

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE BROMWICH INFANT SCHOOL

Birmingham

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104067

Headteacher: Ms Caz Birch

Lead inspector: Mr J Sorsby

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 255727

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: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 383

School address: Green Lane
Castle Bromwich
Birmingham
West Midlands

Postcode: B36 0BX

Telephone number: 0121 747 3369

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jan Hiorns

Date of previous inspection: 11th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Castle Bromwich Infant School is much larger than most infant schools. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage, only a small number being of other backgrounds. With some social deprivation locally, pupils' socio-economic standards are below average. One pupil is in public care. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language and only one is at an early stage of acquisition in English. Fifteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is below the national average and five pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is slightly below the national average. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties, although there are small numbers of pupils with a wide range of learning and physical disabilities. Less than five per cent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than normal in the past year, which is very low. Children's attainment on joining the school is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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32708	H Renfrew-Knight	Lay inspector	
32442	R Blackmore	Team inspector	English History Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
28371	S Cox	Team inspector	Science Art and design Religious education
25778	A Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Music
17546	C Wonfor	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. Strong leadership by the governors, newly appointed headteacher and the deputy headteacher, very good teaching, a very strong ethos and careful attention to the needs of almost all pupils, including those with special educational and physical needs, result in a very good quality of education that enables almost all pupils to achieve very well and reach high standards. Pupils and parents are very happy with the school, which is providing very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The quality of teaching is very good, and pupils learn very well. Pupils enjoy lessons because they are well planned and the curriculum is well enriched and varied. Provision in the nursery is very good, and children receive a very high quality start to their education.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school, behave very well and are exceptionally self confident for their age reflecting the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are highly valued and very well cared for.
- Some parents make too little effort to ensure that their children attend school regularly and the rate of attendance is unsatisfactory as a consequence of a small number of regular non- attendees and parents taking their children on holiday in term time.
- Pupils reach high standards in a range of subjects.
- Too little attention is paid to the needs of higher attaining pupils in science.

There has been overall good improvement since the last inspection although the standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in science are lower than reported at the time of the last inspection because the school's emphasis on scientific investigations is not as strong as previously and too little attention is paid to their specific needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	A	A	A*
writing	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	B	A

Key: A - the top five per cent nationally. A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Overall, pupils achieve very well. Children join reception with standards that are below those expected for their age, and achieve very well as a consequence of very good and sometimes excellent teaching. They are on course to reach their goals in all areas other than their knowledge and understanding of the world, in which they exceed their goals. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. They were well above the average for similar schools in writing and mathematics and in the top five per cent nationally for similar schools in reading. This represented very good achievement. Pupils now in Years 1 and 2 are achieving very well as a consequence of very good teaching and are likely to achieve well above average standards in reading and writing, above average standards in mathematics and average standards in science. Standards in science are lower than those in reading, writing and mathematics because of a lack of emphasis on investigative science and insufficient attention to the needs of higher attaining pupils. In Year 2, standards are well above expectations in art and design and personal, social and health education. They exceed expectations in history, religious education, design and technology, music, physical education, and geography. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are as expected. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and there are no differences between the achievement of boys or girls or the very small number of pupils from

different ethnic backgrounds. Higher attaining pupils also achieve very well, except in science, where they achieve only satisfactorily

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well. However, attendance rates are unsatisfactory because a small number of parents make insufficient effort to ensure their children always attend, and others take their children on holiday in term time which adversely affects those pupils' standards and achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good education. The quality of teaching is very good overall and pupils learn very well. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and make lessons very interesting. This encourages and motivates pupils very well and contributes significantly to their very good learning. Teachers make very good, and in foundation stage, excellent use of resources, which further encourages and motivates pupils. There are exceptionally high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very well. Consequently, lessons are calm, with all pupils trying their best. A very good range of assessment data is collected and analysed by teachers. Good use is made of it to provide appropriate challenge for each child in the nursery and reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2. The exception is science in Years 1 and 2, where insufficient use is made of data to ensure that every lesson meets the needs of higher attaining pupils. Planning is good, enabling pupils to build systematically on their prior learning. Teachers provide a rich curriculum that stimulates learning and matches pupils' interests. This is very well enriched by extra-curricular opportunities and additional and specialised lessons for pupils requiring extra help to reach their potential. Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. Parents support their children's education, in school and at home, satisfactorily. Good links exist with other schools and the community which enhance pupils' learning. The school has a good number of qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. Resources in the nursery and reception classes are excellent and those in Years 1 and 2 good. The accommodation is good, but some toilets are in urgent need of renovation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good contributing well to pupils' achievements. The very well informed governors provide good leadership, participate fully in setting the school's direction and carry out all their statutory responsibilities very well. The newly appointed headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the senior management team and subject coordinators provide strong leadership. It is too early in the headteachers' tenure for her to have made her personal mark on the management of the school, but the team she leads is managing the school very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate its achievements in the educational and personal development of their children, and the nature of their relationship with the school. Pupils like the school very much and enjoy their lessons. Some feel that other pupils are not friendly but this was not borne out by inspection.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that better attention is paid to meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils in science.
- Improve the rate of the pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve very well. Children in nursery and reception reach their goals despite joining the school with standards that are below those expected for their age while pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach standards in almost all subjects that are above or well above expectations by the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in nursery and reception make very good progress.
- Standards in English, art and design and pupils' personal and social development are well above average and pupils make very good progress.
- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well in mathematics, music, physical education, religious education, history and geography.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Pupils achieve well in ICT.
- Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should in science.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.1 (18.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.3 (16.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.2 (17.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 119 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Children join the nursery with standards that are below those expected for their age, and achieve very well as a consequence of very good teaching. They are on course to reach their goals in all subjects and to exceed expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in writing and mathematics and in the top five per cent nationally in reading. These pupils achieved exceptionally well in English and very well in mathematics. Pupils now in Years 1 and 2 are achieving very well in reading and writing as a consequence of very good teaching and a rich curriculum that interests and motivates them, and their standards are well above average. In mathematics, as a consequence of good teaching, they are achieving well and their standards are above average. The trend in results has been variable, with writing standards improving over the past four years, but reading and mathematics results, declining slightly in 2003. This slight decline is of little significance given the overall progress pupils are making and the high standards they achieve.

2. In science, in teachers' assessment in 2003, an above average proportion of pupils reached the expected standards, but an average proportion exceeded these standards. Standards in science of the pupils currently in Year 2 are average, with few pupils doing better. While they have a good knowledge for their age of different aspects of science, higher achieving pupils lack an appropriate understanding for their age of investigative science, and find it difficult to give reasons for simple scientific phenomena. This is because insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged by the work they are set in each lesson.

