

INSPECTION REPORT

QUARRY BANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brierley Hill, West Midlands

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103830

Headteacher: Mr. David Porter

Lead inspector: Ms. Anne Elizabeth Kounnou

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 257248

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	336
School address:	High Street Quarry Bank Brierley Hill West Midlands
Postcode:	DY5 2AD
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms M Brettlell
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Quarry Bank is a larger than average primary school situated on the outskirts of Brierley Hill with 336 pupils on roll including those in the nursery. It aims to be '*a centre for learning, achieving extraordinary performance from ordinary people*'. At over 23 per cent, there is a much higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs than found in most primary schools. This is partly because the school has an Inclusion Centre, which caters for up to ten pupils with very specific needs. All of the pupils currently cared for in the centre have a statement of special educational needs, making a high proportion overall in the school. Pupils' specific needs are predominantly moderate learning difficulties. A substantial proportion have speech and language difficulties and a significant number have behavioural problems. Some pupils had previously been permanently excluded from other local primary schools. A very small proportion of pupils are in public care, and some others are dealing with particularly difficult circumstances at home. Although there is a wide range of ability, when they start school in the nursery most children's attainment is well below that expected for their age. Many children have significant difficulties in speaking and listening and this is reflected in the special educational needs. The proportion of pupils currently claiming free school meals is broadly in line with the national average at over just over 23 per cent. A few pupils at the school are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and a small proportion are learning to speak English as an additional language. There have been a considerable number of staff changes, and changes to the governing body since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2002. Since then the school has won a range of awards including an Investors in Parents Award, which is currently held by only six primary schools in England. In addition to this, the Investors in People Award was regained in 2003. A Basic Skills Quality Mark, and a Healthy Schools Award were won in the same year. Extra funding was secured through Awards for All, which has been used to develop a community room in the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30810	Liz Kounnou	Lead inspector	Personal social and health education Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language
14141	Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector	
24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Religious education History Geography
19120	Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science
4989	Lynn Lewis	Team inspector	English Provision for special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Quarry Bank Primary School is a **good and improving school**. Many children start school with well below average attainment. Despite this, pupils achieve well throughout the school. This is because teaching and learning are good and there is a relentless focus by the leadership team on raising standards and helping pupils to succeed. The headteacher provides very good leadership and governance is very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good progress through the school. However, standards, seen during the inspection, are below average in English, mathematics, science and religious education from Year 1 to Year 6.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good, so that pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The school has won a rare award for its very good work with parents.
- The school has a very clear plan for improvement, which has the full support of both staff and governors. Consequently, the school knows what is successful and where improvements need to be made.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in the Inclusion Centre, and in Years 3 to 6.
- Although teaching and learning are good overall, lesson planning for different groups of pupils could be more sharply focused, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The school checks how well it is doing in English and mathematics effectively; however, this is not true in other subjects.

Following the last inspection the school has been through a period of change. Staff changes and the opening of an Inclusion Centre for pupils with special educational needs have contributed to falling test results. Since the appointment of a new headteacher the decline has been checked. The rate of improvement has dramatically increased. The school is now improving rapidly and pupils throughout the school achieve well. The way that the school uses its very effective school improvement plan alongside good procedures for checking how well pupils are learning has resulted in satisfactory improvement overall.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	D	E	E	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.*

Achievement for all pupils throughout the school is good overall. This is partly due to the good teaching and learning in all stages of the school, and to very good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In the nursery and reception classes, a rich curriculum ensures that children achieve well, but the majority do not reach the goals they are expected to by the end of reception. Results seen in the tables include those of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those in the Inclusion Centre. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. In the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6 they achieve very well. Results are well below the national average in the national tests; however, throughout the school pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, and in science in Years 1 and 2. Results in the

Year 2 tests are improving at a faster rate than those achieved in other schools. During the inspection standards seen in all year groups were below average in these subjects. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average and pupils achieve very well. In religious education pupils are underachieving throughout the school. The school has identified that girls achieve higher standards than boys, and has a clear plan of action to help boys do better. The few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language do well because a high priority is given to encouraging all pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and a strength of the school. There are particular strengths in pupils' moral and social development. However there are missed opportunities to celebrate the rich range of cultures represented in Britain today. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning that help them achieve well. Attendance is improving but is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and this contributes well to pupils' good overall achievement. The curriculum is good overall. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches it very well. The provision for pupils with special education needs is very good in the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6, and good elsewhere in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher's very good leadership lies behind the rapid improvements that are taking place. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and by the very good work of the governing body. Together with other senior staff, they all have a clear vision for their school and drive forward improvements to secure this. Good management systems for checking the quality of education have identified all the key weaknesses that need to be addressed, and clear plans to address these are underway. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Almost all parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school; a number comment very favourably on the recent improvements. The school has recently been awarded the highly prestigious Investors in Parents Award, one of only six primary schools nationally to achieve this.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are already identified as key priorities in the school improvement plan for this year:

- Continue to raise standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education.
- Continue to improve the quality of teachers' planning so that it is tailored more precisely to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Continue to improve the way teaching and learning are checked in subjects other than mathematics and English.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement overall is **good** due to the relentless focus on improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and good teaching and learning. Pupils' good attitudes to learning are a significant factor in their good overall achievement. In the Foundation Stage, although children build well on their overall very low attainment when they start school in the nursery, by the time they leave the reception year most have not reached the goals expected at that age. Standards in the national tests for English, mathematics and science were well below average in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2003, the latest year for which comparative data is available. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels in the national tests is adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils in each year group with special educational needs. Standards seen during the inspection are below average throughout the school. Nonetheless, pupils achieve well in English and mathematics, and in science in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress in science when compared to those with similar prior attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in their personal and social development, as do pupils in Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics throughout the school, and in science in Years 1 and 2.
- In ICT pupils achieve very well, reaching average standards due to the well-planned curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards could be higher in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6; pupils' progress slows because lessons are not planned precisely to meet their needs.
- Standards remain too low in religious education, as this subject has not had a high enough priority for development since the last inspection.

Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage children in both the nursery and the reception classes achieve well. They make good progress because the rich curriculum is structured well and helps children to improve on their overall low level of ability. Most children start school with levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age. The majority will not reach the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception in communication, language and literacy development, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve very well in their personal and social development, reaching the goals expected for their age despite their very low starting points. This is due to the very high expectations of teachers and other staff. There was not enough evidence to make firm judgements about children's achievement in the other areas of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (14.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.8 (12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (14.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well, particularly when compared to those in similar schools. A comparison with the longer-term national trend shows that standards in Year 2 are improving at a faster rate than those achieved in other schools. Standards in the national tests remain low mainly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 2003, more than 37 per cent of pupils taking the tests had special educational needs. In reading, mathematics and science, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in the national assessments in 2003 was good, matching the national average. This represents good achievement for these pupils. Despite their low starting point, more than 75 per cent of the pupils reached the expected level in English and mathematics, and more than 90 per cent in science at the end of Year 2. These proportions were below the national average, but represent good achievement overall. Currently about a third of pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs. Experienced teachers and well-trained support staff provide these pupils with individual help so that they begin to learn the basic literacy skills they will need. Work in English is well tailored to pupils' abilities and the imaginative teaching in some lessons leads them to be interested in the work and make good progress. Reading skills are developing at a good rate due to the effective way that teachers organise reading sessions. The introduction of 'quality writing' time in the timetable is giving pupils opportunities to practise the writing skills they learn during the literacy hour. Good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided regularly to help pupils develop these key skills. Some exciting activities in mathematics motivate pupils very well in Year 2. Despite this concentrated focus on raising standards, pupils are not reaching average levels of attainment by the end of Year 2. Standards seen during the inspection are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Nonetheless, pupils continue to achieve well. In ICT pupils achieve very well, reaching the standards that are expected at the end of Year 2 due to teachers' high expectations in the subject. In religious education pupils are underachieving because they do not have enough opportunities to work at activities in the subject. This is because the school curriculum for religious education is not implemented well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (24.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.4 (24.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.7 (27.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils achieve well overall in Years 3 to 6. Results in the 2003 national tests were well below the national average. The longer-term trend of improvement in standards in the Year 6 national tests is slower than that achieved in other schools. However, the results of Year 6 pupils include those of a considerable proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs who are cared for in the Inclusion Centre during the morning sessions. Some of these pupils have severe difficulties that affect their learning. In addition the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group is higher than the national average. To address this the school has set pupils by ability from Year 3 to Year 6 in mathematics and English, to help provide them with high quality support for learning. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher teach a mathematics set in Years 5 and 6, so that the three classes are divided into five small sets for mathematics, and four small sets for English. This good support has enabled most pupils to make good progress. In mathematics, pupils did not build successfully on their prior attainment in the national tests and this has been a high priority for the school. As a result, it was evident during the inspection that standards are beginning to rise. Pupils now make good progress in mathematics as well as in English. Nonetheless, lessons in mathematics are not always finely tuned to stretch and challenge the most able in the higher sets. In English, pupils achieved well in the 2003 Year 6 national tests, reaching average levels when compared to those with similar prior attainment. Science achievement is broadly satisfactory and is limited by a lack of challenge in some of the work. Standards seen in all three subjects remain below average. In ICT pupils achieve very well,

reaching standards that are broadly as expected at the end of Year 6 due to good teaching of ICT skills in the ICT suite. Pupils do not cover enough work in religious education to allow them to achieve the expected levels, so that they are underachieving in this subject.

4. The school has identified that boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in writing, and this is a high priority for school development. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall, due to very good provision for them. In the Inclusion Centre, and in Years 3 to 6 pupils with special educational needs achieve very well as a result of the expert support they receive. The few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language achieve well because of good opportunities for speaking and listening. More able pupils are not always challenged well enough in mathematics, as lessons in the higher ability sets are not planned well enough to meet their needs. Since the last inspection, there has been erratic progress in improving standards overall. This is partly because the new Inclusion Centre, to cater for pupils with very specific needs, has been opened, and these pupils' test results are included when comparing the school's overall performance with that of other schools. The trend is now improving and standards are beginning to rise. These improvements have been secured due to the relentless focus of the new leadership team on raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall, and **very good** in social and moral development. Attendance is improving, but is currently **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and a strength of the school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard in smoothly running lessons; this makes a considerable contribution to their overall good achievement.
- Relationships are very good and there is a high degree of racial harmony.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory in spite of the school's considerable efforts to improve them.

Commentary

5. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Because lessons are interesting, they listen carefully and concentrate well. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. The behaviour policy, school rules and sanctions are well known and applied fairly and consistently by all the adults. There is a strong and very successful emphasis on boosting pupils' self-esteem, aspirations and confidence. Significant initiatives like the ethos and merit assemblies, where teachers draw out such qualities as hard work, persistence and good behaviour, mean that pupils show pride in their achievements, that motivates others. Effective use of praise, encouragement and activities like the 'You can do it!' sessions for older pupils mean they are hard working and becoming more ambitious in their learning. Teachers are good at taking pupils aside when necessary and discussing incidents so that their behaviour improves. The Inclusion Centre deals very well with the challenging behaviour of some of its pupils so that they successfully integrate into lessons for part of each day. All of these features, and the very good example of adults working in the school, mean that relationships are very good. A high degree of racial harmony is clearly evident in the friendly and co-operative way that pupils work and play together.
6. The very good provision for pupils' moral and social development is helping pupils throughout the school to develop mature attitudes. Many lessons are planned to improve pupils' skills in working together or independently as they learn. Provision for spiritual development is good and there is a lot of enjoyment for pupils in many of the lessons and activities provided. The school makes good use of extra-curricular activities, such as the 'Fusion Arts' project on

creation stories. Year 5 and 6 pupils enjoyed an excellent experience as they prepared music, drama and art for a performance of the creation story of the Navajo Indian tribe. Pupils learned to work co-operatively and increased their self-confidence by learning how to perform to an audience. They took part by sensitively and expressively interpreting the North American Indian myth in a moving performance. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils develop a good grasp of life in the past, but their appreciation of the many cultures in Britain today is not so well developed as there is too little emphasis on this aspect.

Exclusions

7. The number of exclusions has dropped considerably, with none in the current year. The high proportion of exclusions previously was related to the individual circumstances of pupils with special educational needs in the Inclusion Centre. The table below shows the ethnic background of the pupils on roll during the inspection from the reception year to Year 6. This is different to the ethnic background of pupils in the last school year, and to the total number of pupils on roll when children in the nursery are included.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	257	7	0
Mixed– White and Black Caribbean	0	6	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	15	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Attendance

8. Attendance has been well below the national average in recent years. The school has made considerable efforts to improve attendance rates but, although they are slowly improving, they are still unsatisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	2.1
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 quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good, with some excellent examples seen during the inspection. The curriculum is good, and is enriched very well to provide interesting activities that motivate pupils well. Pupils are cared for very well, and there are very good links with parents and the local community that contribute well to pupils' good achievement.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school. The quality of assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus on providing good opportunities for independent work, investigation, and for pupils to talk about their work in lessons, improves pupils' personal skills well and leads to good achievement
- Teachers make thorough assessments of pupils' achievements but do not always use this information well enough to plan lessons that meet their needs.
- These good strategies are not used consistently throughout the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 63 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (10%)	15 (24%)	25 (40%)	15 (24%)	2 (3%)	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.

9. There is a very strong focus in most lessons on teaching pupils to develop personal skills that will help them in their learning across the whole curriculum. Teaching and learning are good in all stages of the school including the Foundation Stage. The large proportion of pupils with special educational needs are taught very well in the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6. They receive very good support in the Year 5 and 6 lower sets for mathematics and English. A high proportion of lessons seen were excellent or very good; these were all characterised by high expectations of the pupils. There were plenty of opportunities for them to work independently using their initiative, or in groups learning how to work together successfully. A very good focus on encouraging pupils to talk about their work to one another, and to staff, is also a key feature of these lessons. This helps pupils develop vital communication skills, and is particularly effective for the few learning to speak English as an additional language. School leaders have ensured that improving the quality of teaching and learning is a high priority for the school. They are very well aware of where teaching quality needs to improve, and have a clear plan of action to deal with less than satisfactory teaching.
10. A very good programme of using expert advice from external consultants and other professionals is improving the quality of teaching and learning and provides pupils with opportunities to take part in excellent lessons, for example the extremely successful workshop days for Years 5 and 6 that enabled them to gain skills in art, music and drama as well as improving their self-confidence and personal skills. Excellent teaching was also seen in some of the Year 5 and 6 sets for mathematics and English. The excellent teaching was characterised by challenging learning targets that were very well matched to pupils' abilities. The structure of the lessons was extremely good so that pupils learned step by step to understand difficult mathematical concepts in data handling, and the power of using complex sentences in poetry. Throughout the school English skills are taught well in literacy lessons, due to a good focus on what it is that pupils will be expected to learn each day. In mathematics lessons in Years 1 and 2, and in the Year 5 and 6 mathematics sets, teaching is also good, and is helping pupils to make good progress. The overall good quality of teaching and learning matches that seen at the last inspection. There is clear evidence that the quality of teaching has improved over the year in response to support from school leaders and external consultants. For example, all teachers show a good awareness of the difference in boys' and girls' achievements and are seeking ways to motivate boys in 'quality writing' lessons.

