

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LAURENCE CHURCH INFANT SCHOOL

Northfield, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103459

Headteacher: Mrs P. Short

Reporting inspector: Mrs G. Crew
22837

Dates of inspection: 17th – 18th June 2002

Inspection number: 230574

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bunbury Road Northfield Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R. Nicholls
Date of previous inspection:	1 st December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Laurence Church Infants provides schooling for 268 boys and girls aged four to seven years old. This is about the same size as other primary schools, but large for an infant school, even though the numbers are slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection. When children start school they have had a wide range of pre-school experiences and, although their individual attainment varies, standards are generally at the expected level for their age. Although this is similar to that reported in 1997, the school has recognised a decline in the levels of personal development and speaking and listening. The school serves a community wider than the immediate area and children live in a range of owner occupied and local authority housing. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals, 10 per cent, are below the national average. The ethnic background of the children is mainly white and the number of pupils with English as an additional language, 10, is broadly in line with national figures. Fifty-nine pupils are on the register of special educational need, this is higher than at the time of the last inspection, and one of them has a statement to outline their specific provision. This is broadly in line with national averages. Other pupils have been identified as being higher attaining and their needs are currently being met through individual or group programmes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with excellent features. Standards that pupils attain at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and very good in most other subjects. Achievement, from the levels they are working at when they start school, is very good. The personal development of pupils is excellent and the key to their achievement. This permeates all the school does and underlies the school's thoughtful Christian ethos. All pupils are cherished and valued for their individual achievements and contribution. Teaching and all support staff are very hard working and use their skills to best effect. The curriculum is very relevant and adapted to the needs of all pupils. The contribution of the headteacher in leading the school forward is excellent. The deputy supports this strongly, in particular through developing the curriculum and assessment. The drive with which they lead the rest of the team is purposeful and focused on supporting each pupil so that they achieve the best they can. Management is very good overall. This is upheld by the work of all members of the governing body and parents in creating a happy, caring community. Accommodation and resources are used very efficiently to provide a rich learning environment. The school does not stand still; it is constantly seeking to improve standards further. The strengths of the school all interlink together to produce a very effective learning environment. Good value for money is provided.

What the school does well

- Leadership is excellent and provides the vision for the way forward in school developments.
- Pupils make very good progress. By the time they are seven, standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils produce very good work in other subjects.
- Pupils' social and moral development is excellent. This reflects the aims and values of the school.
- The provision for personal development, and pupils' response to this, is excellent. Very good relationships support this.
- The quality of teaching is very good and results in highly effective learning.
- Monitoring of pupils' achievements and their personal development is excellent. The school uses the information very effectively to make sure that pupils make the best progress they can.

What could be improved

- The inspection team found no areas where significant improvement was needed.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was inspected in 1997 improvement has been very good. The school has most effectively implemented national and local initiatives required of it. Standards have improved. Issues raised in the inspection report have been tackled very successfully. The school has developed portfolios of assessed work to affirm standards, and target setting that is linked to these. Short term planning includes objectives for pupils' learning that are specific and can be assessed. Due to the improved assessment the school is in a better position to identify the needs of the highest attaining pupils and support their needs. These areas are now strengths. In addition, areas that were identified as strengths have been further improved. For example, the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' personal development, including their attitudes and relationships, and the progress pupils make. The school's ability to reflect, identify and deal with difficulties is a very good feature of its success. As a result, all areas of the school's work have been enhanced.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	B	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	A

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

At the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are generally above average in all the required areas of learning. A significant number of pupils do very well in personal and social development and speaking and listening due to the high emphasis placed on developing these aspects. At the end of Year 2, attainment is well above the national and similar schools average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, the number of pupils attaining the level expected of seven year olds is above the national average. The number of children who attain the level expected of nine year olds, two years older than they are, is well above the national average in writing and mathematics. In reading and science performance is very high when compared nationally. This is attributed to the programmes that have been put in place to develop all areas of the English curriculum, including those to specifically improve speaking and listening, and the exceptional partnership the school has with local industry in order to develop pupils' scientific learning through first hand experiences.

