

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CLAREGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104310

Headteacher: Mr D. Lee

Lead inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> July 2004

Inspection number: 255826

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	397
School address:	Chester Avenue Tettenhall Wolverhampton Westmidlands
Postcode:	WV6 9JU
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Thomason
Date of previous inspection:	19/1/1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Claregate Primary School is a larger than average size primary school with places for 420 full-time pupils ranging from four to eleven years in age. In addition, it has 60 part-time places in its nursery for children who are three years old. At the time of the inspection, 367 primary aged pupils were attending full time, with an additional 60 children attending part-time in the nursery. The school always is oversubscribed, with 78 pupils applying for 60 reception places in 2003. The school serves an area of Wolverhampton that is in an average socio-economic area. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is below the national average, but as only a sixth of the pupils opt to eat a school meal this does not reflect the socio-economic background of the pupils. The percentage of pupils from other cultural backgrounds is above the national average at 24 per cent. The majority are from Indian backgrounds. Seven pupils do not speak English as their first language.

The majority of children transfer from the nursery to the reception class and then into Year 1. Their attainment levels on entry to Year 1 are average overall. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is five per cent, and lower than the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need; this is also below the national average. The school regularly loses up to 10 of its higher achieving pupils at the end of Year 4 each year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. D. Gander	Lead inspector	Design and technology, art and design, foundation stage, special educational needs
9146	Mr M. Brennand	Lay inspector	
31963	Mr M. Padmore	Team inspector	English, physical education, history, religious education
2266	Mr J. Allen	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, English as an additional language
25778	Mr A. Hicks	Team inspector	Science, geography, music, personal, social and health education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is an effective school**, because it ensures that pupils achieve well. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and in the last year have improved with more pupils reaching higher levels. The stability in staffing results in a consistently good teaching and in many lessons teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, and all staff know how well pupils are progressing. Staff are dedicated and hardworking, completing much of their curriculum development responsibilities outside the school day. In relation to the money available to the school and the high standards it achieves, **the school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils by the end of Year 6 achieve well in most subjects, and particularly in information and communication technology (ICT), and in design and technology.
- There is a very good ethos for learning, and as a result, pupils become mature and enthusiastic learners.
- The curriculum planning is used very effectively and contributes to consistently good teaching and learning. It is enriched by the high emphasis on the performing arts.
- Teachers are very dedicated and hard working, but do not have any non-contact time to plan or to carry out subject responsibilities.
- The school is not yet using self-evaluation systematically enough in order to spread good practice, and identify and improve areas of weakness.
- There continues to be weaknesses in the quality and quantity of the accommodation.

**Since its last inspection in 1998 the school has made good improvements to the overall provision.** It has coped well with the increased numbers of pupils, and maintained its high standards while major building work was taking place. Accommodation for the nursery and reception children has improved but there is a lack of appropriate outside play areas. The unsatisfactory classrooms, library, and toilet areas are about to be replaced. The health and safety issue has been effectively dealt with, and there is now a good ICT room. The school development plan has been improved and considerable improvements made to curriculum planning and its co-ordination. Monitoring of the standards has improved well. Monitoring of teaching has been introduced, but teachers do not have a chance to observe each other and share good practice.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	Year 2001	Year 2002	Year 2003	Year-2003
English	B	B	C	C
mathematics	C	B	C	C
Science	A	C	D	D

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

**Pupils achieve well.** In most subjects standards are above average. Results at the end of Years 2 and 6 have fluctuated over the last three years but the standards seen on the inspection have improved from last year. There are indications that these will continue to rise, as many Year 5 pupils are

already achieving above the national expected level. There are more pupils attaining the higher levels in national tests. This is the result of the improved curriculum planning, the grouping together of pupils at similar standards for English and mathematics for Years 3 to 6. Science is showing a good improvement. There is no significant difference between the standards reached by boys and girls, or for pupils of different ethnic origin. Overall, achievement in the nursery and reception classes is good, but some higher attaining children in the reception classes are ready for more challenging activities and learning. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, and to one another. **Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good.** Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The educational provision of the school is good. Teaching and learning are good,** and there are examples of very good teaching. The curriculum is good and consists of experiences that cater for the interests, aptitudes, and particular needs of pupils. Good assessment of pupils' progress takes place, and used well to plan their later learning, but it is insufficiently detailed in foundation subjects. The school provides very good care and good support, advice, and guidance. The accommodation, with the exception of the overall space for reception children, is satisfactory. Links with parents are very good, and good with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Leadership by the headteacher is very good, and there is good support from the management team. The governance of the school is good. The effective and prudent financial management has underpinned high standards and achievement. The school meets all legal requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Children like coming to school and feel that they are treated fairly. Parents have great confidence in the school. A small number felt they did not have enough information on their children's progress but an overwhelming majority stated they were well informed. A very small number reported that their children had been bullied, but the inspection team felt that the school dealt very well with any occurrence.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- The systematic use of self-evaluation in order to spread good practice, and identify and improve areas of weakness
- The quality of the outside play area for the reception year children.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

The standards achieved are above the national average and pupils achieve well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well in the nursery.
- Some higher attaining children in the reception classes are ready for more challenging activities.
- The setting of pupils for English and mathematics has helped to raise standards, and the standards in science have improved significantly.
- Pupils achieve high standards in information and communication technology (ICT), and in design and technology (D&T).

#### **Commentary**

1. Children, during their time in the in the nursery achieve very well. They make very good progress especially when considering they only attend on a part-time basis. Children come into the nursery with a range of ability levels, and their achievement is average overall. By the time they move into the reception class, many are already well on their way to achieving the learning goals that children are expected to reach at the end of the school year. They are able to sit for short periods of time as a group, listen to a story, recognise letters and sounds, write their names, recognise numbers up to 20, and confidently talk about what they are doing. Assessment shows that they make gains in all areas of development. This is because the nursery is a well-organised and calm learning environment. There is careful planning of a good balance between adult directed activities and child initiated learning. It takes into account the changing maturity of the children, and learning activities are altered so that the provision meets the needs of all children.

2. Most children in the reception classes have benefited from the good foundation for learning found in the nursery. As a result, some children come into the reception classes as higher achievers. As the year progresses they become ready for a more formal structure to their learning opportunities. The school has, in keeping with national and local initiatives, made considerable adjustments to the way in which learning experiences are presented to these children. It has moved from a very formal approach to one based on active learning through structured play. The school has continued with a very informal approach throughout this first year, and has not introduced more formal one as the children have become ready for increased challenges. As a result, some higher attaining and/or older children, who were during the inspection at the end of their reception year, were not interested in the activities which were available to them. This happens in both classes, and when each group is taught by different teachers. It happens in child-initiated activities where pupils wander from activity to activity, do not engage in any meaningful way with learning, and in a few instances mistreat the resources. Some children make it very obvious that their interest lies in the more formal activities taking place. For example, they stand close to the numeracy group and listen to the teaching. When this happened, they were directed by staff to 'their activity' for which they had no real interest, and as a result, spent time wandering around the classroom.

