

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROMAN WAY FIRST SCHOOL**

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116733

Headteacher: Mr John McMillan

Lead inspector: Mrs Chris Field

Dates of inspection: 14th to 16th June 2004

Inspection number: 257292

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	234
School address:	Colts Lane Winyates West Redditch
Postcode:	B98 0LH
Telephone number:	01527 528111
Fax number:	01527 529952
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Reddish
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school which is of average size is located in the Winyates area of Redditch and serves a stable community comprising private, rented and social housing. Currently there are 234 pupils on roll including 40 children attending part-time in the nursery. The profile of children's attainment when they start school in the nursery is typically below average but covers a wide span of ability. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds but there are also a very few pupils from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds plus a small number from mixed race heritage. All pupils speak and work confidently in English. A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of learning difficulties; two pupils have a statement. A new headteacher joined the school at the beginning of the school year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	C Field	Lead inspector	Personal and social education and citizenship.
10965	P Edwards	Lay inspector	
1189	S Brown	Team inspector	English, art and design, history, religious education, special education needs.
4099	R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology.
22856	K Campbell	Team inspector	Science, music, physical education, Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Roman Way First is an **improving** school that is working effectively to improve pupils' achievements and raise standards. The new headteacher is providing strong and well-focused leadership and is receiving the full support and commitment of staff in implementing changes for the better and at a good pace. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features that lead to successful learning and good achievement overall. Classrooms are happy and purposeful places and the ethos is good. The school is well placed to continue to improve and gives **sound** value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Strong and determined leadership from the new headteacher is ensuring that the school moves forward at a good pace.
- Standards are above average in English, science and art and design by the end of Year 4.
- Morale is high and subject leaders are rapidly getting to grips with their roles and taking responsibility for raising standards.
- Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and junior years and is enabling good learning.
- More work is required in assessing progress, tracking achievement and targeting pupils' next steps in learning through marking and pupils' self-review.
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Good provision ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others of the same age.
- Higher attainers are not given sufficient challenge in what is planned or provided for them across their studies, especially in the infants.
- Relationships are a strength at all levels in school and underpin pupils' good achievement.
- The presentation of work is not good enough and expectations for the amount and quality of some of the work produced should be raised.
- The links with the parents, partner schools and the community are working to the good advantage of pupils.

There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection in 1998. The significant weaknesses in information and communication technology (ICT) have been eradicated. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been improved from being unsatisfactory to good and the provision for pupils' spiritual development has been changed from a weakness to a strength. The role of deputy headteacher has been well advanced since the current headteacher took up appointment, but is still in need of more development, as are the management roles of other key staff. Assessment is an area for more improvement to assist both teaching and learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	C	D	C	C
Writing	C	D	B	B
Mathematics	C	D	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with 8-20% of pupils eligible for free school meals*

From a below average start in the nursery pupils' achievement is **good** overall but better in the first two years and last two years of school than in the middle two years. Year 2 pupils reached average standards in reading, above average standards in writing and below average standards in mathematics in the 2003 National Curriculum tests. Teachers' assessed science standards as above

average. Current standards in Year 2 are average in English, mathematics and science and in all other subjects inspected. At the end of Year 4 standards are above average in English, science, art and design and average in all other subjects inspected. The organisation of pupils in sets of similar ability, the targeting of specific individuals and a new and enthusiastic teaching team in the juniors are making a positive difference to raising standards in mathematics, which are average overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good. Pupils enjoy school, they try hard with their work and behave well. Relationships are very caring and the school is a happy community. No exclusions have been made and this is testament to the school's good commitment to inclusive education. Attendance levels are similar to those found in other primary schools and punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good**.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall with good features that are now enabling good progress and achievement. Teaching is most effective in the Foundation Stage and juniors. Some of the teaching in the infants, though satisfactory overall, lacks pace and challenge. Planning has shortcomings and the school has yet to fully implement systematic ways of assessing individual pupils' progress and targeting improvement. Handwriting and the presentation of work are not always of the best quality. The curriculum meets requirements with some good enrichment, however higher attainers are not receiving a consistency of provision. In contrast pupils with special educational needs are receiving a good deal. The quality of learning resources is good and accommodation is satisfactory however, noise transference between open-plan classrooms is a problem for the school to address. The health, welfare and safety of pupils are central to the school's work and procedures to support these work well. The provision for pupils' personal and social development ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The links with the parents, partner schools and the community are working to the good advantage of pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are **good** overall. The new headteacher is leading effectively from the front. He knows what needs to be done and has put in place many new systems, processes and initiatives to support school improvement. His approach has been very successful in securing the full involvement of all staff, governors and parents. Senior management and subject leadership roles are in the process of development but more training, time and opportunity is needed to enhance management aspects. Governors are carrying out their responsibilities effectively and are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that best value principles are applied well to their decisions.

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

Parents hold positive views about the all round education provided. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. Friendships are valued and most say that other pupils are kind and behave well towards one another. Pupils rate physical education, art, writing, mathematics and ICT as their favourite subjects.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Sharpen up teachers' assessment of progress including marking, the tracking of achievement including pupils' self-review and targeting of their next steps in learning.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to the best level found in school, especially for higher attainers and specifically in the infants.

- Insist that the presentation of work is of high quality and that all teachers expect pupils to do their best.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

Pupils' achievement is **good**. From a below average start pupils reach standards that are above average in English and science and art and design by the end of Year 4.

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

- Achievement is good overall but pupils make better progress in the first two years and last two years of their school life than in the middle two years because of good teaching.
- Standards are above average in English and science and art and design and average in all other subjects at the end of Year 4.
- Good improvement has been made to raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design from a below average to an average standard since the time of the previous inspection.
- The school is well placed to continue to raise standards in mathematics due to the effective improvement strategies introduced by the new headteacher.
- The tracking of achievement including pupils' self-review and targeting of their next steps in learning require development.

#### **Commentary**

1. Most children start with below average levels of skills and knowledge in the nursery and achieve well so that virtually all achieve the goals set for them by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1. The pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily. Standards are currently average in all subjects in Years 1 and 2. A few pupils could be achieving a higher standard of work if more was demanded of them in the work they are set in most subjects. Target groups of pupils, mainly girls, have been identified in mathematics and this is supporting the better achievement of these pupils. The approach has successfully stemmed the downward trend in the National Curriculum test results, which are clearly shown in the school's own monitoring data. A similar approach would have merit to target the higher-level achievement of those pupils capable of reaching level 3 in English, mathematics and science. Personal targets have recently been set with pupils in literacy but these are not adding enough value to the process of raising pupils' achievement as many are too vague and do not help pupils understand how they can move up a level. This is true of the pupil targets set in the junior years too but teachers' higher expectations of what different pupils need to do to learn to the full of their capabilities enables a better pace to learning and more challenge. These features in teaching result in better achievement in the juniors than the infants.
2. Pupils reached average standards in reading, above average standards in writing and below average standards in mathematics in the 2003 National Curriculum tests. Girls' performance in mathematics was much below that of boys in school and girls nationally. The data shows that girls in school are not performing as well as the boys in school. Teachers' assessed science standards as above average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.3 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.4 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