11. Teachers make good use of the information they have about pupils' previous attainment to group them by ability, and to set them for English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. The impact of the Year 5 and 6 sets is increased because both the headteacher and deputy headteacher teach a mathematics set, so that there are five small sets in mathematics. This allows a very clear match of the lessons to pupils' ability. However, not all the sets are planned well enough to meet the needs of pupils. Some still have a wide range of ability, and too often pupils work at the same tasks. Most lessons identify different activities for pupils to complete. However, sometimes the activities do not match pupils' previous skills, so that work is too difficult or too easy. For example, all pupils in the lower mathematics set in Year 3 were trying to understand equivalent fractions, when many were not at all sure about fractions when the lesson began. Consequently, they were confused and made little progress. This lack of precise tailoring is sometimes seen in science, where too often pupils of different abilities complete the same investigation, and this limits the rate of some pupils' progress.
12. Despite the strong focus on improving the quality of all aspects of teaching and learning by the leadership team, the quality of teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Unsatisfactory lessons seen were characterised by low expectations and too few opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills. These lessons did not reflect the excellent and very good practice that is a key feature of many lessons in the school. Low expectations are also seen in some pupils' work, particularly in Year 3, where often presentation is poor and pupils sometimes unnecessarily repeat work they already understand in mathematics.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good** throughout the school. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **very good** because there is a high priority on providing pupils with good experiences. The quality of resources and accommodation is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6.
- The systematic planning for improving pupils' basic literacy skills throughout the school results in good achievement in English.
- The mathematics curriculum is not well tailored to meet pupils' needs; however, the school recognises this and it is a priority for development.
- The religious education curriculum is not covered adequately and this limits pupils' achievement.
- The very good provision for extra-curricular activities and a wide range of opportunities to take part in exciting experiences in lessons motivate pupils well.
- Some aspects of the accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory and limit pupils' achievement.

Commentary

13. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good in the Inclusion Centre and in Years 3 to 6. A strength here is the focus on target setting, which closely matches pupils' individual education plans. Consequently, pupils who work in the Inclusion Centre during the morning play a full part in lessons during the afternoon periods when they are taught in other classes from Year 3 to Year 6. The skills they learn during the morning sessions stand them in good stead when working with a whole class. Throughout the school the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and teachers, particularly when working in small groups. High quality resources motivate the pupils well.
14. Teaching literacy skills has a high priority for the school, which is currently developing its strategies to improve these skills in all curriculum subjects. The imaginative use of resources is a strong motivating factor for pupils. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop

their skills in speaking and listening so that all groups of pupils benefit and gain confidence. In mathematics, pupils follow a programme designed to help them cover all the aspects recommended in the national numeracy strategy. However, the curriculum has not been tailored well enough to meet pupils' needs, so that some more able pupils are not fully stretched, and occasionally those who find mathematics more difficult struggle with the work. The mathematics co-ordinator has clearly identified what needs to be done to address this, and the plan of action is a high priority for the school. The religious education curriculum is not implemented well enough to allow pupils to reach the levels they should. This is mainly because pupils do not cover enough work in the subject. By contrast pupils achieve very well in ICT due to rigorous school planning and considerable investment in training and resources. The newly acquired interactive whiteboards are proving to be a valuable resource in lessons across the curriculum in Years 3 to 6, and in lessons that take place in the ICT suite for all pupils. There is a rich curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, with imaginative activities, good resources and a wide range of interesting pursuits to absorb children's interest.

15. There is a strong emphasis placed on the development of a thematic approach that is planned to motivate pupils through a very wide range of activities. For example, Year 4 pupils built a Tudor house from wattle and daub in the school grounds. These pupils took part in a residential visit to Dovedale during part of the inspection week. Specialist visits like these provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal skills. Extra-curricular activities are very good; there is a very wide range of clubs. Organisations such as Sport Link enhance the quality of after-school sports activities for pupils. Other professionals are also used to improve pupils' creative skills. For example, throughout this year there has been an ongoing project with Fusion Arts. This is an exciting initiative, funded by the Arts Council, that improves pupils' skills in art, drama and music. For example, during the inspection pupils in Years 5 and 6 spent a whole day preparing for a performance on the theme of 'Creation Stories'. They increased their knowledge and understanding of music, drama and art skills extremely well, and gained huge self-confidence from the superb performance that rounded off the day. Activities such as these have a high priority in the school. In addition the school provides Easter and summer schools to help pupils improve their basic skills.
16. Although the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall, some aspects are unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to the age and condition of mobile classrooms and the general fabric and design of the 1935 building. On warm days pupils find it difficult to concentrate in some parts of the school building and this affects their learning. In addition the space provided by the school hall, and the resources available, are inadequate for teaching gymnastics to a high enough standard for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision and implementation of measures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good** and pupils work in a safe environment. The availability of support, advice and guidance based on teachers' monitoring of pupils is **good** overall. The school actively seeks to involve pupils in the work of the school and does so **very successfully**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to participate fully in lessons.
- The very enthusiastic and effective school council, and pupil groups such as the 'Bully Busters', are able to influence and improve the school routines.
- Very good relationships with staff give pupils the confidence to approach an adult when in need of help or advice.
- Well-planned arrangements to help children settle into the nursery, and to make each transfer to the next stage of their education, help parents to gain confidence in the school, and help pupils to achieve well.

Commentary

17. This is a caring school where staff know and respect every pupil as an individual with particular problems and needs. All pupils are well cared for and very good support is provided for those pupils with special educational needs, particularly the pupils in the Inclusion Centre. The school supplements its own staff with a large number of visiting specialists to ensure that all pupils are able to take part in the full range of activities and lessons provided. Child protection arrangements, including Internet security, are fully implemented and are effective. Statutory requirements for health and safety are met. The school carries out regular surveys of pupils' opinions and suggestions to find out how school facilities and routines are regarded, and what change or improvement pupils would like to see. In addition to an annual questionnaire, the school successfully does this through the work of the school council. This group of volunteers are elected by their classmates and given the responsibility to represent their views to the senior staff. They have already succeeded in acquiring extra equipment for lunchtime play and bringing about improvements to some of the school toilets. The present topics under consideration are how pupils can raise funds for school improvement, and how pupils can become involved with improving the energy efficiency of the school.
18. Improvements in behaviour have been achieved with the help of the 'Bully Busters', a small number of volunteer pupils who have made written application to the headteacher setting out their reasons for wishing to become involved. Applicants are interviewed for each appointment, ensuring that they are committed to the task. Successful candidates make themselves available in the playground to help any pupil with problems and any incidence of bullying is reported to the headteacher. This is very successful. Pupils are confident that others appreciate their efforts. The very good relationships established with staff enable pupils to have the trust and confidence necessary to be able to approach an adult in school if they are worried or concerned. Pupils' academic and personal development are checked by the staff, and individual targets are agreed and set in English and mathematics so that pupils know what they need to achieve to make progress.
19. The good level of care shown to pupils is evident in the nursery. The school's Parent Partner Worker is active in the community and liaises with pre-school playgroups to advise parents of the work of the nursery. Prospective parents and children are invited into the nursery for two sample sessions and parents are able to discuss any concerns or requirements their children may have. The nursery arranges special workshop sessions where all parents are encouraged to stay, work with their own children, and gain information on how they can support their children at home. There are good procedures to help children transfer from the nursery to the reception class, and to help older pupils with the move to a large secondary school. These include some partnership teaching, with secondary teachers helping out at the enjoyable Fusion Arts day, providing expert music tuition for Year 5 and 6. The school plans to improve the transfer of pupils from Year 2 to Year 3 by appointing a member of staff with responsibility to oversee this transition period. This is part of the school's strategy to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress in all year groups.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are significantly widening and are **very good**. The **very good** links with the local community are effectively making the school a focal point in the local area. There are **very effective** links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good influence of the Parent Partner Worker is improving and promoting parental and community involvement in the school.
- The very effective links with other schools and colleges provide good support for both staff and pupils.