3. Overall, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics have improved over the last two years, with a higher number of pupils achieving the higher levels of 3 or 5

respectively; these are the standards expected of pupils two years older than they are. This is the result of improved curriculum planning and the high expectations by teachers for what pupils can achieve. There is also good assessment in English and mathematics, which is used to set realistic but challenging whole-school targets. In order to achieve these targets, the school regroups pupils in Years 3 to 6, based on the monitoring pupils' progress, so that pupils attain their best by being challenged to reach higher levels. Of particular concern to the school was the lower science result in the end of Year 6 tests. Analysis of pupils' work and assessment information indicates that standards have improved significantly during the year, and a high percentage of pupils is attaining above the national average. This increase in standards is the result of the curriculum planning improving the quality of teaching. The school's monitoring and evaluation shows that pupils are more confident when using their literacy skills to interpret the meaning of questions on the test papers. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls. Any small differences that do occur are identified and become part of the school's overall planning for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (16.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (28.5)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. The standards achieved by pupils are particularly high in ICT, and in D & T. Pupils are well taught in both subjects, with some examples of very good or excellent teaching. In ICT pupils are given a good amount of time to practise specific skills and this allows them to become proficient users of ICT. In D & T teachers have a very good understanding of the wider and specific requirements of the curriculum. Pupils are taught to be designers with enquiring minds. In both subjects the curriculum is very well planned and is effectively led by co-ordinators who have a high level of subject expertise. They therefore provide teachers with very knowledgeable advice and support. In ICT, the lessons are organised to make good use of a well resourced ICT suite throughout the day.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and the school makes very good provision for their personal development. The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well. Attendance is good and pupils' punctuality is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good.
- Relationships are good, warm and trusting, and pupils feel secure in school.
- Personal development is good but they do not have a school council.

- Attendance has improved and pupils are keen to join in with all the school offers.
- Pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a high profile and is central to the ethos of the school.

## Commentary

5. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn and find lessons interesting and challenging. They feel that teachers make learning fun and they enjoy the variety of experiences that the school provides. All pupils are excited by their work which engages them almost all the time. The exception, occasionally is the higher attaining pupils in reception classes when their activities are not directed by the teacher or other staff. Pupils throughout the school appreciate the individual and 'house' awards system for work and good behaviour, and know that their efforts are appreciated and valued. They enjoy the levels of responsibility that they are given and feel that they really matter to the staff. The school has worked hard to encourage regular attendance and punctuality through the support of parents. This has improved since the last inspection. This, and the pupils' very good attitudes, make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement. Punctuality is generally good, with the majority of pupils arriving in good time for the start of the school day.

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6	School data	0
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.*

6. Behaviour is very good in lessons, as pupils move about the school and at playtimes. Staff have high expectations of conduct and behaviour, and pupils respond well. There is mutual trust and respect between both pupils and staff. The school has a consistent approach to behaviour which is appreciated by the pupils. This impacts positively on the ethos of the school. The school does not allow bullying and this is instilled into the pupils. Any incidents that do arise are dealt with promptly and with sensitivity. At playtimes pupils are well supervised; playing happily and well together, and they use the play and games equipment sensibly and with enjoyment. The older pupils show care and respect for the younger ones. There have been no exclusions in recent years. This sanction is used rarely and only when all other avenues in the process have been exhausted.

7. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are fostered by their responsibility as monitors and helpers. As they get older they are encouraged to take on increasing responsibilities. For example, older pupils apply to become prefects, are keen to follow the code of conduct set out for them, and take on supervisory duties about school. Pupils are encouraged to take risks with their work and to feel secure in the knowledge that making mistakes is part of learning. They have a very good understanding of what is right and what is wrong. High profile is given to pupils' social and moral awareness, and this has helped to establish very strong, warm relationships throughout school. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate very well in play and work. They are very friendly, polite and welcoming, greeting visitors with a smile and a 'hello'. They hold doors open for each other, and are quick to say sorry when the need arises.

8. The school promotes racial awareness very well. It values and celebrates the differences in the rich multicultural society within which the pupils live. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. This is enhanced through religious education, and the way the staff strive to make the school inclusive and a microcosm of the social world in which the pupils live. Pupils are taught to appreciate and respect others beliefs, ideas and cultures. This can be seen in the good level of fairness and tolerance they demonstrate, and is enhanced by work in subjects, such as geography, history, religious education, art and music.

9. The school pays particular attention to developing pupils' social and moral awareness. Pupils' spiritual awareness is enhanced well through the curriculum and assemblies. Most major festivals of most world religions are celebrated, linked to personal, social and health education (PSHE), and developed in the classrooms. Many representatives from differing religious groups come into school to enrich the pupils' understanding of different faiths. The good displays of art about the school make a valuable contribution to the overall ethos of the school. Music, dance and drama enrich pupils' creative and emotional development and their self-esteem and confidence is developed from reception to Year 6. The singing and drama, evident in the excellent Year 6 leavers' assembly production of 'Alice in Wonderland', was spectacular.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The overall educational provision of the school is good. Teaching, learning, and assessment are good. The care, support, advice, and guidance are very good. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Links with parents, and other schools and colleges are very good. Links with the community are good.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, and there are many examples of very good teaching. Assessment is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The secure curriculum framework, and its use by teachers in planning, results in teachers having high expectations of achievement for all pupils.
- There is an insistence of high standards of behavior and the encouragement of positive attitudes to learning.
- The grouping of pupils in Years 3 to 6 based on achievement for English and mathematics is particularly beneficial to teaching and learning.
- The use of teachers to teach one subject across four classes ensures a consistent approach.

### **Commentary**

10. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there are examples of very good teaching in all subjects. This ensures that the school attains high standards and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The school's results at the end of Years 2 and 6 are improving and there are an increasing number of pupils who reach the higher levels. This is because the teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers use the new curriculum planning very well as a framework for planning learning outcomes for pupils in all lessons. Therefore there is consistency and no variation in standards as pupils move through the school. It also provides teachers who are new to the school or who teach on a temporary basis to have a clear framework to teach to. Pupils' learning is therefore based on previous work. Teachers also plan the use of literacy in all subjects. Pupils are expected to produce extended pieces of writing, such as evaluations in design and technology, and in art and design, and in history and this helps to improve standards in writing as well as the other subjects.

*Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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2 (5 %)	12 (31 %)	18 (46%)	7 (18 %)	0	0	0
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*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.*

11. All teachers use good strategies to make the lessons exciting and pupils eager to learn. The ethos in the school centres on ensuring that pupils become mature and independent learners and this it achieves very well. Teachers use discussion and questioning to challenge pupils, check understanding, and draw on their experiences. This in turn helps them understand more easily and makes their learning more meaningful. A great value is placed on pupils' contributions, whether they are correct or not, and these are used to develop their ideas further and to see alternative possibilities. Pupils are expected to work and discuss with a partner an aspect of the task, and to share ideas, such as in D & T lessons where they sometimes work on group tasks. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good. There is mutual respect, and therefore any immature behaviour or silliness quickly disappears.

