

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. JOHN BOSCO CATHOLIC (AIDED) PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

West Bromwich

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103991

Acting headteacher: Mrs. L. Peterson

Lead inspector: Mr. C.D. Loizou

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 June 2004

Inspection number: 257693

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	202
School address:	Monmouth Drive West Bromwich West Midlands
Postcode:	B71 2ST
Telephone number:	0121 556 0228
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. K. Payne
Date of previous inspection:	15 June, 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St. John Bosco Catholic (Voluntary Aided) Primary School is average in size, with 202 pupils on roll. This includes 47 part-time Nursery children aged three who are admitted to the school's Foundation Stage. The Nursery can have up to 50 part-time children (25 full-time equivalent). The school also admits up to 25 four-year-old children into its Reception year each September. The children's attainment on entry to the school varies but is well below average. In addition to the Nursery and Reception classes, there are six single-age classes. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school at times other than the usual time of admission or transfer is low compared with most schools. Most of the pupils live near to the school. The majority of pupils are of British white heritage. Ten pupils are of mixed heritage, twenty-one are of Asian descent, of whom the majority are of Indian heritage, eleven pupils are from black Caribbean or African backgrounds and a small number are from Eastern Europe. Approximately five per cent of the pupils are in the early stages of English language acquisition. Nineteen per cent of pupils are currently eligible for free school meals, which is average, and this fluctuates from year to year. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average (six per cent) and just over one per cent of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is average.

The headteacher and two other staff were appointed three years ago on temporary contracts. The headteacher's temporary contract has come about because the governors have had difficulty appointing a permanent headteacher so have appointed and re-appointed the current acting headteacher on an annual basis. The school has been led by an acting headteacher for the last three years, though the governors have recently appointed a permanent headteacher who will start next term.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	English as an additional language; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology (ICT)
32660	Robert Adams	Lay inspector	
23686	Pamela White	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Geography; History; Physical education
1189	Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Art and design; Design and technology; Music

The inspection contractor was :

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school has serious weaknesses** because there is underachievement in parts of the school and unsatisfactory governance. The leadership of the acting headteacher has had a positive impact on raising standards by Year 6, but the management and governance of the school are unsatisfactory because of the underachievement of pupils in Year 2 and a large budget shortfall, which is hampering the future development of the school. The teaching is satisfactory in most parts of the school. Standards are below average by the end of Year 6 but the pupils have made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Standards are too low in Year 2. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- The pupils make satisfactory progress by Year 6 where standards are improving but those in Year 2 underachieve in English, mathematics and science
- The acting headteacher has raised staff morale, improved standards by Year 6 and led the school well through a difficult period of uncertainty
- The governors have not addressed the school's large budget deficit
- Assessment and its use are unsatisfactory with the result that pupils of different abilities are not challenged as much as they should be
- Standards in writing by Year 2 and ICT across the school are below average and are too low
- The personal development of the pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, resulting in good behaviour and attitudes to learning
- Attendance rates are improving because the school has good procedures to monitor these but they remain below the national average

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection in 1998. The picture is mixed; standards have declined in Year 2 and improved by Year 6. The intervention and leadership by the acting headteacher have helped to raise standards in most parts of the school and improve the curriculum. The temporary nature of her appointment, which has been reviewed on a year-by-year basis, has led to uncertainties which the governors have not fully addressed. This has also led to a very large and unacceptable budget deficit.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The **pupils achieve satisfactorily** in relation to their attainment on entry to the school by Year 6 but there is underachievement in Year 2. The results of national tests over the last three years show improvement in line with the national trend in Year 6 but a decline in Year 2.

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

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

The pupils start school in the Reception year with low attainment on entry. This affects their language, communication and mathematical understanding in the early years of Year 1 but they make satisfactory progress up to the end of Year 1. However, national test results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 show that the pupils attained well below average standards, even when compared with similar schools. This year (2004) standards have declined further. Pupils are underachieving in relation to their ability and consequently standards in writing, mathematics and science are too low. In Year 6, the 2004 test results show that this year's standards improved on last year's (2003) and, although they are below national expectations, the pupils have made satisfactory progress from Year 3 through to Year 6. In most other subjects standards are in line with national expectations but those in ICT are below average and are too low.

The pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well behaved. They are polite and courteous to each other and relationships are good throughout the school. Attendance rates are below the national average and improving, but punctuality is unsatisfactory. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.** There are good opportunities for the pupils to show respect and demonstrate care for each other.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory** in most parts of the school. However, assessment is unsatisfactory because teachers' planning does not always provide tasks for average and higher attaining pupils based on assessments of their progress. The pupils use literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects but writing standards are underdeveloped by Year 2 and this hampers the pupils' independent writing. Reading is taught satisfactorily across the school but mathematics and writing work is not challenging enough in Year 2. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Learning is satisfactory overall, but teachers do not assess satisfactorily, or plan work frequently enough for lessons of different degrees of difficulty based on systematic assessments.

The curriculum provides satisfactory opportunities for learning. However, the use of ICT is unsatisfactory. Computers are not being used well enough to support teaching and learning because accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory. Some subjects, such as science, are taught in lessons that are too long. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the school is satisfactory** and that shown by the acting headteacher has been good. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been done by the headteacher and she has managed to improve staff morale and the curriculum. However, the budget deficit has hampered the school's determination to improve further. The lack of qualified support staff places an additional burden on teachers who have pupils with special educational needs in their class. Governance is unsatisfactory because the governors have not been effective or vigilant enough to prevent the large deficit facing the school. Consequently, **the management of the school is unsatisfactory.** Uncertainties about the permanent appointment of a headteacher and the lack of coherence and clarity among the governors have led to a lack of direction and improvement in some aspects of the school's work.

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

Most parents are very pleased with the school. The parents are very involved in the life and work of the school. They are well informed and invited to support in school. However, a few parents are not playing their full part in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and on time. The

headteacher now involves the pupils more in decision making and the pupils respond with positive attitudes; they enjoy making decisions about their school.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- improve standards and the teaching in Year 2;
- improve the management and governance of the school and, in particular, reduce the unacceptably high budget deficit;
- improve standards in writing by Year 2 and in ICT across the school;
- improve assessment and its use;
- continue to improve attendance rates and punctuality.



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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Although standards are below average in English, mathematics and science, the pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, but the pupils in Year 2 underachieve. Standards are rising in Year 6 but falling in Year 2.

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

- Although there is satisfactory achievement, standards are too low in Year 2 because the pupils are not being provided with sufficiently challenging work
- National test results in Year 6 are improving well because of the determined leadership of the acting headteacher and the focus on improving the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics
- Standards in writing are too low across the school
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average and should be higher
- The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but lack of additional support for those with specific learning difficulties hampers their progress

