

INSPECTION REPORT

OLD CHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Darlaston

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104224

Headteacher: Mr Paul Westley

Lead inspector: Mrs Parveen Raja

Dates of inspection: 28th June – 1st July 2004

Inspection number: 257079

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
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	357
School address:	School Street Darlaston Wednesbury West Midlands
Postcode:	WS 10 8DL
Telephone number:	0121 5686329
Fax number:	0121 5265973
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Baker
Date of previous inspection:	8 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Old Church C of E Voluntary Controlled Primary School is bigger than most primary schools and is situated in Darlaston near Walsall. Most pupils come from the surrounding areas with considerable disadvantage. Children's attainment when they start school is well below average. Most of the pupils are from a white British background. Some pupils are from an Indian background, with a few from Pakistani and Caribbean backgrounds and a small number of mixed heritage. There are two pupils learning English as an additional language. The school has registered 61 pupils (17 per cent) with special educational needs, including three pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. This is in line with the national average. The range of special educational needs includes dyslexia and autism. The school has implemented the 'Sure Start' national initiative and has introduced 'Enquiry into Learning Project' and Primary Learning Network. The school received Healthy Schools and Investor in People awards in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6282	Parveen Raja	Lead inspector	Mathematics
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector	
11901	Patricia Lowe	Team inspector	English Music Religious education English as an additional language
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History
16971	Roger Hardaker	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Ltd

BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school makes good provision for the education of its pupils. The school is very well led by the headteacher, well supported by the key staff and is very well governed. The school ethos is very good with a high emphasis on pupils' personal development and on the promotion of good achievement. Teaching is good overall and consequently most pupils achieve well. Individuals feel valued and pupils of different abilities achieve success. The school makes effective use of resources and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in reading, science, information and communication technology (ICT), music and religious education by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.
- Teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and the Foundation Stage with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, which enables all pupils to achieve well.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and as a result, pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well, and relationships amongst the school community are very good.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve well enough in English and mathematics.
- Provision in ICT is very good.
- The rate of pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998. The provision for developing writing and speaking and listening is good and standards have improved. There has been very good improvement in the provision for music and most pupils achieve above average standards in music.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Achievement is good overall. In Year 6, standards are currently above average in reading, science, ICT, music, art and design and religious education. Standards are overall average in English and mathematics. Test results in 2003 for this age group improved in mathematics and science but dipped in English. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language continue to achieve well because provision for their needs is good. The school has not identified its gifted and talented pupils and some pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Compared to similar schools, pupils are doing very well particularly in English. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in science, ICT, religious education and below average in English and mathematics. Results tend to be below average, although they were well below average in 2003 because of the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the cohort. Nursery and reception children make good progress but are unlikely to reach the learning goals for their age. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and are close to reaching the learning goals in this area of development.

Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory but has improved over the past year. Pupils make very good progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and develop confidence and self-esteem well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. **Teaching is good** overall. It is very good in Years 5 and 6 and very good teaching was seen in nearly all the classes. Most of the satisfactory teaching occurred in Years 1 and 2. This is because on occasions activities are not sufficiently varied and pupils spend too long listening to the teachers in these lessons. In all the classes and the nursery, teachers work well with support staff, who contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Staff set high standards of conduct and consequently, pupils behave very well. In Years 3 to 6, in particular, activities are challenging and stimulating, teachers' expectations are high and pupils experience learning as fun. Assessment practice is good overall, but in Years 1 and 2 it is not used rigorously enough to inform planning in English and mathematics for the higher attaining pupils.