3. Early indications are that pupils' performance in the 2004 National Curriculum tests will be broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. This year girls have out performed the boys. Results are likely to be better in reading and mathematics than in 2003 but not in writing. The presentation of pupils' work is not good enough and more attention is required to ensuring that handwriting is neat, with higher expectations held for the quality and amount of recorded work in all subjects. Teachers' assessment of science in 2004 is similar to that reported in 2003.
4. At the end of Year 4 standards are above average in English, science and art and design and average in all other subjects inspected. The standards in religious education meet those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. The average standards in ICT and above average standards in art and design are a positive reflection of the school's good improvement strategies as standards were below average in both subjects at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are reaching above average standards in art and design by the end of Year 4 because of the rich quality and range of experiences provided. The subject leader is highly influential in raising colleagues' expectations through the example she sets in Year 3, as shown in the high quality of displayed work. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy art and are especially proud of their sculpture in the style of Henry Moore that has been shown to the public as part of a County exhibition. The partnership work with the Middle school through the Sports Leadership Programme is assisting the school's provision in physical education to improve. A very good lesson involving team teaching enabled Year 3 pupils to reach above average standards as they practised and perfected bat and ball skills before playing a much-enjoyed game of *kwik cricket*.
5. The school's monitoring data shows that pupils in Year 3 and 4 are achieving well in English and science and the inspection team's scrutiny of pupils' work confirms this. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory but work in books shows that good progress has been made by most pupils in the last term, and particularly those in danger of not meeting the levels expected for their age. The schools' booster work is proving to be effective in supporting progress as are the additional strategies used to enable pupils to catch up on their studies in literacy and numeracy. There are effective individual education plans in place to support the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties, including those who have statements. However, teachers are occasionally stretched to match work to specific learning needs when they have limited additional support in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties generally achieve at a good pace because of the strong commitment shown by all staff to meeting the needs of individual pupils and the encouragement given to do their best. The next step is to make sure that that higher attainers receive the same consistency of provision so that they can achieve the best they can at all times.

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good**. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are happy in school.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and at break and lunchtimes.
- No exclusions have been made and this is testament to the school's good commitment to inclusive education.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
- Relationships between pupils and pupils and staff are a strength and underpin the good achievement.

## Commentary

6. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and their personal development are good and some aspects have improved since the previous inspection. The school is a happy and caring community. Pupils have a very good regard for the school and the staff team. Their behaviour in lessons and at break time is good overall. They settle down to work quickly, listen carefully concentrating well on the activities provided. Pupils know and discuss class rules which they adhere to well. They know well the behaviour expected of them and the consequences when they misbehave. In discussions with pupils none expressed any concerns about bullying or harassment, they are confident that any instances would be dealt with swiftly and firmly.
7. Pupils' personal development is good. They are friendly and confident amongst adults. Pupils clearly enjoy working co-operatively in the friendly atmosphere of the school. The relationships formed between pupils' and staff are good. Pupils are comfortable chatting to adults in the school about work and personal issues. Pupils know the school motto and they work hard and try to do their best except in one respect- the presentation of work which could be neater. They are generally well motivated in lessons and this makes a positive contribution to their good achievement.
8. The school provides pupils with secure knowledge of and insight into the values and beliefs of others through religious education and collective worship. However care needs to be taken that all class assemblies contain time for reflection and prayer. Within lessons staff provide opportunities for pupils to reflect for example, listening to *Grieg's Morning* while considering butterflies the life cycle of which they had been studying earlier. Pupils work well together in lessons and willingly carry out responsibilities such as, school council representative, milk monitor and classroom helper. Pupils are encouraged to make positive decisions about their conduct and attitudes and show respect for each other's contributions. Moral concerns such as recycling and improving the environment are discussed and involve pupils in developing a sense of social responsibility. The school is successful in teaching its pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions through the curriculum and by visits to the theatre and places of interest such as Worcester Cathedral. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils' learn about the richness and diversity of non-European cultures as seen in their work on Kenya and Australian Aboriginal life.
9. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Teachers call registers at the beginning of every session and staff monitor attendance appropriately. Pupils' punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/3 (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.3	School data :	0.2
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

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

10. The school is **effective** in providing a **sound** quality education within a caring ethos that supports pupils' good achievement. Teaching is **satisfactory** overall with some good features that enable pupils' successful learning. The **good** curriculum meets needs and aptitudes and has a **good** range of extra activities that pupils enjoy. Pupils receive **good** levels of care and support. Links with parents and with other stakeholders are **good**.

11. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall with some good features that lead to pupils' overall good achievement.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is never less than good in the Foundation Stage and enables the youngest children in school to make consistently good progress across the six areas of their learning.
- Teaching in the infants though satisfactory in most respects lacks pace and challenge and these features hamper pupils' good learning, especially higher attainers.
- Teaching is good overall in the juniors for boys and girls with some very good features in physical education, art and design and ICT leading to pupils' improving achievements.
- The assessment of progress including marking, pupils' self-review and the targeting of their next steps in learning are all weaker aspects of teaching and learning.

### Commentary

12. Teaching quality is better than at the time of the previous inspection and is improving due to the effective strategies for professional development that the new headteacher has introduced since September. Morale is high, all staff are reflective about their practice and willing to implement new strategies and systems that are enabling pupils to learn more effectively. The school to home partnership is beneficial to pupils' effective learning, especially in support of reading.
13. The changes made to staffing in Years 3 and the Foundation Stage in particular are proving to be successful and this is reflected in the consistently good teaching and learning. The school benefits from having a leading teacher for literacy on the staff and developments in English are moving forward at a good pace, though more work is required in the presentation of recorded work in all subjects. The headteacher's leadership of mathematics is supporting steady improvement as staff confidence to promote pupils' independent enquiry and problem solving skills increases. Classrooms are happy and purposeful places where consistently high expectations for behaviour, with the emphasis on praise and encouragement, are at the heart of the pupils' good personal and social development. The next step is to make sure that expectations are universally high for pupils' good academic achievement in all years and in all subjects.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4 (9%)	21 (49%)	16 (37%)	2 (5%)	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.

14. Teaching is never less than good in the Foundation Stage and enables the youngest children in school to make consistently good progress across the six areas of their learning. A very well taught lesson in literacy led to children in the nursery making considerable progress. Staff new to teaching this stage of children's education are doing well and the team ethos across nursery and reception years is strong. There is a good focus on enabling the children to make choices and in so doing help them develop good levels of confidence and independence. The Foundation Stage buzzes with activity and the stimulating experiences provided and well-chosen resources are very beneficial in supporting the children's good progress.
15. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants with some strengths and a few weaknesses. The strengths lie in the good quality of relationships in lessons that provide the pupils with confidence, the well-chosen resources that enliven topics and stimulate pupils' interest and the plentiful opportunities provided for pupils to work collaboratively and independently. The

main weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching are the lack of expectation and challenge, especially for higher attainers. The one unsatisfactory lesson in the infants observed by inspectors contained these features but also shortcomings in class management. Teachers make sure that lesson planning focuses on the overall gains that pupils are expected to make but lacks precision in identifying the specific outcomes expected by pupils of different abilities. This shortcoming restricts the accuracy of assessment of progress and is a missed opportunity to support a quicker pace of learning, especially for higher attaining pupils. The same situation exists in the juniors too but here higher expectations and more skilful teaching that enables pupils to build skills and knowledge at a generally good pace alleviates the problems.

