweeteners dissolve in water, and understand the need to control variables.
8. Standards in the other subjects by Year 6 are broadly average, where it was possible to make a judgement. Here, there were a few examples of very good achievement since some of the teaching observed in the foundation subjects was very good. In design and technology in Year 6, for example, after a demonstration on an interactive whiteboard, pupils designed and constructed a working prototype of a fairground machine using interlocking cogs. In physical education, pupils in Year 6 benefited greatly from the expertise of a visiting specialist teacher to produce a wide variety of balance positions with a partner. In ICT by the end of Year 2 pupils use the mouse and toolbar to alter the size, colour and style of text and insert pictures into their work. By Year 6 most pupils demonstrate good word-processing skills and are confident in their use of the Internet. Often pupils with special needs or who are at the early stages of acquiring English are paired with higher-attaining pupils. This enables them to achieve equally as well as their classmates. In some lessons teachers make effective use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects, for example in history, but this is not yet consistent to help engage pupils in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have good attitudes to school and their behaviour is also good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Punctuality is satisfactory and attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school has very high expectations for pupils' conduct and deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Pupils are enterprising and willing to take responsibility.

Commentary

9. Nearly all pupils are keen to come to school because they enjoy their lessons and have friendly and caring teachers and support staff. In classrooms they listen carefully, concentrate, apply themselves well to the task and work hard. They participate enthusiastically in discussion and are keen to ask and answer questions. Children at an early stage of learning English are often helped sensitively by others to take part in activities. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life. They demonstrate positive attitudes and good relationships with their peers. The school expects pupils to behave well and to show respect, and pupils respond positively to these expectations. A good focus on social skills in the early years provides an effective basis for the school's ethos of care, consideration and good

manners. In the playground pupils from all backgrounds play very well together without any aggressive behaviour. In lessons pupils' behaviour is almost always good and often it is very good. A small number of pupils, particularly in Years 1 - 2, have difficulty in meeting the school's high expectations of behaviour but teachers and support staff manage the situation well, making effective use of the behaviour policy. The work of the learning mentors is effective in promoting pupils' personal development.

10. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and to help others. They enjoy this and are proud of being monitors and school councillors. Older pupils are given responsibilities for looking after younger children and assisting staff during wet play times. Pupils behave responsibly as they move around the school showing courtesy and respect to teachers and other adults. Pupils do not regard bullying as an issue. They are well aware that the school will not tolerate bullying and know what they should do if they encounter it. Parents report that most instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively, although on occasions parents have unrealistic expectations. There have been no recent exclusions. The school has a good arrangement for agreements with other local schools whereby pupils in danger of being excluded can transfer for a short period to another school. This is normally effective in resolving the difficulty. The school also accepts pupils excluded from other schools; there are good examples where these pupils have made good progress because support and the good ethos are effective.
11. The pupils' spiritual development is good because the school provides good opportunities for reflection through assemblies, class discussions, lessons and the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils are expected to work hard and to persevere when things get difficult, and the school recognises and celebrates their achievements. Literature, art and music provide further opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, as do visits into the city centre and to a farm. An assembly to celebrate the birthday of Muhammad, where a group of pupils sang a selection of prayers, provided a very good spiritual occasion.
12. The school's very good provision for moral development ensures that pupils understand right from wrong, are sensitive to the feelings of others and behave appropriately. They are involved in making class rules and the displays of awards, sanctions and rules, together with celebration assemblies, encourage the high standard of behaviour seen during the inspection. The school's provision for developing pupils' social awareness is good. Pupils are treated in a warm and friendly manner by staff and this has a positive effect on their relationships with others. A range of clubs and visits, including two residential visits each year, contributes effectively to pupils' social development. Pupils' social development is also enhanced by their involvement in a good range of sporting events.
13. The pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils experience aspects of the local culture through visits to the locality and through their studies in art and design, music, history and geography. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the traditions and values of the variety of cultures present in today's world.
14. Attendance levels were unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance with significant success, as attendance levels are now good for the current year and attendance is likely to reach 95 per cent. More parents understand the need for their children to attend consistently but the extended holidays taken by a large number of pupils have a negative impact on successful English language acquisition.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.7
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has a good approach to including all pupils and a good ethos for learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good level of care and welfare for pupils. The partnerships with parents, the community and local schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall; it is good in Years 3 - 6. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers place a strong emphasis on pupils' language skills which has a good impact on learning.
- Teaching is good in Years 3 - 6 because the senior staff provide effective support to these year groups.
- Resources in the foundation stage are unsatisfactory and restrict children's opportunities to learn new skills.
- Pupils work together well during activities so that learning is enhanced.
- Teachers engage well with pupils to encourage confidence in learning although at times the higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Children learning English as an additional language achieve well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	6 (12%)	27 (54%)	16 (32%)	1 (2%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in the foundation stage and Years 1 - 2 and good in Years 3 - 6. Recent teaching appointments are beginning to resolve difficulties associated with previous temporary appointments and to improve management in the foundation stage. All teachers work hard to make interesting presentations during their introductions and to engage all pupils in the ideas. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 science lesson when the teacher used a pair of very worn trousers to pose the problem of finding the best fabric to mend them. Teachers have good relationships with pupils so that pupils are mostly not afraid to try. The influence of the senior staff is evident in planning for lessons in Years 3 - 6, which is generally good here and satisfactory in the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2. However, planning in all years concerns mostly subject content and activities, and the organisation of pupils. There are very few notes on the intended teaching strategies to be used to promote learning and the same tasks are often provided for all pupils. In some lessons teachers do not provide practical resources and there is a tendency to present ideas too formally too early.
16. There are sufficient numbers of support staff and they are well trained. They are involved in planning and provide valuable insights into pupils' progress which feed into daily lesson planning. They feel confident at delivering the support identified on individual education plans. Many of the support staff are bilingual, which enables them to engage closely with pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) and to help with home/school liaison where possible.