The school sets realistic targets for what the pupils can achieve by the time they leave the school. These are sufficiently challenging, as they are based on a careful analysis of the varying prior attainment of each year group. Over the last three years, the pupils' performance has exceeded the national average for their age group in reading, writing, mathematics and science. There has been no significant difference in the attainment of pupils of differing gender or ethnic groups. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are in advance of those which might normally be expected of them,

especially in speaking and listening. Those pupils who are gifted or talented make very good progress; they are encouraged to develop thinking and reasoning skills beyond those expected for their age. Each pupil is considered individually; they all achieve very well. All pupils make very good progress from their starting point and achieve as well as they can. Inspection findings confirm that standards are high in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is borne out by the results of the 2002 national tests and assessments, although national comparative data is not yet available. In addition, very good standards of work were seen during the inspection in all areas of the children's learning in the Foundation Stage (children of four and five years), and in information and communication technology, art and design, history and music throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good - pupils are very eager to learn and keen to succeed. They are and are greatly interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good - as a result of the excellent procedures and consistent management behaviour is very good. Pupils show respect for each other, for adults and the school. They are friendly, kind and understanding.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent - the promotion of this area is fundamental to all the school does.
Attendance	Good – pupils really enjoy coming to school.

Pupils have a confident approach to their work, which has a positive impact upon the standards that are achieved. They work well independently and are also very good at working together. Pupils are attentive, thoughtful, hard working and comfortable to 'have a go'.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The overall quality of teaching is very good and all teaching observed was good or better. Two lessons were excellent. The sensitivity and care that is taken to motivate pupils is exceptional. Excellent aspects of teaching were seen in a number of lessons when pupils' contributions were carefully considered and used to improve pupils' learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective. Lessons are carefully planned and very well prepared. In mathematics, the oldest pupils are grouped by ability, for part of the term, to enable a focus on teaching specific skills and knowledge. This helps to improve performance further in number. In all lessons, teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. Care is taken to provide appropriate challenges according to pupils' particular stages of development. Suitable demands are placed on the pupils and they are always encouraged to 'have a go' and learn through their mistakes. This results in very effective learning for all pupils, including those who are gifted or talented or have

special educational needs. Teachers are very adept at providing opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. The proportion of high quality teaching is greater than at the time of the last inspection. This reflects the emphasis the school has placed on discussing how pupils learn best and how they can make their teaching more effective.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A very rich curriculum is provided, which includes a strong emphasis on pupils' creativity and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language	Very good-pupils requiring support are identified early. Tasks are tailored to pupils' particular learning needs and individual support is given when it is appropriate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good – pupils are sensitively encouraged to reflect on issues that affect their lives and the lives of others. Social and moral development is excellent. A strong feature is developing each child individually through raising confidence and self-esteem. There is scope to develop multi-cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good - all adults show great care and procedures related to this are very good. Pupils' academic and personal progress is monitored exceptionally well. Targets are set and programmes of learning are adapted appropriately.

The school develops the curriculum through a range of exciting first hand experiences that are especially relevant to pupils' needs. This provides a firm foundation for the next stage of their education. Pupils flourish within the very thoughtful and caring learning environment provided by the school. The school works in very close partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has excellent support from the deputy headteacher. They have a firm belief in the potential of all pupils to succeed. Management is very good and staff with responsibilities work very well together as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work together effectively to support the school and act as a critical friend. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very clearly and accurately. Precise performance data is recorded and analysed very well to identify areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Resources, human and physical, are used very carefully and always with a view about how their use will influence learning opportunities.

The school has developed an ethos that is rooted in a commitment that all pupils will do their personal best. Finances are used very efficiently and the principles of best value are used very well to ensure cost effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of staff are approachable. • Their children like coming to school and they are encouraged to be mature and responsible. • The teaching is good and expectations of the pupils are high. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework that is given. • Information about how their children are getting on and how closely the school works with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments. Inspection findings show that the school works very closely with parents and they are given very good information about pupils' progress. Pupils are provided with the right amount of homework. This increases progressively as pupils move through the school. The range of activities outside of lessons is very good. Other than 'the after-school club', that a significant number of pupils attend, there are no extra curricular activities at lunchtime or after school. Inspectors do not judge this to be inappropriate in the context of this school where a very wide range of first hand experiences, including visits and visitors, are otherwise provided for the children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

Leadership is excellent and provides the vision for the way forward in school developments.

1. Leadership is efficient and effective and has improved since the last inspection. The role of the headteacher in this is exemplary and her management skills are very good. She ensures clear educational direction for the work and development of the school and for the promotion of high standards. The headteacher leads by example. She has excellent support from the deputy headteacher, who has a clear sense of purpose based on raising standards. As a result, leaders share common goals; they put pupils and their achievements first and have managed change to improve the school very effectively.

2. The headteacher, working with the governors, has created and secured a clearly stated vision for the school. This is firmly reflected in the mission statement and aims, which are brought to life in the daily running of the school. Other school managers uphold this. This ensures a very good ethos securely based on Christian values and teachings.