- Very strong links with parents of pupils with special educational needs ensure these parents can provide good support for their children's learning and progress.

Commentary

20. Through the dedicated work of the school's Parent Partner Worker and active support of the headteacher and staff, the school has achieved the Investors in Parents award. Only five other schools in the United Kingdom have managed this. All parents are positively encouraged to come into school to see the work their children are doing and are urged to play an active part in supporting learning both at school and at home. The Parent Partner Worker has successfully introduced many more parents into school by annual provision of a wide range of adult education initiatives. The most recent is the 'Start' course. Ten parents are attending this to help them understand the literacy and numeracy strategies and devise mathematics games for supporting pupils at home. This course is coupled with two others known as 'Keeping up with the Children', in literacy and numeracy. Basic computing, food hygiene and first aid courses are provided to help parents develop other associated skills and National Vocational courses on Childcare in Education are proving very popular. The school now has a good number of parents who are happy and willing to come into classrooms on a regular basis to provide support for the staff. The nursery has its own daily rota of two parents for each session. Parents have dug and planted the gardens around the new building and made story sacks for the main school. In the reception classes, weekly opportunities to share in children's lessons are forging strong links between teachers and parents.
21. The school is not satisfied with the undoubted level of success achieved and is intent on widening parental interest wherever possible, particularly at home for those parents unable to attend or visit the school. To help in this objective, the school provides regular written information to parents and offers evening meetings each term for discussion of children's work and progress. The Parent Partner Worker meets parents on and off the school premises as often as possible to talk about any concerns and to pursue any suggestions parents may wish to offer. The 2004 to 2005 annual courses are already planned and include topics put forward by parents at such meetings. The school has set up a community room that is now very well used by both parents and the wider community. This was funded from 'Awards for All' following a successful bid for money. Voluntary and other groups occupy the room on most mornings and afternoons due to the good promotional work of the Parent Partner Worker. The school's active and enthusiastic parent teacher group assists the school with funding and also arranges and finances outings for parents and children.
22. The school has very well established links with other schools and uses them effectively to provide joint training for staff and for the provision of additional adult support in the classrooms. The school provides annual placements for student teachers and college students. The link with the main receiving secondary school is particularly well used to provide pupil mentors, who are mostly ex-Quarry Bank pupils, who return to give support and advice to pupils with behavioural difficulties. Staff from the secondary school give valuable assistance, for example by teaching music skills in excellent workshops such as the Fusion Arts experience for Year 5 and 6 pupils. The school is particularly concerned to develop and maintain good relationships and contact with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Their involvement is encouraged as a means to ensure that they can play their part in helping the pupils achieve well. Parents appreciate the work of the Inclusion Centre very much and give their whole-hearted support to the staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership, and that of other key staff is **good**. Management of the school is **good** and is continuing to improve, as recently introduced strategies start to make a positive impact on the work of the school. Governance is **very good** and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides strong, purposeful and very effective leadership that is leading to rapid improvements in the school.
- The committed and able governing body makes a significant contribution to the successful leadership of the school.
- Systems for school self-evaluation are rigorous and analytical and are increasingly being used to drive up standards in English and mathematics, and for pupils with special educational needs.
- In other subjects the school is not yet checking the quality of education rigorously enough.
- The school improvement plan is thorough and rightly focuses on the need to raise standards. It is supported well by all staff and governors

Commentary

23. The new headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership, and has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school. He sets clear priorities and has established a rigorous agenda to improve standards. His energy and enthusiasm inspire a sense of shared purpose among staff and governors who are very keen to make the school successful. A newly appointed deputy headteacher ably supports him. They both act as a model of very good teaching and set a very good example to other teaching staff. The headteacher has secured the commitment of all stakeholders to school improvement, and initiated strategies and approaches to make this happen. Senior staff and governors have been fully consulted to determine the school's priorities for development to ensure they are fully supportive of the relentless focus on raising standards.
24. The governing body, led by an experienced and committed chair, provides very good support for the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties very well. Governors are knowledgeable about the strengths of the school and the areas where it needs to improve. This is because there are clear published arrangements for ensuring that visits to school are regular, focused and recorded. Observations are discussed at the next meeting of the full governing body so that any actions required can be agreed and implemented. All governors take a keen and active interest through links with specific teachers and subjects and are kept well informed by the headteacher who knows, and shares with them, where improvement is needed and what can be done to secure it. Governors have a very clear vision for their school, which is reflected in the school aim to be: *a centre for learning, achieving extraordinary performance from ordinary people.*
25. The headteacher has put into place good systems to support a rigorous approach to all aspects of checking the quality of education to help raise achievement. For example, the senior leadership team regularly analyses pupils' performance in the national tests to identify and overcome weaknesses, and tracks the achievement of individual pupils regularly to ensure that they are being given the best possible opportunities to succeed. Pupils' books are now regularly scrutinised for quality, consistency and compliance with National Curriculum requirements in English and mathematics. He has introduced regular and systematic monitoring of lessons in these subjects, initially using external expertise, to help improve the quality of teaching and learning, but realises that there is still much to be done in this important area. Because of the good management systems established for checking the quality of education, all areas still requiring attention have been identified, and work to overcome them is underway.
26. The headteacher is initiating strategies to develop the role of all staff with subject and key stage responsibilities to ensure that all are fully effective in this respect. Not all subject leaders are equally effective at present because their checking of teaching and learning is not yet sharp enough. For example, the Early Years coordinator provides good leadership, but needs to develop her monitoring skills to help her identify what is working well and what needs to improve in classes from the nursery to Year 2. Some co-ordinators, such as the design and

technology leader, have not had enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Governors are aware of this and are seeking ways of financing a better system to free teachers for this valuable work. The leadership and management of the special educational needs co-ordinator are very good. She has a clear vision and a sense of purpose. She provides a very good model of literacy and numeracy teaching in the Inclusion Centre. Additionally she has ensured that pupils' clear individual education plans are displayed in classrooms so that they are adhered to rigorously.