16. Teaching in the juniors is good overall but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. Teaching for much of the time is helping the pupils learn successfully and inspectors observed only occasional shortcomings. For example, where weak subject knowledge in mathematics led to some pupils being confused between *rounding up* and *rounding down* to the nearest number when trying to approximate. In contrast, very high expectations, a brisk pace to learning and lots of challenge are the key features in the very good teaching observed in 3 lessons that led to pupils making considerably better progress than expected in art and design, physical education and ICT. The support for newly qualified teachers is not yet effective enough in securing a consistently good level of teaching and learning.
17. Good support for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, ensures that they learn successfully, very occasionally teachers are stretched to meet all pupils' needs when additional support is not available. The work of teaching assistants is satisfactory but sometimes they are too passive in role and could support teaching and learning more actively in the opening and closing sessions of literacy and numeracy hours.
18. The school has made a satisfactory start to monitoring teaching and learning through using a range of strategies and involving many of the staff in the process. The monitoring of writing in all years and shared evaluation by senior management has been a very useful tool to support the schools' developing self-review systems. The presentation of pupils' work, teacher marking and the need to smarten up pupil targets have rightly been flagged by senior managers as key areas for improvement. However, more remains to be done by managers to find ways of identifying and sharing the most effective practice so that teaching and learning are raised to the best level found in school.

## The Curriculum

The **good** curriculum meets requirements and offers worthwhile experiences for pupils of all ages with some **good** enrichment. Resources for learning are **good** but the accommodation has shortcomings in its design.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good start to their education and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with special educational needs, including statements, to achieve well. The group who are not as consistently well served are the higher attainers.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- Accommodation inadequacies are a barrier to be acknowledged; however the school has already drawn up plans aimed at cutting down noise transference between classrooms which is the main weakness.

## Commentary

19. The curriculum is in much better shape than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The curricular provision made for ICT and art and design and for children in the Foundation Stage have all been improved. All subjects have schemes of work in place and resources have been built to a good level. The ICT suite is an asset but slow Internet access is causing some problems and is delaying the development of a school-based web page that managers want to provide for parents. The school has earmarked £15,000 of the planned savings to upgrade tired computers this year and has planned to purchase interactive white boards for all remaining classes due to the success of the four purchased so far. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is of good quality with religious education meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' views about the quality of curricular experiences are very positive. Most say that they find lots of things out in lessons and mostly receive the help they need when they get stuck. Physical education, art, writing, mathematics and ICT are their favourite subjects.
20. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a rich and varied curriculum; they receive a good start to their education and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Major weaknesses relating to the curriculum have been effectively addressed and there is now a consistent, cohesive approach in the provision being made.
21. The curriculum offers a wide range of experiences that broaden pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in the infants and juniors. Planning is a collaborative process with medium term planning identifying worthwhile experiences across all subjects. Over recent months, action has been taken to provide rolling programmes of study in the non-core subjects and to providing blocks of time geared towards enabling pupils the opportunity to study specific subjects in greater depth. This is proving to be a useful strategy, for example as reflected in the high quality artwork seen in display. However, more refinement is needed to ensure that pupils in different age groups have sufficiently different work set for them within the shared topics. The key skills of numeracy, speaking, listening and reading are well promoted across subjects. More emphasis could be given to enabling cross-curricular use of writing.
22. Pupils with special education needs are provided with an appropriate curriculum that ensures they generally have the additional support required to work successfully towards the targets set for them in the well-written individual education plans. Additional strategies in literacy and numeracy are assisting those pupils who are just behind classmates of the same age, to get up to scratch in building key skills. The *booster work* undertaken in the lead up to the end of year tests in Years 2 and 4 have proved beneficial to consolidating pupils' skills and assisting those in danger of missing the level expected for their age to reach it. The school has just begun to look at the needs of those pupils with gifts and talents with a view to developing strategies to cater for their capabilities more effectively. A register has been created that identifies pupils in all years who have a specific gift or talent or is very high attaining and this is a useful start to widening provision.
23. Extra curricular activities include ceramics, recorders, computers, basketball, team games, hockey, short tennis, soccer, keyboards, flute and school council meetings. All of these add enrichment as does the well-planned programme of visits that tie in well to topics being studied. In addition, this year for the first time, Year 3 pupils' benefited from a residential visit to Kingswood that involved participation in a range of physical out-door activities included motorised sports. Pupils told inspectors how very much they had enjoyed this exciting opportunity.
24. There has been good improvement to the accommodation in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection but within the constraints of finances. The open-plan layout means that noise travels easily and this become obtrusive at times, as does the movement of pupils through teaching areas during lesson times. More work is in hand to partition classrooms with sound-proof screening but this is very costly. The internal layout is being rationalised to enable more teaching space and more storage but this will involve a much reduced size library. Governors are trying to make improvements to the accommodation but do not have the funds

available to tackle everything and will have to look for additional funding to support the realisation of their plans.

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

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is **good** and contributes effectively to the happy working atmosphere in the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is caring and supportive of pupils.
- Teachers know their pupils well.
- Parents are happy with the school's induction arrangements.
- Pupils need to be more involved in target setting to aid personal and academic development.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has improved the care, guidance and support provided for its pupils since the last inspection. Staff value pupils as individuals and closely, but informally monitor their personal development through class discussions and the award of certificates for good behaviour, hard work and effort. Most classes use smiley face charts to log pupils' development in these areas. The staff keep a good record of how well pupils with special educational needs make progress in their academic development but the same is not true for those with gifts or talents and the school is alert to the need to do this and has begun the process. Pupils' views are obtained through the recently introduced school council and circle time and this is a positive feature. More work is required on their involvement with setting personal targets.
26. The school has effective health and safety arrangements. There are three trained first aiders and first aid boxes are appropriately stocked and sited. All safety checks are up to date and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Child protection procedures are well understood by staff and training is up to date.
27. In reply to the inspection questionnaire most parents say they are happy with the school's induction arrangements for the youngest children. These allow the children to settle quickly into school and feel safe and secure in their new environment. Parents are provided with a detailed pack containing information on topics to be studied and suggestions on how parents can help prepare their children for this first stage of their school life. Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with adults working in the school. Pupils are particularly pleased that the lunchtime staff treat everyone fairly and that they always listen to both sides in any disagreement.

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

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and has forged strong and **effective** links with other schools and its community to the benefit of pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Regular newsletters and curriculum information keep parents well informed.
- The school has good links with other local schools and with the community.
- Parents are supportive of their children's learning at home.
- Parents are welcome in school and encouraged to help whenever they can.

### **Commentary**

28. As reported at the time of the previous inspection the school has maintained strong links with the community and local schools. Most parents think well of the school and feel comfortable about approaching staff with any questions or concerns.
29. Parental involvement with the school is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Homework is regularly set and builds on work done in class. The school encourages parents to help whenever they can. Staff appreciate greatly the help of a number of regular, reliable parents in classes and on educational visits. The recently inaugurated parent-teacher association has organised a disco and a fashion show is planned to raise funds for the refurbishment of the music room.
30. The information the school provides for parents is regular and informative with weekly newsletters, a termly calendar of events and curriculum information. Pupils' annual progress reports are to be re-formatted from this July and it is planned to include details of pupils' standards in relation to national expectations and ways in which parents can help their children at home. Parents will be consulted about these new style reports, as they were about the information they received at the reorganised parent-teacher consultation meetings.
31. The school has productive links with local schools especially Ipsley Middle School and Arrow Vale High School, which add to pupils' learning and teachers professional development. The schools links with the local community are good and include visits to Arrow Valley Park, the parish church and a local supermarket's recycling centre. There are links with Redditch College for childcare students and with Worcester and Newman colleges for students on initial teacher training placements. A pupil with a statement for special educational needs has two days of his education each week provided at Chadsgrove Special School which meets his individual needs well. This link is much valued by the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of leadership and management is **good** overall. Governance of the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher is good, and he has a strong sense of purpose for school improvement.
- The leadership of other key staff in the school, whilst satisfactory at present, is improving rapidly.
- The leadership of subject leaders overall is good but their management is satisfactory.
- School self evaluation is accurate and realistic, and has identified several areas for school improvement.
- The governing body makes a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- The financial management of the school is good.