3. The headteacher is adept at thinking strategically. She has very good support from the deputy and senior management team to formulate improvement plans that reflect this. Long-term plans reflect the school's aims and objectives and are securely linked to very good financial planning. In order to put plans into action, best use is made of the skills of staff and governors. Roles and responsibilities are delegated according to needs. As a result, high standards are promoted. For example, teaching assistants are given responsibility for supporting different aspects of pupils' development depending on their individual training and expertise. The headteacher and deputy are strongly influential in introducing a culture of self-evaluation into the school. In partnership with the management team, they ensure that staff and governors are reflective and analytical when discussing whether they have achieved all they expected to and the overall effectiveness of the school. The headteacher balances this with recognition of what the school is doing well, and compliments those involved, so that the ethos of the school is positive and forward looking.

4. The headteacher inspires, motivates and influences staff and pupils, thus giving a firm steer to the school's work. The impact of this is evident in the response of the staff, parents and pupils and in their involvement in all the school sets out to achieve. Her deputy strongly supports this and the way in which she works complements the style of the headteacher very well. The senior management team shares the philosophy that everyone is good at something. The governing body echoes this. A team of high performing staff has been developed and they work very effectively. All staff and governors are committed to continuous improvement and this is consistent with the philosophy of the headteacher. They support the headteacher and deputy in the determination to raise standards and know what needs to be done to improve, as this is shared on a regular basis. A very good example of this is the way in which the school continues to improve the quality of pupils' writing even though standards are high.

5. The governing body supports and shares in shaping the direction of the school with the headteacher, deputy and senior management team. Duties required of them are carried out well. They act as a critical friend and hold the headteacher to account for standards achieved and quality of education accomplished. The thorough way in which governors carry out their duties gives them a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is due to their involvement in monitoring and through successful communication with the headteacher. The governors have a good mix of personal skills and experience as governors that help them to competently support the headteacher in school developments. They show their commitment in a wide variety of ways. These range from regular

involvement in daily and weekly activities to offering advice on such matters as health and safety. Through formal and informal links, governors find out for themselves what is going on in the school. In partnership with the school staff, the governing body has responded well to the previous inspection, national and local initiatives and school-based priorities.

6. Subject co-ordinators, and those staff with additional responsibilities, are given time to carry out their roles according to school priorities. Their responsibilities are clearly defined. This helps them to know what needs to be done to improve the quality of provision, or standards in individual subjects, and to ensure that the outcomes are linked to the needs of the school. Very effective discussion between staff increases the impact on further improving practice and standards. All members of staff have a very good knowledge of their roles in the day-to-day running of the school and in longer-term developments.

7. Accommodation is very good overall. Although one Reception class teaching area is significantly smaller than the others, the adults overcome the difficulties this presents in a variety of ways and it does not affect the attainment and progress children make nor the equality of access to provision at present. However, as priorities for developing the outdoor classroom are targeted the opportunities for children to have equal access to the curriculum will be difficult to provide within the constraint of present accommodation. This will have a detrimental affect on attainment in this area of learning as the children will not have the opportunity to develop all the skills necessary for promotion of high standards. The management of resources is very good overall, with examples of excellent use of deployment of staff. The quality and range of resources have improved since the last inspection and actively contribute to pupils' learning. The displays of pupils' work in the school, and especially in the corridor areas, contribute very well to the quality of the learning environment; they cover all areas of the curriculum and celebrate all children's achievements.

Pupils make very good progress. By the time they are seven, standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils produce very good work in other subjects.

8. Good foundations for learning are laid in the classes for the four and five year olds, the Foundation Stage. All children make good progress because:

- activities are based on first hand experiences whenever possible;
- activities are very carefully planned to ensure that children develop their skills, knowledge and understanding by building on what they knew before;
- children consolidate their learning in a very wide range of different ways so that they remain motivated;
- there is a very high level of interaction between adults and children.

9. The school sets realistic targets for pupils' attainment and high standards have been maintained. The more recent test results, 2002, are consistent with previous scores and the findings of the inspection, that at the age of seven:

- attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the expected level for pupils of this age;
- a significant number of pupils attain the levels expected of nine year olds;
- boys and girls and pupils from ethnic backgrounds reach equally high standards.

10. Pupils' achievements are very good from the time they start school to the time they leave at the age of seven, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening, as skills in these areas are generally lower when pupils start school. Achievement is due to:

- the high emphasis placed on developing each pupils' personal, social and emotional needs;
- planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening across the curriculum;
- a very good range of activities that allow the pupils to work at their own level, but which also allow for challenge;
- planned programmes for the development of reading, writing and number;
- the attention given to adapting activities for pupils with special educational needs;
- the consistency of very good teaching and the imaginative and effective way in which subjects are taught;
- the setting of realistic targets for what the pupils can achieve that are sufficiently challenging and based on a careful analysis of the varying prior attainment of each individual.