This is a welcoming and friendly school with a lot going on, particularly in drama, music and sporting activities. The curriculum is good overall and is very well enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The effective links with the community and partner schools contribute well to the quality of learning. The accommodation and resources to support children's learning are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **good**. The headteacher provides very effective leadership in creating a school climate in which all individuals feel valued, resulting in very good relationships and enhanced confidence and maturity in pupils. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff effectively set high expectations of pupils and staff and present themselves as very good role models of professional practice. The governing body provides very good governance for the school, organises its work well and makes a good contribution to school effectiveness. The school meets all the statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and most have no significant concerns. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, whose views are sought, feel that the school is good and they like coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve as well as they can in English and mathematics.
- Formally Identify gifted and talented pupils and ensure that their needs are met.
- Establish formal procedures for seeking pupils' views.
- Improve the rate of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **good**, and standards are at the level expected nationally when pupils reach the end of Year 6. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is generally good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress as well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and standards are above average in science, ICT, music, art and design and religious education.
- Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in science and ICT.
- The higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve well enough in mathematics and English.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for this age and a significant number have poorly developed social and language skills. Children achieve well and a few very well because they are taught well and are provided with a very well planned curriculum. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and are close to reaching the goals for this area. In all the other areas of learning children make good progress but are not likely to reach the goals expected in each of the areas of learning because of the level at which they start their education. The nursery and the reception year give children a good basis for their future progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (15.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.7 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.9 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The table above shows that in the national tests, in Year 2, standards were well below average in 2003. This represents a sharp decline over the previous years when standards were generally maintained at below average levels. This decline was due to a high number of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 2 cohort. In science, teacher assessments showed standards as being average. Very few pupils achieved at Level 3 in any of the subjects. The school's trend in the national tests for this age was below the national trend. Most pupils make good progress over time in most of the subjects and achieve average standards in science, ICT, religious education and speaking and listening. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory and pupils achieve below average standards. Although progress is good, standards in reading and writing are below average. In Years 1 and 2 the higher attaining pupils are not provided with work that is well matched to their needs and as a result do not achieve well enough in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.0 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.1 (26.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.8 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table above shows that in 2003 tests, standards in Year 6 were below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science when compared to all schools. Compared to schools with similar prior attainment at the end of Year 2, standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. This represents very good improvement over the previous years' results. The proportion of pupils achieving at the higher than expected Level 5 in science and mathematics has risen well. The trend in the rate of progress over the last five years in the National Curriculum tests was broadly in line with the national trend. The school met its target for English and exceeded it in mathematics by 12 per cent. Teachers' assessments for this year indicate that the school is well set to exceed its realistic targets in English and mathematics with good improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics.
4. Currently in Years 3 to 6, pupils consistently achieve well. The main reason for the good achievement is that the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is very good and so in Year 6 they are well placed to perform well in national tests. Pupils' achievement is good because the curriculum is broad and stimulating and pupils are involved in determining their own targets and assessing when they have reached them. Lower attaining pupils are given challenging work and extra teaching support that are well matched to their needs and result in their achieving well. Standards are above average in science, ICT, music and art and design, and average in English and mathematics. In religious education, pupils achieve standards that are above the expectations set for this age in the locally agreed syllabus.
5. Throughout the school, pupils' with special educational needs often achieve well in relation to the targets within their individual education plans and, where relevant, their statements. Many of these pupils have low attainment levels, but sensitive support from teachers and other adults ensures progress and a sense of success. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds at an advanced stage of English language acquisition are provided with specialist support and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to learning and behave very well. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance levels are **low** compared with other schools. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well around the school and in classrooms, and are very keen to learn.
- Pupils are very considerate and relate well to others.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good and contributes well to their academic progress.
- The attendance records of some pupils are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. The importance that the school places on pupils' personal development is very strong. The provision for the development of pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities is very good. Pupils are happy, confident and eager to learn. Behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently of a very high standard because of the high expectations that are evident in the school. Pupils know what is acceptable. Teachers are very good at stimulating interest and motivating children to try hard. Pupils respond enthusiastically, engaging very well in lessons and other school activities.
7. Pupils work successfully with their classmates. Teachers encourage pupils' ideas and value their responses in lessons. Older pupils help the younger ones and this contributes to the very good relationships between all in school. Pupils are frequently asked to co-operate with one another in lessons; pupils are given a few minutes to discuss things with a partner before responding to a question or offering a suggestion. As a result pupils learn well together, working effectively in pairs and groups and often displaying highly effective levels of co-operation. Pupils learn to value each other and their achievements. They are encouraged to celebrate the success of others. Assemblies contribute well to this aspect of pupils' development, especially those that focus on celebrating pupil achievement. Pupils and parents are confident about the absence of bullying.
8. The school supports children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Children are encouraged to reflect on issues, for example about what friendship means. There are good opportunities for children to appreciate and make personal responses to art and music. Social and moral development is promoted very successfully. Teachers often put the onus on children to make the right choices and ensure that they understand that choices and actions have consequences. As a result pupils become responsible school citizens and are self-disciplined, thoughtful and sensitive to the needs of others. They are eager to accept responsibility. Through activities in English, history, art, physical education and music, children develop a good sense of their own cultural heritage. Pupils learn about the diversity of cultures through their studies in religious education, history and geography and in the theme weeks organised throughout the year. In one of these weeks pupils in Years 3 and 4 learnt much about the culture of the Ancient Egyptians.
9. Attendance is not good enough, but is improving as a result of the school's careful monitoring procedures. Attendance in the last two years has been well below that seen in most primary schools and remains below the national median, but is much improved so far this year. There is no unauthorised absence, but some parents do not appreciate how much schooling their children are missing through sickness or holidays. More rigorous monitoring procedures have identified the small number of pupils whose attendance records fall below acceptable limits. Direct approaches to parents by the school, with the support of the education welfare officer, have brought about a considerable improvement in attendance rates. Most pupils attend well and punctuality overall is good. There have been no exclusions during the last year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-3(%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.4	School data	0.0
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides good quality education. The good teaching enables pupils to achieve well. They are provided with interesting and challenging activities and the curriculum is good overall. As a result, pupils work with enjoyment and concentrate well. They are offered very good support,

guidance and care. Parents support their children's learning well. Assessment of pupils' learning is good overall but does not inform planning rigorously enough for the higher attaining Years 1 and 2 pupils in English and mathematics.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** overall and pupils learn well. It is often very good in Years 5 and 6 where most of the very good teaching occurred. Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection with a much higher proportion of very good and good teaching and no incidence of unsatisfactory teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, which underpins well-planned interesting activities, and as a result pupils learn with enjoyment.
- The focus on the use of probing questions and effective use of interactive whiteboards has resulted in increasing the pace in lessons.
- Expectations for the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not high enough in English and mathematics.
- In Year 1 there is too much emphasis on workbooks in mathematics and the lower attaining pupils are not provided with opportunities to learn through structured play activities.
- Assessment is used effectively, particularly in Years 3 to 6 to help pupils to learn.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	19 (33%)	28 (49%)	10 (18%)	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.

10. Good teaching was seen in every class. Teaching is good because teachers carefully plan challenging lessons, which are well timed to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Suitably varied work is planned to match pupils' different capabilities and so pupils mostly learn at a good rate. Very good questioning characterises most lessons now; it is precisely targeted to encourage pupils with different abilities to give a response and so take part in the lesson. Teachers always explain to pupils what the object of the lesson is and time is generally set aside at the end for pupils to talk about what they have learnt, although this practice is used more consistently in Years 3 to 6. Teachers have good rapport with their pupils and so pupils are confident to ask questions and this helps them to clarify their thinking. Where the quality of teaching is very good, teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. Tasks present challenges and pupils of all abilities tackle these with high levels of motivation. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very skilfully and involve pupils in using the interactive technology to work independently, as groups and in whole class sessions. This moves the lessons at a good pace and makes learning fun. The visual, fast-moving impact of some of the software programs in lessons is highly influential in helping the lower attaining pupils to concentrate for longer periods and capture their interest.
11. Most of the satisfactory teaching occurred in Years 1 and 2. Good and very good teaching was also seen in these classes. The main reason for some of the teaching being satisfactory and lacking the sparkle and vitality is that the amount of time allocated to individual lessons for English and mathematics is overlong. Whilst teachers plan interesting and varied activities for the very wide range of abilities in the class, pupils find it difficult to concentrate for long periods. In some lessons teachers take too long in giving explanations and pupils spend long

periods listening to the teacher. Currently there are a high number of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in Year 2, and teachers ensure that their needs are met well. However, they do not pay sufficient attention to the needs of the higher attaining pupils and consequently they do not always achieve well enough. Expectations for these pupils are not high enough. In mathematics in particular, the higher attaining pupils have few opportunities to record work systematically and build on prior learning. The school is aware of the need to make provision for structured play activities and opportunities for outdoor play for the Year 1 pupils, particularly the lower attaining pupils. This is because when they transfer from the reception year, they are not ready for a full formal programme of the National Curriculum and still need to continue with the Foundation Stage curriculum.

12. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so make good progress. This is because most teachers use good support strategies, including good questioning, praise, and encouragement, to motivate pupils and keep them on task. Teaching assistants support pupils well in class lessons ensuring they can be fully involved and can participate purposefully in all activities. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds at an advanced stage of English acquisition. They work collaboratively with the visiting specialist to further develop their expertise and deploy effective strategies. Consequently these pupils make good progress and achieve as well as their classmates.
13. The school has good systems to assess what pupils know and understand. These are used to give teachers valuable information at the start of the school year on pupils' previous performance and what they have learnt. The senior management team and the assessment co-ordinator analyse the results of all the assessments undertaken and check that pupils are making good progress so that additional help can be targeted where it is most needed. This information is shared with teachers as part of the management's strategy to raise achievement. The system as it stands is thorough and a valuable aid to teachers and to the management of the school but is not applied as rigorously in Years 1 and 2 as it is in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets in English and the practice is well established. It has recently been extended to mathematics and is already beginning to show improvements in standards achieved by pupils in mathematics at Year 6.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. There is **very good** provision for out-of-class activities, which enrich pupils' learning. Provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and relevant.
- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education.
- Support for learning outside the school day is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The accommodation and resources for learning are good.
- Insufficient account is taken of the Year 1 lower attaining pupils' needs in the transition from the Foundation Stage curriculum to the National Curriculum.

Commentary

14. The school ensures that all pupils have a good range and quality of learning experiences. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and for collective worship are effectively met. There is a very well planned programme for personal, social and health education and this supports pupils' personal and social development very well. Good attention is given to the

dangers of solvent abuse and to the importance of healthy eating and personal fitness. The decision to allocate a significant amount of time to English and mathematics is relevant to the needs of the pupils. The priority given to teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills has had a positive effect on pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 in particular. However, the time allocated to lessons in Years 1 and 2 is too long, so that pupils become inattentive and the pace in learning slows. In Year 1 most pupils start with below average attainment and most have not reached the learning goals for the Foundation Stage but are provided with the National Curriculum programme. Opportunities for learning through structured play are rare and there is no access to outdoor play. The school is aware of this situation and is beginning to take steps to ensure a smooth transition in learning opportunities from reception to Year 1. The school has no formal procedures for identifying gifted and talented pupils though in practice their needs are met well in some areas. For example, some pupils attend mathematics workshop in the local high school.

15. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers identify pupils who have special educational needs as early as possible and make good assessments of their needs. Teachers set clear and realistic targets and together with the support staff regularly check on pupils' progress. Teachers plan and tailor the curriculum well to make sure the work they give to the pupils is relevant and helps them to achieve their targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and classroom assistants work well together, ensuring pupils with special educational needs are well supported with the additional help they need to take part successfully in lessons. This contributes to the good progress they make.
16. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is a wide range of sporting and musical activities which is a strength of the provision. The activities are mainly, but not entirely, for older pupils. A flourishing breakfast club provides a good start to the day for many pupils. Visitors frequently contribute to lessons adding a valuable dimension to the day-to-day curriculum. In addition a wide range of visits helps pupils appreciate the wider world. For example, pupils have visited a number of local museums, art galleries and Litchfield Cathedral.
17. The school's open plan accommodation has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was judged to be poor. The teaching areas have been partitioned and pupils are now able to work without disturbance. The three de-mountable classrooms have been replaced with a new building. There is very good accommodation for ICT and for music. Teaching areas are bright, spacious, well maintained and help to enhance learning. Outdoor facilities have been developed very well and are good. The outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage now provides very good facilities and this allows staff to organise a range of activities to enhance learning and physical development. Resources are of good quality and are well deployed to enable best use to be made of them. There are particularly good resources for music and for ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are **very good**. There is **good** support and advice for pupils. There are no formal procedures in place for taking pupils' views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school pays meticulous attention to pupils' health and safety.
- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults and feel valued, which raises their confidence and self-esteem.
- Staff support and advise pupils well, so that they know what to do to improve.

Commentary

18. The school provides a secure, safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Health and safety

requirements are scrupulously observed and pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The comprehensive health and safety policy is carefully implemented, with regular checks of the building and equipment. Safe practices are observed in lessons, for example in the use of cutting tools, and pupils are constantly reminded of the need to take care during their class activities. Risk assessments are undertaken for any new activity or visit, while existing ones are updated termly and prominently displayed to make sure that staff are aware of them. There are good arrangements for first aid and pupils are well supervised at all times. The provision of a breakfast club, run by school staff, is a good example of the school's thoughtfulness in catering for pupils' welfare.

19. The genuine care and concern for the well-being of pupils that are clearly evident throughout the school mean that pupils form trusting relationships with their teachers and adult helpers. As a result, they try hard in lessons and commit themselves enthusiastically to after-school clubs, knowing that their efforts will be supported and encouraged. The school provides good care and support for pupils with special educational needs, which has a positive impact on their learning. There is a strong emphasis on celebrating pupils' achievements outside school, which proves to pupils the extent of the interest that staff have in them as individuals. This helps to strengthen relationships, so that, if pupils have problems of any kind, they are confident that they will find help and support from an adult in school. In personal, social and health education lessons, pupils have good opportunities to express their opinions and share their views about school improvements; as a result, for example, the marked games in the playground and small play equipment have been provided. However, a lack of formal consultation procedures limits the awareness and meaningful understanding of consultative and democratic processes. Both pupils and parents are very happy with the level of care that the school provides.
20. Teachers track pupils' academic and personal progress carefully and have introduced a system of individual support and guidance for pupils to help them learn well. Each term, pupils are given an opportunity to talk about their work and to discuss with their class teacher what they need to do to improve. Targets are agreed and reviewed again the following term, so that pupils always know how well they are doing in school and what they are aiming at. Even the youngest pupils take part in this process, which starts them off on the path that helps them to take responsibility for their own learning as they move through the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, with the local community and with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality and range of information for parents are very good.
- Strong links with the local community contribute to pupils' social development.
- Liaison with other schools brings curricular and practical benefits.