### **Commentary**

32. The leadership of the new headteacher at Roman Way First School is good. Very shortly after taking up appointment, he identified areas for priority action, and moved rapidly to guide staff towards making improvement. Key aspects of the schools' provision included improving standards in mathematics, especially those attained by girls, and the introduction of new management procedures for the senior team and subject leaders in the school. Leading from the front and to help manage change he took on the leadership of mathematics and this has already led to improvement in standards. For example, the standards being reached by girls have risen sharply in the last year, and there has been a marked improvement in the performance of pupils in Years 3 and 4. Most importantly, changes in management have resulted in the deputy headteacher, senior managers and subject leaders having greater autonomy and empowerment to fulfil their responsibilities.

33. The headteacher has high aspirations for the future of the school, and this is shared by other key staff and teachers in the school. This is because an effective team is in place, where all staff know exactly what is expected of them, and that they are accountable for the success or failure of their areas of responsibility. As a result, the leadership of the senior managers of the school, whilst satisfactory at present, is clearly improving, as they attack with relish their increased responsibilities. The leadership of the provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good as is the leadership of the Foundation Stage. Likewise, most subject leaders are proving to be effective in the leadership of their subjects, which is reflected in the standards achieved across the curriculum. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they are attaining above average standards in English, science, art and design, and there has been substantial improvement in ICT and mathematics.
34. Management in the school is not yet as strong as leadership, because certain aspects are still at a developmental stage. The monitoring of learning and teaching, whilst frequently taking place across the school, is not yet effective enough. Teachers are given ideas on how to better focus teaching in order to improve pupils' progress, but there is insufficient follow up to check that this happens, and that learning improves. This is true in a number of areas such as the use of assessment data to identify the achievement of pupils over time; the setting of individual pupil targets to help them know how to improve their work; the guidance to pupils by teachers through accurate and diagnostic marking, and especially in improving the presentation of their work; and the raising of expectations for all ability groups, particularly the higher attaining pupils and those in infant classes. The school itself has identified all of these areas for development in recent months, and is now establishing clear areas of management responsibility in order to achieve all round improvement, rather than one or two particular priorities. The school's own self evaluation is accurate and realistic, under the astute guidance of the headteacher. As a result early indications show success in several identified areas. The school is well placed to continue to build for improvement, because staff are working well as a whole team, leaders are good role models for other staff and pupils, and all are highly committed to inclusive education for all pupils and have concern for the needs of individuals. Future improvement could be helped by increased effectiveness in the performance management strategy through more opportunities for staff professional development, with specific and attainable targets for the school and individuals.
35. The governing body is playing an increasingly proactive role in school management. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties well and are also strongly committed to a fully inclusive school. They are very determined that the school should be a beacon of high quality education in the area, and that it should be the school of first choice for as many parents as possible. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and the chair works effectively with the headteacher. They also have a good understanding of the principles of best value, both in the use of the school budget and in comparing the performance of the school with that of similar schools.
36. Financial management is good. Day to day financial management by the school administrators is efficient and effective. However the school has not received an independent financial audit from the local education authority for seven years to help support even better effectiveness. The school spends almost its entire allocated budget for the benefit of its pupils, and priorities for spending including costing and success criteria, are well established, though the latter could stand sharper focus in the school's improvement plan. The headteacher is well aware that the future growth of the school is dependent financially on maintaining, and preferably increasing, the number of pupils on roll. Indications arising from the inspection are that Roman Way has good capacity to become the school that the governors are determined it should be, both through the standards and achievement of its pupils, and through its happy and stimulating learning ethos. The school is improving the education for pupils all round and currently gives sound value for money.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	658,585
Total expenditure	623,296
Expenditure per pupil	2,664

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54,581
Balance carried forward to the next	34,092

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

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

37. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** and is a strength of the school.
38. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Major weaknesses, relating to the curriculum, assessment, the quality of teaching and leadership and management, have been effectively addressed. There is now a consistent, cohesive approach towards provision.
39. Children enter nursery the term after their third birthday and move into one of two reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there were 40 children attending the nursery part-time and 38 children in the reception classes. Despite some children only being in nursery for a short period, they were confident, settled and secure.
40. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average. Through good teaching, nursery children achieve well so that, by the time they reach reception, attainment is similar to others their age. Children continue to achieve well in their reception year. Most children develop sound early literacy, language and numeracy skills. The vast majority achieve the early learning goals and are well prepared for National Curriculum work in Year 1.
41. Currently, no children with special educational needs are identified in the nursery. In the reception classes, children with special educational needs make as much progress as everyone else because support staff are of high quality.
42. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and occasionally very good in the nursery. Teamwork between adults is strong. Nursery staff have adapted well to new arrangements for admitting children termly instead of annually.
43. The Foundation Stage curriculum is securely in place and activities match the six areas of learning well. Planning is detailed and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Children receive a good balance of interesting, purposeful activities. Assessment procedures are developing well, although there is still further work to be done to ensure work matches the needs of individual children, particularly higher attainers, more accurately. The school makes appropriate provision for teaching religious education in the reception classes.
44. Very good induction procedures and strong links with parents ensure a smooth transition into nursery and school.
45. The school has enlisted the support of a skilled practitioner from a neighbouring school to provide a secure framework for improvement. This collaboration has proved highly effective and has been instrumental in moving provision forward. The Foundation Stage is now well led and managed and there is a clear sense of direction for future development. Accommodation is spacious and displays are of good quality. Resources are good and the recent addition of an outdoor learning area has become a very effective part of children's learning.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

46. Personal, social and emotional development is an important part of provision.

47. Staff provide very good role models and relationships are very secure.
48. Home visits, prior to entry, ensure children settle into nursery quickly.

### **Commentary**

46. Children enter the nursery with weak social skills but make rapid progress through good teaching. All staff have clear expectations of behaviour, courtesy and collaboration and, as a result, children achieve very well. They quickly learn to share and to treat each other with kindness and respect. A good example of this occurred as a group of children were observed digging and planting in the outdoor area. The level of co-operation was very high as children helped each other to load the wheelbarrow with wood chippings. Good humour prevailed throughout as they obeyed the instructions of the one in charge and kept a careful eye out to make sure the 'monster' did not harm anyone.
47. By the time children move into the reception classes, most are confident and secure. They work well together in groups, whether they are researching information about minibeasts or talking with an adult about their work. They have a strong sense that people care about them. Relationships are very strong and children reach the early learning goals by the start of Year 1.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

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

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

- Staff develop children's speaking and listening skills effectively through good quality discussion.
- Reception teachers develop early writing skills well.