3. In Year 2, standards in art and design and personal, social and health education are well above expectations because of the successful emphasis placed on planning for these subjects. In history, physical education, music, design and technology, religious education and geography standards are above expectations, also as a consequence of the school, recognising its successes in English and mathematics, beginning to develop these subjects through improved curriculum planning. Standards are in line with expectations in ICT because over a period of years the school's ICT facilities became out of date and it is only recently that funding became available to replace them. Pupils are also now benefiting from teachers' improved confidence in ICT, and, given their starting point, pupils are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to all other pupils. There are no differences between the achievement of boys or girls or the very small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Higher achieving pupils progress at a similar rate to all other pupils in all subjects except science.
4. Overall standards have been maintained since the last inspection in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils display very good attitudes to school and learning. They behave very well and are exceptionally self confident. However, attendance rates are unsatisfactory because several pupils attend poorly and a number of parents take their children on holiday in term time. The school is working hard to remedy these situations.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils display very good attitudes to school and to learning and behave very well as a result of teachers making lessons interesting and setting very high expectations of conduct.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and pupils are exceptionally self confident for their age.
- The rate of attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved since the last inspection. Pupils display very good attitudes to the school and to learning. Throughout the school, very high expectations are set and pupils behave very well. Good behaviour is celebrated every week in assembly. Pupils are friendly and polite and say how much they enjoy being at school. In class, they are attentive, listen very well and are very keen to participate and to learn. They take turns well and listen to each other's views. Pupils' very good behaviour extends over lunch and break times and no instances of bullying or poor behaviour were observed. There have been no exclusions. The very small number of parents who felt their children might have been bullied in the past stated that it had been dealt with effectively by the staff.

7. Pupils are exceptionally self confident for their age. In assembly a number volunteered their views on what they liked about their school. They spoke clearly and confidently in front of the whole school. Other pupils showed respect for their opinions and listened well. The very high standards of behaviour in the school mean that children can speak up and participate in the knowledge that they will be listened to and supported by the staff. Children are very keen to perform in school plays and concerts which are well-attended by parents and carers. The productions are much enjoyed and contribute significantly to the pupils' personal development in terms of gains in confidence, self-esteem, teamwork and responsibility. This was commented on by parents, for example "my child has grown in confidence since September and I am overjoyed."

8. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning and are keen to engage in activities and lessons whether withdrawn from, or part of, the whole class. Pupils are very supportive of one another, for example during the 'I can' Club', a club designed to promote pupils' self-confidence.

9. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils are taught about world religions and celebrate major festivals. Many displays of pupils' work have been clearly inspired

by aspects of religion and spirituality, while others reinforce the schools' values and rules. The high-quality of the art work encourages reflection on beauty. Assemblies provide an opportunity for collective worship and prayer and pupils are encouraged to listen to and think about the music they hear in school. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has a very positive effect on their attitudes and behaviour.

10. The school provides very well for pupils' social development. They are given roles such as "friend of the week" and "playground monitor" to encourage and reinforce care and support for each other and to help the staff. Group discussions, "Circle time" provide an opportunity for children to be heard, reflect on themselves and each other and develop their self-esteem.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.2	School data :	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

11. Although the school makes clear the importance of attendance through parental communications and weekly inter-class competitions for the "Attendance Cup", authorised and unauthorised absences are higher than the national average and have deteriorated slightly since the last inspection. There are several pupils with particularly bad attendance records which the school monitors and works with the Education Welfare Officer to address. Punctuality is generally good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12. The school is providing a very good quality of education, with a particularly good start to their education being provided to children in nursery and reception.

Teaching and learning

13. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is very good overall and pupils learn very well. Assessment procedures remain good as does the use of the data to plan challenging lessons that meet all pupils' needs, except those of higher attaining pupils in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning in nursery and reception and exceptionally good use of resources to make lessons stimulating for children.
- Very good procedures to measure what pupils know, understand and can do and good use of the available data in nursery, reception, for pupils with special educational needs and in English generally.
- All staff set very high expectations of pupils conduct in lessons and pupils behave very well.
- Teachers motivate pupils very effectively and pupils are eager to learn.
- Learning support assistants play a very significant role in helping to raise pupils' standards.
- Pupils are very self confident and work very well independently and in groups.
- The available data on what higher attaining pupils know, understand and can do in science is not sufficiently well used to ensure all science lessons are challenging for them.

Commentary

14. In nursery, the quality of teaching is consistently very good or better while in reception the quality is good overall. Nursery and reception combine to provide children with a very good start to their education and

their very good learning results in their standards coming into line with expectations very quickly. Simultaneously, because of careful planning of exciting and innovative lessons, children are set well on the road to becoming independent learners, full of self confidence and the will to progress. They develop a love of books which prepares them well for their Year 1 studies and for later life. Learning resources, such as books, displays, construction equipment and sand and water are exceptionally well used to promote children's learning.

15. In Years 1, teaching is solidly good, and pupils continue to learn and make good progress. In Year 2, teaching is very good. Years 1 and 2 combine to continue the very good learning that began in nursery and reception, and pupils' standards rise as a consequence. It is because of the strength of teaching – few lessons are only satisfactory and none are unsatisfactory – that pupils are able to progress from being below expectations in their skills and knowledge to being above and often well above expectations for their age.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	22 (48%)	17 (38%)	5 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. Pupils achieve very well because in most subjects teachers plan lessons that meet individual pupils' needs, by careful reference to accurate assessment data that tells them what pupils know, understand and can do. However, in science, planning to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently rigorous. Often, such pupils are set similar tasks to the majority of the class, although these tasks do not challenge them sufficiently. There has also been a decline in the emphasis placed on teaching science through investigations since the last inspection. Teachers follow the scheme of work for each subject, ensuring that the challenge presented to pupils is correct and enables them to learn each subject in logical steps, building on their prior knowledge. Teachers have good subject knowledge, enabling them to present lessons that flow well and to answer pupils' questions accurately and constructively.

17. Throughout the school, teaching assistants support pupils' learning very well. The small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are well integrated in the school and consequently benefit equally from the quality of teaching. Parents' and pupils comment very favourably on the quality of teaching.

18. A particular strength of teaching is the very high expectations all staff set of pupils' conduct. Misbehaviour and time wasting are not allowed and pupils know it! Consequently, lessons are calm and productive and proceed at a good pace. Pupils say they enjoy learning and relish new knowledge. Teachers' insistence of good behaviour, the pace of work, the variety of the curriculum and interesting lessons make learning fun and result in highly motivated pupils.