Commentary

21. The school provides a wide range of information for parents to help them understand what and how their children are learning, how well they are learning and how the school is changing and developing. Written information, meetings, workshops and other events are all designed to encourage parents to take an active interest and to become increasingly involved in their children's education. The prospectus and regular newsletters are written in a friendly, welcoming style that reflects the school's 'open door' policy and its approachability, which is recognised and appreciated by many parents. School reports are detailed and informative. They describe pupils' strengths and weaknesses and give clear targets for improvement. There are good arrangements to involve parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs in the review of their children's individual educational plans. Formal consultation evenings for parents are held to discuss their children's progress. Further meetings are organised to explain specific topics such as the end of Years 2 and 6 National Curriculum tests or the transition from nursery

to reception. Many parents take these opportunities to meet teachers and are pleased that they can also talk informally to staff on a daily basis, to deal with minor queries and concerns, or even, on request, to be given a demonstration of how, for example, mathematics is now being taught.

22. Links with the local community are strong and developing. There are, naturally, very strong links with the local church, which include regular visits from the rector and participation by the pupils in services, but pupils also benefit from links with the Sikh temple and the mosque. Religious education lessons are enriched by the contributions of visitors from the local community, who bring artefacts and talk about their beliefs and customs. The school has enjoyed some sponsorship from local businesses in the shape of prizes donated by the supermarket, and musical instruments paid for by a large engineering firm. Pupils act as ambassadors for the school by taking part in a wide variety of local events. Sometimes they join with other schools to show off their talents to the local community, for example through song and dance performances at the Town Hall and a Celebration Parade through the town. The choir has sung and the band played to entertain residents in a home for the elderly, as well as during Christmas celebrations in the town centre.
23. A fruitful partnership is enjoyed with other schools in the local cluster that is proving mutually beneficial, in both curricular and practical terms. There are strong links with the receiving secondary schools in the areas of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Reciprocal visits by teachers contribute towards ensuring continuity of teaching when pupils move into the secondary phase. The facilities and resources of the secondary school are made available, while sports coaching gives pupils opportunities to take part in a wider range of activities, such as badminton and cricket. Links with other primary schools through the Primary Learning Network enable staff to share ideas and good practice. Within the local cluster, primary schools are making more efficient use of their resources by sharing equipment and the expertise of staff, for example in relation to electrical testing and buildings maintenance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and is ably supported by key staff. The governance of the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body takes an active role in shaping the vision and direction of the school and provides a good level of challenge.
- The very clear, shared vision and high aspirations of the headteacher and key staff lead to good achievement on the part of pupils.
- Efficient management systems reflect the emphasis on obtaining best value for money.

Commentary

24. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team in leading and managing the school. Together, they form an effective team. They have a strong commitment to raising pupils' standards and achievement by continually improving the quality of education provided. Strategic planning reflects the school's aims and values. Leadership of the curriculum and teaching is good and is based on a framework of shared values. Area and subject leaders give careful consideration to future developments and are very good role models for other staff and pupils. They establish a positive climate for learning and inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils, well. There is a strong commitment to equal access to all that the school has to offer and to the development of pupils' independence and self-esteem.

25. The management of the school is good. The school has established good systems for the regular monitoring and evaluation of the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science. These provide clear evidence of achievement, and enable effective action to be taken where necessary. In other subjects, the analysis of assessment information is used well to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning and to inform teaching. The management of all subjects is good and sometimes very good. Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching and learning, teachers' plans and pupils' written work. They carry out regular evaluation and incorporate their findings into action plans, which provide a clear sense of direction for improvement. The school manages the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff well. Together with good induction procedures, very good performance management and the continuing professional development of staff, this is a crucial factor in bringing about improvement.
26. The management of special educational needs is good. Pupils' needs are well catered for through well-constructed individual education plans. There is effective liaison between the school and key outside agencies to make sure there is a co-ordinated approach to helping pupils. The quality of the individual education plans for pupils with special needs is good. These include realistic targets for improvement against which progress can be readily assessed. These targets are regularly reviewed.
27. The governance of the school is very good. The governing body is very well organised, under the leadership of a very experienced chairman. Members of the governing body give generously of their time and varied experience, in support of the school, and take full advantage of available training opportunities. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, as a result of the monitoring undertaken by individual governors and committees. They take an active part in the school's development and ensure that the school fulfils its duties with regard to special educational needs, English as an additional language, race equality, disability, gender and inclusion. Governors challenge, as well as support, the leadership and management of the school and are prepared to take difficult decisions, if necessary. Their approach to financial management is very good. Their management and use of resources, based on the principle of obtaining best value for money, are very efficient.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	798,428
Total expenditure	821,411
Expenditure per pupil	2,256

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,471
Balance carried forward to the next	19,488

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

28. The Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education and is a strength of the school. Most children enter nursery with well below the expected levels of attainment. The limited language skills of many children affect their overall standards of attainment in other areas, particularly language and mathematical development. The quality of teaching, learning and achievement is good. This is because the children are taught well through a good range of stimulating and very well planned activities. Children therefore enjoy all areas of learning and work and play with growing levels of concentration. Children with special educational needs receive good support so that they achieve well. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Good systems are in place to monitor and record children's progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Much work has been done to improve outdoor play provision, which is now very good. The addition of an attractive garden and greenhouse to the outdoor facilities makes a significant contribution to what is now an exciting and vibrant learning environment. Parents speak highly of the overall provision and they are warmly welcomed into the nursery at the end of the sessions. By the time children leave reception standards overall in all areas of learning are below the expectations for this age.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children feel secure and confident in trying out new ideas.
- Very good relationships between children and adults underpin a very effective learning ethos.
- Most children are very well behaved and are keen to learn even though they can concentrate for only short spells of time.