### **Commentary**

48. Children enter the nursery at various stages of development but their language and literacy skills are below average overall. They achieve well through good teaching. Adults talk with children; they question and skilfully extend understanding. Opportunities that enable reticent children new to the nursery to talk in front of others, such as answering the register with *Here I am*, work well. Group activities, ranging from going on the magic bus to composing a letter for *Handa*, create much animated discussion and encourage children to develop early writing skills.
49. By the time children move into reception, most are confident speakers and listeners. Some write their names unaided. Reception staff build on secure foundations. They continue to develop speaking and listening skills effectively through lively discussion. A good example of this occurred when children were observed confidently ordering fruit and vegetables in the class shop. Others busily wrote orders for the shopkeeper and there was much purposeful discussion. Children make good progress with writing through a balanced programme of learning letter sounds and trying to write by themselves. Reading is fun and children of all abilities love books. Routines for reading with adults at home and at school are well established and parents make a strong contribution towards children's learning. The vast majority achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.

### **Mathematical Development**

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

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

- Activities are fun and staff and children enjoy their work.
- Practical activities make a purposeful contribution to children's learning.

## Commentary

50. Children throughout the Foundation Stage make good progress in this area of learning because they are taught well. They enter the nursery with a wide range of ability that is overall below average and achieve well. They have secure basic mathematical understanding by the time they move into reception. The good teaching and learning enables most children to achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1.
51. Nursery children show real enthusiasm for mathematical activities that stimulate interest and excitement. They try very hard to identify the number on their ticket for the magic bus so that they will not lose their seat. They count the number of children present with great enthusiasm and varying degrees of success.
52. When they move into reception, children become more confident with numbers. Some develop a very mature grasp and know that 40 is bigger than 30. Most understand one more and one less. One proudly announced *I know 34 is one more than 33.*

## Knowledge and Understanding of the World

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and support staff make very effective use of outdoor learning areas.
- Computer skills develop well.
- Children have ample opportunities to explore and experiment.

## Commentary

53. Nursery children achieve well from a below average starting point. They develop good understanding, through an exciting range of purposeful activities linked well to topics. Good teaching in both nursery and reception classes enables most children to reach the early learning goals by Year 1.
54. During the inspection, nursery children made purposeful use of the outdoor area. They were filled with apprehension and excitement, as they journeyed through the swamp in their *Jungle Adventure*. One could be heard shouting *I've just killed a lion*, amid a range of weird animal sounds in different parts of the wild area. All developed a much greater knowledge of animals from this activity.
55. Reception classrooms have an interesting range of good quality displays, ranging from watching grass seeds grow to mini-beast collections. *The Hungry Caterpillar* features prominently and the story is used very successfully to provide a rich range of activities, ranging from observational drawings of fruit to going on a mini-beast hunt. Computers are an integral part of daily work and most children develop secure mouse and keyboard skills as they create mini-beast paintings on screen. Provision for teaching religious education is well organised and children in the Foundation Stage have a good basic understanding of different faiths and religions.

## Physical Development

Provision for physical development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor areas have improved significantly since the previous inspection and now provide well for developing physical skills.
- Lessons are well planned and children throughout the Foundation Stage receive a good variety of purposeful activities.

## Commentary

56. No indoor physical education lessons were observed.
57. Physical development skills are average on entry to the nursery. Children achieve well through good teaching. They quickly become confident when using outdoor apparatus to jump, slide and climb. Through a wealth of opportunities, they gain increasing competence when using scissors, paintbrushes and other tools.
58. Children move into the reception classes with average skills and continue to achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning remains good. They demonstrate good pencil control in their writing and increasing skill when using a wide range of media in their artwork. In one lesson, they demonstrated very good control and mature attention to detail in their observational drawings of fruit cross sections. By the time children reach Year 1, the vast majority have achieved the early learning goals.

## Creative Development

Provision for creative development is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in both nursery and reception achieve well because they receive a rich variety of opportunities to develop their creative skills.
- Children's work is attractively displayed and provides them with an exciting learning environment.

## Commentary

59. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery. Children start at various stages of development and make rapid progress. By the time they move into reception, standards are similar to other children their age. Through good teaching, most children achieve the early learning goals. Staff successfully create an atmosphere of fun. The recent multi-cultural week in the nursery provided good opportunity for everyone to dress up in clothes from different countries. During the inspection, children were observed letting their imaginations take over, as they pretended the wood bark they were digging was chocolate
60. Work continues to be both interesting and exciting in the reception classes. Activities are linked very well to topics or stories. Children *sang There's a Tiny Caterpillar* with great enthusiasm during their work on minibeasts. They pay careful attention to detail in their observational drawing and have attractive fabric prints and appliqué butterflies on display to demonstrate good levels of skill. Their paintings in the style of *Miro* show good creative development very effectively.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good overall.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good overall in English but needs to be more pacy in the infants.
- Good leadership is driving forward improvement with management aspects developing well.
- Target setting is a new process and requires more precision.
- Marking is not sharp enough to help pupils' next steps in learning.
- The presentation of work in books is not good enough and teachers should insist on pupils' best work at all times.
- Good use of ICT enhances pupils' learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well against their specific targets.

#### Commentary

61. Standards in English are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 4. Standards have improved markedly in Years 3 and 4 since the last inspection. Achievement is good overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are well challenged and pupils respond positively to effective teaching. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good as a result of the good provision and well-organised support in literacy lessons. The school identified writing as a weaker element and this has been a key focus. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in writing are above average by the end of Year 4.
62. Overall, standards in speaking are average but listening skills are good. Good use of questioning checks pupils' understanding of words such as slumped and attractive. There are many opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion, although responses are brief with few pupils engaging in more extended conversations. The use of role-play and hot-seating contribute to pupils' increasing confidence to speak aloud to an audience and to communicate effectively.
63. Standards in reading are average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4. Teachers build well on pupils' positive attitude to books. There is a strong focus on the teaching of phonics. Higher attainers read confidently and fluently. They enjoy reading and are happy to engage in discussion about their book. Pupils are well supported at home with reading. Although reading diaries are maintained they lack diagnostic comments to help pupils improve, and their use is not consistent. By the time pupils reach Year 3 the amount of time for individual reading is reduced but other opportunities such as guided reading groups ensure pupils maintain steady progress in these skills.
64. Writing across the school has improved and standards are above average in Year 4. Pupils write for a good range of purposes. Older pupils are well challenged to use powerful language, particularly evident in the good range of poetic writing – for example, one pupil began, *Deep in the galaxy, the egg-like planet floats silently...*, while another writing a poem based on the moon wrote, *Where shadows belong, the curious star in space? The moon pinpoints on me like a patch of dull silver. High in Heaven, the shadows of shadow world sparkle on me like a silver diamond egg...* The range of writing in Year 2 shows a secure group of story writing as well as non-fiction writing, instructional text and poetry; younger pupils are beginning to use basic

punctuation accurately and their writing is increasingly extended. Higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

65. Handwriting and presentation skills are inconsistent. Too many pupils do not present work carefully. Although handwriting skills are taught and practised, pupils do not reflect these skills well enough when writing in English and in other subjects. Pupils in Year 4 do not always join their writing and the majority write in pencil.
66. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well-integrated and supported in lessons. They have positive attitudes to their work as a result. Individual education plans are well focussed on pupils' key needs with appropriate and clear targets. Additional strategies to boost learning are having a positive effect on standards.
67. The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 and 4. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Where it is good, teacher's good use of questioning and intervention techniques enables pupils to use their knowledge of language conventions and grammatical features in writing, helping pupils to achieve well. Expectations are high and pupils are well challenged. Throughout the school, resources are used effectively, contributing well to pupils' learning. All teachers expect pupils to behave well in lessons. Pupils respond well and work with good independence when required. Effective use of interactive white boards is having a very beneficial effect on learning. Classroom support staff are not always used effectively, particularly during the first half of literacy hours.
68. A range of assessment strategies are in place, which are used appropriately to inform progress. However, opportunities for pupils to be more involved through self-evaluation are limited. The recently introduced target setting is not yet well-embedded and is not reflected in the marking of pupils' work. Marking is inconsistent and often lacks sufficient comment to help pupils improve their work.
69. There is good leadership and sound management in English. He is aware of what is required to raise standards further, particularly through tracking achievement and targeting pupils' next steps in learning through marking and self-review.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

70. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills such as in the role-play of religious education of Hindu celebrations. There is satisfactory evidence of written work in other subjects, but pupils do not often write at length. Skills in handwriting and presentation of work are not good enough. An over-reliance on work sheets in some areas of the curriculum limits opportunities for more extended writing. Pupils make use of computers for independent research and for presenting some of their writing.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

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

- Standards are rising due to the good drive for improvement being led by the headteacher.
- A three year decline has been stemmed and standards in mathematics are now average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
- Ability groupings that enable more targeted teaching are proving to be beneficial but a tighter focus is required on planning and assessment to support even better progress, especially for higher attainers.
- Assessment, including marking, is not sharp enough to help pupils' next steps in learning.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and try hard, although their work is not always presented well enough.

- Leadership and management of mathematics are good and have created a secure base for continued improvement.

## Commentary

71. Standards in mathematics are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards in the subject that were in decline during the intervening years have been improved during the last year. School data shows that girls have been significantly under performing in mathematics tests in comparison with boys in the infants, and that the progress being made was too slow in the juniors. The new headteacher took on the role of subject leader shortly after his arrival last September and has guided staff successfully in the drive to improve standards. The strategies being implemented are already showing beneficial impact on pupils' achievements. The latest National Curriculum test results for Year 2 pupils indicate that standards have been raised. Girls' attainment, especially, has improved as a result of newly introduced strategies that include setting by ability and precision teaching. Targets for improvement in Years 3 and 4 have also been reached, and exceeded by a significant number of pupils who have benefited from additional *booster input* to bring the standard of their work up to the level expected for their age. As a result, although the achievement of pupils overall is satisfactory, the achievement of some lower attaining pupils is good. The school realises though, that not enough higher attainers are yet reaching above average standards throughout the school and has rightly identified this as the next step for improvement in the school action plan.
72. Teaching and learning reflects achievement and is satisfactory overall, even though observed lessons varied between good and unsatisfactory. However, detailed scrutiny of pupils' books revealed that many pupils are making good progress over time in their learning, which is helped by well-directed teaching. The most effective teaching provides challenge to pupils of all abilities, as for example, when pupils in Year 2 learn about reflective lines of symmetry, and when pupils in a set of average attainers in the juniors learn about division and remainders. Learning is less effective when teachers are unclear about what they expect pupils to learn, which can lead to confusion and not enough gains being made. Learning could also be improved, if teachers were more proactive in offering guidance in their marking, and consistently set targets in mathematics for each individual pupil to help them understand how to improve their work. Teachers have a good bank of assessment data, which they have used to track progress accurately over time. This has undoubtedly helped in the improvement in girls' attainment in the last year. Teachers need now to use information gained from termly assessment, and ongoing assessment in lessons to help in their planning for the learning needs of all individuals, especially those of the higher attainers.
73. Pupils throughout the school enjoy mathematics, especially problem solving and practical problems. Their attitudes and behaviour are especially good when their teachers use effectively the interactive whiteboards in the lessons. Some pupils, though, lack urgency when in group work, and when not being supported by adults. Teachers are sometimes not rigorous enough in setting time targets, or demanding that pupils *do their best*, particularly in the presentation of their work, which sometimes leads to inaccurate calculations.
74. The leadership and management of mathematics by the headteacher are good. He has set clear targets for improvement, closely monitored teaching and learning through frequent lesson observations, and encourages all staff to take on individual responsibility for improving standards. This has given mathematics a really solid foundation for the continuation of the recent raising of standards and expectation.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

75. The mathematics curriculum is well linked to design and technology and ICT for example, and the use of data handling is effective. The basic skills of numeracy are taught soundly across the

school and are related well to problem solving. Opportunities for the use of mathematics in subjects such as geography and history are infrequent and need to be developed.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school and achievement in the juniors is good.
- Standards are higher in the juniors than the infants because junior teachers focus more effectively on developing investigative and experimental skills.
- Procedures for assessment do not give a precise enough picture of what individual pupils know and whether they are making enough progress.
- In the infants, higher attaining pupils are not always given enough to challenge them.
- The quality of presentation and marking varies from class to class.
- Teachers throughout the school develop scientific language well.

### Commentary

76. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe science lessons in some year groups. However, evidence taken from a full year's written work indicates that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Pupils enter the infants with a secure basic knowledge of the world about them. They demonstrate steady progress in their understanding of life processes, materials and physical processes but do not receive enough opportunities to gain greater scientific understanding through experimentation and investigation. Although planning includes extension work, higher attaining pupils do not always move on to these activities, and this restricts opportunities for even better achievement. All too often, throughout the infants, teachers rely too heavily on worksheet based activities. Consequently, infant pupils achieve satisfactorily, rather than well.
77. Standards in the juniors present a far more positive picture and show good improvement since the previous inspection. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average and some older pupils demonstrate mature scientific thinking. No differences were detected between the achievement of boys and girls, or those with special educational needs. Pupils follow their own lines of enquiry and achievement is good. However, evidence taken from previous work reveals some variation in the quality of presentation that does not always reflect the ability of individual pupils. Marking also varies considerably across the school and does not help pupils know how to improve their work.
78. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. In both Year 1 lessons on grouping and changing materials, three activities were sensibly broken up into short timed sessions, so that pupils did not lose interest on a very hot day. Teachers promoted scientific language very well in their discussions. They drew groups together at regular intervals to learn from each other. Pupils developed speaking and listening skills well during group work and showed good levels of collaboration. They enjoyed what they were doing and, as a result, succeeded. However, everyone completed the same tasks and not all higher attaining pupils got round to more advanced work.
79. Science has not been a high profile subject during the past year, while the school has focused its attention on raising standards in English and mathematics. The action plan for development accurately identifies the need to increase some teachers' confidence with experimental and investigative science. It recognises that assessment procedures need greater precision and that the quality, quantity and presentation of work vary considerably across the school. Although there are good individual examples of ICT being used well to support learning, computers are

not a strong feature of provision and the school has correctly identified their use as an area for development. Numeracy skills are used in graphs, charts and tables to help recording but, once again, further development is needed.

80. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The subject leader has started to develop her monitoring role but, currently, does not have an accurate enough whole school overview of standards, achievement or the quality of provision. However, she has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in provision and is well placed to make good improvement when science becomes a priority for development during the next academic year.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, but have improved markedly since the last inspection.
- Resources are good and continue to be enhanced; the introduction of interactive white boards is a positive feature.
- The leadership and management of ICT are good.