#### **Commentary**

1. Attainment on entry to the school is low and is well below that expected of children starting the Nursery and Reception years. Provision for both Nursery and Reception children is satisfactory overall and provides children with a sound start to their education. By the time they enter Year 1 standards remain well below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are below average in creative development and aspects of physical development but in personal, social and emotional development standards are average. In some key areas the children could be better challenged, as too much effort is adult-directed, which hampers the children's independence and progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.7 (13.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.2 (16.5)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (24.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.5 (23.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.2 (26.2)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. The school's results in the national tests and assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2003 declined compared with the previous year in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The most recent provisional results also indicate a decline; this is a serious weakness, which shows significant underachievement in Year 2. This decline has occurred against a background of satisfactory achievement in Year 1; the pupils in Year 1 have made good progress in reading and writing in particular. The results achieved by Year 2 pupils in the national tests in 2003 were below the national average in reading, and well below in writing, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools standards were also below average in reading and well below average in writing, mathematics and science. The decline in standards indicates underachievement because the pupils are capable of doing much better, even though their attainment on entry to the school is low. Monitoring has largely focused on improving English and mathematics standards by the end of Year 6 but the underachievement in Year 2 is largely related to a lack of expectations and an unsatisfactory match of work to the abilities of the pupils.
3. In the national tests in 2003 for Year 6 pupils, the school's results were well below the national average in English and science and average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools, English results were well below average overall, but the results show a sustained improvement each year for the last three years. Currently, standards show significant signs of improvement, particularly in English and mathematics. They are currently below average in English but this is largely related to writing standards where pupils' independent writing is inconsistent across the school. Nevertheless, reading, speaking and listening standards are in line with those expected, and so the pupils have made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Given the difficult challenges facing the pupils and the school, for example limited initial speech and language skills, the pupils achieve satisfactorily. This includes the achievement of pupils who have been in the school continuously since the early years. Science standards are currently below those expected by the end of Year 6, but have improved compared with the previous year. Although mathematics standards are currently below average, pupils have made satisfactory progress compared with their attainment on entry to Year 3.
4. The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher in difficult circumstances has ensured that the pupils' progress is tracked. This has led to a sustained improvement in standards by Year 6 but there is still underachievement in some lessons where tasks are not sufficiently matched to the needs of more able pupils. Since the last inspection, teachers have adapted their planning and the curriculum to the needs of pupils but staffing disruption and budget constraints have hampered their efforts. Despite the satisfactory progress made by the majority of pupils in most year groups, these efforts have not been consistent enough to avoid some underachievement, notably in Year 2.
5. The school is committed to including all pupils and, despite the lack of qualified support staff, the teachers do well to provide work that helps pupils who have particular learning needs, such as those with special educational needs or the small number who are learning English as an additional language. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Individual education plans are put together carefully by teachers and the headteacher to enable pupils to progress in small, well-defined stages, set against their individual learning targets.
6. Standards in ICT are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and are too low because provision is unsatisfactory and poorly resourced. This is unsatisfactory compared with the position found at the time of the last inspection. Unsatisfactory leadership and management of this subject and the lack of resources are responsible for this decline and have hampered the development of the ICT curriculum, which remains unsatisfactory.

7. Standards in music are below average because the staff lack musical expertise, but the school does well to compensate for this by using a specialist music teacher who provides part-time support every week. Art and design and design and technology standards have improved since the last inspection and are in line with those expected. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education are also in line with national expectations. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in these subjects and make satisfactory progress. However, there is an imbalance of time allocated to other subjects such as art and design, geography and history, which hampers the progress of some pupils, especially when large blocks of time are spent on one subject. The school has identified this as an area for improvement.

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

Behaviour in the school is good. Attendance rates are improving but are still below the national average. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some pupils are consistently arriving late for school
- Creative and cultural development are improving and beginning to improve pupils' self-esteem

### **Commentary**

8. A significant number of pupils arrive late for school, causing disruption to the start of lessons. A substantial proportion of families took holidays in term time, bringing the schools attendance below the national average. The acting headteacher has worked hard to improve attendance by introducing robust checks by the staff and regular letters to parents. School policies are detailed in many documents circulated to parents, including newsletters and annual reports, and last year every parent was given another copy of the prospectus, which contained the updated policies. The involvement of outside agencies in supporting the school's attempts to improve attendance highlight the governor's lack of support in this area.
9. Pupils demonstrate good behaviour. The staff effectively challenged those seen to compromise safety. Pupils say they are treated fairly and relationships are good throughout the school. The pupils are able to identify more than one adult they could turn to if in need. The pupils are enthusiastic and many participate in after school clubs.
10. Boys and girls are equally well able to take responsibilities, which include being classroom monitors. Pupils were observed at lunchtime setting up the classroom for afternoon lessons to maximise the time that could be spent at work. Teachers confirm they do this voluntarily as the pupils are enthusiastic to learn. The pupils are happy in school and say that the staff deal quickly and efficiently with any bullying or harassment issues. Bullying is not a significant issue in the school and those pupils who have joined the school from other schools say that this school is much better because there is no bullying.
11. Pupils were confident when talking to inspectors and have a good regard for themselves, their peers and the whole school community. They are quick to identify right from wrong. A good relationship exists across year groups, as was witnessed by inspectors during lunchtime in the hall and playground. Pupils demonstrate maturity and understand the consequences of their actions, resulting in responsible and sensible behaviour and attitudes to school.

12. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The headteacher has promoted more cultural activities to improve the self-esteem of pupils. Using the TRIAD partnership of schools (a working partnership with two other schools) she had been able to release a member of the teaching staff to dedicate two weeks during which children prepared for activities and then demonstrated or performed them at partnership schools that have pupils from a range of backgrounds.

### Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.0	School data	0.3
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.*

### Exclusions

There were no exclusions last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory but there has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection in some key areas. Overall, the pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment on entry and to their abilities, but there is a mixed picture that includes underachievement because the teaching is unsatisfactory in parts of the school.

### Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but are unsatisfactory in Year 2. The assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching in parts of the school that has led to an improvement in the pupils' performance and achievement but this is not consistent across the school
- The teaching in Year 2 is unsatisfactory and leads to underachievement
- Assessment is not being used well enough to inform teachers' planning
- Pupils work hard because many lessons are practical and interesting but over-direction by teachers sometimes hampers the pupils' development of independent learning skills
- The use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool is unsatisfactory
- Teachers' marking of pupils' writing in particular does not always help the pupils to improve their work as there are inconsistencies in spelling and independent writing

### Commentary

13. The teaching in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is satisfactory and there is a good understanding by the staff about how young children learn. However, some tasks are too over-

directed by adults and this hinders the children’s independence and ability to choose for themselves. The Foundation Stage staff work closely with those in Years 1 and 2 and so the transition from the Reception year to Year 1 is very smooth. There is a good degree of consistency in teaching styles up to the end of Year 1 and this ensures smooth progression, but the teaching in Year 2 is not demanding enough of the pupils, particularly average and higher attaining pupils. This was evident in a Year 2 English lesson, where the lack of extension work for the more able hampered their progress when looking at rhyming words and devising riddles in text.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	12 (36%)	18 (55%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

14. In Year 1, the teaching is effective so that basic communication skills are learned well and the teaching is successful in improving the children’s early language skills, particularly reading and independent writing. The lack of learning support practitioners affects the progress of some pupils but teachers work hard to compensate for this and often have the support of volunteer parents. In particular, teachers ensure that the individual education plans for special educational needs pupils are monitored closely and time is given up to work alongside these pupils. Consequently, they make satisfactory progress.
  
15. The headteacher has established an effective team approach across the school. This provides opportunities for teachers to plan lessons together but staffing shortages and the disruption caused by using temporary staff has not always ensured that tasks are matched well enough to the abilities of the pupils. The teaching is usually well organised, and this results in many opportunities for the pupils to benefit from a broad range of practical tasks and activities. However, over-direction and long drawn out introductions to lessons slows progress so that in some lessons there is underachievement.
  
16. The teaching in most parts of the school is satisfactory with some good features but in Year 2 the pupils underachieve because of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly in the core skills of mathematics and writing. Generally, literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily and the pupils are able to read a range of texts with increasing accuracy and fluency. Extended forms of writing are given high priority in most classes but this is not consistently evident in all subjects, with some variations across classes in the structure and forms of independent writing. This has been identified as a weakness in the pupils’ literacy development. Although measures to improve the quality and range of extended forms of writing, as well as spelling, have begun to show some improvement, the lack of vigilance by teachers, evident in their marking, is not helping the pupils to understand what they have to do to improve.
  
17. Assessment is not being used well enough to inform teachers’ planning. Teachers’ marking and assessments of pupils’ performance in optional national tests are not synchronised to provide a clear picture of the pupils’ achievements. This is because the marking and assessments do not take account of National Curriculum levels or stages of learning to help the pupils develop a step-by-step approach towards their learning targets. For example, spelling is not marked as rigorously as other aspects of writing which leads to inconsistencies across the school. Despite sharing learning objectives with their pupils at the beginning of lessons, more often the work provided is similar for all abilities so that targets and objectives are not particular to the

individual needs of the pupils. This was evident in a Year 6 English lesson, where the guided reading session was too difficult for some and too easy for others. The sharing of texts with the whole class is usually appropriate in most lessons, but as in the Year 6 lesson, the tasks are not well matched to the abilities of the pupils and, as in most lessons observed, previous assessments of the pupils were not being used to provide appropriately challenging work that matched the different stages the pupils have reached. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, what began as an exciting opportunity for the pupils to engage in role-play shopping exercises, turned out to be a less challenging play activity that did not demand enough of average attaining and more able pupils. Similarly, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the brisk introduction of quick-fire mental calculations led to an over-long class introduction to the investigation of timetables which resulted in a challenge for some but confusion for others because the tasks were the same for all pupils.