12. The assessment of pupils' work, and teachers' lesson planning arising from this, are good. There is joint planning between teachers who teach similar year groups, and this helps provide continuity of curriculum coverage between classes. Recently the school has paid particular attention to the grouping of pupils for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. They have used the information from the assessment of pupils well to regroup pupils according to their attainment levels, and provide teaching groups where pupils are at a similar level. The school has taken this innovation further by using the ongoing assessment in these subject to regroup pupils according to achievement in different aspects of the subject. This good practice ensures that pupils are concentrating on the learning objectives which are very well matched to their levels of attainment.

13. The quality of teaching and learning is also enhanced by the decision to use each teacher's expertise and experience to its best advantage. To achieve this, teachers of the four classes in Years 3 and 4, or in Years 5 and 6, specialise in teaching subjects in which they have more expertise. For example, one teacher teaches art and design to years 3 and 4, while another teaches all the design and technology. By doing this, the school ensures that teaching and assessment of one subject within two year groups are consistent, that standards are securely understood by the teacher concerned, that teachers have fewer subjects to plan and assess, and that the demands on teachers' time for subject meetings is reasonable. While the teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is overall good, it is better in the nursery class where the activities presented to children are securely based on their previous learning and their readiness to take on more challenge.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is good and supports pupils' achievement well. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are very good. Staffing is good, and accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Curriculum planning is very good.
- Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities contribute very well to learning.
- The school staff are well qualified and deployed effectively to maximise the use of their specialist knowledge.
- There are still areas of the building which are unsatisfactory,

## **Commentary**

14. Curriculum planning was weak at the time of the last inspection. Planning at all stages, from long-term overviews and schemes of work through to short term weekly planning, has been extensively revised. It is now very good. A good balance has been struck between the times allocated for each subject, and all statutory requirements are met. The weaknesses in planning which centred on the systematic development of pupils' knowledge and skills as they moved through the school, has been very effectively remedied. The new planning sets high expectations through the teaching of the clear objectives. This structures this learning very well. The very good planning that is now in place is a key factor in the consistently good teaching seen throughout the school.

15. Teachers make good links between English, mathematics and other subjects. There is also good emphasis on the development of specialist vocabulary, for example in geography and science, and there are opportunities for extended writing. Accounts of history museum visits, and the use of measuring skills in subjects, such as in design and technology all contribute well to learning in all the subjects concerned.

16. Educational visits, visitors to the school and extra-curricular activities all add very well to the quality and range of learning experiences enjoyed by pupils. These contribute effectively to their personal development. For example, pupils speak with enthusiasm of their visit to Bewdley Museum to experience life in Victorian times, where they say that the "real experiences" they had, enabled them to "learn by actually doing things". They have many opportunities to take part in inter-school sport. They do well. For example, they have been local gymnastics champions for several years! During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were putting the finishing touches to their production of "Alice in Wonderland". Work was of a high dramatic and musical standard. One pupil spoke highly of how her self-confidence was improved over the course of the three-day residential trip she had recently enjoyed, because she was faced with unusual challenges, such as abseiling down a sheer cliff face.

17. The staff are well qualified to meet the needs of all curriculum subjects. Classes in Year 3 to Year 6 are often exchanged to make good use of teachers' specialist knowledge, for example in music, ICT or physical education. These arrangements work well and contribute effectively to pupils' achievements.

18. The rolling programme to develop the school site and provide new accommodation is nearing completion. The new buildings are attractive and welcoming. However, when the reception classes are full, the interior space and outdoor play area are too small. They inhibit flexible approaches to teaching, especially for creative play.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are very good. Staff know pupils well and they provide good support and advice when required. There are satisfactory arrangements for seeking pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a high level of care, particularly in regard to health and safety.
- The arrangements for the introduction of pupils into the school are very good.
- The school creates an environment in which pupils grow into mature and responsible individuals.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to have a say in the running of their school.

### **Commentary**

19. There are very effective arrangements for the care and welfare of pupils. From the time children commence their education in the nursery, they are looked after well and this approach continues through every stage of their school life. The school ensures that health and safety

procedures are up-to-date; with good adherence to risk assessments and daily visual checks. In this regard, Claregate is well served by its health and safety governor whose full-time job elsewhere encompasses responsibility for health and safety. Together with the deputy headteacher, he undertakes audits of the premises every half-term to identify risks. These are reported to the headteacher who takes the appropriate action. Fire drills are conducted each term, and it was as a result of an unsuccessful drill, that the school decided to install a new fire alarm system. Child protection arrangements are also good. They are backed up by a dedicated staff who provide a secure and caring environment where pupils feel happy and secure.

20. Arrangements for the induction of pupils into the school are very good, and underpin the partnership the school establishes with parents. Following the completion of an application form, the head of the nursery visits the home of every new child. To ensure good practice she is accompanied on these visits by the nursery nurse. Following this visit, all children attend a taster day at the school where they become acquainted with their surroundings and meet their new classmates. Once children move to the reception year, they undertake another induction; the implication being that they are starting a new school. The headteacher is present at this induction to meet with parents and to give an introductory talk on the ethos within the school.

21. One of the strengths of the school is the creation of an environment in which pupils can grow into mature and responsible individuals. Staff play a major role in this by promoting very good relationships. Through this they get to know their pupils very well. This intuitive knowledge is backed up by good assessment procedures and as a consequence staff are able to advise pupils appropriately.

22. A strong emphasis is placed on personal development, but pupils do not have a 'voice' in decisions taken about the life and work of the school, for example by way of a school council.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has established very good links with parents. It has established good links with the community and very good links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school fosters very good links with parents.
- Very good support for trainee teachers enhances provision for pupils.
- The strong links the school has with other schools enhance curriculum provision.

### **Commentary**

23. Parents have very positive views of the school and the way it relates to them. This starts with the induction in the nursery, where parents are made to feel welcome and are encouraged to get involved in the life of the school. On a daily basis parents are welcomed into the playground. Here they have the opportunity to talk to the class teachers in an informal setting. This contact is vital for passing on information and resolving minor concerns. To this informal contact are added regular newsletters, curriculum worksheets and annual reports on pupils' progress. These are particularly good; giving parents a clear indication of how their children are progressing both academically and personally. Parents are encouraged to help out in school during the week. Many do this by supporting reading, practical lessons and generally supervising pupils when required. The school has also run the highly successful 'Share Programme', which gives parents of pupils in Year 1 advice on how they can support their children at home. Those attending found the course of great benefit. Other

opportunities to create strong links are provided through the active Friends Association, which organises around twenty social and fund- raising events a year. Significant sums of money are raised each year; being used to buy DVD players, televisions, musical instruments and toys for the nursery.