27. School improvement planning provides a powerful tool for development, with a clear, measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. All teachers and governors fully support the plan because they know and understand the key priorities. As a result, all are focused on the need to meet agreed objectives within the rigorous time scales to help raise standards. The school improvement plan is used well to determine the best use of funds available to the school to support the priorities for school improvement. It is closely linked to the planned provision of professional training for teachers and support staff, and to the performance management arrangements for teachers, which are embedded in the school's work. Precise costs of planned developments are specified to enable spending patterns to be rigorously monitored.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,017,286
Total expenditure	1,049,200
Expenditure per pupil	3,150

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	95,229
Balance carried forward to the next	63,315

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

28. The good provision in the nursery and reception classes found in the last inspection has been successfully maintained. Children come into the nursery when they are three years old and transfer to the reception classes when they are four. Although the range of abilities is wide, their overall attainment on entry is well below average overall, particularly in their personal, social, speech and language development. Children achieve well because teaching and learning are good. They thrive on the rich and well-planned curriculum provided. There is a strong sense of purposeful teamwork among the adults who effectively intervene and support children in their activities, particularly in extending their language skills. They observe children closely and there are thorough systems for checking what they can and cannot do that help them plan children's next steps carefully. Children are absorbed and busy, making good use of attractive resources and interesting activities in the new purpose-built nursery and large reception classroom. They make good progress, but only the most able children securely reach the goals for their age at the end of the reception year.
29. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good with effective systems in place that firmly underpin the good provision. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for others in her effective teaching in a reception class. Teachers have valued the good support received through observation and feedback on their teaching from visiting advisors. Monitoring by leaders in the school is less thorough. More could be done to improve the role of senior staff in observing teaching so that strengths can be adopted by all staff and weaknesses eliminated.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children become independent and behave very well because staff establish effective routines, and have high expectations that children understand and share.
- Adults set a good example and use discussions well so that relationships are very good and children play happily and co-operatively together.

Commentary

30. Very good teaching means that children achieve very well in this area, often from a low starting point. Consequently the majority reach the goals that are expected by the time they leave the reception classes. There is a calm and busy atmosphere in all the classrooms. Children are eager to join in with the interesting activities their teachers plan for them and so they quickly respond to instructions and signals, like the music that tells them to tidy away. Their independence develops well. All the adults make sure that children understand the routines, using praise and encouragement effectively so that children want to do things well. The way children quickly settle to their activities and organise themselves is a significant strength in the reception classes. It means that children work hard with little supervision, leaving the adults free to work with groups of children with few interruptions.
31. Adults make sure that children know how to behave and share their activities with others. In their own examples of teamwork, in class discussions and when taking children aside for a few quiet words about their behaviour when incidents arise, they stress the important qualities of sharing, caring and co-operating. As a result, relationships are very good and children play very well together. They share others' pride when they do things well, sometimes clapping

spontaneously. Children new to the school and the English language do well because they are absorbing new words when others draw them into their play.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- Children do well in extending their vocabularies because adults take every opportunity to talk with them as they play and make sure they understand and use the new words they hear.
- There is a very good partnership with parents that boosts children's interest and skills in reading.
- Progress is sometimes slower than it might be when the activities set for children, particularly the more able, are not challenging enough.

Commentary

32. There is a concerted and successful emphasis on developing children's' skills in this area in all the classes. The adults in the nursery respond very well to the significant challenge presented by the poor speech and language skills of some children on entry to the nursery. They intervene successfully when children play, emphasising new words and providing good speaking models. In all the classes, adults encourage children's speaking by skilfully phrasing questions so that children give fuller explanations. Some children find it hard to learn new words, but plenty of repetition and practice in using them as they play steadily, builds their vocabularies. Children respond well to challenges, like looking for a common pattern in a list of spellings in one reception class. Because they are eager to share what they have noticed, children, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, try hard to speak clearly. This good teaching means that very few lack confidence in speaking, but they often still find it hard to clearly explain what they know. This hampers their achievements in other areas of the curriculum.
33. Children show a keen interest and enjoyment in looking at books and listening to stories because adults choose attractive books to read and their own enthusiasm is infectious. The very good partnership that staff forge with parents makes a significant contribution to the good progress children make in their reading. Parent helpers in the nursery read regularly with children in the book corner as they help them choose a book to read at home. Sometimes the skills parents gain in literacy sessions with the Parent Partner Worker are put to very good use here. There is a good emphasis on early reading skills so that children sometimes 'read' the story in their own way and notice a few words. Thorough teaching of basic skills, practical activities carefully focused on the lesson aims and lively, well-managed introductions, are all features of the good and very good teaching found in the reception classes. Children listen intently and work hard, making good use of the time so that they learn to sequence words into a sentence and to spell simple words. Good support by a teaching assistant sitting with children with special educational needs encourages and keeps their attention well so they show confidence and pride in reading the same words as others. However, children rely heavily on the repetition in the reading scheme and only the more able confidently read labels, captions and words displayed around the room.
34. Children make good progress in their writing. In all the classes there are good opportunities, like creating their own books about the 'Three Bears', that successfully stimulate children's writing. In the reception classes good teaching ensures that children learn to shape letters correctly and they make good progress in handwriting. Good use of whiteboards in spelling sessions challenges children well and they make good attempts at spelling simple words. However, their progress is sometimes slower than it might be when activities are not challenging enough. Sometimes children spend time drawing when they could write more, and

the activities they work on independently do not stimulate their writing enough. Despite the good progress they make, the majority of children will not reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year in all aspects of language work.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy their lessons and make good progress because teaching is good.
- A good emphasis on counting and developing their mathematical language means that children achieve well in these areas.
- When activities that children work at independently lack sufficient challenge, children do not reinforce or extend their learning as well as they might.

Commentary

35. The teaching in this area is good. Children clearly enjoy their activities and listen intently when adults are speaking or demonstrating new work. The adults working in the nursery use ongoing activities like making the Three Bears' porridge very successfully as a rich source for mathematics. They encourage children to count and to describe the different sized bowls. They provide much needed repetition so that children use words like 'big' and 'little' in their own explanations. The adults are ambitious for children, working hard to stimulate their use of words like 'middle' and 'medium' that children find difficult. This effective teaching continues in the reception classes where its success can be seen in the way some more able children confidently talk about the features of cylinders, pyramids and other three-dimensional shapes. Briskly managed counting activities at the start of numeracy sessions means that children confidently count to 50 and beyond. Sometimes, the activities that children work at independently are not sufficiently challenging. When this happens they lose interest, and opportunities to further strengthen their skills are missed. Whilst children come close, most do not securely reach the goals in their mathematical development.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because a good range of well-planned, practical activities successfully extends their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children often find it hard to explain or describe what they know because their language skills are limited.

Commentary

36. In all the classes the planning for this area is good. The nursery staff make good use of the outdoor areas so that children have a wide choice of good resources and well-planned activities. They involve children well in decision making so that the children choose what activities there will be. The adults are good at talking with children as they play, checking their understanding and providing extra explanations where needed. This is particularly effective in helping children persist with activities and in developing their knowledge and vocabulary. Children clearly enjoy the activities and achieve well so that they remember the names of animals, vehicles and features such as rivers and roads as they play with small toys and build with the construction toys.

37. From their topic work linked to 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' story, children in the reception classes have a good understanding of butterflies and their lifecycle. Discussions at the start and end of lessons, where the teacher prompts children to tell their classmates what they have learned, strengthen children's knowledge and understanding considerably, and lead to some clear and detailed explanations. All the activities are carefully planned to provide extra reinforcement and timely adult interventions that help children concentrate and absorb new learning well. They come close to reaching the goals in this area. However, in spite of the adults' considerable efforts, many children still find it hard to clearly explain what they know. This hampers them so that they do not securely reach the goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

38. There were too few observations of physical development in the reception classes to make overall judgements about the quality of provision and children's achievements. There are good facilities for outdoor play in all the classes with a good range of equipment for climbing, riding, steering and generally moving around. Further improvements are planned, so that children in the reception classes have more regular access to their area. High temperatures outside during the inspection meant that the nursery sessions were held indoors where flexible and good use was made of the space available. Good teaching by the nursery teacher, with energetic participation by adults in a successfully planned session, helped children make good progress. They jumped, skipped, ran and moved safely, with good awareness of others and no bumping, in a fairly limited space. They understood that it was important to prepare their bodies for exercises because the teacher explained clearly. However, they were not as imaginative in their movements as they might have been. More could have been done to improve this through demonstrations and further practice, that encourage children to try out new and interesting ways of moving.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