11. Literacy skills are very well developed. Key features that have contributed to raising standards in this area are:

- individual reading programmes, for example reading recovery;
- specific teaching of spelling skills;
- programmes to develop extended writing;
- the development of teaching strategies to promote speaking and listening across the curriculum.

12. Pupils quickly become familiar with the early skills for speaking and listening, reading and writing through a very exciting range of activities. By the time they are seven, pupils do very well in all aspects of literacy. For example they:

- use their knowledge of suffixes to make adjectives into adverbs, such as 'the man shouted loudly' or 'the man shouted meanly';
- extend their use of words and improve sentence construction;
- are confident to 'have a go' with spelling unfamiliar words;
- use their reading skills to tackle new text. For example, reading unfamiliar ingredients in a recipe for 'Greek village salad'.

13. Speaking and listening skills are very well developed, as exemplified by:

- the particularly articulate way in which pupils express their thoughts about the work they have been doing or the projects they have been involved in. For example, they talk about and listen to views about the possibility of improving the equipment used in the playground;
- pupil's very good understanding of how to use different types of speech for different situations. This is due to the focus on providing a wide range of varied opportunities throughout the curriculum. These give the pupils chance to practise and improve their skills in a range of interesting and varied activities. For example, role-play and opportunities for improvisation.

14. Reading skills are developed very well. Pupils read:
- a wide range of material, both fiction and non-fiction;
 - traditional tales, myths and legends and use these to influence their own story writing;
 - classic children's literature, including poetry.
15. Pupils are skilled at writing for different purposes. For example they write:
- descriptive passages;
 - complex instructions;
 - thoughtfully, and understand how to choose words carefully in order to create an accurate picture or an effect that has a strong impact on the reader;
 - using imagery to present their ideas in a more exciting way to enrich their writing;
 - well structured stories understanding the factors that bring each part of the story together. For example a pupil wrote, 'When Nick looked up he saw thousands of snow and suddenly a griffin came out of the mist. Rachel and Nick asked the griffin "where are we?"
16. Mathematical skills are also very well developed throughout the school. Key features that have contributed to raising standards in numeracy are:
- planned opportunities to develop mental recall. For example, in Reception classes pupils count to 100 in 10's and use number rhymes to help to reinforce their understanding of counting in order;
 - group activities that allow pupils to build on what they already know;
 - setting in Year 2 to ensure that pupils of all abilities are being challenged as far as they can;
 - teaching subject specific language early.
17. Pupils build on their mathematical skills throughout the key stage. For example by the time they are seven they:
- show a good understanding of place value and link this to their knowledge of addition and subtraction.;
 - have a very good mental recall;
 - work on multiplication tables and associated division facts;
 - use their knowledge of 2D and 3D shapes to categorise shape, for example, by the number of given faces or edges;
 - find the perimeters of shape;
 - understand how to calculate area;
 - tackle algebraic problems by using deduction.
18. In all classes, pupils:
- use a range of strategies when solving problems mentally or when using written calculations;
 - explain why they have chosen to use particular methods;
 - are confident to 'have a go' and respond to tasks quickly;
 - check their work through carefully and use alternative methods to correct their mistakes;

- present their work very well. This helps pupils to understand the principles of arithmetical calculations and recognise where they have made mistakes in their reckoning;
- use their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science;
- use mathematical programs on the computer to support their learning.

19. All aspects of the science curriculum are very well developed throughout the school. As a result, pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding are equally well developed by the time they leave Year 2. They are confident to;

- put forward their own ideas about how to find the answer to questions and understand the importance of collecting data to prove an answer;
- use their knowledge and understanding of materials to describe a variety of ways of sorting and explain why some materials are more suitable for specific purposes than others;
- carry out experiments and predict, using their previous knowledge. For example, pupils understand what happens to water when it falls on different surfaces and predict what will happen relating this to their knowledge about absorption;
- describe the properties of solids, liquids and gases;
- talk about dissolving solids to give solutions;
- say that some materials are better conductors or insulators than others;
- record their findings in a variety of different formats depending on the type of data collated;
- use information technology to communicate their findings in appropriate ways.

20. Throughout the school, pupils follow a specific programme planned to gain knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties and physical processes. Pupils' understanding is particularly well developed due to the exceptional link with a local car plant, which allows the pupils to develop scientific learning through first hand experiences. This is enhanced when the pupils visit the factory and are involved in manufacturing in the true sense while they work on making a car. They put the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom to practical use and see the purpose and relevance for learning skills. As a result, their achievements are enhanced to a level that helps them to attain high standards at the end of the key stage.