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs by the co-ordinator is very good with teaching assistants playing a very active role in furthering pupils' learning. This is characterised by highly effective questioning, enthusiastic teaching and a very good knowledge of pupils' needs. Staff are very aware of the targets in individual education plans and long term objectives for pupils with statements of special educational needs. This awareness enables them to address individual needs accurately and generates good progress. The work and activities planned focus on these areas for development of individuals and groups of pupils. Resources are well matched to pupils' needs and effectively support learning.

The curriculum

20. Teachers provide a very well planned, stimulating curriculum that matches pupils' interests and contributes very well to their strong desire to learn. Extra-curricular opportunities and additional specialised lessons for pupils requiring extra help to reach their potential further enhance pupils' achievements. Very good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. The school's good accommodation and resources support teaching and learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in nursery and reception is excellent and contributes very well to the positive start to children's education.
- A strong emphasis on English and mathematics, contribute well to pupils' achievements.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are well used to reinforce learning in other subjects and are themselves reinforced through other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is well enriched through extra-curricular activities and visitors.
- Good accommodation and a good range of very well used resources promote high achievement.

Commentary

21. An excellent curriculum in nursery and reception ensures that children learn all that is required to meet their targets, and do so in a fun filled way that meets their needs and stimulates their interest. Teachers' plans are comprehensive and take into account the needs of each child.

22. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 is very good. Weekly plans are detailed and show clearly what is to be learned. Once a week Year 1 and 2 classes are reorganised for special lessons in English, and Year 2 for special lessons in mathematics. Extra classes are created to reduce the size of teaching groups, and to enable pupils of similar attainment to be taught together. This arrangement works very well. It adds variety to teaching and helps teachers to plan effectively for the needs of all pupils. These lessons contribute very well to pupils' achievements in English and mathematics.

23. English, mathematics and ICT are threaded well through other subjects. Pupils are motivated well by the interesting and imaginative tasks they are set. For example, a school sports day newspaper, including photographs taken on a digital camera, gave pupils good opportunities to practise report writing and to use ICT to present the finished work. Focused opportunities for extended writing on topics such as life in Victorian times or impressions of St Lucia give pupils good opportunities for creativity and contribute well to achievement in all the subjects concerned.

24. The range of curriculum opportunities for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils are ably supported in numerous lessons and activities including science and dance. There is breadth and balance, which promotes pupil achievement in a variety of subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants seek to find new and exciting methods to encourage pupils to reach good standards. An in depth knowledge of pupils and their needs strongly influences the curriculum and allows learning to flourish. A very efficient use of time is made for individuals and groups resulting in a highly organised timetable of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are aware of their targets and of how they are to try and achieve them.

25. When needed, the school provides good support for pupils with English as an additional language. The special educational needs co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that these pupils receive appropriate and effective support. She is able to put in place appropriate provision making use of additional agencies as required.

26. Out of school activities, for example the recorder club and participation in local music festivals, and visits by specialists such as artists, add to the rich, diverse curriculum that pupils enjoy. These activities contribute well to a range of achievements, such as the high standards of pupils' artwork, but also in terms of pupils' personal development through opportunities to develop self-reliance and teamwork when working with other pupils.

27. Teachers use the school's accommodation and learning resources well. The large hall is used well for lessons in physical education and large scale music making, although its use for access to other classes sometimes disturbs lessons that are taking place. The ICT suite, recently extended, is a very good facility. It is used very well for specialist ICT lessons but also for lessons related to other subjects in the curriculum. There

are copious attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school which not only celebrate pupils' achievements but also create a welcoming, vibrant environment.

Care, guidance and support

28. This is a very caring school in which all pupils are highly valued as individuals. Pupils receive very good support, guidance and advice and have at least one adult with whom they have a trusting and supportive relationship. The school has good arrangements to involve pupils in its work and development

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good break and lunchtime activities and supervision
- Very good, sensitive and supportive procedures for welcoming new families and children into the school.
- Good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.
- Pupils receive good quality advice, support and guidance based on teachers and support staff knowing their pupils very well.
- Good attention is paid to pupils' views and all pupils are highly valued as individuals.
- Some toilets are in urgent need of renovation.

Commentary

29. The school is notable for its warm, safe and welcoming environment. This is observed in the organisation of the classrooms and the bright displays in the classrooms and corridors which celebrate pupils' work. The school appropriately follows local child protection guidelines.

30. There are good processes in place for seeking pupils' views and sharing issues with them, for example, through discussions and assemblies. In planning the redesign of the school playground, pupils were asked for their ideas and created drawings and models which played a role in the final outcome. Mutual respect is part of the ethos of the school and this is demonstrated by teachers' relationships with pupils, who are highly valued as individuals.

31. Pupils are happy and talk enthusiastically about the school. Ninety five per cent of the responses to the pupil questionnaire stated that they like being at school. They know who to go to if they are hurt, worried or upset. Teachers know their pupils very well and monitor them closely. Pupils value their teachers highly and name them as part of what makes their school special. There is very good care and support for the pupils in the playground at lunchtime. Three benches designated as "Friendship stops" provide somewhere for children who want someone to play with to go and the children explained that they were often used. The lunchtime assistants organise games such as basketball, running races and obstacle races. The playground is laid out with games such as hopscotch and there is a quiet area provided with crates of books. Before and after school the "Kippers" club provides childcare and opportunities for constructive play.

32. The school's very good procedures for welcoming new families and children into the school were commented on in the parents' questionnaires and in informal discussions with parents. The staff were described as "supportive, approachable, friendly and extremely kind" by one parent whose child initially found it hard to settle. The care, guidance and support of pupils have improved since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

33. As at the time of the last inspection, the school has strong links with parents and enjoys their support. There are good links with the local community and with other schools and colleges that enhance pupils' opportunities for learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views of the school are very positive.

- Parents enjoy very good, open communications with staff. There are very good relationships.
- School events receive very strong parental support.
- The arrangements and relationship with the junior school are very good, easing pupils' transfer.
- Some parents make too little effort to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Commentary

34. Links with parents are good. All parents approached after school spoke warmly of the school and the good relationships they have with teachers. Almost all parents state that they are well informed about their children's progress, that the school seeks their views and that they are comfortable dealing with the school with problems and ideas. Parents' evenings are attended by an average of 95 per cent of parents and school productions and concerts are also well attended.

35. There is a very active Parent Teachers Friends Association which organises termly after-school entertainment for pupils. Its annual fund-raising fete has effectively become the "Castle Bromwich" fete fostering good relationships with the wider community. It is attended by in excess of two thousand people and contributes significantly to the purchase of resources and equipment that promote pupils' learning.