17. In Years 1 - 2, teachers establish pupils' attention and good behaviour well so that pupils are ready to learn. Teachers are usually sensitive to the needs of EAL pupils, for example by emphasising key words. Teachers emphasise language skills effectively, for example by helping pupils to discuss and explain the ideas, which has a good impact on learning. The classroom assistants provide good support in several lessons but this is not consistent and there are times when they are under-used. Most tasks are relevant, adapted for the pupils' levels of attainment and provide good interest. As a result, pupils sustain effort well, although the level of challenge is satisfactory rather than high since the higher-attaining pupils are not always extended. Teachers are focusing well on pupils' oral skills by discussing and explaining unfamiliar words. Their questioning often reinforces this but at times insufficient attention is given to encouraging pupils to reason or explain. The skills of writing are a problem for many pupils so that they are slow to learn to record their tasks and sometimes produce a limited amount of work. A few higher-attaining pupils, including those with EAL, demonstrate substantial improvement in their writing over the two years.
18. In Years 3 - 6 teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge through their presentations and questioning so that pupils are challenged well. The senior members of staff are having a good influence on lesson planning which has improved progression through the years and teachers' confidence. Teachers' use of the interactive whiteboards is generally satisfactory; they are used imaginatively in a few lessons, for example to illustrate how cogs link in a fairground model. Teaching methods are good, by arranging for pupils to work ideas out in pairs, for example, or in using a problem-solving approach. Pupils learn together through having to reason and explain about their ideas to others, as for example about how the temperature of water affects the time to dissolve a sweetener. Teachers persist with their questioning and discussions until they feel pupils understand. Teachers are generally observant of the pupils and use answers to assess understanding. The final plenary discussion sessions are generally worthwhile although some are too short to provide time to share findings and reinforce the main ideas.
19. Formal assessment arrangements in English are good but are under-developed in other subjects. Tracking procedures in the core subjects for pupils in Year 6 are good since they give a good indication of difficulties and progress towards targets. Teachers' marking of pupils' work in their books is good, with praise and some clear comment which helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory and the breadth of activities offered contributes well to pupils' learning and personal development. There are good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation, staffing and resources satisfactorily meet the needs of the curriculum overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities and school clubs.
- Residential and other visits, together with a good range of visitors, support pupils' learning well.
- Tasks set are not always matched to the needs of all pupils in some lessons.
- There has been substantial recent investment in new technology, but not all teachers are making use of the opportunities this now provides.
- The quality of learning resources for the foundation stage is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

20. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects including religious education. The school has a determination, which allows it to vary the form of worship according to the varied ethnic backgrounds of the pupils, and provides a daily Collective Act of Worship.

21. The school timetable allows for a sensible balance of subjects across the curriculum. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, but are not systematically monitored to ensure that what is planned for is actually taught. In some classes teachers create good opportunities for pupils to practise the skills learned in one subject in other areas of the curriculum. The school has recently developed a curriculum map which identifies the ways in which ICT can be used to support learning in other subjects, but this is not yet fully applied across all classes. Policies for drugs education and sex and relationships education are in place.
22. There is a broad range of enrichment activities which support learning across the curriculum. The school provides a good range of sporting activities beyond the classroom and outside school hours. Older pupils have good opportunities to take part in competitive team games and compete in the local schools' football league. This helps to develop team work and social skills. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in drama, music and art activities, but the school could do more in this regard. The school has begun to develop links with local business partners and this is helping pupils to understand their role in the wider community. Effective partnerships with other schools are providing good support for curriculum development in some subjects. For example, the school has good links with its partner secondary schools and the "Moving On Up" programme which pupils undertake in Year 6 prepares them well for the next stage in their education. The Year 6 residential trip and visits to places of interest, together with a range of visitors, support pupils' learning well. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. This contributes to the good behaviour and positive relationships in the school.
23. The curriculum is inclusive and pupils have equal opportunities to achieve regardless of gender or ethnic group. However, in some lessons teachers do not always plan work which matches the needs of all the pupils in their care. In Years 1 and 2 there is insufficient early identification and diagnosis of pupils' specific learning needs and tasks to extend the higher-attaining pupils are not always planned specifically. Provision for pupils with special needs is satisfactory for pupils in the foundation stage and those in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6 due the additional staffing which has been deployed to support their learning. Provision is good for all pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Although support staff enable pupils to access the curriculum, the support given is sometimes general and in these cases the progress of individual pupils is not sufficiently monitored. Teachers identify higher-attaining pupils and aim to provide more challenging tasks. Teachers also look out for indications of gifted and talented pupils but none are identified at present, for example no pupils are showing promise in playing a musical instrument.
24. The internal accommodation is generally well organised to make maximum use of the available space. However, some teaching areas are through-routes to other parts of the school and this can be distracting. Attractive displays in corridors and classrooms create a rich learning environment for the pupils and celebrate their achievements effectively. The outside area, however, is unattractive and does not provide pupils with clearly defined areas for physical activity or quiet play. The school is aware of the shortcomings and has plans and funding to address these in the near future. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum in Years 1 - 6 and these are generally well looked after and carefully organised. Resources in the foundation stage, especially those for outside play, are unsatisfactory and restrict children's opportunities to explore and learn new skills. There has been substantial recent investment in new technology and the majority of classes now have access to a computer-linked whiteboard. However, not all teachers are making best use of the opportunities this now provides and the school is not yet monitoring the impact of the investment on teaching and learning.
25. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet curriculum and learning needs. Where teaching assistants are used well this has a positive impact on standards and ensures that lower ability pupils and those with special needs make good progress. However, this was not always the case in all the lessons seen during the inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. The involvement of pupils in the running of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The learning mentors provide very good support for the more vulnerable children and their families.
- Good induction arrangements ensure that children in the foundation stage settle into school life quickly and easily.
- The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views and be involved in decision-making.
- Procedures for the day-to-day care of pupils are good.