Commentary

29. This area of learning receives a high profile, especially in the nursery. Children make very good progress as a result of very good teaching. Children quickly respond well to the interesting, yet calm and ordered environment. In the nursery some of the youngest children quickly learn to work and play together as a result of encouragement and very good opportunities for collaboration with others. Children are given choices and encouraged to make up their own minds and gain in independence. Adults take every opportunity to encourage responsibility; for example, children are expected to clear up after activities. Children respond extremely well to the high expectations of conduct, effort and achievement as staff consistently support and encourage them with praise. They are keen to engage in the wide range of activities on offer. Children's capacity to keep concentrating by themselves improves significantly over time. For example, most of the oldest children quietly listen to stories and use computers independently. However, many still cannot maintain attention and concentrate for lengthy periods of time. Careful planning by the staff of a wide range of exciting and stimulating activities caters well for their needs. Although the standards children attain in this area of learning by the end of the reception are slightly below expectations, they achieve very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for role-play contribute well to developing speaking and listening skills.
- Every opportunity is seized upon to develop children's speaking skills.
- Most reception children have sufficient knowledge of letter sounds to enable them to read and write simple words.
- Sometimes, by using only 'closed' questions', adults supervising activities miss good opportunities to draw out children's ideas.

Commentary

30. Most children achieve well but are unlikely to achieve the goals expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and imaginative play is used very effectively to promote speaking and listening skills. Staff are skilled at initiating conversations and encourage children to use language in a wide range of contexts. Listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are planned well so that children quickly learn letter sounds and a few simple words. For example, in music sessions children build up a repertoire of songs, learning the words by heart. Through good, direct teaching children gradually learn to associate letters and sounds. They learn that some letter combinations have distinct sounds of their own. Using this knowledge the higher attaining children learn to recognise simple words. Nursery children make meaningful marks on boards and on paper and most reception children are beginning to form letters, displaying a developing control of writing materials. Higher attaining reception children are able to write down several letters correctly on hearing the individual letter sounds. A significant number are able to spell simple words correctly. The classrooms and other work areas are attractive places containing stimulating displays that reflect the importance of language, through signs, notices and books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Careful planning ensures frequent opportunities for practical mathematical activities.
- Stimulating resources engage children well in mathematical learning.
- Higher attaining reception children are challenged and extend their learning well.
- Sometimes children take too long to move between activities and some children do not stay in focused activities from start to end.

Commentary

31. Children achieve well and by the time children leave reception some are attaining the early learning goals but overall standards are below those expected for this age. A good range of attractive resources stimulates and focuses learning nicely. For example, computer programs that children access through the interactive whiteboard give good support in learning how to add and subtract. Good relationships encourage them to learn enthusiastically through number songs and games. For example, children count, sort, match and ordering a wide range of objects, often in a games context, and learn the sequence of numbers when singing number songs. There is a good focus on the development of mathematical vocabulary. Reception children learn to write numbers and most count in order up to nine. The higher attaining children know one more than a given number within nine. These children have secure number skills and knowledge and use them well in solving simple number problems. In

a very good lesson the teacher strongly focused on helping children use mathematical language more confidently and order numbers up to ten and beyond. Most children were able to identify the *smallest* and the *largest* number from a group of numbers. Whilst children are encouraged to develop independence and make choices, the time taken by some children is not always monitored rigorously and on occasions some children do not use their time gainfully.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning provides children with many opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Children are encouraged to be inquisitive.
- Monitoring of group work and interventions by adults are not sufficiently rigorous in some activities.

Commentary

32. Teachers effectively plan a wide range of activities to encourage children to explore and find out for themselves in order to help broaden their understanding of the world around them. As a result of this stimulating planning, children are motivated and achieve well. The youngest children play with sand and water, discovering their various properties for themselves. Older children show an awareness of change. For example, when helping plant seeds to grow vegetables, fruit and flowers in the garden and greenhouse, they observe change over time as the seeds germinate, the plants grow and flowers turn to fruit. This enables them to develop some understanding of where fresh food originates. Computers are used regularly in the nursery and reception area. Nursery children, initially, need a lot of adult help but by the end of reception year, children confidently use computers for a range of purposes. For example, they move the mouse confidently to create pictures and patterns on screen. They are encouraged to be inquisitive. For example, one reception child was observed using a magnifying glass in order to look in more detail at a number of shells. He was pleased to see the shell in greater detail but was also intrigued by the fact that the magnifier 'made the shell bigger'. He then decided to sort all the shells according to their colours. Opportunities to extend children's knowledge and deepen their understanding are sometimes missed because children work in small groups and adults do not always get round to all the groups.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good outdoor play area contributes to the very good outdoor play provision.
- The children's skills develop quickly through many activities available each day both indoors and outside.
- Children's finer manipulative skills are not yet as well developed as their control and co-ordination in movement.

Commentary

33. Achievement is good overall because children's physical activities are varied but they are unlikely to reach all the goals expected for this age. By the end of the reception year, children are close to developing the control co-ordination and poise in their movements in physical education lessons, in the classroom and around the school. However, progress in

manipulating small objects such as pencils, paintbrushes, scissors and markers is slow. Teachers provide very good opportunities for children to choose activities outside and good opportunities to choose inside, throughout the day. Very effective use is made of the outdoor play area, which is very well resourced with a very good range of large toys and play equipment. There are imaginative markings on the playing surface and these extend opportunities for play and for children to move in different ways on their wheeled toys. This makes a significant contribution to children's good progress. More formal physical education lessons enable reception children to develop skill and control in body movements and raise their awareness of space and others. In one good lesson children were observed experimenting with different ways of moving along, jumping and responding to rhythm. These children were learning well to control and refine movement and to co-operate together in using space effectively.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of different experiences is planned and well resourced.
- Children make good progress in imaginative work and play.