39. Few observations of this aspect in the reception classes mean that no overall judgements are made. Planning is particularly good in the nursery where teaching and children's achievements are good. Attractive resources, like the daddy bear's huge chair, and bear masks and paws, grip children's interest and imagination well. Adults join in as children play in the role-play areas. This keeps their enthusiasm and concentration alive so that they sometimes recreate well-known stories as they play. However, children often do not persist with role-play when adults move away. Music sessions, where small groups of children make music with the teacher, are managed well. These are most effective when carefully structured activities give children opportunities to practise and refine their playing so that their music is more expressive and varied with loud and soft sounds. In all the classes there are good opportunities that enable children to experiment as they create pictures and patterns using different media. In the reception classes butterfly pictures and patterns show imagination and good attention to detail.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English throughout the school due to good teaching and learning.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs who are learning literacy skills in the Inclusion Centre is very good.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

40. Pupils achieve well in English throughout the school even though standards seen during the inspection are below average in all aspects of English, and are not as high as those reported at the last inspection. The main reason for lower standards is an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection a special centre for pupils with very specific needs has opened and this has affected the standards achieved overall. The youngest children start school in the nursery with very low levels of attainment in literacy. Many have speech and language problems and some have associated behavioural difficulties. Pupils achieve well because good management of behaviour and a concerted focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills across the school are beginning to make significant improvements in their ability to listen and to communicate clearly. This focus is particularly beneficial to the few pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. A good initiative to improve pupils' writing skills has been implemented across the school. Special 'quality writing' lessons are timetabled in all year groups and this is leading to higher standards in writing. Some pupils' work is marred by poor presentation, particularly in Year 3. Girls' handwriting is much neater than that of the boys, and they achieve higher standards in writing overall. All pupils achieve well in reading. Some good initiatives such as reading buddies are helping them to gain confidence. The school is making every effort to involve parents in reading at home with their children. For example, colourful story sacks, filled with exciting activities, are available in the library for pupils to take home with them. The library has been developed well since the last inspection.
41. Teaching and learning are good overall and at times excellent. The quality of teachers' planning is good and in each lesson the learning intention is shared with the pupils so that they have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. Some of the best practice is inspirational, as in an excellent lesson, which involved more able pupils analysing the effect created by an author's use of subordinate clauses within complex sentences. This very challenging activity was planned meticulously so that the pupils fully understood the impact of written language. Some lessons in Year 3 are not planned sufficiently well to include and challenge all of the pupils in the learning. Nonetheless, the overall good quality of teaching and learning in English is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement from Year 1 to Year 6. The best teaching is characterised by an imaginative use of resources that gains pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Additional activities such as specialist support for teaching drama further enhance pupils' experiences. During the inspection there were excellent opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to improve their speaking and listening skills as they prepared for a special performance to round off a full day's work on the Navajo Indian creation story.
42. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs are very well supported in the Inclusion Centre. Here they receive high quality teaching, which is focused on the rapid development of basic language skills. Teaching assistants and experienced support teachers make a very good contribution throughout the school, supporting both individuals and small groups of pupils with special educational needs very well. Pupils are allocated to groups according to their ability in English from Years 3 to 6 and this strategy has been successful. Pupils with special needs are very well supported in the lower sets, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6. In addition pupils who are more able are stretched and challenged particularly well in higher sets in Years 5 and 6.
43. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The strengths of leadership lie in the clarity of vision and sense of purpose in the school. The co-ordinator is a very good classroom practitioner, providing an excellent model for all staff. Her innovative leadership is moving the subject forward in the quest to raise the standards of literacy across the school. Since the last inspection a much clearer focus on raising standards is evident. Senior staff use data very well to check pupils' progress, and ensure that the curriculum offered to pupils throughout the school is lively, interesting and well matched to their needs. This is resulting in higher standards, because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. This is good and improving due to a good new initiative to improve literacy across the curriculum that is underway in the school. The school has been supported well in this initiative by the local education authority. Another initiative to provide 'quality writing' lessons has been used well to develop writing for other subjects, particularly history and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics due to recent improvements in teaching and learning.
- The best teaching, in Years 5 and 6, is enabling pupils to reach higher standards.
- Leadership is good, with clear plans for the subject's needed development.
- Some lessons are not tailored well enough for all pupils to make progress.
- The development of mathematical skills is not yet given enough emphasis in other subjects.

Commentary

45. Standards seen during the inspection are below average throughout the school and not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. Since that time a special unit catering for pupils with very specific special needs in Years 3 to 6 has been opened; this has affected the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards. Raising standards in mathematics has been a high priority and has been successful. Rapid improvements are now taking place, which have yet to make an impact on rising standards but are already leading to improved teaching and learning. Pupils' rate of progress has improved steadily over the year and in most classes pupils achieve well. Teachers are giving increasing emphasis to the development of mathematical understanding, and pupils show good and sometimes very good attitudes to learning. Girls achieve higher standards than boys in mathematics, and the school has introduced a clear plan of action to raise boys' achievement.
46. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning are good. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, although there is too much variation between lessons seen that were excellent and a small number that were unsatisfactory. Very good teaching is seen in both key stages. Organising pupils by ability into sets for mathematics teaching is particularly effective in Years 5 and 6. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher teach a mathematics set, so that the three classes are divided into five smaller groups. This is very successful for the lower ability groups and means that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in these classes. There were excellent examples of teaching seen in both the Year 5 and Year 6 lower sets during the inspection. In these lessons, involving pupils in complex data-handling activities, the teachers had very high expectations. They maintained a brisk pace throughout and asked purposeful questions to develop pupils' understanding of the difficult work. Pupils were motivated and involved because of the teachers' enthusiasm, the excellent relationships established and the secure subject knowledge shown. As a result of these many strengths, pupils made significant strides in their learning. In Years 1 and 2 teachers use imaginative methods to gain pupils' interest. For example, by sticking a secret message under Year 2 pupils' tables, the teacher motivated them to use a 'code cracker' to work out the mathematics. Enjoyable lessons such as this help to explain why pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Mathematics lessons for pupils taught in small groups in the Inclusion Centre are very effective, helping pupils to understand the basic skills that are necessary in mathematics.
47. By contrast, in an unsatisfactory lesson Year 3 pupils made very little progress because teaching methods used were ineffective. There is a clear framework for developing knowledge, skills and understanding as pupils move through the school. However, lesson

plans are not always tailored to pupils' precise needs. As a result, work is sometimes too difficult for some, but much more often is too easy for others, especially the more able pupils. Pupils' books show that they are sometimes required to complete work they already understand before proceeding to appropriately challenging tasks, which affects the rate at which they are learning. Teachers are rightly placing increasing emphasis on providing opportunities to develop pupils' reasoning skills, initiative and understanding through investigative and problem-solving activities, but this is not yet making an impact on raising standards. Some teachers do not yet use real-life mathematical experiences enough to help pupils appreciate the importance of number in their daily lives. Some teachers do not involve pupils who are more reluctant to make a contribution well enough in question and answer sessions. However, throughout the school, teachers maintain informative records to help them identify what pupils know and understand and what requires attention. Most teachers mark pupils' work carefully and conscientiously, and this is helping pupils to make sound and sometimes good progress.