18. The teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the stages of learning and attainment targets set out in the National Curriculum but lack confidence in music and ICT. Despite planning an interesting range of topics with good links between subjects, the use of computers is unsatisfactory because resources are poor and inadequate. The use of ICT has not kept pace with the demands and improvements to the National Curriculum since the last inspection. Some evidence of the use of digital cameras and class computers shows that some progress has been made, but overall there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make progress in the development of their ICT skills.

### **The curriculum**

The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. The accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a broad range of curricular opportunities
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good
- Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory
- Weaknesses in curriculum planning, such as the overlong blocks of time for science and foundation subjects, are having a negative impact on pupils' learning
- The match of teacher and support staff to the curriculum is unsatisfactory

### **Commentary**

19. The curriculum is appropriately broad and relevant to pupils. All subjects are covered and the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses in planning with the result that activities are not always matched to differing needs and abilities. Planning lacks sufficient reference to the stepping-stones and Early Learning Goals. Planning for outdoor play is superficial and lacks clear purpose and challenge. The imbalance of time for morning and afternoon sessions means that afternoon children in the Nursery do not have the same access and opportunity as children attending the morning session.
20. With the exception of ICT, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There are no policies for music and personal, social and health education. National guidelines have been adopted for all subjects and are used satisfactorily to support teachers' planning; however, a weakness in curriculum planning is the overlong blocks of time given to some subjects such as science and

design and technology. This is having a negative impact on pupils' learning, particularly towards the end of an afternoon focused on one subject. Planning is not sufficiently adapted to the differing needs and abilities within the class. The lack of challenge results in a significant amount of underachievement.

21. The literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented satisfactorily. A visiting music specialist delivers music throughout the school. Provision for ICT is unsatisfactory mainly because of the poor resources as a result of the mismanagement of finances. The headteacher has managed to deal with this to some extent because the school makes use of facilities at the local secondary school and a community centre in an effort to compensate for these shortcomings. The absence of a school library adversely affects pupils' progress in English, particularly in the development of research, library skills and independent learning.
22. The school provides effective personal, social and health education, including citizenship, sex education and attention to drugs misuse.
23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The pupils are identified early and individual education plans are drawn up that are clear and based on sound assessments of their needs. The pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need are well supported. A learning support practitioner helps them either individually or as part of a small group and this enables them to achieve well as they work towards their targets. Much of the learning practitioner's work focuses on developing the pupils' language and communication skills. However, some of the other special educational needs pupils do not achieve as well as they could. This is because there is a lack of classroom assistants to support them and some teachers do not plan work that is appropriate for the different ability levels within the class.
24. Although some provision is made in some classes to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, too often they do not receive sufficient challenge in lessons. Instead pupils often complete the same work and work at the same pace, irrespective of their prior attainment. Provision for the small minority of pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory, enabling them to achieve satisfactorily overall.
25. Support for learning outside the school day is satisfactory, with a sound range of activities including football, tag-rugby, and art club. The curriculum is appropriately supported by educational visits, for example, to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and by residential visits such as that to Ingestre Hall by Year 5 and 6. Visits make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and to the pupils' personal development. At times, residential experiences are planned for other year groups to outdoor education centres such as Edgmond and Frank Chapman.
26. Staffing difficulties, such as long-term absence and temporary teachers, disrupt pupils' learning. This has not been helped by the constraints of the deficit budget, which have also limited opportunity to extend support staff in Years 3 to 6. Where the deployment of teaching assistants is effective, such as with specific support for special educational needs, learning is at least satisfactory. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition from a visiting music specialist. Each of these activities promotes pupils' interest and learning well. Staff expertise is unsatisfactory in music and, while the support from the outside music specialist teacher is good, teaching staff lack the knowledge and confidence to follow up the brief weekly session. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, lacking both a library and ICT resources. Storage provision is poor; consequently, areas of the school are cluttered.