Commentary

26. Health and safety is taken seriously. The governors have a good link into health and safety matters through the site manager, who is also a governor. Routine safety checks are carried out and pupils who are injured or taken ill at school are cared for well. There are appropriate safeguards to monitor pupils' use of the Internet. The headteacher is the designated child protection co-ordinator. He ensures that teachers and support staff know what signs of possible child abuse to look for and what they should do if they have any concerns.
27. Three very enthusiastic and capable learning mentors provide a range of very good support, particularly to children who have difficulties with their behaviour or low self-esteem. They contribute well to the school's current initiative on improving behaviour. They also support the school's very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality. They have a significant role in preparing and supporting pupils and their families during the transfer to secondary education.
28. The parents of pupils coming into the nursery are provided with good guidance and support to help them and their children to become familiar with school routines and expectations. Members of staff visit pupils and their families at home prior to admission and this enables them to get a clear picture of the child's abilities and needs. Parents are invited to spend time in the classroom with their child during the term prior to admission. The members of staff help parents to complete any necessary forms and explain about the way in which the nursery operates, particularly for parents whose home language is not English. Children are introduced to school life gradually and admission is staggered to allow staff more time to get to know the children. Pupils joining the school other than at the normal age of admission are also well supported. They are partnered with another pupil who speaks the same language and when their knowledge of English is limited they are given an intensive programme of support to help them to gain a good command of basic English quickly. Provision is carefully structured and organised so that all pupils may take a full part in activities.
29. The headteacher, special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and the learning mentors liaise regularly to ensure that high levels of care are maintained. Teachers identify pupils who have learning or behavioural difficulties and provide additional support to help them. The marking of pupils' work shows them how its quality might be improved. However, other than in English, teachers do not use assessment data effectively enough to set appropriate targets for individual pupils and make them aware of what they need to do to achieve higher standards.
30. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon. The school council allows pupils a genuine voice in the work and development of the school. Council members are elected by pupils in Years 3 - 6 and ideas and suggestions can be put forward through class representatives. The council is currently considering issues connected with a tuck shop and the healthy eating initiative.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents make a good contribution to their children's education.
- Good links with the community and other schools enhance the children's experiences.
- Reports are limited in the amount of information they give to parents about their children's progress and attainment.

Commentary

31. Most parents have positive views of the school and appreciate the efforts of all staff on behalf of their children. They consider that teaching is good, that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best, and they feel that the school is led and managed well. They are pleased with the good induction arrangements that help their children settle in quickly and they also appreciate the way in which their children are encouraged and helped to become mature and independent. A small number of parents are concerned about bullying but parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt that any bullying brought to the attention of the school was quickly and effectively dealt with.
32. Parents themselves support their children well by listening to them reading at home and ensuring that homework is completed and returned. A significant number of parents of younger pupils take advantage of the opportunity that the school offers for them to read with their children at the start of each school day. A small but increasing number of parents help out in school on a regular basis. Parents are helped to assist their children's learning through a range of workshops on various aspects of the curriculum. The school also provides parents with advance information about the work their children will be covering and invites them to attend events such as World Book Day and special class activities such as glass painting.
33. The annual written reports issued towards the end of the school year are reasonably informative but they do not indicate how well pupils are achieving in the core subjects. They sometimes indicate targets for improvement but on occasions these are too general, such as "continue to work hard". The school seeks parents' views from time to time by means of surveys and questionnaires.
34. The good links with other schools assist the smooth transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education. A learning mentor is closely involved and she arranges visits and prepares pupils for the transition. The school works closely with nearby schools, for example for sporting activities, which enhance pupils' experience. Several specialist teachers and instructors visit to give valued support.
35. Good links with local companies have provided opportunities for pupils to find out about the world of work. These have included the design of websites and opportunities to discover how the banking system works. There are good links with a local museum which provide opportunities for pupils to discover what life was like in the past and to use more sophisticated computer equipment than that available in school. Links with a professional football club help to develop pupils' sporting skills. The local rotary club takes pupils to Slimbridge Wildfowl Trust each year, and also provides an annual holiday for children in need. All these experiences enhance pupils' education and help to develop their social and personal skills.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is satisfactory. The leadership of the school by the other key staff is satisfactory. The school is managed in a satisfactory manner.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no written long-term vision.

- The governing body does not give itself enough time to gather first-hand information about the school's work and provision.
- The school is a harmonious place which runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
- New teaching initiatives are raising standards in Years 3 to 6.
- Most co-ordinators do not have enough time to monitor teaching and learning.
- Financial over-sight is rigorous.

Commentary

36. The headteacher works hard to bring about his vision for the school and in many respects he has succeeded. The school is a harmonious place where every child is valued. It functions smoothly on a daily basis and suitable policies and procedures are in place to guide staff and pupils. Pupils' attainment is improving slowly. Recent initiatives have improved teaching in Years 3 to 6 and pupils are learning more but this to some extent is to the detriment of children in the foundation stage and Years 1 and 2 who get little additional support. Strategic planning is satisfactory but is too short-term because it is set out for only one year ahead. The headteacher and governors need to agree on what kind of school they want in three to five years' time.
37. The senior managers are generally effective in their roles but concentrate too much on Years 3 to 6. Their teaching role has raised pupils' attainment; and improved colleagues' teaching and pupils' learning. The management of special educational needs is good in these year groups and satisfactory overall since more support is needed in other years, although the co-ordinator has gone through the process of preparing a Statement of Special Educational Need for three children in the foundation stage. The deployment of support staff is well organised and there is effective liaison with outside agencies. Individual education plans are monitored and access to the curriculum for all pupils ensured.
38. The management of additional language support is good. The co-ordinator oversees provision which is largely delegated to an experienced and bilingual teaching assistant. Initial support, which includes children in the foundation stage with little or no English, is geared to 'survival language' and moves on to a programme of basic literacy skills. There is a policy of total immersion into lessons in English and much of the curriculum is demanding. However, pupils respond well and make good progress. Pupils with little initial English who enter the school at a late stage in their career make particularly good progress. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school with opportunities for role-play and paired discussion. In the nursery, home visits by bilingual staff help them to understand the child's early experiences and inform interventions for children with EAL.
39. Subject management is variable. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and ICT have moved forward significantly because the co-ordinators of these subjects contribute to year group planning and have some non-contact time to work with colleagues and use test data. In physical education the manager has been pro-active in driving the subject forward. Other managers have not written quality action plans and many, including science, have yet to put in place a basic assessment system. The foundation stage co-ordinator works hard to manage a willing team, who help children make a sound start to their schooling, but without sufficient support from the headteacher.
40. The governing body does not function cohesively and relations with the teaching and support staff are strained. Governors meet their statutory duties, partly because many are delegated to the headteacher but also through the efficiency of the office staff and clerk to the governors. They play little part in shaping the vision for the school, allocating the budget or developing the school development plan despite attempts by the headteacher and senior staff to involve them. They have little idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they do not have a simple but effective system to visit the school or gather first-hand information about its performance and provision. Many of the governors are over-critical of the school rather than being a 'critical friend'.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,264,909	Balance from previous year	12,444
Total expenditure	1,211,947	Balance carried forward to the next	65,406
Expenditure per pupil	2,825		