21. Pupils are attaining very well in aspects of information and communication technology. Work seen during the inspection linked effectively with other subjects. Pupils in all year groups:

- use function keys adeptly for example to find the print menu and print their work;
- show good confidence in re-ordering text. They highlight, cut and paste, re-edit, order and categorise;
- use publishing programs confidently to produce such work as cards for Mothering Sunday to a very good standard;
- work confidently using programs on various web sites;
- know that information and communication technology is a tool for supporting learning across the curriculum;
- learn specific skills as they use the wide range of technology that is available, for example cameras, tape recorders and computers.

22. Very good work is produced in art and design. For example pupils:

- create good paintings in primary colours and mixed media;
- show a good level of understanding of background and composition;
- know about art movements of different periods and use their knowledge to work in that style. For example, when studying Lowry pupils learn to consider the arrangement of people in their compositions as well as background colours and shapes so they make it appear as if a person is moving;
- use knowledge gained in other areas of the curriculum to generate ideas, such as the famous shipwrecks Titanic and Mary Rose, to stimulate their ideas for underwater pictures.
- embellish their work. For example, they weave to create a background and cut 'underwater shapes' from fabric to apply for enhancement;
- make effective links with other subjects, such as religious education when they make a very good 2 and 3 D multi-media collage of 'God's Creation';
- are inspired by visits and visitors who introduce them to the art of different cultures.

23. Pupils' achievements in history are very good because:

- the programmes of work are carefully planned in a progressive way;
- topics are taught through a 'first-hand' approach, which helps the pupils to experience and understand. For example, pupils in Year 1 compare everyday objects they use and those seen at a museum;
- understanding of similarities and differences are developed to good levels early;
- pupils learn to sequence items in chronological order;
- very good use is made of pupils' literacy and information and communication technology skills to support learning in humanities.

24. Pupils achieve very well in music. They:

- know the names of a wide range of un-tuned percussion and describe the sounds they make;
- have the opportunity to play from a range of instruments;
- listen and respond to a wide range of music in assemblies and lessons;
- learn about music from other cultures and the influence they have. For example, Japan and Ireland;
- recreate rhythm. For example, by using 'rhythm strips';
- understand the effect of different speeds and different instruments, such as simulating a rainy day with a 'dripping pipe';
- give good demonstrations on how to vary tempo and can organise sound and silence within their compositions;
- have good levels of confidence in performing and evaluate their own performances by listening to recordings.

25. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements are enhanced by the effective ways in which literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and citizenship (through the provision for personal development and science) are integrated into pupils' work. This contributes to very good standards overall. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to use the skills they have learnt across the curriculum. For example, pupils use their literacy skills in writing associated with other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography, history and science. A very good example was seen when pupils in Year 1 wrote pieces associated with the Victorians following a visit to the Black Country Museum. Pupils used their knowledge of this period of history and citizenship, to make comparisons between

then and now, and their knowledge of different styles of presenting work to do this in a range of different ways. Very effective use was made of computers to 'publish' their work. This helps to encourage very good presentation and range of styles.

Pupils' social and moral development is excellent. This reflects the aims and values of the school.

26. The provision for moral and social development is excellent and has improved from that reported in the previous inspection. It is reflected in all aspects of school life and underpins all the school sets out to achieve. This makes an exceptional contribution not only to high standards, but also to the levels of pupils' personal development overall.

27. From the Reception classes onward pupils' moral and social development is fostered by their involvement in the daily routines of the school and everyone in the school community helps each other. Pupils notice what needs to be done in their classrooms, or around the school, and do it. Even the youngest put resources away carefully at 'tidy up time' and often do this without being reminded. Pupils are very aware of the importance of being careful with resources. Pupils plan and organise their work and their confidence and independence grow as they move through the school. They have many opportunities to work alone, in pairs and in small or large groups to develop their social skills and therefore they get to know each other very well. Many of the activities that have been introduced to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills contribute to this for example, telling news in pairs or collaborative work in literacy and numeracy lessons.

28. Pupils' moral, and social development is enhanced through the wide range of learning opportunities across the curriculum. These provide pupils with knowledge and insights into values and beliefs that help them to reflect on their experiences, and those of others, in a way that develops citizenship to exemplary levels for pupils of this age. This occurs during lessons such as science and history, and through the study of music, art and literature. Time is set aside for pupils to discuss moral and social issues that affect themselves, the wider community or, as pupils move through the school, local and national issues. Pupils learn the importance of social and moral issues and that all people have 'rights' that should be respected by all. This is exemplified by the depth of understanding the pupils have of different viewpoints. For example, pupils consider their own needs and those of their friends when thinking about ways in which to improve the environment, as playground leaders or as members of the playground council.