24. This open partnership with people from outside the school is echoed in the support the school gives to the graduate teacher programme. In conjunction with Wolverhampton University, the school has been involved in the scheme for a number of years and is highly regarded for its work in supporting trainee teachers. There is a successful partnership with Wolverhampton College. This provides good opportunities for the training of nursery nurses and teaching assistants, and provides the school with additional support.

25. Claregate school welcomes the involvement of outside agencies, and has created good links. These are used to broaden the range of topics that pupils experience. The established links with Kings School have helped to enhance the provision in the arts, and particularly in dance and drama. Aldersley School also supports work in art, ICT and engineering. This link is particularly valued as the school provides transport and shares in the publication of a termly newsletter, which goes to all parents in both schools. Aside from these pupil-specific links, the local cluster of six schools meets half-termly to provide a useful forum for moderating work and sharing expertise.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall leadership and management are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. The leadership and management of senior managers and the governance of the school are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher who is supported effectively by the senior managers and the governing body.
- The headteacher has created a strong sense of common purpose which focuses upon high expectations, and the raising of pupils' achievements.
- Arrangements for checking the school's performance are good but the school could use self-evaluation more effectively to monitor other aspects of its work.
- The good deployment of staff has contributed to the good and efficient planning of the curriculum.
- Co-ordinators lead and manage their subjects well.

### **Commentary**

26. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, ensuring very clear direction and purpose. He has set a clear plan to continue to improve the quality of education. He is firmly focused on providing the pupils with an effective curriculum and continually strives for high standards. The headteacher is frequently seen about the school, and is readily accessible to pupils, staff, parents and governors. He sets the tone for each day; ensuring that pupils and staff feel valued and motivated; reinforcing the school's ethos of inclusion, and creating an excellent climate for learning. His warmth and caring approach inspires pupils and staff. This is evident in the way everyone goes about their work, ensuring a strong sense of team work and shared vision for the school.

27. The headteacher manages the school very well and is very effectively supported by the senior management team. The management structure was reorganised following the last inspection and the

senior management team now functions very well. Although there is no non-contact time for the deputy headteacher or the special educational needs coordinator, they still lead and manage their areas of responsibility very well. The headteacher has successfully built a well performing team with a strong, shared commitment to improvement. The members of the team all have very clear lines of responsibility. The management by this team structure creates cohesion, identity, accessible support and rapid response to areas in need of improvement. The very effective delegation of responsibilities to staff at all levels ensures that all staff feel involved and participate in whole school decision making. The good deployment of staff has contributed to the good and efficient planning of the curriculum. The very good management systems ensure the smooth day to day running of the school.

28. Co-ordinators lead and manage their subjects well. They are very knowledgeable and evaluate the impact of current practice on standards and achievement. They evaluate provision for their subject and also have the confidence and expertise to offer strong support to their colleagues when new initiatives or direction are introduced. However, within this good subject leadership, there is a shortcoming. This is the lack of non-contact time for co-ordinators to monitor more lessons and share good practice. This has been particularly difficult for the school to achieve, due to a budget deficit brought about by the unexpected part-funding of the new buildings.

29. The monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning through the performance management of staff is comprehensive and very effective, and has contributed strongly to the high quality teaching and standards of work seen throughout the school. A high priority is given to the professional development of each member of staff. For example, consideration has been given to ensure all members of staff are trained and skilled in the use and teaching of ICT. This has led to improvements in standards achieved by the pupils.

30. A strong aspect of leadership is the strategic planning undertaken through the school improvement plan, which covers the next three years. This document is detailed and contains criteria against which the school can measure its success in achieving its targets. It is closely linked to the budget. The plan provides a clear sense of vision, direction and purpose. The school is a place that welcomes all groups of pupils and places a high commitment to providing high quality provision to meet their individual needs. The school monitors performance data well and uses it to check the progress that pupils make, and especially to compare how it is performing against national and similar schools. Areas where improvement is needed are highlighted and action is taken to address the issues raised. These arrangements have impacted positively upon the standards attained. However, although the school has started to use self-evaluation well to monitor and evaluate aspects of standards, it does not analyse other aspects of its work. For example, to identify the need to introduce more challenging work into the reception class, or to evaluate the differences in achievement of pupils in different parallel classes.

31. The governance of the school is good. The school has recruited new and enthusiastic governors. They are very knowledgeable about the school and are able to hold it to account for the standards it achieves. They are perceptive in their understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and support the school very effectively. For example, in its desire to establish the new nursery. They have introduced a good range of strategies for checking on the work of the school. For example, they visit the school often, and individual governors are linked to specific classes, subjects or responsibilities. As a result, they have access to a lot of very useful information to help them draw conclusions about the school's future direction. The new governors are ambitious for the school and have a very important input into the school improvement planning cycle. They are keen to be involved at all levels and want to be seen as an integral part of the school. For example, their summer term full Governing Body meeting involves eating with the pupils at lunchtime and meeting the staff for coffee before holding their official meeting in the afternoon.

*Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	810801
Total expenditure	756272
Expenditure per pupil	1949

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22421
Balance carried forward to the next	54529

32. Financial planning is very good. The total income to the school is below the national average. This has been exacerbated by the school having to part fund the building of the nursery, which when completed was above the expected cost. In order to do this, the school had to set a deficit budget. This official over-spend was paid off in three years by good management, but has meant that the school has had to cut back on other developments, such as non-contact time for senior managers and teachers, and the equipping of an outdoor play area. This was considered by the school as the best available option and the school has done well to minimise the negative impact. The budget has been very well managed to support the school's priorities for improvement and is regularly monitored to ensure that spending levels are within the agreed targets. Prudent financial management by the headteacher and governors has contributed to the high standards attained.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING and SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

33. Provision for children in the nursery and reception years is good and has been maintained since the last inspection. Children enter the nursery in September or February, for either a morning or afternoon session. The two full-time reception classes are organised as mixed ability groups, with most children transferring from the nursery to the reception. This enables children to have a firm foundation on which to build their achievements. There is a very sensitive approach and welcome into school for children and parents, and transfer arrangements into the reception class are very well considered. They ensure that the children's move to this stage of education is smooth. Staff have very good relationships with parents, who are delighted with the provision.

34. Considerable adjustments have been made to the way in which the learning experiences are presented to children. It now starts from the philosophy of active learning based on structured play. However, since this is the first full year that the new approach has been used, the overall provision is not as effective as it might be for all children. The school has continued with a very unstructured approach throughout the academic year, and has not introduced the children to more structured learning activities as they have matured and become ready for increased challenges. As a result, the well-planned curriculum was not operating as effectively as it should. During the inspection some higher attaining and/or older children were not interested in the activities which were available to them. Examples of this were seen in child-initiated activities in both classes when pupils wandered from activity to activity, did not engage in any meaningful way with learning, and in a few instances mistreated the resources. There were also instances where children wanting to join the more formal activities taking place, but could not do so as it was not their turn to be part of the group. They showed no real interest in their allocated activity and as a result, spent time wandering around the classroom. In contrast, the curriculum was operating effectively in the nursery where it is organised to meet the developing and changing needs of the very youngest children. Here the provision is very good as all children are challenged through a range of different adult-led or child-initiated activities.