41. The managers make effective use of the information provided by the hard-working bursar and the expertise of the financial management company to monitor the use of funds. Spending is linked quite well to the initiatives in the school development plan, although budget planning would be helped by projecting developments over three years. The school benefits from involvement in the local Education Action Zone and Excellence in Cities initiatives through access to advice and specialist teaching. There is a five per cent 'carry forward' figure which is already allocated mainly to refurbishment projects. Whilst the governing body seeks best value in all its purchases it has not considered closely enough the value for money of staff deployment. Four senior members of staff have no class of their own and the governing body does not have robust measures in place to assess the effectiveness of their focused work in Years 3 to 6 which has resulted in some reduction in support for staff and pupils in the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2 during the current school year.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children join the nursery after their third birthday on either a full or part time basis. Many of them come to school with little or no English language at all, and a few cannot communicate in words in their home language. Many of them have little experience of playing with friends or using toys. A comprehensive induction programme involves both parents and children in becoming familiar with the foundation stage routines. Home visits by bilingual staff help staff understand the child's starting point and give parents and children a point of reference when they start school. All groups of children from the differing backgrounds achieve satisfactorily. Those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language gain in confidence and independence although some group activities do not promote early language sufficiently. Children with special educational needs generally receive sensitive support, and those with significant needs are assessed thoroughly. The foundation stage co-ordinator is having a strong individual impact on the children's learning through her approach although her influence across all areas of learning and year groups is still at an early stage.

The management of the foundation stage is satisfactory. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has good ideas for the development of the foundation stage but has had little time in which to influence practice. With her colleagues, she has invested considerable energy in improving the accommodation and learning environment in the nursery. She has had little non-contact time in which to work alongside colleagues in reception classes. Teachers' planning has been reviewed but she has yet to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

Resources, especially those for outside play, are unsatisfactory and restrict children's opportunities to learn new skills. The accommodation for the foundation stage is satisfactory in that the space is large and enables children to move around freely. However, there is no feeling of a whole unit and the nursery appears cut off from the school because of the two locked doors and the different break and lunch times.

Changes in staffing and the curriculum mean that a judgement on improvement is not comparing 'like with like'. It is clear that provision in the foundation stage has not improved much because of staffing and management uncertainties and lack of investment in resources.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to behave and share resources.
- Children move confidently around the class.
- Children have a growing curiosity about the world around them.
- Teachers effectively encourage children to work and play together.
- 'Family time' is not always used well.

Commentary

42. From a very low starting point, children quickly develop basic social skills because nursery staff encourage learning through play well. Gradually children separate from their carer willingly, though some take much longer than others, and become more confident. In both classes their curiosity is encouraged and they enjoy using torches or observing butterflies. Family time in reception classes is a positive feature only if it is led well. Occasionally this valuable time is used to change books rather than to engage children in discussion and promote good eating habits.

43. Children from all ethnic groups learn to value each other and, as their communication skills develop, they start to play together rather than side-by-side. Good interventions by bilingual staff encourage children to talk, though briefly, about what they are doing. They are likely to leave the foundation stage with attainment which is below national expectations.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some children come to school unable to communicate in their home language, indicating very low attainment.
- Good support from bilingual staff helps children pick up 'social' language quite quickly.
- Teachers ask some children to record their thoughts formally too soon.
- Children handle books well.
- No members of staff in nursery speak Bangladeshi dialects fluently.

Commentary

44. Children make rapid progress from a very low starting point in speaking skills but listening lags behind a little. They pick up social language in the nursery because the provision is good and the bilingual staff support and encourage children well, for instance at news time. Although the ethnic backgrounds of the intake have changed, the school has not deployed a speaker of Bangladeshi dialects into the nursery to help children settle more quickly. Children do not listen attentively to each other yet, though staff encourage this all the time. In reception, children's confidence grows and they engage each other and staff in short phrases, with the most able speaking in sentences. Their listening also improves and they enjoy story time. Role-play equipment is poor, though staff do the best they can with it. Children play sensibly in the 'insect' shop but could learn more with better toys and more adult involvement.
45. In the nursery, children hold books correctly and turn the pages sensibly. They use their limited English to talk about the characters and storyline. In reception, children have a regular 'reading' book which they proudly take home. They learn that print carries the meaning and want to know more. They learn letter sounds and sight words, with higher-attaining children knowing most of them and identifying more than twenty words. However, some children are encouraged to learn this before they have a broad spoken vocabulary and the ability to talk extensively about their book.
46. Children in nursery improve their hand-eye co-ordination through drawing and painting. They like to colour teddy bears and talk about what they are doing to staff. In reception, children sometimes move on from this type of activity to attempting to write in sentences before they are ready. Higher-attaining children make letter shapes well and write a complete sentence about 'The Hungry Caterpillar'.
47. From a very low starting point children achieve satisfactorily in the foundation stage because teaching is generally satisfactory although it varies in quality. Children are likely to join Year 1 with very weak language skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn number names rapidly but move to formal notation too quickly.
- Children have a weak understanding of the language of mathematics.

Commentary

48. Children know very few number names in English when they start school. They quickly pick up this knowledge when playing in the nursery, for instance by chanting the numbers when counting the children who are present. They also start to establish the names of basic shapes during a printing task and positional words from the very well-led 'Bear Hunt'. In reception classes this is extended quite well, especially in number. However, teachers encourage children to record in a formal way before many of them are ready and have the necessary understanding. Children gain a wide vocabulary, such as circle, big/small, empty and cube, but it is the smaller words which they find difficult, like 'more'. They sometimes find it hard to understand whether this is to do with addition or subtraction in practical situations.
49. Whilst some children reach the standard for their age too many do not because they have so much ground to make up. Overall, children's achievement is satisfactory as a result of sound teaching, although they leave the foundation stage with attainment which is very low.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and walks around the school broaden children's understanding of the world around them.
- Children know how to join a wide range of construction kits.
- Some children have little access to technology toys.
- Children know little about other cultures.