36. The school prospectus and Governors' Annual report to Parents are well-presented and meet statutory requirements. "Red books", prepared for the termly parents' evenings, provide a record of children's progress over their time at the school. They include a drawing or piece of writing from the child, a comment from their class teacher and a comment from their parent/guardian added at parents' evening. This enhances parents' understanding of their children's education and how best they can support their children. Pupils' end of year reports give parents statements on attainment but little information on how they could help their children improve and what their immediate learning goals should be. Parents are invited into school to work with their children, for example in Year 2 for a writing morning and in Reception on learning to read. Parents that volunteer make mathematics games which pupils borrow each week to play at home with their parents, thus furthering pupils' knowledge of mathematics and their enjoyment of the subject.

37. The school communicates very well with parents of pupils with special educational needs and involves them fully in decision making for their children's education. Links with outside agencies that can provide specialist support are fully utilised to develop pupils' learning.

38. The mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to the local junior school are very good, as a result of the very strong links between the two schools. There is productive dialogue between staff at all levels, and all relevant data and reports are transferred. Visits to the junior school, with planned activities, are organised for Year 2 pupils during the summer term. There is particularly good exchange of information between the two special educational needs' coordinators which enables the school to prepare the support that will be required by pupils with special educational needs.

While the importance of attendance is emphasised in the Governors' Annual Report to parents and individual pupils' reports, some parents make too little effort to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

39. The quality of leadership and management of the school are **good**. Strong leadership is provided by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and subject coordinators. The school is well managed. The governing body carries out all its statutory requirements very well.

40. Strong leadership, good teaching and learning, the very good quality of provision in the nursery, the very well developed curriculum, very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils' very good behaviour and strong motivation to learn all contribute well to raising achievement. The limited achievement by higher attaining pupils in science and the unsatisfactory rate of attendance act as limitations on raising achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very well informed governing body contributes well to setting the school's priorities and gives good support to senior management.
- Subject coordinators provide very good subject leadership and support to their colleagues.
- New staff are very well inducted into the school.
- The newly appointed headteacher has managed the transition well and is providing strong leadership.

Commentary

41. The governance of the school is good and the governors are very well informed and strongly committed. They frequently visit school and very successfully ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. They work closely with the headteacher formulating and developing the school's long-term aims, clearly demonstrating a deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school fulfils all its responsibilities in relation to racial equality.

42. The headteacher's leadership is good. She has made a good start in her new post and has a clear and appropriate plan for the school's future development. This is well reflected in the school improvement plan, which receives the full and active support of all staff. The strength of partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher is a considerable asset, and sets the tone that results in very good team work throughout the school. There is knowledgeable and thoughtful leadership and management of curriculum areas. For example, the leadership of special educational needs is very good with policies and procedures being very clear and effective. It is possible to see pupils improving in identified areas specifically noted on individual education plans. This is a highly inclusive school.

43. The school is committed to the development and careful induction of new staff. Much time is spent ensuring that teachers and support staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and fully equipped to carry them out. Provision is made for ongoing and high quality training in different aspects of learning. For example the English coordinator has trained support staff in a range of strategies to promote learning within the literacy hour. This has had a good impact on pupils' achievement.

44. The management of the school is good, and recognised as such by parents. The school uses all available data to evaluate its own performance well, and uses the results well to formulate priorities for development. For example the school studied past differences in standards of reading between boys and girls, and planned and took appropriate actions. Performance management of staff is in place and having a positive effect on raising pupils' achievement and the promotion of high expectations. As the headteacher has been in post only a few weeks it is not possible to comment on her recruitment and retention of staff. The quality of leadership and management of the school is unchanged since the last inspection. This is a reflection on the speed and skill with which the new head teacher has managed her own induction into the school and established strong and positive relationships with governors and staff colleagues.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	854716	Balance from previous year	87026
Total expenditure	932180	Balance carried forward to the next	9562
Expenditure per pupil	2161		

45. The school monitors its finances well and takes care to apply the principles of 'best value' in all its work. Governors work closely with senior management and the highly efficient office staff to ensure that all spending is targeted to raising pupils' achievement. Given the average cost per pupil, the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve, the very good quality of teaching and the extent of pupils' personal

development, the school is providing very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. The quality of provision for children in nursery and reception has improved since the last inspection. The school has a well established very high quality nursery which offers 70 part time places to children from the September following their third birthday. Just over half the children who enter reception have attended the school's nursery, these children therefore benefiting from a whole year in the school's nursery prior to starting in the reception class. A number of other children join the reception class having been to other pre-school and day nurseries. The induction procedures are very good enabling children to start nursery and school with confidence and settle in quickly.

47. The nursery provides a very good start for children's school life. Their attainment on entry is below average, however with very good teaching they make very good progress in all areas of learning. Children achieve very well and by the end of the reception year, even those who have a limited time in the school's nursery and reception achieve their goals. Higher attaining children are likely to exceed these goals, and most children exceed their goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff know their children very well and the very good use made of data derived from very good assessment procedures enables children's progress to be carefully tracked throughout their time in nursery and reception, and lessons to be accurately planned to meet their individual needs.

48. Teaching and learning observed during the inspection was very good. High quality leadership from key staff has engendered an ethos of high expectation in a rich, stimulating and exciting learning environment. The creative learning opportunities offered to children capture their interest and enthusiasm and enable very good learning to take place across all areas of the curriculum. Resources for learning are very good and staff use these with imagination and flair. Although housed in a temporary building, the nursery environment is particularly attractive and imaginative with many high quality displays to stimulate learning and engage children's interest.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The relationship between adults and children is very good and adults provide very good role models.
- The development of children's confidence and independence are very good.

Commentary

50. The very good quality care, encouragement and guidance that children receive in the foundation stage enable them to become confident and independent learners. Children's behaviour is very good; children are sociable and confident and relate well to each other and to adults. Many children show the confidence to talk freely to adults, and some children initiate this conversation with visitors to the school as well as adults known to them. Children's co-operation with each other is very good; they listen to each other, take turns and share very well. Children persevere with their work and are able to maintain concentration during activities. These qualities are particularly significant because of children's below average social and communications skills on joining the nursery.

51. All staff work very well together to provide a calm, well-ordered and secure learning environment where children are valued and respected. Children with special needs are very well supported. All activities promote children's personal development, and this was evident in the many learning opportunities seen in which children worked co-operatively within small groups. Relationships are warm and very supportive and

staff listen attentively to children. By the end of reception all children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is high quality teaching and support for children.
- The well planned curriculum provides opportunities for children to develop skills in speaking and listening and early reading.
- Resources for teaching and learning are very good and are used imaginatively and creatively to engage children.