35. Developments, since the last inspection, in assessment are giving the teachers a good overview of children's ability and progress as they move through this foundation stage. Because of this, and their considerable experience, the staff have been very aware of the shortcomings in the new organisation, but have not acted on the information they had. As a result, although overall, children make good progress and achieve levels above the average for children of a similar age, for a few children this good achievement tails off at the end of the year. Teaching is good overall and is very good in the nursery. The teamwork and enthusiasm of the staff creates a happy and busy atmosphere, and children are eager to learn and explore their environment. They make good progress and achieve well, particularly in language and literacy, numeracy, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

36. The new buildings have enhanced the provision and are a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, while the nursery is of a reasonable size for the number of children and the curriculum it delivers, the situation is different in the reception classrooms. While the two rooms are large enough to accommodate the activities and the number of children at the beginning of an academic year, space is at a premium by the time of the second intake of children in the spring term. When there are thirty children in each class, there is insufficient room to set up floor activities especially when, because of poor weather, the outdoor environment cannot be used. While the nursery has reasonable and safe hard play area, the reception classes have no such provision. The outdoor area for these two classes consists of a grassed area between two buildings. It is not securely

fenced, nor is there access to a secure adventure playground. The school is aware of this and has it as a priority need for the school.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make fast progress in settling into the routines of school.
- The school assesses children very well and sets appropriate targets for individual development.

### **Commentary**

37. The children enter the nursery at an average level, and rise to the teacher's high expectations for independent learning, co-operative play and inquisitiveness. Children achieve well and make fast progress in settling into the routines of school, working and playing alongside others, developing independence skills, and in some situations, showing care and concern for others. Social training is a key element of the Foundation Stage. Staff use every opportunity to make sure children learn and understand class routines. This is particularly effective in the nursery where the youngest children with only a few months experience are able to engage in the activities without teacher direction. They understand that there are times when they need to listen carefully to instructions. Children are busy, confident and friendly and have warm relationships with the adults. This good progress continues into the reception classes, where teachers encourage sharing, independent or group working. The children have some opportunities to engage in short sessions of structured work, such as for literacy and numeracy. Children respond very well to these situations and concentrate for good lengths of time, but some children are less responsive to the practical activities the teachers have prepared. However, many children do select and settle to their preferred options, and investigate with serious concentration. By the end of reception, due to very good teaching they show how far they have progressed through the enthusiasm with which they help in clearing up. When they join older pupils, for instance in the infant assemblies, their behaviour is very good.

38. The assessment system the school uses is based on close observation of children and enables teachers to track developing maturity. As a result, teachers know the children very well. This starts at the beginning of their nursery stage through the very good links that are established with the home and parents. This allows developmental targets to be set in conjunction with parents, and to plan additional input from outside agencies if necessary. Children make good progress during the reception year and are often more mature and confident than other children of a similar ages.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff use opportunities in all areas of learning to develop the children's language skills, and assess these well.
- Teaching is good.

### **Commentary**

39. The strength in the curriculum is the range of opportunities through a variety of activities which encourage children to communicate, read, and write. Activities in the nursery and reception concentrate on language and literacy, with work on sounds, formation of letters and sentences to

record what children have seen or learnt. Nursery children begin to recognise letter sounds of words and enjoy making marks on paper or whiteboards. Most are beginning to write their names. By the time they reach the reception class they are writing familiar words, while higher attaining children are reading and writing short sentences. Pupils' levels of speaking and listening are very good, with pupils being able to hold sensible conversation, make their wants known, and respond to complex instructions and questions. Standards are above average at the end of the reception year and achievement is good.

40. Teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers plan work in this area of learning so that they are meeting the needs of all the children very well. They challenge the higher attaining children while providing appropriate learning opportunities for pupils who have special educational needs to achieve and make good progress. This is because the comprehensive assessment system that is in place shows what steps children need to acquire to move towards the next level. This information is used well in language and literacy, in which teachers effectively group children together who have similar learning needs. This setting in small groups enables effective learning to take place which results in high achievement and good progress.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- High expectations by teachers enable children to achieve well.
- Teachers use many opportunities to reinforce mathematical ideas.

### **Commentary**

41. Achievement in mathematical development is good and standards are above those for children of a similar age. Most children, but not all start nursery at an average level. They make good progress, and by the end of their time there they are at expected level for their age. Some of these young children have gone beyond the expected level and are achieving the levels expected for older children. They are able to count and organise numbers up to 20. The teaching and learning are good overall, with high expectations by all teachers being at the centre of children's good achievement. Teachers plan many opportunities, both in discrete teaching sessions and the wider continuous activities, which are set out around the classroom and outside. The good balance between the two helps pupils achieve well, especially in the nursery where the children enjoy number rhymes. They listen well to stories which focus on early number concepts, such as about a lady bird that lost its spots. They take great delight in looking around the grounds for the 'lost spots', and when they have found four; they are able to work out how many they will need to find to make six. This area of the curriculum has a slightly more formal approach in reception and children are ready for the increased challenge, eager to work out problems, and show their answers. The small groups of children concentrate well in spite of the many interruptions from other children who are not actively engaged in an activity. Further good progress throughout this stage enables the children to reach, and for a good many children surpass, the early learning goals. For example, by the end of the reception class the higher attaining pupils are counting to 100, adding two single numbers together, and can name and recognise shapes.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers create an exciting and creative learning environment.
- Very good teaching and good balance of curriculum experiences enable children to achieve very well.

## Commentary

42. This area is a strength of the Foundation Stage. In both the nursery and the reception classes the teachers, through joint planning and very good teaching, provide very good practical opportunities to broaden children's understanding of the world. The restricted space within the classrooms is used effectively, along with resources to support different areas of learning. There are good opportunities for children to observe, feel and handle material and equipment, both in and out of the classroom. For instance, all children were engaged in a 'bug hunt' topic during the inspection and the grounds surrounding the school were used to their best advantage to support teaching and learning. Here children discovered what lived under logs, stones, up trees and in ponds. These young 'scientists' all handled magnifiers expertly, and recorded their findings through writing, drawings, paintings, models. Photographs show a range of visits supports all the topics.

43. Explanations of what children will be doing and looking for are very clear and informal. They draw on the children's own experiences and engage their curiosity which prompts them to observe and investigate for themselves. For example, when nursery children found a lizard and a small frog under a log, they knew what they were both called, and were anxious to see if any more were under other logs. The planning is very thorough and gives a good balance to elements of history, geography, science, technology and Religious education. The use of the new computer suite is of particular benefit for reception children's ICT skills. The children's standards at the start of the nursery are average, and they reach the expected levels by the end of the nursery. By the end of reception, children achieve very well, and exceed the early learning goals.