Commentary

50. Children know little about the world around them or other cultures before coming to school. In nursery they celebrate festivals, like Eid and Chinese New Year, but have few Chinese objects to play with to reinforce their learning. They have a good range of mechanical toys, though they are very simple for them, and have access to a computer.
51. In reception children are amazed when they hear the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and even more astonished when they visit a butterfly farm. Most of them learn the key words related to these experiences for the first time. Every new experience brings new vocabulary. They make exciting models from construction kits and junk. Reception children have access to a computer and control the program by moving the mouse accurately. Children are likely to leave reception with attainment which is very low, despite satisfactory teaching and achievement, because so many do not have the vocabulary to talk about what they observe.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are too few resources for outdoor play.
- Stimulating activities develop children's eye-to-hand co-ordination well.
- Outdoor play is not planned well enough to promote learning.

Commentary

52. Children come to school with physical skills which are well below what is normally found. For instance, few children have used pencils to draw with. They control their movements quite well and staff develop these skills satisfactorily in the nursery. They learn to run, climb and ride

tricycles, carefully avoiding each other. In reception classes, physical education lessons encourage children to move to music and use the apparatus, thus improving their control. In both classes outdoor play is not planned well enough to extend children's skills and there are too few resources. Staff rarely promote or engage in children's play, rather they supervise and ensure good order.

53. Members of staff develop children's handling skills well. In the nursery, children have daily chances to draw and paint. They learn to handle a variety of toys and to join construction kits with growing accuracy. In reception, children are taught how to hold a pencil correctly when they extend their skills in making marks on paper to writing sentences. Teachers tend to over-emphasise pencil grip without stressing other skills, e.g. scissor control or using paintbrushes effectively. Children's achievement is satisfactory because teaching, though variable, is satisfactory. Children are likely to leave the foundation stage with attainment which is below the national expectations. The good quality provision noted at the last inspection has been maintained.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy drawing and painting activities.
- Role-play areas are poorly resourced.

Commentary

54. Children come to school with very low skills. Satisfactory teaching promotes a wide range of enjoyable creative activities in the nursery and reception classes which help develop children's skills. Imaginative play is promoted quite well in both age groups and children enjoy it. However, their limited language skills and inadequate resources restrict their progress, despite the teachers' best effort to make areas as lively as possible. Children do not sing spontaneously and song is not used as well as it could be to promote learning in other areas of the curriculum. There are few instruments available for children to make their own music. Children's achievement is satisfactory and they are likely to leave the foundation stage with skills which are well below national expectations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English improve as pupils move up the school but are below average by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching in English is good overall.
- Pupils at an early stage of learning English are supported effectively and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 reflecting the additional support provided.
- There is insufficient additional support for teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

55. Pupils enter Year 1 with very low attainment in language and literacy skills. Several pupils join the school in later years with little spoken English and this, together with the relatively high number of pupils taking extended holidays during term time, acts as a barrier to learning.

Through good teaching, pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. This reflects a similar picture to that at the last inspection.

56. The school has put in place a number of initiatives which address areas of identified need. These include a 'Big Writing' initiative, a regular reading hour outside the literacy hour and an emphasis on developing pupils' oral skills. The support for pupils at an early stage of English is carefully structured and pupils make rapid progress in learning the language. Staff work hard to compensate for the pupils' limited range of vocabulary and there is a good emphasis on subject-specific vocabulary which is helping to improve speaking skills across the curriculum. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well because of focused intervention and initiatives. Evidence from the inspection suggests that, where extra teaching staff have been used effectively to teach pupils in smaller sets, the additional support is having an effect. However, extra teachers have not been drafted into Years 1 and 2 and pupils in these years make only satisfactory progress. This is significant because the needs of pupils at this stage are relatively greater and if not addressed become more significant as they get older.
57. Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average in speaking and reading. Most pupils have a positive attitude to reading although there is little reading done at home. More able readers are reasonably confident but are frequently flummoxed by new vocabulary. Basic reading strategies are beginning to be established but are insufficiently internalised to ensure fluent reading. Pupils find it difficult to offer opinions on what they read or to predict the likely outcome of the story despite some challenging teaching directed at these skills. The majority of pupils rely heavily on picture clues to make sense of the text. Lower-attaining pupils are not able to apply the strategies that they have been taught, such as sounding out words or breaking words into syllables, without prompting and many are still acquiring a basic sight vocabulary.
58. In Year 2, pupils' writing is also well below average with no evidence of higher level attainment. Higher-attaining pupils write in simple sentences with basic punctuation and reasonably accurate spelling. However, the vocabulary used is limited and relies heavily on the very structured teaching approach. Overall, pupils' writing reflects the characteristics of spoken rather than written language although more able writers communicate meaning and the organisation of their work reflects the purpose of the writing. Presentation is good, letters are clearly shaped and correctly orientated. Lower-attaining pupils do not yet write reliably in sentences and only apply their knowledge of letter sounds with considerable support.
59. The current Year 6 had results in the Year 2 national tests which were well below average. Since then, through good teaching and carefully-targeted support, they have made good progress. The teaching of both reading and writing is highly structured and this approach was beneficial in helping about three-quarters of pupils in 2004 to reach the nationally expected level in English by the end of Year 6. This was close to the Birmingham LEA average and not significantly behind the national average. In particular, by Year 6, most pupils read confidently and expressively with a good understanding of the text. However, there is little evidence of the development of pupils' higher order reading skills. For example, pupils have limited capacity to compare and contrast different authors, to look beyond the literal meaning of text or to suggest how characters and plot might logically develop.
60. In writing there is an appropriate emphasis on the mastery of basic skills. Spelling strategies are taught well, basic sentence structures are reinforced and the majority of pupils have developed a clear, well-formed style of handwriting by Year 6. Standards of presentation are good throughout the school and pupils take a pride in their work. Necessary strategies for organising ideas and structuring extended pieces of writing are constantly reinforced. Teachers strike a good balance between teaching basic grammar and providing opportunities for pupils to write for a variety of different purposes. Pupils' writing is carefully assessed against specific criteria and levelled accurately. However, across the ability range, the variety and depth of vocabulary used are very limited and there is little evidence of higher level writing. Lower-attaining pupils do not write grammatically and struggle to express ideas clearly.
61. The teaching of English is good overall. There is skilful questioning and pupils' answers are modelled and extended. Opportunities for paired discussion and role-play are built into lesson planning and speaking, listening and writing are closely linked. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan carefully with support staff. In most but not all lessons support staff are

used well and help lower-attaining pupils to access the curriculum. The quality of marking is very good across the school. All marking is done to specific criteria and learning objectives which are clear to both teachers and pupils. Opportunities are built in for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. Teachers' comments are detailed and evaluative and help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Continuous assessment is used to allocate pupils to specific sets in Years 3 to 6 and to identify pupils who will benefit from targeted support. Pupils in the early stages of learning English often make good progress and there is constant upward movement of pupils between sets. Management of pupils is consistently good and the good relationships between adults and pupils underpin learning. Lessons take place in a calm and purposeful atmosphere and pupils work well even when not directly supervised. Collaborative learning is encouraged and pupils benefit from the increased opportunities to discuss their work.