29. Through important times in the school week, including assemblies, pupils develop self-knowledge, an understanding of what is right and wrong and an understanding of the principles that govern society to a level that exceeds that expected for their age. This is enhanced further through the link with a large local car factory. Pupils learn the importance of industry within the community and how different people have equally important roles to play in the local economy. In addition, through their participation in the 'playground project', where they have been instrumental in improving the quality of provision and play at break times, they learn what it means to work and play alongside each other with companionship within a community. These aspects of pupils' development are excellent.

30. The school's consistent approach to discipline, ensures that children know how they should behave. Nearly all the children listen very carefully to adults' instructions. Most children show self-control and consideration of others. For instance, when lower attaining children were using the computer two waited very patiently for another child, who was unable to control his enthusiasm, to give them a turn. Children learn to distinguish between right and wrong because adults explain to them the effect of their actions on others. Even

when the children's behaviour does not meet the school's high expectations, adults handle the situation in a quiet and positive manner that reflects the school's aims.

31. Excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour, established through the promotion of improving behaviour in the playground, have had a significant impact on pupils' social skills. Children have become sensitive to the needs of others when playing outside. An example of this was seen when one child took a much younger child who was unhappy in the playground said, "Come into the gazebo with me and I'll read to you". They were later seen in deep concentration over a book with the younger child gently resting their head on the shoulder of the older one. This depth of understanding has had a very positive impact on the quality of social skills and behaviour in the classroom.

32. The improvements in playground provision have also enhanced pupils' sense of justice and fair play, which is very good. They understand that mishaps in the playground usually occur accidentally rather than intentionally. Very good teamwork is evident as pupils work together in their responsibilities, for example helping the younger children choose an activity and in organising the equipment for each other. This has an impact in the classrooms where pupils help and support each other in lessons. A good example was seen in Year 1. Pupils worked on the computers as part of their history work and they were quick to give each other advice so they could all achieve success in the task.

The provision for personal development, and pupils' response to this, is excellent. Very good relationships support this.

33. The school's provision for its pupils' personal development is excellent and has improved since the last inspection. As a result, everybody who contributes to the school knows exactly what it means to be part of the community where achievements are valued and respected. Pupils know they are important and that they are expected to give of their best. They know that their contribution to the school, whether it is academic or creative, will be welcomed and appreciated.

34. The personal development of each pupil is given an especially high priority and this begins before the children even start school through links that are established with parents and carers. The headteacher and the staff have a personal interest in every pupil and they communicate very well with families. They quickly learn about pupils' interests and try to extend their skills or talents.

35. Throughout the school, pupils are thoughtful and reflective and personal development flourishes in the secure learning environment that the school creates. Central to personal development is the school's recognition that positive self-esteem and confidence are crucial to being a valuable member of a society and an effective learner. The school has a structured programme in place for developing this, which is regularly taught through planned sessions, for example, circle times (when pupils come together to discuss or share feelings on a given topic) and news times.

36. Pupils' levels of personal development help them to have remarkable confidence and they discuss their work and social issues in a mature manner. Pupils' experiences as playground leaders and school councillors contribute to this in an exemplary way. This feature of the school's provision is excellent. Pupils' understanding of citizenship is developed from the time they start in the school and they have a deep respect for the environment for which they have responsibility. For example, they take an active role in monitoring the playground, such as checking on each other and deciding ways in which play

can be improved. All pupils thoroughly enjoy the role they have and take on responsibilities with the greatest of care and respect.

37. Very positive attitudes reflect pupils' high levels of self-worth. These have improved since the quality of provision in the playground has been enhanced and pupils play together more effectively. Members of staff enjoy teaching and plan experiences that make learning challenging and exciting. As a result of this, and the improved attitudes following pleasant break-times, pupils respond very enthusiastically, enjoy their work and tackle activities with determination. Pupils concentrate hard and seek to do their best in all aspects of their work. They are conscientious and diligent, whilst maintaining a balanced good-humoured approach to all they do.

38. Pupils' very good attitudes to learning are further enhanced by a understanding of the aims of individual lessons, their mature knowledge of their own learning and a very good insight into their own strengths and areas for improvement. Pupils understand the significance of paying attention in lessons, which contributes to their strong motivation. This is supported by the pupils' knowledge of their own learning targets and the use of very effective marking that informs pupils what they need to do to improve.