Commentary

53. Teaching and learning are very good in this area of learning. A very good emphasis is placed on children's language and communication skills in the nursery and reception classes. All staff are attentive to children; they listen carefully to what children say and there are many opportunities to promote speaking and listening through imaginative play. In one class a hospital for bears had been set up and children were engrossed in their play, developing very well their speaking and listening skills in the role of the doctor and patients. From their very first days in the nursery children are immersed in a rich literacy curriculum, with every opportunity taken to use stories in sequencing, early writing and story telling and as a consequence children are also developing a love of books.

54. Children's standards in reading and writing are in line with expectations and some children exceed the early learning goals by the end of reception. This represents very good achievement despite some children's limited time in nursery and reception, and is the result of very good teaching. Reading is very strongly promoted and there are frequent opportunities for children to listen to taped stories and share books. There are very good resources to support the development of reading. Children in the reception class read a wide range of early reading books and all classrooms are well resourced for reading. Reading is encouraged and developed from children's early days in nursery with activities designed to promote word recognition and develop early reading skills.

55. The learning environment in all classes strongly promotes language development; there are many labels, signs and captions around the walls and displays with a very strong emphasis on using books. There are many opportunities for children to write for different purposes related to their topics and imaginative play. For example in a reception class, children acted out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears and then went on to write letters to Goldilocks from the three bears. In reception, children are able to write simple sentences and have a growing awareness of letter sounds with many children able to identify letter names and their sounds. Good examples were seen of children's early writing in which they had sequenced the main points in a familiar story.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

56. Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Number songs and rhymes are used with very good effect to support the children's mathematical development.
- Teachers and support staff capitalise on every opportunity to develop children's mathematical understanding through excellent cross-curricular learning opportunities.

Commentary

57. By the end of their time in reception children's standards are in line with expectations and some children exceed these standards. This represents very good progress from children's entry levels which are below average and is the result of the very good teaching. In reception children can count reliably up to 10 and some can count up to 20 and beyond. They are able to find one less and one more than a given number and have a good knowledge of simple shapes such as square, circle and triangle.

58. There are very good links with other subjects in which children's mathematical skills are enhanced and developed. For example children's knowledge of shapes was enhanced by their creative geometric shape work in art. Children also acted out a play with numbered seats for the audience and tickets costing two pence each. With support, children in nursery are beginning to sequence the days of the week and are developing their knowledge of numbers to 10 through a wide variety of songs and rhymes. Children's mathematical development is also enhanced by the many stimulating displays which include numbers and shapes. Resources for mathematics are very good and children's enthusiasm for mathematics is captured by the imaginative use of these resources such as the set of 30 numbered bears in reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative, creative and stimulating learning opportunities are created for children to explore the world around them.
- Children have very good opportunities to develop their skills in ICT.

Commentary

60. Children's standards in this area are above expectations by the end of the reception year. Children make very good progress during their years in nursery and reception. They have a growing awareness of the world around them as a consequence of an imaginative and rich array of learning opportunities provided by teachers and support staff. In nursery children learn about their senses and during the week of inspection children responded with excitement and interest when tasting, smelling, touching and feeling different fruits. Children have opportunities to grow plants, watch and record their development and help look after the plants in the school grounds. There was some exceptional work in the nursery in which children were able to understand the life cycle of a butterfly through acting out roles in the story of the Very Hungry Caterpillar. Children emerged from a white egg, jumped through large cardboard fruits, balanced along blocks until they came to a cocoon. Their joy and excitement was evident when they emerged from their cocoons with flapping net wings and butterfly head bands. This imaginative and exciting way of teaching children is representative of the very high quality teaching in the nursery. Children's technology skills are well developed through simple construction projects. In reception children successfully designed and made simple bags using card, tape and string.

61. The provision for developing children's computer skills is very good. Children have weekly lessons in the computer suite and as a result their skills are well developed and they are confident when using computers. During the week of the inspection children in nursery were able to draw simple but effective butterflies using a range of colours within a painting program. Achievement in this lesson was very good. Children are also developing a good knowledge of other cultures and beliefs through their work on different festivals such as the Chinese New Year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

62. Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Wide range of opportunities for children to develop their hand co-ordination and control.
- The limited outside hard surface areas in the nursery play area limits children's opportunities for physical work when the grass is too wet to play on.

Commentary

63. Children make good progress in physical development and despite the limited time some have in nursery and reception, their skills are broadly in line with expected standards at the end of reception. This very good achievement is a consequence of very good teaching. There are many opportunities for children to develop their co-ordination skills. They complete jigsaws, manipulate play dough into different shapes, trace carefully and have many opportunities to develop appropriate pencil grip. The very good opportunities in creative art work effectively support children's co-ordination. Many of the tasks they complete include the cutting and arranging of different materials on collage. When playing outside children move about with confidence and control, showing appropriate skills in balancing, jumping and running.

64. There were limited opportunities to see children playing outside during the week of the inspection because of very wet weather. Resources are appropriate including bikes, trikes, simple slides and low climbing apparatus. There is also a large sand pit, tunnels and other imaginative play equipment. The staff in the nursery and reception make imaginative and good use of the outside areas provided. However, whilst there have been steps to improve the outside environment, the nursery children's opportunities for outside play are limited due to the restricted area in use when the grass is wet.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

65. Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly creative and imaginative learning opportunities and stimulating physical environment.
- Resources are very good and they are used with flair and imagination.

Commentary

66. The children's achievement in creative development is good overall and very good in art and design. Opportunities for imaginative play are provided which capture the children's interest and enthusiasm. In reception children particularly enjoyed their role play in the Bear Hospital and the Three Bears' House which were very well set up to support children's creative imaginative play. Children's interest and enthusiasm is well developed by the wide and rich array of creative opportunities using paint, collage and other materials. A rich assortment of materials is provided and, together with the very good support and teaching children receive, children produce imaginative and thoughtful work. The children's very good quality observational work shows attention to detail and effective use of colour and texture. Children enjoy singing and they know a range of songs and action rhymes from memory. By the end of reception all children achieve their goals in their creative development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

67. Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As at the time of the last inspection, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are well above average for pupils by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall, and the quality of teaching was never less than good in the lessons observed .
- Assessment is well used to judge how well pupils are progressing and to set challenging but realistic targets.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

68. The teaching and management of English are very good and good use is made of assessment data to plan lessons that meet individual pupils' needs. Consequently, standards in all aspects of English are well above average by the end of Year 2. This represents very good achievement by pupils, who join Year 1 with average standards. Good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy, and the school has developed its implementation within a rich and varied curriculum. This makes lessons fun and captures pupils' imaginations. The very competent coordinator has worked hard with colleagues to ensure that all teachers with their support staff are able to deliver high quality lessons. Part of the schools success in raising standards in English is due to the highly effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. This has enabled many such pupils to achieve the nationally expected level in national tests at the end of Year 2.