48. The subject is well led and there are clear plans for its continued development. There are good management systems in place but the effect of these is satisfactory because not all teachers are making full use of the information they have about pupils' previous achievements to help them make progress. Lessons and pupils' work are now regularly and systematically monitored to establish what works well and what needs doing to help raise standards. This has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Data from national tests is rigorously analysed and weaknesses identified, such as in mental arithmetic, so that they can be overcome.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. In physical education and science lessons pupils in Years 5 and 6 investigate pulse rates and heartbeat to develop their mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. Throughout the school there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their mathematics skills in other subjects. However, this important area has been identified as a priority by the school, and plans to establish a more systematic and high profile approach to help extend learning are in place. ICT is used well to support mathematical learning in lessons taught in the ICT suite. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to use ICT and mathematics together in these lessons, for example through data handling activities, and through controlling a program designed to draw two-dimensional shapes. This work reinforces pupils' knowledge of angles well.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- The skills of scientific enquiry are given increasing emphasis and improve pupils' understanding but some teachers do not yet give this sufficient emphasis.
- Although leadership and management are satisfactory, there is room for improvement in the way that the quality of science education is checked in the school.

Commentary

50. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, reaching higher standards than could be expected of them. This is due to a good emphasis on investigating science in these year groups. Standards seen are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6, and are lower than those seen in the last inspection in Year 6. This is partly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and because an Inclusion Centre for pupils with statements of special educational needs has opened since then. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the support they receive. Pupils from the

Inclusion Centre are integrated well into science lessons with other pupils of their age. Nonetheless, the results of these pupils affect the overall percentage reaching the expected level for their age in the national tests in Year 6. However, in Years 3 to 6 some pupils are not challenged enough because work is rarely matched to their precise needs. The school is now taking appropriate steps to address this. At present, pupils make satisfactory gains in learning from Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well, with significant proportions reaching the higher levels in the national assessments.

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2 they are good, leading to good achievement. Teaching is especially good in Years 5 and 6. In the best lessons teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and there is good emphasis on developing pupils' scientific understanding through practical investigation. These good features were seen during the inspection in a Year 3 lesson when pupils went on a mini-beast safari in the school grounds. In good lessons, such as in two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, teachers' enthusiastic approach and carefully chosen resources to support learning ensured that all pupils were interested and involved. Teachers' high expectations ensured good levels of challenge for pupils. These strong features, combined with the brisk pace, the use of good quality questioning to aid learning, and the regular use of encouragement and praise to enhance self-esteem, helped pupils to make good progress. However, in one unsatisfactory Year 3 lesson, pupils made little progress because time was not used to best effect to benefit pupils. There was no clear scientific focus, and no clear lesson target so that pupils did not know what they should be learning. Pupils are occasionally required to colour diagrams to enhance their appearance, which does not contribute to the development of scientific understanding. Work is sometimes not presented tidily enough in Year 3.
52. The skills of enquiry, such as predicting, investigating, testing, recording, evaluating and drawing conclusions as part of carefully structured scientific investigations, are given increasing emphasis as a means of developing pupils' understanding, for example when older pupils find out through investigation what is needed for plants to grow and flourish. There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening that helps pupils learning to speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, understand new scientific vocabulary. This is because the subject is secure within the school's good curriculum. Visits, such as to Saltwell Woods, help to bring the subject to life to aid learning, and regular checks are made of what pupils know and understand. However, some teachers do not bring the subject to life for their pupils because they do not give scientific investigation enough attention. In other lessons pupils of different abilities often carry out the same task, which prevents more able pupils from achieving well. Pupils do not have targets to aid learning, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Links with ICT require further development, such as to help pupils to record results of investigations accurately so that they can draw relevant conclusions.
53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. An experienced teacher, who is aware of what needs to improve, co-ordinates the subject and there are good plans for its further development. Improvement in science is currently a high priority for the school because of the low standards. The headteacher analyses data from national tests to help identify and overcome weaknesses. Although these areas are given increasing emphasis, they are not yet leading to rising standards. This is partly because the checking of teaching and learning and of pupils' work is at an early stage of development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school due the well-planned curriculum.
- Interactive whiteboards are used well to motivate pupils in some lessons.

Commentary

54. Throughout the school pupils achieve very well in ICT, reaching the levels that are expected for their age. These standards have been maintained well since the last inspection. This is due to a well thought out curriculum that results in pupils improving their understanding of ICT skills in well-taught lessons in the ICT suite. Lessons are well constructed to help pupils make progress. For example, in Year 2, lessons are broken into small sections. This helps pupils to refresh their skills in searching a CD-ROM and to complete the first task of using the 'tools menu' competently, before they go on to investigate the CD-ROM as they search for information about plants and animals. In most year groups teachers set some pupils working in mixed ability pairs to ensure that pupils who are not as confident get help from their partners. This is a successful strategy. There is a great deal of flexibility shown and older pupils are often allowed to choose whether or not they want to work together or on their own. These good teaching and learning are seen throughout the school in the ICT suite. Year 1 pupils, for example, designed an advertising poster together. They imported words from an electronic word-bank on the interactive whiteboard, before settling down to write an advertising slogan independently, using a word processor. The very clear focus in these lessons, on improving pupils' ICT skills as they work, results in the majority making very good progress.
55. In Years 3 to 6 all classes have an interactive whiteboard for pupils and staff to use in lessons, and Year 1 pupils also have access to the technology, as do pupils in the Inclusion Centre and those working in the ICT suite. This is relatively new technology for the school and some lessons make very good use of it. For example, Year 4 pupils in one class were invited to come and model their skills to their classmates using the interactive whiteboard. This motivated them extremely well, as all were keen to come out and have a turn with the gadget. In most lessons teachers use the boards very well to display what pupils are expected to learn. They use them effectively as lessons progress to make it clear what it is pupils are expected to learn in each part of the lesson. Pupils are fascinated with these presentations, enjoying the way the next learning target flashes onto the screen with an accompanying noise. This helps to keep them well focused on learning in many lessons. As yet not all teachers are using the interactive whiteboards to their full potential, for example for on-line research of the Internet or to enhance learning resources available in lessons with photographs. Some teachers tend to use the boards simply, as an electronic blackboard, rather than using the full capacity of the new technology. During the inspection teachers were understandably nervous of 'breakdowns' and used the resource cautiously. However, pupils talk enthusiastically about short and sharp daily mathematics' tests that are made huge fun by whizzing the questions and answers on the screen. Furthermore, some good examples of the use of displayed photographs were seen in the 'Art Workshop' in Years 5 and 6, when pupils spent most of the day designing and creating totem poles. They were able to see strong images of Navajo Indian reservations, and good images of totem poles. Excellent lessons such as this make full use of this exciting new resource to motivate and inspire pupils to work to their full capacity.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. Lessons taught in the ICT suite help pupils well with improving their understanding of mathematics and English skills, and with researching science topics. Pupils also have plenty of opportunities to learn how to use a graphics program to develop design skills. Interactive whiteboards are used as a tool in many lessons across the curriculum, so that overall ICT is used well in other subjects. Nonetheless, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT independently in lessons that take place in their classrooms. This means there are missed opportunities to use computers to record information, such as in science investigations, or to use the Internet for research, such as in history lessons. This is partly because there is not yet Internet access on the computers in all classrooms.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

57. No lessons were seen in history and geography during the inspection. Examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussion with pupils, show that the curriculum is good. Interesting, practical activities and visits to places connected with the class topics enrich pupils' experiences considerably. In history, particularly, there are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their knowledge in activities such as writing about what life was like in Victorian times or during the Second World War. Opportunities like analysing census data from the past mean that older pupils develop their enquiry skills well. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to record their work in their own way when worksheets are used too much in geography lessons.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils gain a secure understanding of topics in well-managed discussions that make a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral and social development.
- Planning is effective, but the guidance is not being used consistently well by all teachers so that pupils' progress is not as good as it might be and standards are not high enough.
- Weaknesses in teaching and gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding persist too long because the checks on teaching and learning are not thorough enough.