## PHYSICAL and CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

44. There is insufficient evidence on which to judge the overall provision for physical and creative development. In **physical development**, the main weakness in the provision is the inadequate outdoor play facilities which undermine the opportunities for children to make good progress. However, teachers do make as much use as they can of the outdoor play areas. This is easier to achieve in the nursery where there is a fenced hard play area. Young children have opportunities to play safely in and on large equipment. This they do successfully by sharing and taking turns. However in the reception classes this is harder to achieve as there is no hard play area close to the classroom. The area is grassed and causes problems for organisation when the weather is poor. The school is very aware of this and plans have been put together should additional funding become available. Children demonstrate that they love playing outside and, when able, the teachers provide resources, such as water, sand and construction material which extends most of the classroom learning on a larger scale. This applies to the smaller scale equipment used to improve finger control, and the manipulation of a wide range of tools and writing equipment. In **creative development**, teachers plan a wide range of experiences which stimulate children's imaginations. Role play situations support children's language development well. They imagine themselves running a café, sending letters, and building model 'bugs'. A strong area is painting, with children exploring colour and subjects using their imaginations, experience and observations. They enjoy music and sing well, both in group situations and sometimes to themselves.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2 ENGLISH**

### **English**

The provision of English is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average in all years.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The good behaviour of children makes a significant contribution to their learning.
- The library is inadequate in size and in the number of books it contains.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards of speaking and listening in Year 2 are above national expectations. Pupils listen very well to the expressive reading of their teachers. The responses they give show understanding and are confident and extended. This was so in a lesson where pupils were asked to discuss possible endings for a story in which a girl finds a seal pup alone on a beach. The pupils' suggestions were thoughtful and appropriate. In the same lesson they read their draft writing out with clarity, assurance and expression, often using words and phrases well for effect. Pupils in Year 6 also reach standards in speaking and listening that are above national expectations. In class discussions, they develop their views well, often engaging the listener with well chosen words and phrases. Their confidence extends outside of the classroom. In the end of term school production that was put on in the inspection week, they delivered their lines with good expression and assurance.

46. In reading, Year 2 pupils exceed national standards. They are fluent readers who tackle a wide variety of texts. They use a good range of strategies to reach meaning. They are often excited by the books they read in class and on their own. They can retell the main events, as well as offering ideas about the characters. They know what they like about what they have read and have a good grasp on how to search for information in fact books. Year 6 pupils have acquired an above average range of skills to help them enjoy and understand books. They identify the main features of the texts they read and can advance theories about various aspects such as motive, plot and the devices used by the author to achieve response.

47. Writing in Year 2 is above average. The school has concentrated on developing writing over several years and this is now paying off. Year 2 pupils' writing is creative and well structured. Pupils write using a variety of approaches and styles that include for example a postcard describing a holiday and dialogue between the pigs and the wolf in the popular fairy tale. They follow the latter up with news reports about the houses falling down. Punctuation and spelling are good. Presentation, including handwriting, is consistently good. In Year 6, writing is above average. By this year, pupils are confidently writing in a good variety of styles both formal and informal. They adopt the style of an author successfully when they provide alternative endings for a popular novel. Their writing of letters of complaint is increasingly mature, putting the cases they adopt well. They use paragraphing effectively and spelling and presentation are generally above average. Work done on the development of vocabulary has paid off and they actively seek to use words that are interesting and effective in their context.

48. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and planning is very good. This ensures that what pupils learn builds on what they have learnt before. Lessons have a clear structure, and teachers begin with clear instructions that set out what is to be done. Lesson objectives are shared giving good direction to learning. Teachers plan well for group activities using good knowledge of individual attainment to place pupils with others of similar ability. Lessons end with a plenary session that often celebrates the progress pupils have made as well as explaining where their learning is heading. Teachers develop good relationships with their pupils. They make lessons enjoyable and motivate pupils to learn. Challenge is good and teachers make sure that lessons have pace and rarely flag. Pupils rise to the challenge, as in a Year 6 lesson discussing T.S. Eliot's cat poetry when a brainstorm yielded a very good variety of apt comments about the poem under consideration. Question and answer is well used to probe understanding as well as to give pupils the opportunity to put forward a good variety of ideas. However, more opportunities could be provided to promote discussion and debate.

49. The co-ordination of the subject is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection especially in writing due to measures that have been put into place and which are now paying off with recent improvements in standards. The library remains a problem as it was in the last inspection report. However, there are now firm plans to improve it. There remains a need for the co-ordinator and other teachers to observe the teaching of colleagues in order to share more widely the considerable good practice that was evident during the inspection. The school makes very good use of outside resources and visitors to promote literacy. One example is the recent work of a specialist in Commedia del Arte who worked with pupils and a music specialist from the local education authority to produce operas.

### **Literacy across the curriculum**

50. The provision of literacy across the curriculum is very good. Teachers plan well to include opportunities to develop literacy through the other subjects of the curriculum, such as in design technology when pupils write informed evaluations of their work. In science, pupils are taught how to write reports of experiments. Pupils extend their literacy and ICT skills when they produce presentations in ICT lessons. In history, there are many opportunities such as reports of visits or first person accounts from the point of view of a historical character, such as Guy Fawkes.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well, and the grouping arrangements in Years 3 to 6 have impacted positively on standards.
- Teaching is good throughout the school with some very good practice and high expectations.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment is effectively used to target all pupils, especially those who need extra support.

### **Commentary**

51. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils make good progress during their time in Years 1 and 2. Good progress is maintained and by the end of Year 6 standards are again above average. Boys and girls do equally well and the majority of pupils attain above nationally expected standards. The grouping arrangements in Years 3 to 6 have impacted positively on standards and have enabled higher attaining pupils to achieve levels normally associated with 13 year-olds by the time they leave school. Pupils

are well motivated and find lessons interesting and stimulating through being realistically challenged. They record their mathematical work well and the quality of presentation is good throughout the school.

52. The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is good overall, with some very good practice observed in several classes. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) appropriately, and, as a result, pupils learn well with some very good work being seen in many classes. Learning intentions are made clear to pupils, and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. As a result, pupils settle to their learning quickly and progress within lessons is good. Teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupil progress and move the learning on. Lessons and learning both move at a good pace, with staff ensuring that pupils fully understand one concept before moving on to the next. Very effective monitoring within lessons by staff enable them to identify pupils who need further support. This ensures that all pupils' needs are met.

53. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good, and they use the mathematical language appropriately so that pupils become used to using the correct terms at an early stage. For example, in a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils worked collaboratively and confidently on the addition of numbers, using appropriate vocabulary and presenting their work carefully. Any spare moment was taken up with number games and rhymes, reinforcing the pupils' learning. In a very good Year 6 lesson pupils worked with prime numbers and prime factors very confidently, drawing on their previous learning to good effect. The teacher's high expectations impacted positively on the pupils' responses.

54. The subject is well led and managed. All staff have attended 5-day mathematics courses and their subject knowledge is good. Assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do are used and test results are analysed to set targets and areas for development for groups and individuals the following year. These groups and individual pupils are then targeted appropriately. Every pupil has a tracking sheet enabling all staff to target individual needs. The mathematics lending library of games and activities for parents and pupils is well used, as are resources in lessons. Overall planning is very good across the school. The analysis of results, and the compilation of portfolios of pupils' work and teachers' own regular monitoring and evaluation of their teaching and of pupils' learning ensures that the quality of provision is maintained and pupils make good progress.

55. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and each others work as well as having appropriate feedback following the marking of work. Day-to-day assessment of the pupils' mathematical learning informs teachers of their progress and allowing them to better cater for pupils' needs in the next and following lessons.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

56. There are satisfactory links between mathematics and other subjects. Basic numeracy skills are used well in other subjects and activities. Teachers are increasingly using ICT well to strengthen pupils' mathematical skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Subject leadership and management are good.
- Systems to record pupils' progress are good.

### **Commentary**

57. Current Year 2 pupils are maintaining the good standards seen in previous years. All pupils reach the levels expected for pupils of their age, and about one third of pupils do better than this.

Standards in Year 6 have improved, reversing the dip in performance seen in recent years. They are now above average overall and recent differences in the performance of boys and girls have been eradicated.

58. The quality and consistency of teaching have improved since the last inspection. Planning is now very good. Learning intentions are clear, teachers have high expectations and there is a good emphasis on science investigations. Pupils in Year 2 for instance, know from practical experience that heating chocolate until it melts leads to a reversible change when it cools again, but that heating eggs does not because they become cooked. Older pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct science experiments from initial predictions and designs through to final analysis and conclusions. Pupils use their mathematics skills well to record and analyse experimental data, for example drawing graphs to show how yeast causes dough to rise over a period of time or to show how liquids cool from different temperatures.

59. Practical lessons are organised well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. For example, in an experiment to investigate how light affects the growth of cress seeds, the teacher prepared three different planning templates. These enabled higher attaining pupils to write in their own words, whilst giving more structured support for the writing of average and lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. As a result all pupils made good progress in planning the experiment and achieved well.

60. Teachers demand high standards of work, both in content and the quality of presentation. They ensure that pupils learn a good range of science vocabulary and factual knowledge. Pupils rise to the challenge well and work hard. This is seen for instance in Year 6 work where good diagrams and detailed explanations show how plants take in nutrients and how they exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide through their leaves.

61. Science is led and managed well. Good leadership, especially in the development of subject planning, has rectified inconsistencies in teaching and achievement reported at the last inspection. Additionally, a good system to track pupils' progress has recently been developed, and is now becoming well established. Priorities for further improvement, notably in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning and the use of assessment information to guide short term planning, are clearly set out in the school development plan, and are appropriate developments.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Good leadership and management of the subject have ensured good all-round improvements since the last inspection.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good, pupils are keen to learn.

### **Commentary**

62. Standards are above average because pupils are well taught and given a good amount of time to practise specific skills in each year group. The curriculum is well organised to maximise the use of the ICT suite throughout the day. The level of resourcing is good and pupils have access to good quality desk-top computers that are networked and linked to the Internet both in the ICT suite and also in classrooms.

63. Good teaching, by knowledgeable, computer-literate staff, helps pupils learn effectively. Teachers use the interactive projector, screen and PowerPoint in the ICT suite to good effect. By the end of Year 2, pupils are well used to accessing programs they need and in two lessons observed they were working confidently with a hyperlink between a file and a website. In a Year 5 lesson pupils were working with spreadsheets competently, storing their information and using the *AutoSum* tool well. Every pupil in Years 3 to 6 has an email address so that when they work on their own computers at home they are able to send attachments to their files in school. Strong features of all the lessons observed are the good relationships between teacher and pupils and the very positive attitudes of the pupils resulting in good progress in learning being made.

64. ICT is extremely well led and managed by the co-ordinator who works closely with a Year 5 teacher, resulting in standards and overall provision being considerably improved since the last inspection. The two teachers have helped raise teachers' expectations and up-to-date training has created knowledgeable teachers who use ICT effectively as a teaching tool. The school has a variety of good quality hardware and the co-ordinator has plans to continually update the resources. There are good links with local schools which includes the shared use of an ICT technician. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively in their own Log Book and Pupil Profile document that moves with the pupil through the school recording the experiences undertaken and the National Curriculum levels achieved.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

65. There are satisfactory links between ICT and other subjects. It is used as a research tool for different subjects and pupils have opportunities to manage choices and different techniques, thus developing their skills in a wider context, as well as being used in literacy to help in the drafting and re-drafting of writing.

## **HUMANITIES**

66. In **geography** two lessons were seen, work from pupils in all years was examined and a short discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils was held: this allows some judgements to be made but does not allow overall judgements on teaching or overall provision. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress across the school overall, and achievement is satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the last inspection.

67. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of how life in other places compares to their own. They know for example that the Arctic is cold and that the local Inuit population relies for survival on seal hunting and fishing. A good lesson developed pupils' understanding of how building a new pier can both benefit and threaten life for those living on an island. The use of a taped story and follow-up questions drew out considered comments, for instance that the island farmer would welcome easier access to mainland markets, but that other residents might not welcome increased tourism because "*it will get too busy*" and there would be "*too much rubbish*".

68. In Year 3 to Year 6, pupils know a good range of geographical terms such as *settlement*, the *water cycle* and river features such as *meander* and *confluence*. However, there is little difference in the quality of written work for pupils of different abilities because teachers give all pupils the same worksheets on which to write their notes. While this works well for the majority in teaching the important geographical information that pupils need to learn, it gives higher attaining pupils insufficient scope for research and restricts opportunities for them to write in their own words. Good planning ensures that pupils generally study topics in sufficient depth. For example Year 4 pupils know that the volcanic, mountainous terrain and tropical climate of the Caribbean island of St Lucia affect farming, how people live and how these have led to the development of tourism. In an investigation of local traffic problems, a very good lesson drew well on earlier learning as pupils wrote letters to local councillors suggesting solutions such as residents' parking permits, pedestrian

crossings and one way systems. Very good individual support enabled all pupils to express their ideas effectively in well-written letters. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, lessons for Year 6 pupils have been interrupted this year. This has led to work being rushed. For example, diagrams to show how waterfalls form and explanations of the impact of industrial pollution on the River Severn are not explained in sufficient detail to allow higher levels of attainment to be reached.