39. Pupils say how important it is for good 'things' to be shared and celebrated. They say that they are encouraged to do their best throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the 'awards' they receive. Assemblies provide an opportunity to acknowledge pupils' achievements publicly and they have a significant impact on pupils' confidence and feelings of self-esteem. Pupils are rewarded for a range of accomplishments, and also how much they appreciate being told of their success. The way in which pupils respond to the achievements of their peers, for example, their spontaneous clapping, shows how aware they are of others' feelings and how mature they become during their time at the school.

40. Relationships within the school are very good. This is of crucial importance in forming pupils' attitudes to their work and play. The adults who work and help in the school provide powerful examples for pupils. They model values that reflect the aims of the school, for example courtesy and respect, and their response to other adults and the pupils is very good. The relationship between adults is exemplified in the way in which they work together collaboratively as a team and this gives very good encouragement to pupils to do likewise. Adults encourage pupils to work together and use their initiative, but also provide opportunities for pupils to learn to compete fairly. All members of staff know the pupils very well and offer sensitive advice and support. They also encourage pupils to understand the feelings and beliefs of others and the differences between people in a constructive way that contributes to pupils' personal development.

The quality of teaching is very good and results in highly effective learning.

41. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is a strength. This results in high levels of pupil performance throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved on that reported in the last inspection. Teachers create a purposeful working atmosphere in classrooms. This reflects their high expectations of academic performance and standards of behaviour. Teachers' planning is very thorough. This ensures progression in what is taught and helps to maintain the high standards achieved. Lessons are carefully sequenced to ensure full coverage of a topic or a programme of study. Plans include precise detail about what it is teachers want pupils to learn. This is always communicated to the pupils so that they know what they are going to learn and what they are expected to achieve. Individual lessons are planned in such a way as to seize pupils' interest.

42. Aspects of teaching that underpin the school's philosophy and pupils' effective learning are the care that is given to presenting work at a level that challenges and the belief in the ability of all pupils to succeed. These features can be seen in all lessons and results in a consistency of approach. Adults give regular praise or constructive help to encourage pupils to give of their best. This contributes to the ethos that is rooted in a commitment to achieving high standards. Grouping of pupils is considered very carefully in all lessons. As a result, pupils are working at or near to their capacity and learning is very good. For example, in literacy and numeracy sessions for pupils in the Reception classes the same focus is planned for all pupils. However, the activities for each group are adapted according to ability and their prior knowledge. Groups work independently, concentrate well and complete tasks successfully. Pupils who need to consolidate their learning do so, while others are challenged to use more recently learnt skills.

43. Teaching makes demands on pupils. For example, during lessons teachers constantly challenge pupils by asking relevant and probing question, such as, "What do you notice about...." or "How do you know how to.....?" Very good expectations and challenge require pupils to put effort into their work. As a result, they work at a very good pace, even when they are not explicitly told to do so. For example, in a Year 2 music lesson pupils worked well in groups deciding on what type of weather they would represent in their composition. Pupils concentrated hard, made careful decisions and were responsive to each other's ideas. This contributed to very good learning.

44. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective. The curriculum for both subjects is taught with a very good depth of understanding of the key skills that pupils are required to know and understand. Explanations are extremely well structured. Teachers analyse pupils' particular needs and, as in other lessons, they are grouped by ability to promote higher standards. Teachers provide brisk, focused activities that promote most effective learning. The organisation of lessons allows teachers to work with all pupils at some time, including the highest attaining, so that they are challenged as their individual needs demand. Practical activities and investigations are used to allow pupils to apply and extend their learning in a range of ways. For example, lower attaining children in Reception have extra resources for counting and all the pupils have visual aids to help them practise in mathematics lessons. During all elements of literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers use questioning very well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and to challenge thinking. This is particularly evident in the final part of lessons when pupils review whether they have achieved what they should have. This contributes very well to pupils' understanding of their own learning.

45. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good extra help in class lessons and there is excellent teaching in small group and individual work. The warmth of relationships ensures that pupils make very good progress. Teaching assistants carry out their individual roles most effectively and give very good support. For example, children in the Reception classes who have yet to develop confidence in speaking in front of the class are gently encouraged to do so. Assistants are extremely well versed in the purpose of lessons or group activities. They use their initiative exceptionally well and spend their time profitably to support learning. There is very good support for extending the learning of the highest attaining pupils from both teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' thinking skills and imagination are stretched. Due to this, pupils learn to consider different ways of thinking for different situations or tasks.