Commentary

34. Staff plan a good range of stimulating activities and the children achieve well with good teaching and good levels of support. Many come close to attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children are taught the skills needed to mix paint, and use brushes to express their ideas. Children are encouraged to make things using a range of media. They draw and paint observational pictures of plants and flowers and they make recognisable models using pliable materials. Few reception children are yet at a point where they plan and create colourful two and three-dimensional pictures and artefacts without a lot of support, but they do work independently and select their own materials. In physical education lessons, reception children move and use spaces creatively and in response to their own ideas. In music lessons reception children sing simple songs from memory and the higher attaining children suggest different ways in which instruments can be played in order to produce different sounds. They describe the rhythm and sound of the music they listened to, using the words 'loud', 'soft', 'faster' and 'slower'. They show a developing understanding of pitch and beat.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong emphasis on the teaching of the basic skills of speaking and listening is having a positive impact on standards.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 do not reach high enough standards.

Commentary

35. Standards are below national expectations in Year 2. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average standards. Virtually no children achieve expectations for their age. This lack of higher attaining pupils, together with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (21 per cent in

Year 2), militates against achieving national standards. Since the last inspection, standards have declined but show an improvement on the 2003 national tests when standards were well below national expectations in reading and writing due to there being 41 per cent of pupils with special educational needs and virtually no higher attaining pupils. Standards in English are in line with those expected at Year 6. This represents an improvement on the 2003 national tests, when standards were below national expectations, although above average in relation to pupils' prior attainment. All groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.

36. Standards in speaking and listening are below those expected of pupils in Year 2. They match those expected of pupils in Year 6, and a small number of pupils exceed the standards expected for their age. Most pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident and articulate when speaking formally and informally. Attainment in reading is tracked and analysed to improve standards. Standards in reading are below those expected of pupils in Year 2. They are above those expected in Year 6. Standards in writing are similar to those in speaking and listening. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to write at length. Their skill in using extended sentences and advanced vocabulary improves as they move through the school. Spelling and punctuation are of a good standard. Handwriting is generally neat and legible and most pupils take pride in the presentation of their work.
37. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2, overall. It is very good, overall, in Years 3 to 6, due to the successful grouping of pupils for English and high expectations for all groups of pupils. Where teaching is very good, teachers use very effective methods to engage and retain pupils' interest successfully. Work is challenging for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive very good support from teaching assistants. Most pupils work very well, both independently and collaboratively. Good assessment and tracking procedures are used effectively in response to individual needs. The increased emphasis on self-assessment in Years 5 and 6 ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to improve.
38. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has a very good knowledge of the standards and achievement of each child and has been instrumental in implementing new approaches to learning, in order to raise standards further. She has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject. She has created a very effective team and provides a very good role model for staff and pupils. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the use of interactive whiteboards, the application of literacy skills across the curriculum, drama and special events. Provision shows good improvement since the last inspection. Speaking and listening show good improvement, and the breadth of writing has improved. The emphasis is now on improving attainment in Year 2.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. Opportunities for pupils to use their language and literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum are very good. There are particularly good examples in religious education, where pupils are encouraged to record their work in a variety of interesting ways. In addition to writing chronological and non-chronological reports in other subjects, pupils are encouraged to write diaries, character studies and eye-witness accounts. Drama lessons and role-play enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills and develop their confidence and self-esteem.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well.

- Increased emphasis on developing mental calculation strategies and practical and problem solving skills is helping to improve standards.
- The subject is well led and managed and this contributes well to improving the provision.
- Expectations for higher attaining pupils are not high enough in Years 1 and 2 and they do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have fewer opportunities to record their work and as a result do not consolidate their learning well enough.

Commentary

40. Standards are average at the end of Year 6 and below average at the end of Year 2. Standards have been maintained at Year 6 but have declined from average to below average at Year 2 since the previous inspection. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well because they are provided with challenging and stimulating work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates and achieve standards in line with their capabilities. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in mixed age classes that are set by ability. Work is very well matched to pupils' individual needs, expectations are high for all the ability groups and pupils make good progress, with a few making very good progress. In Year 1, pupils generally start with below average skills in mathematics, make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2 and achieve standards that are generally in line with their capabilities. In the 2003 test results for the Year 2 pupils, very few pupils achieved at higher levels and a high proportion achieved below the national expectation.
41. Good quality teaching enables most pupils to achieve well in Years 3 to 6. A particular strength in Years 3 to 6 is the way teachers start lessons with a variety of mental arithmetic and mathematical exercises. Strategies include team games, use of small whiteboards to quickly display an answer, and timed tests. The pace in the lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge and focused questioning hold pupils' attention, promoting clear thinking and enabling them to learn in a logical and systematic way. In lessons where teaching is very good, pupils learn at a very good rate as in Year 5 in a lesson on measurement, reading 24-hour and 12-hour clocks. The very good opportunities for speaking and listening keep pupils attentive and fully involved.
42. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory and most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils are provided with well thought out, interesting activities that make learning mathematics fun and provide ample opportunities to learn through first hand experiences. However, whilst teachers ensure that the activities are varied to meet the wide range of abilities in the classes, on occasions expectations for the higher attaining pupils are not high enough. Moreover, there are fewer opportunities to record work independently. There is an over-emphasis on the use of workbooks in Year 1 and very little work is recorded in books, so that pupils have limited opportunities to review and revise previous work; as a result, they do not build firmly on what they have learnt.
43. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The enthusiasm and expertise of the co-ordinator have a positive influence on the subject. The school's effective monitoring and evaluation procedures are used well to analyse test results and assessment outcomes and weaknesses identified are addressed consistently. The co-ordinator, in collaboration with the headteacher, monitors teaching and learning regularly and ensures that all the teachers provide sufficient opportunities for practical and problem-solving activities. A high emphasis is now placed on the use of probing questions. The focus on mental arithmetic is beginning to pay dividends in improving pupils' understanding and increasing their mental agility in calculating with growing speed in different number operations but this is at an early stage of implementation. Training and external consultant support have been used well to raise teacher expertise. However, evaluation and implementation of outcomes are not carried out with the same rigour in Years 1 and 2 as in Years 3 to 6.