62. The co-ordinator of English provides effective leadership and sets a good example by the quality of her own teaching. However, the benefits of this are not distributed equally across the school. There has been appropriate modification of the National Literacy Strategy but new initiatives are largely directed at Years 3 to 6 and there is insufficient targeted support for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 3 to 6 but only satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 where there is relatively little early intervention. There is insufficient precise and early diagnosis of specific learning problems. Although support staff are deployed effectively to help pupils to access the curriculum they lack the expertise to address pupils' specific learning problems. Individual education plans generally contain precise and measurable targets but these are addressed more effectively in Years 3 to 6 when problems have become more marked.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Literacy skills are used well to support other curriculum areas. For example, pupils record their evaluative comments in design and technology using the appropriate technical vocabulary. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of subject-specific vocabulary which promotes pupils' speaking skills and understanding of concepts. However, many pupils continue to have difficulty with more abstract language and this affects their ability to apply their knowledge in a range of different circumstances. The school is slowly beginning to use material from other curriculum areas as a focus for work in the literacy hour.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is low.
- Staff use praise well to motivate and enthuse pupils.
- In Years 3 to 6 pupils' work is marked especially helpfully.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- Pupils' weak language skills restrict their ability to solve problems.
- The use of setting and small groups in Years 3 to 6 is effective in raising standards in those year groups.

Commentary

64. In the 2004 national tests Year 2 pupils' attainment was well below average compared to all schools but slightly better when compared to similar schools. Currently pupils' attainment in Year 2 is well below national expectations. From a very low starting point these pupils have achieved satisfactorily. Many pupils have weak number skills and find the technical language difficult to interpret at times. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but good in some classes. For instance, high quality methods, which helped everyone learn about change from 10 pence, were used in one Year 1 class. However, some lessons lacked challenge,

particularly for higher-attaining pupils, because tasks are mainly set at the average grade [Level 2C]. Teachers find working with the very wide range of attainment in their classes difficult and this year receive little support from senior managers to make groups smaller.

65. In Year 6 pupils' attainment in the 2004 national tests was below average when compared to all schools. It was average against schools with a similar free school meals percentage and when compared with these pupils' scores in their Year 2 tests in 2000. They made a little more than the expected progress from Year 2 to Year 6.
66. Currently pupils' attainment in Year 6 is well below national expectations mainly because too few pupils are working at the highest grade [Level 5] and pupils do not always understand the language of mathematics. However, this represents good achievement from their low levels in the 2001 national tests. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good because pupils benefit from the additional support of senior managers, which enables year groups to be split into three teaching groups. These groups are carefully selected, using test data effectively, so that well-planned teaching can be more accurately channelled. In most classes teachers mark pupils' work very well, providing feedback and offering pointers for improvement.
67. Standards have been rising slowly since the very low levels achieved in 2001 in both age groups but that rise has not always been linear because of cohort differences, for example when there are high percentages of pupils with special educational needs. In Year 2 in the past boys appeared to outperform girls quite markedly in the national tests, though there was little evidence of this in the lessons observed. Small groups and additional support help pupils with special educational needs and those who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language achieve well in Years 3 to 6 whilst in Years 1 and 2 these pupils, like the rest of the class, make satisfactory progress.
68. All teachers have established positive relationships with their classes by using praise well. Pupils generally like lessons, behave well and do their best to complete tasks. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are starting to use self-assessment at the end of each lesson to show teachers how well they understand the work. The setting of individual targets for pupils is not yet used consistently across all classes to help pupils improve.
69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Standards have been rising steadily since the very low levels achieved in 2001 and data is being used better to inform groupings and teaching. There is a shortage of resources to support learning for some tasks. There has been satisfactory improvement since last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Pupils' use of their numeracy skills in other subjects is satisfactory. Good examples include the use of two-digit grid references in Year 4 geography and graphing skills in science. Pupils' weak number skills on occasion limit their progress in other subjects. The school is currently undertaking an audit of the mathematical skills required in other subjects and, once finished, should provide teachers with the information to enable them to prepare pupils thoroughly for using their skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because there is an interesting practical basis to the work.
- Although standards improve as pupils move through the school they are below average by Year 6 and were well below average in the national tests of 2004.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