### Commentary

81. Standards in ICT at the end of both Year 2 and Year 4 are average. The achievement of pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity, is satisfactory. However, ICT is a success story in the school since the last inspection, when standards were very low, resources poor and the subject was not regarded as a priority area of pupils' education. Since then, to the great credit of the subject leader, the present deputy headteacher, there has been considerable progress. There has been effective training for teachers, good leadership of improvement and a substantial upgrading of resources, which is continuing. This has led to considerable improvement in the learning, standards and achievement of all pupils.
82. Learning and teaching are satisfactory, which is a very good improvement. They have been helped by the provision of a good quality ICT suite, well-chosen software to support pupils' experiences in the subjects they study, and the recent addition of effectively used interactive whiteboards in several classes. Sometimes though, the computers in the suite, which are quite old, are slow and do not have the functions of more up to date equipment, additionally the school is aware of the need to train teaching assistants in ICT as part of its action for the future to enable better support for both teaching and learning. Computers are located in all classrooms, and were used frequently during lessons observed by inspectors. The confidence of teachers has increased greatly over time and they now try to give their pupils as many opportunities as possible to develop their ICT skills. In a satisfactory lesson, pupils in Year 2 were observed learning how to use *return* and *enter* keys to organise sentences in poetry and include breaks in the text. Most achieved the task but with many requiring help that resulted in a slow pace to learning as the teacher did her best to give the support required. However, a handful of pupils, mostly boys, made too little effort when working on their own and were a distraction to other pupils. In contrast, a few worked well independently and finished the task quickly but could have benefited from a pre-planned extension activity to assist the pace and level at which they worked. In a very good lesson in Year 4, pupils were challenged to develop control instructions to construct different regular shapes. Very good teaching enabled pupils to develop their learning and thinking skills in order to achieve this demanding task using the correct sequence of commands to draw lines with the right angle to make squares and rectangles. Pupils' learning at such times, benefits from their avid listening, and observation of often striking visual teaching points. They concentrate hard, and generally work well in pairs and independently.

83. The leadership and management of ICT are good. The subject leader has shown considerable determination and fortitude in guiding the improvement in standards and resources. She has organised successful staff training by another local teacher and is now training another teacher to take over her subject leadership. She is also guiding pupils in the new *content streaming initiative* which enables them to access educational information directly from their homes.

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

84. Opportunities for using ICT across the curriculum are satisfactory. The improvement in resources, especially software programmes, is beginning to make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in English, mathematics and music in particular.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Religious Education**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching is closely linked to the locally agreed syllabus
- Visits and visitors enhance the subject
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning
- There are good links with other areas of the curriculum
- Marking is inconsistent
- Limited opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length

#### **Commentary**

85. The picture in religious education is similar to the time of the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and 4. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Two lessons were observed and in both, teaching and learning were good. Planning in all lessons was closely linked to the locally agreed syllabus. Support for pupils with special educational needs was good enabling pupils to achieve well.
86. During their time in school pupils learn about different faiths including Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They are encouraged to recognise similarities and differences between religions. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know about stories from the Bible such as Moses and the birth of Jesus. They know some facts about special people such as Dr Barnardo and St Francis. They recognise and name artefacts and symbols from the Christian and Jewish faiths and know that Christians worship in church and Jewish people worship in a synagogue. They know the importance of special celebrations and events such as the Passover and the Seder meal, comparing this with their own special meal.
87. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build steadily on their knowledge and understanding of Christianity as well as learning about Hinduism. Good use of role-play helps pupils to understand the importance of Hindu ceremonies such as Churti, Namakarama and Niskarma ceremonies. They discuss prayer and the reasons for praying, writing their own thank you prayers and learning the meaning of language in the Lord's Prayer. Pupils gain a sound understanding of Hinduism, including festivals and celebrations. Good use is made of visits to the local church and to Worcester Cathedral but opportunities to visit places of worship from other faiths are limited. Visitors such as the local vicar and other visiting speakers contribute effectively to pupils' learning in religious education. There are good examples of cross-curricular links, for example, through drama, speaking and listening, history and geography. Work in art and design also contributes to developing pupils' sense of beauty and wonder through artefacts, sculpture, clay, painting, printing and the work of famous artists.

88. Teaching is satisfactory overall and results in satisfactory learning. However, an over-dependence on worksheets by some teachers restricts pupils' opportunities to write at length, particularly when learning about Hinduism. The lack of differentiation in planning results in a lack of challenge for higher attainers who do not always achieve as well as they could.
89. Teachers make good use of the interactive white boards to enrich learning. Marking is inconsistent with few comments to help pupils improve their work. Issues of handwriting and presentation apply to work in religious education.
90. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. The policy for the subject is about to be reviewed. She recognises that provision in the subject requires further development and has identified the strengths and weaknesses, including more time in Years 3 and 4, particularly for learning *from* religion.

## **Geography**

91. No judgement is made on the provision of geography in the school as no lessons were seen and the subject was only sampled. From the subject leader's portfolio of past work, in pupils' work in books from September and in the displays around the school, it is evident that standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.
92. Pupils in Year 4 have recently enjoyed studying classroom waste, initiated by the school council, which has included a trip to a nearby recycling centre. Following their visit pupils have produced posters encouraging others to be more environmentally friendly. Pupils in Year 2 have usefully compared life on an island in Scotland, with life in Redditch, as well as life in Kenya. The work shows sound knowledge being built but not all of their findings are well presented. Layout, punctuation and spelling in written work in geography are sometimes careless, and this does not receive enough correction by teachers. Quite a few worksheets are used to support pupils' studies in geography and it would be useful to review that all of these are worthwhile as apart of the promotion of wider opportunities for personal writing and research skills development.

## **History**

93. No judgement is made on the provision of history in the school as work was only sampled. However, there is every indication from pupils' work and lessons seen that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
94. It is clear that the use of visits and visitors to school make an important contribution to the curriculum, for example, pupils visit Hartlebury Museum and participate in a Victorian school day, they explore Chedworth Villa in their study of the Romans and visit the local church as part of their local study. Visitors to school include speakers for Remembrance Day and The Second World War. Teachers use the smart boards effectively to enrich the curriculum. In the two lessons seen, images of London showing where the Great Fire started increased pupils' understanding. From a painting of King Charles II pupils made comparisons with clothes now and then and discussed why it is better to live in London today than at the time of Samuel Pepys. Although teaching and learning was satisfactory in these lessons, there were missed opportunities through planning to challenge and extend higher attainers. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent with few comments to help pupils improve. Work seen indicates appropriate attention to the programmes of study but opportunities to write at length are limited. The subject leader provides sound leadership and management but monitoring aspects of the role are not fully developed.

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

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

### Main strengths and weakness

- Standards in art and design are above average at the end of Year 4 and achievement is good.
- Links to other subjects are good and multicultural art is a strength.
- The use of visits and visitors provides good enrichment to the curriculum.
- Leadership and management are good.