69. In **history**, it was not possible to see sufficient lessons to come to a secure judgement regarding overall provision, teaching and learning in history. From an analysis of work and discussions with the co-ordinator, it is clear that standards in history are at least in line with national expectations and that there is good coverage of the areas of study required by the National Curriculum. The study of history is considerably enhanced by the good number and quality of visits made by pupils to places of historical interest, such as Shugborough Hall and Warwick Castle. These visits are well-planned to make the most of these valuable resources. History contributes well to the development of literacy skills, and teachers and pupils make good use of digital cameras to record and to research topics thus enhancing their ICT skills.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

70. It was not possible to observe sufficient lessons to make secure judgements on teaching and learning in **RE**. From an analysis of work in books, supported by discussion with teachers and the co-ordinator, it is evident that standards are in line with the expectations set out in the local agreed syllabus and that achievement is at least satisfactory.

71. By the end of Year 2, pupils learn to appreciate ways in which Christians, Jews and Sikhs practice their religion and to identify significant characteristics of each faith. Pupils carefully record their responses to questions about the people they care for and who care for them. They learn about significant events in the religious calendar and also find how different faiths celebrate special times such as births and death. By the end of Year 6, they have learnt about religions such as Hinduism and Islam. They discuss the differences and the similarities between the major religions. Good use is made by teachers of writing to explore religious events. For example, pupils write creatively about the days leading up to Christ's crucifixion. Their work shows good insight and incorporates good detail that helps to bring to life those days and what they mean to Christians. As well as studying mainstream faiths, pupils also learn about Christians who work with the less fortunate in the community, such as the Salvation Army. In this way they learn about ways in which people with faith put belief into practice.

72. The leadership is good. The subject manager has introduced a good scheme of work, based on national guidelines, and has encouraged teachers to make good use of members of the different faith communities in their teaching. Thus, Asian dancers have worked with pupils, and parents have been in to talk about Divali and what it means to them.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

73. A total of seven lessons was observed in this area of learning, too few to make reliable judgements about provision and teaching in art and design, design and technology, physical education and music. Evidence from other sources, including pupils' work and discussions with them, was also gathered.

74. No lessons were seen in **art and design**. Examination of curriculum documents shows that lessons are planned well and that there is coverage of the different aspects on a rolling programme in all year groups. Innovative organisation of teaching, through some specialist teaching, is helping to

raise standards as it provides consistent quality of teaching and learning. A particular strength is the expectation for pupils to provide a written evaluation of some of their work. This supports pupils' literacy skills very well, as many pupils produce lengthy pieces of written work. All pupils have sketchbooks which are also regularly used by pupils to record and evaluate ideas.

75. Two lessons of **design and technology** (D&T) were observed during the inspection; one in Year 1 and one in Year 3. However, there is an abundance of evidence in pupils' workbooks and on display around the school to show that overall pupils achieve higher than average standards. The work pupils produce shows that they are being guided and encouraged to be 'designers and innovators'. Pupils and their activities are well organised so that they work either in groups or pairs and this helps to promote co-operation and support.

76. The high quality work produced by the pupils is the result of very good teaching and the very good leadership provided by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. Teachers begin lessons with searching questions concerning the previous work, and get pupils to reflect on the purpose of the designs they have produced, and where they are up to in the making process. Teachers continue to discuss the pupils' ideas with them at every stage so that they increase their knowledge about processes they may want to use. They ensure that pupils have made decisions about the equipment that might be needed in the making of the products and that they refer back to their designs. Pupils are encouraged to think about how their models could be improved or changed, and there is an expectation for all pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, all work is evaluated by pupils and work books show some lengthy and detailed self-evaluation reports. This is encouraged and expected from pupils of all ages and supports their achievement in literacy and numeracy.

77. The co-ordinator is a trained technology teacher who has continued to improve and develop the subject across the whole school. Very good support and advice is provided to teachers which have resulted in teachers feeling confident to teach the units of work within the curriculum. This is also helped by the decision of the management to nominate teachers to teach the subject to more than one class, thus providing a more consistent approach and enabling the monitoring and evaluation of standards. However, although there is an awareness of the standards achieved across the school and the curriculum coverage, there is not time allocated for the co-ordinator to get into classes and witness practice first hand. This limits the sharing of good practice across the school.

78. **In music**, standards in singing are above what is expected by the age of seven and eleven. Years 1 and 2, pupils led a school assembly on the theme of American Independence Day. They performed a number of songs from memory. Performance was polished, rhythmically accurate and in tune. The final rehearsal for the Year 6 musical "*Alice in Wonderland*" was excellent. Good musical direction and attention to details ensured that the standard of singing was high. Solo and ensemble singing was confident and expressive. Many older pupils, and especially those in the choir, sing two and three part songs well, confidently maintaining individual parts.

79. Lessons seen were satisfactory. In one, pupils improvised short percussion sequences to represent different parts of the "*Hary Janos*" fable, which they were to hear performed later in a visit to Symphony Hall in Birmingham. Work was interesting and challenging but was spoiled by some pupils' over enthusiasm and lack of firm management. As a result, some groups did not think enough about the best way to produce the musical effects they were seeking and not all listened carefully to each other's performance. Another lesson developed pupils' understanding of how percussion instruments can make sounds of different length. However, the lesson introduction was rather long which led to some pupils losing concentration. Sound instruction revised simple playing techniques to ensure that pupils played instruments correctly.

80. Subject management is good, especially in taking the lead in teaching singing and supporting less confident colleagues in planning. However there is no system to record pupils' progress. Singing is taught well and there are many opportunities to perform both in school and local music festivals. These opportunities are clearly much enjoyed. They develop pupils' self-confidence and contribute well to their personal development.

81. From discussion and records of the many **physical education** (PE) activities undertaken by pupils at the school, it is evident that standards are in line with national expectations by Year 6. Provision is considerably enhanced by the good number of clubs and tournaments that take place outside of the school day. Over a third of pupils, a good number, take part in these. They include athletics, cross-country and a gymnastics club. A good number of pupils represent the city in sports such as football. The school makes good use of outside bodies such as a dance specialist from a local high school who has contributed a dance workshop. There are an unusually high number of specialist PE teachers on the staff and, where possible, good use has been made of this to offer specialist PE teaching. The co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has been effective in introducing good schemes of work over the past few years. These have brought consistency and progression to teaching and learning, however, as yet there is no formal assessment in PE.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

82. No lessons were observed in this area during the week of the inspection and so no judgements are made about the overall provision. However, personal development is considered by the school as being an important part of its work. Although it is not specifically timetabled, aspects of the curriculum are appropriately taught within other subjects. The school appropriately includes areas of healthy eating, personal safety, consideration for others less fortunate than themselves, and taking care of their environment. It also permeates everything the school does, such as the drama performances, and caring for the community. This contributes to the very positive ethos in the school. There is an expectation that pupils of all ages and abilities become mature, caring and independent learners.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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