Mathematics across the curriculum

44. Pupils often use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and consequently develop an appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. Links with ICT are particularly good. Pupils have very good opportunities to be actively involved in the regular use of interactive whiteboards in the classrooms. Many pupils work on a range of mathematical programs independently and as a group. Good links are maintained with art and design and design and technology. For example, Years 1 and 2 pupils made symmetrical patterns in painting butterflies. They made Joseph's Coat, using measurements and geometric shapes to design and make the coat.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Standards are rising steadily.
- Teaching is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to work.
- Science makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Work is assessed satisfactorily but marking does not consistently inform pupils about how they can improve.

Commentary

45. In 2003, national test results at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 were above average compared to national averages, and well above average when compared to similar schools. Standards have been rising steadily since the previous inspection and this trend is confirmed by provisional results for 2004.
46. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. A high percentage of pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs and this affects the attainment profile. There are no differences in attainment across the four aspects of the subject. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6 and there are strong gains in Years 5 and 6. There are no differences in achievement between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils from the various ethnic groups in the school achieve equally well.
47. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge across all aspects of the subject. Planning for lessons is thorough and the practical aspects of lessons are carefully thought out. Health and safety considerations are kept in mind in all practical lessons. Pupils show interest in science and have very good attitudes to work. Pupils' work is marked and corrected but written comments do not often provide pointers for improvement. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy development. The use of computers to enhance and enrich the curriculum is very good. Teachers control their classes very well. As a result pupils behave very well in lessons. Working relationships between pupils and with their teachers are very good and this is a strong factor in the happy but very businesslike atmosphere found in most lessons and the continued improvement in standards. There are good assessment procedures in place to track pupils' attainment and progress.
48. Science makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to their personal development. In most lessons there are opportunities to work together, share, take turns and discuss the work with other pupils. The subject co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time and has not yet had time to make an impact on

the subject. The school's co-ordination of science is good. Improvement in science since the previous inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are good with strengths in Years 5 and 6.
- Links with ICT in other subjects of the curriculum are very good.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to work.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

49. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of the same age at the end of Year 2 and above those expected at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well. There are no differences in achievement between boys and girls. Good achievement is consistent across all levels of ability in the school and across all ethnic groups.
50. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. All staff have received a high level of effective training both in the use of computers and in using interactive whiteboards. As a result they have very good subject knowledge of how to teach the skills pupils need. Planning for lessons is thorough. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' conduct in their classes and ensure that expensive equipment is treated with care. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They are interested in ICT and have very good attitudes to work. Assessment procedures are in place to track pupils' attainment and to identify any skills that still need to be taught. ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy development.
51. The subject co-ordinator has shown very good leadership in training and advising staff about how to make best use of the equipment and resources. Management of the subject is very good. A comprehensive scheme of work is used which contains suggested lessons and teaching strategies to provide best learning for pupils. Practical organisation and management of resources are very good. The school and the governors have made a considerable investment in ICT resources, which is now showing good results not only in ICT as a subject but also across the curriculum. ICT makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons they have very good opportunities to work together, to discuss their work with others and to share and take turns. The curriculum is good overall but in some Year 1 and 2 classes lessons are too long and pupils begin to lose interest and become inattentive. The ICT suite provides very good accommodation, which is well deployed to ensure that all pupils have good access. Resources are very good. The ratio of computers to pupils is good. There has been very good improvement in the provision for ICT and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. Cross-curricular provision is very good. In all lessons, teachers and pupils make very good use of the technology available with interactive whiteboards. In English, pupils use ICT to correct, edit and improve their work. There is good use in science for producing a range of tables and graphs. The use of websites to find information is good. Pupils are given specific enough instructions about what to search for to ensure that no time is lost in unfocused searches. Teachers are very good at keeping the possibilities for ICT use in the forefront of their planning for lessons. As a result pupils have a wide range of experiences across the whole curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis on different forms of writing and the use of drama have a positive impact on standards.

Commentary

53. Standards in Year 2 match the expectations of the Walsall Agreed Syllabus and standards in Year 6 exceed them. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. Aspects of Christianity are covered in all classes. In addition, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism are also studied. Pupils have a developing knowledge and understanding of the key figures of each religion, their practices, beliefs and places of worship. They are beginning to understand that what these religions have in common are more important than any differences between them.
54. Teaching is good, overall, and leads to effective learning. It is very good in Years 5 and 6, and leads to very good learning. Strengths of very good teaching are teachers' subject knowledge, high expectations, and the opportunities that they provide for pupils to reflect and think about their own beliefs. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 increased their knowledge of parables and why Jesus used them to illustrate his teaching. In both classes, interactive technology was used well to bring the parables alive and relate them to life today. Pupils learnt that there are choices to be made in life and that these choices may have good or bad consequences. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed respect for beliefs that differed from their own as they researched religions in their neighbourhood – Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. As part of their study of religious symbols and artefacts, pupils in Year 6 recalled what they learnt from the rector about the baptism service and enacted the service, in order to bring it to life. They have a developing knowledge of what it means to be a member of a faith group.
55. The curriculum is enriched by drama, art, music and dance; visits to the church, temple and mosque, and visits by the rector and Christians of the Philippines and of Asian and African origin enable pupils to understand how religious beliefs influence the lives of believers. Pupils meet with children from other cultures and religions during the Darlaston Celebration Week, when the school band and choir take part in a concert. They use their literacy skills in discussion, writing in many forms, and research. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provides valuable guidance for staff. He has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject and sees religious education as embracing every aspect of school life. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

History

Provision in the subject is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards rise over pupils' time in school.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Commentary

56. Standards are below those expected at the end of Year 2 and in line with those expected at the end of Year 6. Standards in the earlier years have been adversely affected by pupils' writing skills, which were below average. Pupils achieve well over their time in school. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Achievement is consistent across all levels of attainment. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils.
57. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons carefully so that all resources and materials are to hand. History makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. At the time of the previous inspection it was reported that too many worksheets were used and pupils had too few opportunities for individual research. This has been rectified and pupils now have good opportunities to research and develop their own writing style. Teachers also lead discussions with a good level of skill to allow pupils to develop and express their own ideas, thus improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. Very good use is made of computers both in lessons through interactive whiteboards and for research purposes. The use of role-play and presentations brings 'to life' the historical periods studied. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils took part in an interesting 'Egyptian Day' during the inspection.
58. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to pupils' personal development. The taught curriculum is good. It is enhanced by the use of the local area for teaching history, by visitors to the school and by trips out, such as those to local museums. The leadership and management of the subject are good.
59. It is not possible to judge overall provision or teaching in **geography** because only one lesson was seen. Pupils' work indicates that standards are likely to be below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Pupils show good attitudes to work and take care over the presentation of it. Pupils' work is marked and corrected but teachers make limited use of marking as a means of giving pupils advice about how they can improve their work. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