- Formal assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

71. Pupils enter Year 1 with generally limited understanding of the world and very low standards. Their attainment is also adversely affected because many pupils are learning English as an additional language and they have weak language and communication skills so that they find learning unfamiliar words and giving explanations difficult. This was noted in a good Year 1 lesson on plants in which pupils achieved well during group activities since adults provided very good support. In a further good lesson in Year 2 several pupils recalled food classifications from the previous week and most understood that a healthy diet has a good balance. The teacher's good presentation using an interactive whiteboard and discussion led to good achievement as pupils carried out a food survey, recording their results on a tally. With prompts, all pupils completed a tally sheet and most gave sensible interpretations. Discussion with pupils indicates that many have limited English to explain their work but they enjoy science and are keen to take part in the tasks. Pupils' previous work shows there is a good emphasis on practical work and they are gaining the skills of observation, controlling a simple experiment and recording their results. Standards are well below average by Year 2 which, on balance, represents good achievement through the impact of good teaching.
72. The good emphasis on practical investigation continues in Years 3 - 6 where pupils demonstrate increasing confidence in planning and carrying out an experiment. In Year 3, for example, the teacher motivated pupils well by discussing how to decide on the best fabric to mend a worn pair of trousers. Her good discussion with the pupils helped them understand how to carry out a test in a fair way by doing the same thing to each of four pieces of fabric. Pupils make good gains in their learning and subject knowledge through the teachers' good presentations and their close observations of plants and materials. In Year 4, for example, pupils observed the bright orange pollen in lily flowers and, as a result, understood better how pollination occurs. Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their growing responsibility while planning an experiment and in working as a group. In Year 5, for example, pupils planned to investigate evaporation and were challenged to explain their prediction. The teacher made good interventions as pupils worked hard which had a good impact on their understanding of scientific method. Pupils demonstrate good achievement by Year 6 in their skills to plan and carry out an experiment to find a relationship between the time it takes for a sweetener to dissolve and the temperature of the water. The higher-attaining pupils were mostly accurate in repeating the experiment each time, while other pupils tended to be less consistent. The weak numeracy skills of several pupils in working with their results, for example in finding an average or in scaling a graph, limit their ability to interpret results. Discussion with pupils and their previous work indicate that standards of current work are below average. The difficulties several pupils experience with recorded work, especially those learning English as an additional language, indicate that standards in formal tests without support are likely to be well below average.
73. The quality of teaching in science is good throughout the school. There is a good emphasis on practical investigation which encourages learning about real problems and promotes good achievement. Teachers motivate pupils well through interesting tasks so that most are keen to plan and conduct experiments. The marking of pupils' work is mostly good, providing guidance on how to improve as well as praise. Some teachers confirm what the children have learnt from an activity but this good practice is uneven. Ongoing assessments in class are good since teachers are observant of the pupils and respond to difficulties. The Year 6 tracking sheets provide a good indication of pupils' standards and progress but there is no whole-school assessment system to ensure pupils' progress is tracked through the school. Leadership and management in science are satisfactory at this stage since the co-ordinator is relatively new to the post. He is keen to establish the role and is giving the subject clear direction with a good emphasis on practical investigation. Standards have declined since those reported at the time of the last inspection although the current good provision is having a good impact on achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and is a good role model for staff. She provides good support for teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards the subject, they work hard and support each other well
- Good and sometimes very good teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6. In these lessons pupils achieve well.
- There are some gaps in pupils' learning and they do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT to sort information, present it as graphs or to program and control a sequence of events.
- Some teachers are not taking full advantage of the new technology when planning and delivering their lessons.

Commentary

74. Overall standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This was also the finding at the last inspection.
75. By the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining above average standards in word-processing. They can use the mouse and toolbar to alter the size, colour and style of text and insert pictures into their work. They can use a graphics program to design their own patterns and know how to fill using different colours. They confidently log on to the computer and can save their work and shut down a program. However, they do not have enough opportunity to sort information and present it as graphs or to use ICT to program and control an object. As a result overall standards attained are satisfactory.
76. By Year 6 most pupils confidently log on to and close down the computer, manipulate screen icons using the mouse, select items from an on-screen menu, use the "drag" and "drop" features of a program and save and print their work. They demonstrate good word-processing skills and are confident in their use of the Internet. They create simple multi-media presentations using PowerPoint and generate spreadsheets and simple data bases to present information. They are given good opportunities to discuss, evaluate and improve their work. However, opportunities to develop skills in control are limited through lack of resources for this aspect. This leads to overall satisfactory standards in the subject.
77. Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 generally achieve well due to their own enthusiasm for the subject and the good and sometimes very good teaching in these year groups. Very good achievement was noted in one lesson in Year 6. In this lesson pupils worked together to plan a documentary about their work in religious education. One group recorded their documentary as a video sequence. They planned carefully and took turns to use a digital camcorder to record a sequence which was projected onto a whiteboard linked to the computer and shown to their classmates. All the pupils then had the opportunity to review and evaluate the work and make suggestions for editing and improving it.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. It is good in Years 3 to 6 largely as a result of the good support which is given to these classes by the subject co-ordinator. In these year groups, activities are well planned and there is appropriate emphasis on developing new skills as well as using ICT to consolidate learning in other subjects. Pupils are managed effectively, with the result that they behave well in lessons. Teachers engage the pupils in their work and pupils listen with interest and are confident in answering questions. Pupils have a very good attitude towards the subject. They are keen to develop new skills and are happy to experiment and learn from their mistakes. When working in pairs they help one another, take turns to use the mouse and keyboard and discuss their ideas sensibly. Often pupils with special needs or who are at the early stages of acquiring English are paired with more able pupils. This enables them to achieve equally as well as their classmates.

79. The subject is led and managed well by a very knowledgeable and well-organised subject co-ordinator. A sensible action plan sets clear priorities for developing the subject further. However, the school is not yet using assessment of pupils' work to monitor standards or check the impact of recent investment in new technology on the quality of teaching and learning.

ICT across the curriculum

80. In some lessons teachers make effective use of ICT as a tool for learning in other subjects. A good example of this was seen in a history lesson where pupils were using the Internet to research information about the Roman invasion of Britain. They demonstrated proficiency in logging on to the Internet and using a search engine to find an appropriate website. They could locate information using a menu and follow links to other pages. In some lessons teachers make good use of a computer-linked whiteboard as part of their lessons. However, not all teachers are taking advantage yet of this new technology to engage pupils in their learning. The school has recently developed a good plan for the use of ICT across the curriculum but it has not yet had time to impact on learning in all subjects in all classes.

HUMANITIES

81. Work was sampled in history and geography. Only two lessons were seen in geography and pupils were observed undertaking historical research during ICT lessons. Evidence was also gathered from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work. It was not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.
82. In **history** there is a policy and scheme of work in place. These ensure continuity and progression in learning and enable pupils to develop satisfactory skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. As a result standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. This was also the finding at the last inspection. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated satisfactory factual knowledge of life and events in Britain during World War Two and were aware that information about the past can be found using a variety of sources, for example, by interviewing people who lived at the time. Pupils in Year 4 found out information about life in Roman Britain using the Internet and library books. Pupils in Year 2 recognise that things change over time in their study of toys from the past, and have found out about life in a Victorian seaside town by discussing old photographs. Trips to places of historical interest, for example Aston Hall locally, are helping to broaden pupils' experiences of the past.
83. The quality of teaching in the **geography** lessons observed was very good. In both lessons the teachers set clear expectations of behaviour and the pupils responded well. Good use was made of the teaching assistants to support the lower ability pupils with their work which enabled them to participate fully in the lesson. The teachers' secure knowledge and understanding ensured that tasks were set which challenged all pupils appropriately enabling them to make good progress. Atlases, maps and photographs were used well and helped to deepen pupils' understanding of the contrasts between life in a village in India and life in Aston. Pupils also had the opportunity to compose and ask questions of a member of staff who had lived in the area. The teachers very effectively drew on pupils' own experiences of family holidays in this part of the world to stimulate lively discussion.
84. There is a policy and scheme of work in place for geography which allows for appropriate skill development and covers the requirements of the national curriculum. However, pupils' work is not regularly checked to ensure that what is planned for is actually taught. In discussion with pupils in Years 2 and 6 it is clear that there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding about places, different landscapes and physical features. Pupils in Year 6 could explain the water cycle, but their understanding of river systems was limited. They showed some understanding of the subject but did not have the vocabulary they need to explain carefully in geographical terms. Standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