69. Reading and speaking and listening skills are very well promoted during lessons, including drama, giving pupils the opportunity to reinforce their learning and build upon it. Videos of school performances in which all pupils are involved show a mix of acting, singing and dancing and demonstrate the high levels of skill pupils acquire and their considerable self-confidence. Teaching is very good and is characterised by lively and engaging tasks, very good questioning, brisk pace to lessons and a successful use of interesting resources. Pupils can recall and explain what has happened in a story and make good use of their developing knowledge of letter sounds when they encounter unfamiliar words. In lessons where the pupils read along with the teacher, almost all, in Years 1 and 2 are able to follow and read the text with enjoyment and increasing understanding.

70. Pupils are given many opportunities to extend their writing and by Year 2 write with enthusiasm and purpose. Their vocabulary is well developed, showing the influence of their reading, and they have a good understanding of basic grammar and punctuation. Pupils listen attentively and answer appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs were seen being well supported and making good progress, challenged by a variety of interesting and stimulating activities.

71. Teachers plan, organise and manage their lessons very well. Classroom routines are well established so that pupils know what they have to do and no time is wasted. Teachers and support staff share and discuss their observations of pupils' progress with one another, providing valuable information to help plan subsequent lessons that meet individual pupils' needs. All have a copy of the lesson plan and those who work with pupils who have special educational needs know the specific targets for their pupils which have been identified by the teacher as a focus in the lesson. Relationships are very good and support learning very well. Activities chosen are interesting and pupils are made aware of how this fits into past and future learning.

72. Very good use is made of assessment that guides future lessons that accurately reflect what pupils' needs. ICT is well used in English for a variety of purposes including recording, redrafting and working collaboratively. High quality displays around the school promote English further still and celebrate pupils'

work very well. Displays are inspiring and generate an enthusiasm for books and reading. Book fairs enhance this enjoyment of books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. Teachers create many opportunities for pupils to practise their language and literacy skills in other subjects and basic skills are very well reinforced. Pupils record their work in subjects such as geography, religious education and history in a variety of ways to demonstrate their understanding. This enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Computers are used well to draft and edit work. Every pupil participates in a writing morning each week, and this is often cross-curricular in nature.

MATHEMATICS

74. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is good.
- Standards are above the national average.
- There is a good focus on developing pupils' problem solving skills.
- Special lessons organised for groups of pupils of different attainment contribute very well to their achievements.
- Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress but make insufficient use of assessment information to guide individual pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not set short term learning objectives to help pupils understand how to improve their work.

Commentary

75. Teachers set demanding work and expect pupils to give of their best. They are not disappointed. Pupils rise to the challenge and work hard. Consequently, starting from average standards when they begin Year 1, pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Nearly all pupils have a good grasp of addition and subtraction; many know some multiplication tables and can use these for division. Many pupils are learning to use decimals and can, for example, find the change from a £5 note if they spend £3.19. Few pupils do not reach the standard expected for seven-year-olds by the end of Year 2, other than a small number of pupils with special educational needs.

76. Teachers plan lessons well. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics and problem solving skills. Year 1 pupils, for example, spent a lesson finding out in how many ways three different teddies can be put in line. Higher attaining pupils worked with four teddies. At the end of the lesson, one pupil was justifiably very pleased when he not only correctly predicted that there were 24 such possibilities with four teddies, but explained clearly why this had to be.

77. One day each week pupils in Year 2 are reorganised to provide additional teaching groups, with pupils of similar attainment taught together. This arrangement works very well, because it enables teachers to cater for different pupils' needs very effectively. For example, higher attaining pupils used multiplication table facts well to find what combinations of three and four legged aliens there could be if the astronaut could see 24 legs out of the spaceship window! In the comparable lesson with the lowest attaining group, pupils practised counting in 2's, 5's and 10's as a prelude to further work on multiplication.

78. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants know pupils' needs well and are deployed effectively, for example to work with a small group to sort numbers up to 20 into *odd* and *even*. The close, often individual support that these pupils receive ensures that they stay well focussed on the task in hand and make good progress.

79. At the end of each lesson, teachers question pupils well to review what has been learned and regular assessments feed into good records of progress. However, teachers do not set short term learning targets to help pupils know what to do in order to improve further – a process which is beneficial to learning in English.

80. Subject management is good. Following recent changes in subject leadership and analysis of needs, the increased emphasis on problem solving is raising standards in this area of work, assessment procedures have been improved and additional resources have been acquired. Above average standards, have been maintained since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. Pupils use their mathematics skills well to help them learn in other subjects. For example, in science, they measure the size of their hands and use a computer to draw graphs of the results to help them investigate whether tall people have larger hands than short people. Work on patterns in art and design show that pupils have a good understanding of how to make repetitive designs based on shape, colour and symmetry.

SCIENCE

82. Provision in science is **satisfactory and improving**. The school is partway through the implementation of an action plan that highlights the same areas for development as were highlighted by the inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 and there are insufficient opportunities for investigative and experimental science.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about science and have very positive attitudes.
- Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.
- Teachers often set the learning of science in an imaginative context, which motivates pupils and encourages their learning.

Commentary

83. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in science are average by the end of Year 2, with almost all pupils achieving satisfactorily and reaching the expected level in national tests. However, few pupils achieve well and higher attaining pupils do not generally reach a higher level. This is because insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that lessons present them with sufficient challenge. While teachers collect and record data on what pupils know, understand and can do, few use this data effectively to present individual pupils with challenging tasks that meet their needs.

84. Pupils have a good knowledge of some aspects of science but are less secure in investigative science and lack the appropriate knowledge and skills expected in this area, because insufficient emphasis is placed on this area by teachers. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and support staff make a valuable and important contribution to the satisfactory progress made by such pupils.

85. Pupils enjoy science, have very positive attitudes and are keen to respond to questions in class. Their knowledge and understanding of science is helped by the imaginative contexts used by teachers. For example, learning about the properties of materials was set in the context of helping a teddy bear to keep dry on holiday. Children in Year 1 were able to relate well to this context and this helped their understanding and their learning. Good use is made of ICT to reinforce pupils' studies of science.

86. Pupils have a growing awareness of living things and in Year 2 are able to compare the differences between plants and animals and know what living things need to be able to grow. Pupils can name the main food groups and know that vitamins and different foods are important to good health. They are also developing their knowledge of electricity by making simple circuits in order to make bulbs light up. Pupils know that heating or cooling can bring about a change in materials; however this has not been extended to an

understanding that some changes cannot be reversed whilst others can. This is indicative of other work which demonstrates that a deeper understanding of the reasons for scientific changes has not been developed. In essence, pupils know the scientific facts they are supposed to acquire, but are seldom able to look at the facts and provide explanations. Pupils have not yet, for example, developed an awareness of fair testing and why this is important when conducting experiments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because subject management and organisation are very good.
- Specialist teaching is very good.
- Teachers link ICT and other subjects well to support learning across the curriculum.
- The recently extended ICT suite is spacious and well equipped. It contributes well to pupils' achievements.