60. During the inspection three lessons were observed in **art and design** in Years 3 to 6. Teaching in all the lessons seen was good. A wide range of Year 6 work was seen, along with teachers' planning. This evidence indicates that Year 6 achieve well and attain standards sometimes above the expected level for eleven year olds. Pupils work enthusiastically and with care. Both classes benefit from good teaching and are encouraged to evaluate their work and challenged to think of ways in which they might improve it. In the good lesson seen in a Year 5/6 class, pupils worked well together producing a large painting based on the work of a famous artist, showing a good understanding of texture. Most pupils are taught colour mixing techniques, which are used well to create tones and shades of colour in pupils' artwork. Older pupils talk knowledgeably about the works of a range of artists including Cézanne, Constable and Gauguin. They critically evaluate their own and others' work. An examination of completed pupils' work indicates that they are given a good range of experiences working with a wide range of media. The quality of their work seen on display and in work sample is often good. The curriculum is enriched by the organisation of art weeks and whole-school theme days. Art and design makes a good contribution to children's cultural and spiritual development.
61. In **design and technology** two lessons were seen during the inspection. Both of these were Year 1 and 2 classes. Year 2 pupils generally appear to be attaining expected standards. Both class groups made model playground equipment from designs generated in previous lessons. Both classes had previously visited a local playground in order to study at first hand the design of equipment and to see how it worked. Children spoke confidently about their models and described the functions of their products and how they used their designs to make the models. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory understanding of the design, make and evaluate process.

They display expected skills of making, marking out, cutting and fixing. They are given opportunities to make choices. They displayed skills at the expected level. An examination of teachers' planning indicates that pupils receive a satisfactory range of learning opportunities.

62. In **music**, it was not possible to form an overall judgement about provision, standards of work, achievement or teaching, as no lessons were observed in Year 2. In the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, teaching was very good. Standards in Year 6 are above those achieved nationally. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Teachers showed very good subject knowledge and an ability to motivate and challenge pupils. They engaged pupils' interest through links with history. Pupils learnt how the Irish song, *Lilliburlero*, was an expression of Irish resentment of a Catholic Lord Lieutenant being put in charge of Ireland in 1687. They understood that lyrics can reflect the time and place in which they were written and have social and cultural meaning. They learnt how lyrics can be generated and organised and composed own lyrics on topical events, such as Euro 2004 and the Olympic Games. Good use was made of interactive technology to play different tracks. In a music session led by a specialist teacher, standards of singing and skills in playing musical instruments were judged to be of a high standard.
63. An exciting and rich range of opportunities for musical development is provided. There is a well-equipped music room. Provision for musical activities, by specialists, enhances the curriculum well. There are regular opportunities for composing and performing. Peripatetic music tuition in brass, strings, woodwind and keyboard is free, and is taken up by many pupils. There is a flourishing choir of 35 pupils, who sing at local concerts and music festivals, vocal workshops, the church, and a home for the elderly. Such experiences are instrumental in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem and increasing their enjoyment of music. A number of talented pupils perform with the Walsall Music support groups. Very good resources effectively promote pupils' learning. Assessment is good and is used well to respond to individual needs. Leadership and management are very good because the subject leader has high level of expertise, which underpins the quality of leadership in teaching, learning and curriculum development. She provides a very good role model for other staff and pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good overall.

Physical education

The provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Attainment of Year 6 pupils in games skills exceeds expectations.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and work hard.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a range of sports out of school hours.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- Facilities outdoors are very good for physical education

Commentary

64. Pupils work hard in lessons and with good support from teachers they practise hard to improve. Year 6 pupils display good games' skills, work hard during practice sessions and make good progress. They demonstrate good abilities in bouncing and catching, and throw with control. Year 1 and 2 pupils work enthusiastically in the hall improving movement techniques and achieve well in attaining expected standards in movement. They perform with basic skill, control and co-ordination. Year 4 pupils work vigorously and with considerable enthusiasm improving dance routines. An observed dance lesson was of very good quality. Pupils respond well to music that excites them. They display high levels of engagement, involvement, effort and enjoyment. Pupils co-operate well, working in small and large groups and exploiting different ways to interpret music. Pupils receive good and sometimes very good

teaching and coaching. They are encouraged, supported well, shown how to improve and given good opportunities to practise. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well, and by Year 6 they exceed expected levels of attainment in games' skills.

65. A strength is the wide range of extra-curricular activities available for pupils. They play competitive games against pupils from the local cluster group schools. Pupils participate in a range of sports clubs after school, which include activities such as football, basketball and dance. The younger pupils can join in a range of games activities also organised after school. These activities enhance the curriculum.
66. The subject is led and managed well by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator. She gives good support to colleagues. Facilities in the school for teaching the subject are good. A hall is available for indoor work and a large well-surfaced secure area and a well-marked out playground are available for outdoor work. The school also makes good use of a nearby swimming pool.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

67. There was not enough evidence to make judgements about the quality of provision. Discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils were held and one lesson was seen. The school sees pupils' personal development as a very important part of its work. It makes a very good effort to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons are provided in all classes. There is a good programme of activities, including work on diet, health, sex education, drugs and alcohol abuse and personal safety. Through this programme, pupils are supported well to develop a safe and healthy lifestyle, gain in confidence and practise their social skills. Circle time sessions are also provided regularly in all the classes to discuss concerns and issues and to develop interpersonal skills. A very good range of opportunities is provided, which promote pupils' personal development very well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
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	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
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 (Ethos)	3
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	3
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	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	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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