Commentary

58. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall in view of the below average starting points of many pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Discussions are particularly effective. Teachers forge very good relationships and manage discussions well. Pupils are willing to share their ideas because they know teachers are interested in what they have to say. Good use of music and a calm atmosphere encouraged some pupils to describe the calm, spiritual atmosphere of peace found in a mosque. Pupils are particularly good at picking out the messages in bible stories because teachers place a strong emphasis on the social and moral aspects in discussions. Pupils clearly see the links between the Ten Commandments and their school rules. They refer confidently to stories like the Good Samaritan as examples when explaining their ideas about qualities such as the need for kindness to people whatever their culture or background. Older pupils benefited considerably when specialists from outside the school led workshops that excited their interest. This work successfully stimulated their deeper interpretation of themes like 'Creation' through dance, drama, music and art. Religious education makes a good contribution to developing pupils' writing skills.
59. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below those expected in the Dudley Agreed Syllabus for religious education, as they were at the last inspection. Pupils' progress over time is uneven, and could be better. In some classes there are long periods of time when no work is recorded. Coverage of themes is not always deep enough to enable pupils to fully interpret the facts they learn, particularly when learning about faiths other than Christianity, so that they do not have a good enough understanding of the similarities between religions and the features that might have relevance for the way they live their own lives. Pupils gain a secure knowledge of Christianity, but they find it hard to recall details, like naming the features in a church. The school is well aware of the weaknesses and has plans to deal with them. However, other more urgent priorities in the school have slowed developments in religious education. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. The planning guidance is good, and she has begun to develop a system to check on pupils' achievements that is urgently needed. Her examination of pupils' work has highlighted the thin coverage of topics. However,

weaknesses have persisted for too long because the checks on teaching and learning, and on pupils' achievements, are not yet thorough enough in identifying and dealing with weaknesses.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

60. Not enough lessons were seen in these subjects to make a secure judgement about the overall provision, the quality of teaching and learning, or the standards achieved in music and physical education. The inspection focused mainly on work in English and mathematics. However, one design and technology, and one music lesson were observed, and two excellent workshop experiences in music and art and design. These formed part of the school's strong commitment to providing pupils throughout the school with a broad and exciting curriculum. No physical education lessons were seen. There are plenty of examples of pupils' work to see in sketchbooks for art and design, and design and technology. In addition there are many samples of pupils' work in these subjects on display around the school. There was no work to see in music and physical education, but pupils spoke about these subjects enthusiastically.

Art and design

61. The excellent workshop that was seen in Year 5 and 6 provided pupils with outstanding opportunities to work as teams. A professional artist and the class teacher, who together inspired the pupils, led it. They designed and created three-dimensional totem poles to complement the performance of the Navajo Indian creation story. The school recognised that art and design was getting lost in the drive to raise standards in English and mathematics across the school. To address this two days have been set aside at the end of each term for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to begin and complete an art and design project. This strategy has been successful. Pupils' sketchbooks show how they have gone through the process of designing and improving work before they create a piece of art at the end of each topic. Standards seen in pupils' books throughout the school match those expected for their age, indicating that they achieve very well.

Design and technology

62. The same strategy to ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have enough opportunities to design and make technological artefacts has been used, so that pupils spend two full days each term on a project. The resulting work on display around the school is of good quality and pupils record the process of their designs well. Most pupils evaluate their work candidly, explaining how they would improve a similar design. The quality of teaching and learning seen in Year 1 provides a very good model for all the staff. The very high expectations led the pupils to investigate how to stabilise a simple frame. There was great excitement when one boy with special educational needs discovered that a diagonal strut would stop his square frame from wobbling. Pupils are going to use these skills to design a playground for a teddy bear. Throughout the school the quality of pupils' designs and finished work matches the expectations for their age, indicating that they achieve very well.

Music

63. A very good model of teaching for all staff was observed in a mixed Year 5 and 6 class. Pupils successfully learned to sing *Summer is a Cummin In* in two parts, and how to perform a rhythmic accompaniment to the song. They learned the meaning of technical musical language such as crotchets and minims and how these are represented in music notation. One talented pupil was able to explain a complex part of notation to the teacher who was delighted to learn from her pupil. In this challenging lesson all the pupils sang in two parts well and with great enthusiasm. The excellent workshop seen in another Year 5 and 6 class took place over a whole day and finished with a moving performance of the pupils' composition to complement the Navajo Indian creation story. A teacher from the local secondary school led the excellent session. In addition to learning about dynamics, tempo, timbre and pitch pupils had huge fun. They also had the opportunity to meet and get to know a teacher from their next

school. Music clearly has a high priority in the school with the result that pupils can reach very good standards.

Physical education

64. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about lessons in this subject that are taught outdoors, particularly older pupils in Years 3 to 6. They appreciate the range of clubs that is provided to help them improve their skills. Experts and keen parents lead some of these. Pupils have the opportunity to learn how to swim so that most achieve the expected standard in swimming by the end of Year 6. Although no lesson in gymnastics were seen it is clear that the accommodation and resources for teaching this aspect of physical education are unsatisfactory. The school hall is too small, particularly for older pupils, and the fixed and large equipment available is outdated.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal social and health education is **very good** and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in their personal development because the school places a strong and effective emphasis on its provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Commentary

65. There is a very good programme, both formal and informal, for developing pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship skills. This is taught very well throughout the school. The very good teaching and learning start in the nursery and reception classes where very good achievement means that most children, often from low starting points, reach the early learning goals in this aspect by the time they move into Year 1. In regular timetabled discussions pupils throughout the school learn to make the right choices and know what to do when confronted by problem situations. As a result, they show a keen awareness of such issues as litter in their local area and strategies for improving it. They take on responsibilities like the recently introduced school council well, and are beginning to decide on ways of improving features like the school toilet areas through their own fund raising. Involvement in the Healthy Schools Project and work in subjects like science mean that pupils appreciate how to eat healthily and to exercise regularly.
66. Sex and relationships education is taken seriously. Very effective group and class discussions, like the one in Years 5 and 6 dealing with the emotional changes and problems arising at puberty, play a significant part in raising pupils' awareness. Because they have shared and discussed ideas, they show considerable understanding of different ways of dealing with conflict and resolving differences. However, pupils in Year 3 are sometimes not as independent as they might be, particularly when teachers direct their activities too closely. Nevertheless, pupils become mature, responsible and good team players by the time they leave the school.
67. The very good school ethos promotes pupils' personal development at every opportunity. In Years 4 to 6 pupils take part in weekly lessons called "You Can Do It!". The aim of these is to provide pupils with the skills and perseverance to tackle learning. Reward systems that encourage pupils to develop responsibility and work as part of a team play a strong part. The banners of each of the four school houses were designed by the pupils and are prominently displayed in the school hall where they are the focus for the weekly award of places for the most house points won. Individual contributions are valued very well in the school ethos book. This highly prized recognition is given to any pupil who has been observed promoting the school's values each week. Pupils can nominate other pupils for acts of kindness, such as

sharing their tuck. The huge beams of delight on pupils' faces as they collect their stickers and sit on the benches at the front of the hall show how effective this is. Parents are invited to a merit assembly where pupils receive awards for their achievements from the headteacher. This very good provision motivates pupils throughout the school to do their best and to succeed.

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	4
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	3
The quality of education provided by the school	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	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
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).