Commentary

88. There are a number of inter-related factors which contribute well to pupils' good achievement and satisfactory and rising standards.

89. There is a generous time allocation for ICT. Each class has two lessons every week. As a result, pupils have frequent opportunities to use computers and they develop very good keyboard and mouse skills.

90. Teaching is of good quality and specialist ICT teaching is very good. For instance, in a lesson in Year 2 a short review established what pupils had already learned about how data can be represented in a "tree" structure. The teacher demonstrated how to use the computer program very well. Follow up work was well prepared and explained. Statements such as "She is 1.3 metres tall" made pupils think hard about how to interpret a succession of questions in order to identify individual people from the data. Pupils were committed to their work and actively engaged in learning throughout the lesson, for example in answering questions, in practical tasks or demonstrating and explaining the work they had done. All pupils achieved very well.

91. Since the last inspection the school's resources became out of date, limiting pupils' learning and progress, but have now been replaced and the school is now well equipped for ICT. The newly extended computer suite is a very good learning environment and pupils have access to high quality equipment. Pupils have made good progress since its introduction.

92. Subject leadership and management are very good. This has enabled the school to move from a situation where lack of confidence among teachers and out of date equipment limited pupils' learning to one where pupils are achieving well. Training, to coincide with the development of the ICT suite, has been effective in raising staff expertise and confidence. Lessons led by the ICT coordinator are continuing staff development well. Expectations are high and good planning ensures that pupils' knowledge and skills develop systematically from the nursery upwards.

93. Provision has improved well since the last inspection, and following a period of reorganisation standards are rising.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Many pupils achieve very well in work that involves word processing and graphics. Standards in this aspect of ICT are above national expectations. This is because pupils have good opportunities to use the skills they have been taught. There are many high quality examples of pupils' work on display around the school, from descriptions of the planets in the solar system, to postcards from St Lucia, and word processed poetry.

Other aspects of ICT are not neglected, and standards overall are in line with national expectations. For example, pupils write short instruction sequences to make a robot take a particular route when studying maps in geography. In science, pupils store data on a computer and draw graphs of their hand length to investigate whether taller people have larger hands.

HUMANITIES

95. No lessons in **history** were seen so no judgement about provision can be made. Standards in history, which have improved since the last inspection, are above those expected for pupils in Year 2, with work across all ability groups being of a good standard. The pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils can place events in order showing a developing sense of chronology. Pupils in Year 1 can describe differences between the past and the present e.g. the differences between a modern kitchen and a Victorian scullery. Pupils also know how the use of different materials has changed in the last one hundred years. In Year 2 pupils demonstrate knowledge of major events including the Fire of London. They are able to analyse reasons why the fire spread quickly and the development of technology in relation to the fire fighting equipment and the impact that this has on our lives. Pupils gain an understanding of factual knowledge of important people from the past and explain the consequences of their activities. For example, Year 2 pupils study Florence Nightingale and know how she helped save the lives of injured soldiers. The leadership of the subject is very good and shows a solid grasp of what pupils know, understand and can do. There is a thorough policy, effective monitoring procedures and clear developments planned for the future. The curriculum is enhanced by special days, such as Jubilee Day and visits to museums, including the Coventry Motor Cycle Museum and supported by good use of ICT for research and for pupils' history writing.

Geography

96. Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good management and leadership contribute well to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are above national expectations. Pupils' achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good. The learning aspect is not well reflected in the commentary

Commentary

97. Effective action by the subject coordinator to improve planning and to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve has led to improvements in teaching since the last inspection. This is reflected in the improved standards that pupils now attain, which are above expectations. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieve well.

98. Year 2 pupils describe Barnaby Bear's adventures in Dublin, drawing out the route he takes on a map as he explores the city. They competently make simple comparisons between life on the Caribbean island of St Lucia and their own locality. They know for instance that St Lucia is a tourist destination and that it is hot and wet, unlike Castle Bromwich. Pupils use their writing skills well to describe, often at length, the local scenery and use ICT effectively to draw and write picture postcards of the area. In other work pupils have a sound grasp of coastal and seaside features such as cliffs, pebbles and sandy beaches.

99. Lessons seen were well planned and organised to give pupils a range of learning opportunities. For example, pupils used digital photographs to locate on a map some features of the locality that they had observed in a walk. Expectations were high. Some pupils devised their own keys for landmarks such as the post box and telephone kiosk. In one lesson teachers related the work well to mathematics and ICT, using positional language to describe where different places were and setting one group the challenge of programming the robot to find its way to school on a very big map spread out on the floor. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and worked well, discussing work with other pupils and sharing ideas with the teacher and classroom assistants.

100. The geography coordinator has produced a very good series of lesson plans for teachers to follow and adapt, resulting in pupils learning and improving their skills and understanding incrementally. An extensive portfolio of pupils' past work clearly identifies levels of attainment, and assists teachers well when they are assessing pupils' work and preparing lessons to meet individual pupils' needs. Records of progress are good.

Religious education

101. Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned.
- The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership.
- Learning about other religions makes a good contribution to children's knowledge of different cultures and customs.
- Children's written responses do not always reflect the quality and level of their understanding.

Commentary

102. Pupils achieve well in religious education and by the end of Year 2, standards are above expectations. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and her enthusiastic approach to the subject has had a positive influence on standards and the profile of the subject in the school. Her work is supported by a good quality scheme of work which sets out the key objectives and content of study. The curriculum is supported by appropriate resources and good use is made of visits by a local minister and links with the church. This assists in religious education being presented in meaningful ways to pupils.

103. Pupils have a good understanding of the significant features of Christianity including the importance of Christian symbols and beliefs. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils showed empathy and understanding of the Easter story and could relate this to their own feelings of fear and anger. Pupils have a developing knowledge of other faiths including Islam and Judaism. This work contributes well to children's understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Learning is supported by the telling of important stories which the children act out, and they are able to relate these stories to their own lives. For example work on the Ten Commandments enabled children to reflect on their personal commandments and rules for living. Although orally children show a good understanding of aspects of different religions, their written work does not always reflect this. At the time of the last inspection standards in religious education were found to be average. A new scheme of work has been well introduced since this time and standards have improved.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

104. **Art and design** was not being taught during the inspection and no judgement can therefore be made on the quality of provision. However, evidence demonstrates that standards in art and design are well above expectations and pupils achieve very well. Portfolios of work and displays seen around the school include a very good breadth of art and design opportunities for children, with many different textures and materials used for children's finished work. Good use is made of ICT to support children's creativity in art and design, with examples of computer generated work inspired by the work of well known artists such as Mondrian, Kandinsky and Lowry. Pupils' work shows developing skills and by Year 2, good control, awareness of colour and attention to detail. Some very effective black and white collage work had been made by children in Year 2 using a variety of textured paper and other materials such as polystyrene. For example, the whole school topics on subjects such as shapes and flowers show good development from children's work in nursery through to Year 2. The school takes great pride and care in the way pupils' art and design work is displayed and there are many examples of imaginative displays that show a flair for colour and design. In the last inspection art and design was found to be above national expectations and was identified as a strength of the school. The school has further improved on this evaluation.