46. The assessment of pupils' learning and the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of a lesson are used very effectively to influence future planning and the setting of targets for learning. Especially high expectations of neat and orderly presentation of work are maintained throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities are encouraged to produce

meticulous, careful work and they almost always do so. Pupils' books are marked with very helpful and encouraging comments from the teachers. In work seen, it was evident that the high quality of teachers' marking is consistent and makes a strong contribution to effective learning. Work is marked in such a way as to ensure that pupils know exactly what it is they need to do next to improve. Careful records are kept of all pupils' achievements. Teachers and teaching assistants use these to reflect on the varying learning styles displayed by different pupils. Several children display, for example, unconventional learning patterns. These are taken into account as teachers prepare and teach their lessons and as assistants work with groups or individual pupils.

47. Teachers and their assistants are enthusiastic and reflect seriously on the quality of their performance and how they might improve pupils' learning opportunities. For example, they have evaluated how the improvements in playground provision have improved pupils' attention in lessons, their social skills and their physical development. This genuine interest in the way pupils learn, and in the performance of all pupils, promotes a mutual trust, understanding and respect. All staff are allocated time to observe their colleagues teaching, which contributes to the sharing of good practice. This results in teachers and teaching assistants feeling comfortable to use their initiative and bring new ideas to their work. The philosophies promoted by the headteacher are reflected in teaching, largely because staff support this enthusiastically. For example, lessons have a very good sense of purpose and there is genuinely high expectation that all pupils should achieve their best.

Monitoring of pupils' achievements and their personal development is excellent. They use the information very effectively to make sure that pupils make the best progress they can.

48. The school has made very good development in the systems for and use of assessment to track pupils' progress since the previous inspection. Procedures for monitoring academic and personal development are now excellent and contribute to the high standards and overall effectiveness of the school, which is very good. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievement leads to the school identifying and drawing on the approaches that work best, knowing and using the strengths and taking appropriate steps towards further improvement. All staff and governors are involved in self-evaluation at some level and as a result, the school knows how good standards are and how good teaching contributes to this.

49. Each year staff administer assessments to assess level of attainment and compare these with performance in the previous year to judge the progress pupils make and to set targets for the next year. Along with information from specific reading, spelling and mathematics tests, information gathered is used to assess pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to set pupils targets in relation to their learning needs. This is incorporated into the teachers' planning and means that pupils' individual needs can be focused on. Teachers' assessments give indicators of those pupils who need further support or challenge, either in small group work or with specialist staff.

50. Assessments used throughout the year are very carefully administered. They are analysed to ensure that lessons are appropriately challenging and effective. Pupils' ongoing progress is mapped out and targets for further improving attainment are set. This creates a flexibility that ensures that each pupil is working at an appropriate level in class work and making optimum progress. Groupings are changed as a result or individual pupils receive additional support. Over time, comprehensive profiles of attainment build up for each child.

51. As part of the monitoring of standards, pupils' work is regularly reviewed to ensure that teaching is effective and to make sure that pupils are learning the right things. This involves looking at work from all year groups, across the range of abilities, to assess whether the pupils are making appropriate progress. In addition, the headteacher takes time to talk to pupils about how they think they are getting on, how they like to work, what it is they have learnt as a result of a particular activity, what was difficult and what was fun that they enjoyed. As a result, she gathers valuable information that is used when members of staff are planning future work.

52. Teachers and assistants regularly discuss how well children in their classes are doing. Along with the profiles of pupils' performance, this gives the school very valuable information about how well individuals are doing and enables teachers to judge whether they are helping each child to make the maximum gains in learning that they can. Information is used for the school to ask itself questions, for example, about why pupils may be achieving better in some aspects of a subject than another, and to decide if improvements are needed. As a result of assessment, the school has an objective view of standards attained, whether pupils achieve as well as they could and the progress pupils have made during their time in school. They measure standards against other schools, both nationally and of similar type, to see what the school is doing well and what still needs to improve. As a result, they set challenging targets for improved performance.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

53. The inspection team found no areas where significant improvement was needed.

54. Inspection evidence shows that issues for improvements observed are already in the school improvement plan, for example to improve multi-cultural development, and the school should continue to work towards the targets set. In the context of its many strengths, the governors and staff should ensure that the intentions regarding improvements to accommodation for the Foundation Stage are prioritised to ensure equality of access for all pupils as the outdoor curriculum develops.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	6	2	0	0	0
Percentage	9	56	26	9	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	268
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	59

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	46	43	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	40	44
	Girls	37	43	43
	Total	73	83	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	93 (92)	98 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	43	45
	Girls	41	42	43
	Total	79	85	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (90)	96 (96)	99 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	152
Any other minority ethnic group	14

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	658,273
Total expenditure	643,983
Expenditure per pupil	2,438
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	14,290

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	268
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	32	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	42	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	48	8	2	1
The teaching is good.	72	24	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	37	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	24	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	34	7	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	25	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	30	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	34	14	4	2

NB: 1 per cent equals 1 response.