85. Leadership in history and geography is satisfactory. However, assessment procedures are not yet in place and there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning. As a result the school does not know how high standards are in either subject.
86. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection so no overall judgement can be made about provision in **religious education**. Much of the work undertaken in lessons is discussion and there is very little evidence in pupils' books to assess the quality of teaching and learning or standards in religious education. In discussion with pupils they are positive about their work and display satisfactory understanding of different world religions and religious festivals. In the lessons seen teaching was good overall. The teachers very effectively drew upon pupils' own beliefs and cultures to explore reasons why religious books are treated with respect. Pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to work in groups to produce a documentary about the Islam faith and had the opportunity to present this as a video sequence using a digital camcorder.
87. The school has adopted the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and the co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work in the subject. However, she does not yet undertake any monitoring of pupils' work to ensure that what has been planned for actually takes place. There are no assessment procedures in place yet and as a result teachers do not know how well pupils are achieving in the subject.
88. Resources would appear adequate to teach religious education and the co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that they are of good quality and are appropriate to the age of the pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

89. Work in art and design, design and technology and music was sampled.
90. The school has managed to maintain an adequate focus on creative subjects despite a necessary focus on the core subjects. The school blocks each subject and has built in manageable and useful assessment procedures at the end of each unit. Sketch books provide a means of ongoing assessment in both subjects. The school has adopted a modified form of government guidelines for **art and design** and has created its own scheme for **design and technology**.
91. Teachers are confident in teaching these subjects and the co-ordinators provide support and advice. However, there is limited monitoring of provision. Good use is made of city resources such as Birmingham City Art Gallery and a City Art Trail. There is a regular art focus week but no art club to extend provision. There are attractive displays of pupils' work around the school.
92. In **music** the available evidence indicates that higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not have much understanding of musical terms. Also some are unsure what a composer does and few can name any classical composers. Many have very little recall of composing or of listening to different styles of music. Two reasons for this are that Year 6 appear to have blocked time after their national tests for music and that there is currently no subject manager to monitor teaching and learning.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good so that pupils achieve well.
- Pupils often have very good attitudes and work hard with partners.
- The subject leader gives good support and direction.
- There is a good range of activities beyond lessons.

Commentary

93. Pupils achieve well because teachers are enthusiastic and committed to improving pupils' skills. Standards are broadly average by Year 2, although several pupils lack confidence and are not fluent in their movements. In dance, for example, pupils relied heavily upon the teachers' good lead to respond to music representing strolling on a beach and the action of waves. A few higher-attaining pupils have good fluency, moving well to the mood and timbre of the music. The pupils benefit considerably from the expertise of visiting specialist instructors, and in Year 2 they are introduced to indoor hockey skills. Good opportunities for practice followed by effective evaluation of their control led to several pupils controlling the hockey ball very well and holding the stick correctly.
94. By Year 6 standards are average overall, although several pupils demonstrate good skill in a wide range of activities. In a very good lesson in Year 5, for example, the pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations by working out a sequence of moves together, such as rolls, balances and jumps. Their evaluations of each other's performance promoted good achievement. In Year 6 a further specialist attached to the Sports College initiative provided very good experience, expertise and challenge in gymnastics for the pupils. His very high expectations, with clear, sharp comment, motivated pupils and helped them understand how to improve. Most pupils tried to hold a good variety of new, challenging balance positions, demonstrating very good attitudes towards the tasks. They co-operated very well with partners, often creating combined positions with good skill and shape.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils respond well with good attitudes. All pupils happily make partners with friends regardless of ethnic background. Teachers prepare interesting and challenging tasks. There is a good structure to lessons with a warm-up stage and good choice of tasks to build body stamina and skills, and opportunities for all pupils to be included and improve regardless of initial level of skill. Teachers, and particularly the visiting instructors, have good subject knowledge which has a beneficial impact on learning since they give clear instructions on how to improve. Positive relationships and good behaviour management also ensure that pupils are active and lessons have a good pace. There is no formal whole-school assessment system, but there are many awards which require evaluations of pupils' performance. Ongoing assessment of pupils in lessons is good.
96. The subject leader has a strong background knowledge and provides good direction. She is attached to the School Sports Co-ordinator programme, which is benefiting pupils through the good range and quality of experiences. She has worked hard to help prepare a bid for funding to improve playground facilities, which has been successful. She has had good opportunities to monitor lessons in physical education through the school which has improved teachers' confidence. The curriculum is good, and there is a wide range of sports activities through the years, including cricket, hockey and swimming.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

97. Work in personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE&C) was sampled.
98. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal, social and health education and the indications are that provision is good although too few lessons were observed to make a formal judgement. The co-ordinator has arranged, for example, for the Health Education Unit caravan to spend time at the school so that pupils' learning is enhanced. In Years 1 - 6 all teachers provide opportunities for class discussion so that issues are aired and resolved. The curriculum is in place since the school has adopted national guidance to provide progression and full coverage of topics, although some class timetables do not show where this is arranged. The teaching assistants in Year 2 delivered useful sessions to help raise pupils' self-esteem since this is recognised as an area of difficulty for several pupils, including some with EAL. Several visitors are invited to talk to children about aspects of PSHE&C, such as a nurse and a police officer, which makes a good contribution. The co-ordinator has recently taken on the responsibility and has put together a scheme of work so that pupils' understanding may be developed systematically as they move through the school. She has taken the initiative to

prepare a bid for the school to be recognised as meeting the Healthy Schools standard. She has not yet had opportunity to monitor provision formally.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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