Design and technology

105. Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Teaching is good and consequently pupils achieve well
- Few pupils add sufficient detail to their design drawings

Commentary

106. Two lessons were observed, discussions were held with the subject coordinator and samples of pupils' work were examined. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the design process. They draw pictures of what they intend to make and list the materials they will need. However, few add details to their design drawings to show for example how they intend to fasten different parts of their models together.

107. Teachers demonstrate and explain techniques clearly and question pupils well, for instance in exploring ways to attach the guide for a sliding mechanism. They stress the importance of making sure that work actually produced matches pupils' original intentions. Whilst providing individual support where necessary, teachers and classroom assistants give pupils good opportunities to learn practical cutting, shaping and fixing skills for themselves using simple equipment such as scissors and glue. Teachers expect high standards of work. Pupils respond well, they persevere and complete work, taking considerable care with the quality of the overall finish. Finger puppets, wind-up toys such as Jack climbing the beanstalk, and sliding Gingerbread men toys are well made and attractively decorated. Many are above the standard expected for pupils of their age, and overall achievement is good. Pupils are proud of their work and are keen to show finished products to visitors. Teachers give good guidance on how to evaluate work, and this aspect of the pupils' work is done well. For example, pupils explain difficulties they encountered and how they overcame them, for instance "the string was too long, so I took the tape off the lift and made a loop to make it the right size", and make suggestions for improvements.

108. Planning follows national guidance well so that learning builds effectively on what pupils already know and can do. Standards of work are similar to those reported at the last inspection and good teaching has been maintained.

Music

109. Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach higher standards than those expected for Year 2 pupils.
- Good leadership has improved the staff's confidence in teaching music. Teaching and learning are good.
- School productions and visiting musicians contribute well to pupils' musical education and personal development.

Commentary

110. Pupils are taught well, and consequently reach higher standards, especially in singing, than are expected for pupils of their age. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils sing well in assembly, and all pupils take part in large scale Christmas celebrations. They sing, dance and act confidently. Year 2 pupils also present a "leavers" concert. There is a real sense of occasion in these events and pupils clearly enjoy taking part. They are well rehearsed and performance is accomplished. Singing is in tune, rhythmical and lively, with good attention to the words. The self-confidence and team spirit engendered in these performances contribute very well to pupils' personal development.

111. At the last inspection the subject coordinator, a music specialist, taught all classes. Staff training in the interim has raised teachers' confidence and expertise. All teachers now teach their own classes, and teaching overall is good. Specialist teaching is very good, especially through close attention to careful listening, insistence on correct playing technique and taking time to improve performance through rehearsal. In particular, the Year 2 recorder group plays one-part and simple two-part tunes well. Teachers use CD recordings and a wide range of good quality instruments effectively to stimulate pupils' musical imagination and to develop skills in performance. For instance pupils devise instrumental sounds to represent the giant's heavy footsteps in the story of "Jack and the beanstalk" and they accompany the "Fee fi fo fum" chant rhythmically.

112. Pupils learned a lot from a drumming lesson taken by a visiting teacher. Animated, lively teaching engaged pupils' interest very well. Skilled use of a variety of drums and good instruction ensured that pupils learned the difference between "pulse" and "rhythm". Performances of repeated patterns were accurate.

Physical education

113. Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils learn well.
- All aspects of the curriculum are developed well.
- Co-ordination of the subject is good.
- Assessment of pupils is developing well.
- The hall in which much of the physical education occurs is a thoroughfare making for interruptions and delays in lesson starts.

Commentary

114. Standards have improved since the last inspection and, for the majority of pupils are above those expected for their age. All pupils including those with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils enjoy and confidently participate in lessons.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are purposeful and pupils are well engaged in their activities. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the skills they have to teach, and frequently reinforce technical terminology such as the distinction between 'points' and 'patch' balances. This serves to reinforce pupils' literacy skills well. Displays in classrooms also refer to terminology and digital photos celebrate and picture the pupils' performances.

116. All aspects of the curriculum have been well developed. For example, dance is taught well with pupils in Year 2 being able to put together a variety of movements to make a complete sequence. This is done with accuracy, precision and good imagination. Teachers sensitively and thoughtfully give pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own and each other's performances, enabling them to understand how to improve their work. The co-ordinator has a clear idea about the physical education curriculum and has introduced a sports day to further encourage pupils. Teachers use assessment well to ensure that lessons meet the needs of all pupils.

117. The hall provides adequate space but due to its position is the only realistic route for some pupils to move around the school. Consequently starts to lessons may be delayed while pupils move through the hall and during lessons a number of pupils go around the edge of the hall while lessons are taking place proving a distraction to the class. Although most pupils are used to this, such disturbances inevitably distract from the overall effectiveness of lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Pupils demonstrate responsibility for themselves and others very well.
- Promotion of high standards of behaviour is very good.

Commentary

119. Standards in personal, social and health education and citizenship are very good. This subject makes a highly effective contribution to the life of the school and its very positive ethos. The level of pupils' awareness of the need for good behaviour, respecting other peoples' feelings and being responsible are very high. Pupils have many opportunities to learn a variety of social skills such as sharing, playing and helping others. This was very evident in the 'I can club', in which the self confidence and self esteem of those pupils requiring it are very well encouraged and developed. The teacher provided high calibre opportunities for pupils to work collectively and share thoughts and feelings within a warm and secure small group environment. Pupils were heard to say 'would you like me to find you a battery?' and 'would you like me to help you?' Opportunities were also given for pupils to say what they had done well this week.

120. Pupils are very confident and the school does much to develop this in different contexts. This was seen, for example, in a literacy lesson where the story of the Pied Piper was introduced and pupils' ability to take turns and listen to one another was developed and strengthened. This whole school approach is clear and developed at other times during the school day such as at lunchtime and during assemblies. Governors have agreed not to teach sex and relationships education, but teachers are instructed to answer pupils' questions honestly. Drug awareness is taught sensitively and well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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