### Commentary

95. Standards in art and design are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 4. This is a significant improvement in the juniors since the last inspection when standards were found to be below average. Pupils' achievement is good overall as a result of good teaching in the junior classes particularly. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated and achieve as well as other pupils of their age in art and design.
96. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop sound skills in observational drawing. They use a range of media, focussing well on pattern and texture, for example, using fingers and tools to create texture in clay tiles. They develop painting, collage and printing techniques to a satisfactory standard.
97. In Years 3 and 4 teachers build very effectively on these skills extending the range of media and experiences well. Pupils create repeating patterns in the style of Escher, Bridget Riley and Kandinsky, showing good use of colour and techniques. Three-dimensional sculpture work in the style of Henry Moore is particularly effective, using clay and wire. Good use is made of the outdoor environment as pupils create outdoor sculptures in the style of Diane MacLean. They have a good knowledge of artists such as Andy Goldsworthy and Andy Nash. Pupils are very proud of the fact that their sculpture work is currently on show in Worcester Cathedral at the prestigious Voices and Visions exhibition.
98. In the Year 3 lesson seen, pupils were immersed in the Aboriginal culture as they explored the use of colour by Aboriginal artists and the ingredients used to create the earthy tones. An excellent range of artefacts such as boomerangs and didgeridoos provided pupils with examples of patterns and colours and enhanced learning very well. The very good use of artistic vocabulary contributed well to pupils' literacy skills with references to colours such as burnt sienna and burnt umber. Pupils worked diligently to background Aboriginal music. The very good use of the interactive white board provided a wealth of information in a Powerpoint presentation and engaged pupils very well in the lesson. Cross-curricular links are good and the focus on multicultural art and design is a strength.
99. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In the infant classes, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some very good teaching was seen in Year 3, which resulted in very good learning taking place. Here, teaching strengths included the teacher's very good subject knowledge, good focus on skills and knowledge to be developed and thorough planning. Very good use of high quality resources also contributed to the success of this lesson, as did the good attention to artistic vocabulary and the very good use of ICT. Such lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic. Sketch books are used satisfactorily overall to explore different techniques and experiment with different media but in some classes use of sketch books could be improved, particularly to develop observational drawing skills. Good use of visits to places such as Wallsworth Hall and Worcester Cathedral contributes to the standards of art seen. Art and design is used effectively across the curriculum, with links to literacy, history, geography and religious education seen.

100. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has very good subject expertise and leads by example, providing good guidance and support to colleagues. Time is given to monitoring teaching and displays and to working alongside other teachers in a specialist capacity. This has contributed well to the improvement since the last inspection. In addition, a useful photographic journal and evaluation involving pupils is made of work in art and design. This is levelled to provide guidance to teachers. As a result the subject leader has a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development and is well placed to take the subject forward and raise standards further.

### **Design and technology**

101. As no lessons were seen during the inspection no judgement is made on the provision in design and technology. The evidence gathered from a good quality portfolio of photographs, pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils shows that standards reached by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are average overall.

102. Links with science are clear where pupils have studied circuits and planned and made a lighthouse. Pupils in Year 2 describe accurately how they have designed and made pop up story books, and made cars from old boxes as well as from specific technology kits. Their most recent work has involved designing and making *Joseph's amazing coat* and the finished products are colourful and show originality and personal flair. The subject leader ensures that there is a broad curriculum, with good resources available. Teachers and pupils alike enjoy design and technology, and the work in display reflects confident teaching and learning throughout the school and worthwhile experiences.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The relocation of the music room has improved the quality of provision.
- The new music scheme offers good support to non-specialist staff.
- Class teachers still have some insecurity with the subject.

### **Commentary**

103. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and the picture is very similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. There have been several improvements that have had a beneficial effect. Although still not ideal, the current music room, which is separated off from open plan areas, is a great improvement on the previous one. Pupils can now listen without background noise and play instruments without causing distraction to others. The school has also introduced a commercial scheme, with lively and interesting activities that promote good learning. Instrumental tuition is starting to develop and the school makes good use of visits and visitors, such as music workshops and the Pyramid Music Festival, to enhance learning.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall throughout the school, although a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers cope with some subject insecurity well and provide pupils with a worthwhile, enjoyable learning experience. In all lessons, they use every opportunity to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion and activities such as making up words for a song. They also ensure music makes a positive contribution towards pupils' social development through well-organised group activities, where pupils are responsible for a combined piece of work. All teachers build an appropriate balance of listening, composing and performing activities into lessons. Sometimes, however, pupils become restless and do not achieve as well as they should when one activity

lasts too long. This happened when a group of pupils had composed their song and had to wait unoccupied for others to finish. On other occasions, pupils find difficulty with trying to tap a rhythm and sing a song at the same time, because they do not know the song well enough and teachers do not have the expertise to address the problem. Unsatisfactory teaching arises when poor class control allows the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority to disrupt learning.

105. ICT has been correctly identified as an area for development. Currently, it does not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
106. The subject is competently led and managed by a teacher who has a clear sense of direction for the subject. The school has benefited from good quality input from an Advanced Skills Teacher, who has increased staff confidence and expertise. Simple but effective assessment procedures ensure teachers maintain an adequate record of progress. There is still more to be done and the school has drawn up a realistic and achievable plan for future development.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Involvement in the School Sports' Co-ordinator programme has improved the quality of provision and is starting to raise standards.
- Links with Ipsley Middle School and Arrow Vale High School have been very productive.
- Two recently appointed co-ordinators lead and manage the subject well.
- There is a good range of extra curricular opportunities.

### **Commentary**

107. No dance or gymnastics were observed during the inspection. Swimming records show that most pupils can swim 25 metres before they leave at the end of Year 4 and this is very positive.
108. Evidence taken from a small number of lesson observations, teachers' planning and photographs of previous work, indicates that standards in games are average at the end of Years 2 and 4. Until recently, physical education has not been the same high profile subject it once was, but that perception is now changing. The school rightly identified the need to improve provision and appointed two enthusiastic subject leaders to develop the subject. New planning, high quality training and strengthened links with Ipsley Middle and Arrow Vale High Schools have all proved very positive in the school's drive to raise standards. Both subject leaders have embarked on the School Sports' Co-ordinator Programme. This package of initiatives has moved the subject forward in the right direction.
109. The overall quality of teaching and learning in both infants and juniors is good and occasionally very good when there is specialist input from the Middle School. All lessons are well structured, class control is very good and teachers develop skills very effectively. In the very good lesson observed in Year 3, on developing throwing and catching skills, relationships were very positive and everyone wanted to achieve well, because they enjoyed the structured activities so much. Pupils of all abilities were challenged to go that little bit further. The whole lesson was a lively and productive session with good standards and very good achievement.
110. As with many subjects, physical education has taken a back seat while attention has focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The school has managed to maintain the strong range of extra curricular sports activities found at the time of the previous inspection. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in residential outdoor pursuits and the school makes appropriate arrangements for swimming. Outdoor hard and grassed areas are spacious and

act as a good quality resource. New assessment sheets are starting to provide a more accurate picture of standards and achievement. ICT is identified as an area for development. Currently, it does not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning in physical education.

111. The subject is going from strength to strength. There has been much improvement in a short space of time and there are encouraging signs that the school is well placed to continue to raise standards in the future.

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

112. The personal, social, health education and citizenship aspect of pupils' education was sampled during the inspection, but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision.
113. The effective programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is supported by a comprehensive policy that was updated in October 2003. In the Foundation Stage, personal, social and emotional development receives much attention and the skills gained by younger children are maintained throughout the school. The social development of pupils has been enhanced by the recent introduction of a school council. In the infants the scheme the pupils follow is based on *Health for Life* materials with a citizenship strand introduced in the juniors. The school is very responsive to pupils' personal needs and supports their growth as responsible future citizens but does not maintain a record of their personal goals, interests or successes and this is a missed opportunity.
114. The school organises a number of talks and demonstrations that inform and extend pupils' learning in this area. For example, the local community police officer, paramedics, and school nurse supports the school's work on health education effectively. Fire officers have visited the school to raise the pupils' awareness about keeping safe, as have road safety officers.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 - above average; 4 - average; 5 - below average; 6 - well below average; 7-very low*