27. The school is part of a partnership called TRIAD (three schools that share best practice), which aims to raise the pupils' self-esteem and aspirations. The school's 'You can do it' programme is also having a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.

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

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are strengths of the school. All pupils were able to identify adults to turn to if in need. Child protection arrangements are very good. Pupils feel consulted and involved in school developments.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety arrangements are robust
- The pupils are well cared for because all the staff are very committed and dedicated to them and their well-being

### **Commentary**

28. The school has a good health and safety strategy which is applied throughout. All fire and first aid requirements exceed basic standards. Storage is an issue in the school but its lack does not compromise health and safety. Some areas of the school have steps which limit disabled access. These have already been identified by the headteacher as a concern but no funding is available to remedy the problem.
29. The whole school demonstrates a caring ethos. The pupils say they are very pleased with the way adults care for them and this is a significant strength of the school. Some gave examples of adults they had turned to in times of need. All reported this as a positive experience for them.
30. Many parents of younger pupils reported good induction procedures. One mother detailed the induction procedures as 'personalised and caring'. Pupils in Year 6 were visiting their new schools during inspection week. All were enthusiastic, reporting it as a positive experience.
31. The headteacher regularly seeks the views of pupils. She had recently conducted a survey in school and pupils felt confident that action would be taken on their opinions. For example, the pupils had approached the headteacher asking for a pupils' newsletter which she supported and they produced. The headteacher has an open door policy with pupils and parents.
32. Inspectors followed the case of a pupil who fell in the playground at lunchtime, sustaining a head injury. Staff were quickly on the scene and gave first aid to a relatively minor bump. As it was a head injury the pupil was cared for until his father arrived and took him home to rest from his experience. All documentation was completed in accordance with school policy.

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

Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most parents believe the acting headteacher is a driving force and think highly of the school as a result
- The Parents Association is active in supporting the school.



- The headteacher has introduced opportunities for parents to have contact with teachers each day
- Some parents are not supporting the attendance policy

### **Commentary**

33. The large majority of parents say they feel welcome in school and that information about the school has improved since the acting headteacher was appointed. They do feel that more information could be available about their children's progress and the headteacher recognises this as a concern of parents. The school provides a regular ten-minute meeting and greet time each morning for parents. This enables the parents to speak briefly about their child's progress or, if appropriate, to make an appointment to discuss the detail. The headteacher had issued three questionnaires during the year to obtain parents' views on improvements and was actively trying to meet expectations before her departure.
34. The headteacher has introduced parent helpers back into the classrooms. Volunteer parents are regularly seen in school supporting pupils and assisting adults. Many have gone on to become teaching assistants in other schools. The Parents' Association is active in its support and fund raising for the school. The headteacher has established links with local education providers to enrich the knowledge of parents supporting pupils with homework or for parents to improve their own academic abilities. The take up for the third of these events has been minimal and was a real disappointment to the school.
35. Parents are very pleased with the way the school deals with concerns or complaints. For example, one parent reported that the school deals effectively with any disputes or concerns and there is a high level of satisfaction with this aspect of the school's work.
36. In addition to links with adult education providers, the school is participating in a scheme (TRIAD) to link three schools' efforts to enrich the pupils' personal, cultural and artistic development. The lead school in the TRIAD provides art and drama workshops. The pupils then attend other partnership schools to perform or demonstrate their skills. The partner schools both have a significantly different ethnic composition, thus enriching the pupils' cultural knowledge and life experiences. TRIAD also allows the Deputy Head one day a week release time for monitoring, curriculum development and for supporting other staff.
37. The headteacher has established links with other local primary and secondary schools. The benefits were evident in the familiarisation visits made by Year 6 pupils during inspection week. She also established links with other community support services to benefit pupils and compensate for the deficiencies in resource provision in the school.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

There are serious weaknesses in the management and governance of the school. The management of the school's finances has deteriorated since the time of the last inspection and is unsatisfactory. The leadership of the acting headteacher is good despite the difficulties faced by the school.

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

- The acting head teacher has provided clear, focused leadership that has led to recent improvements in standards in Years 3 to 6

- The acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher have begun to monitor the standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning
- An uncertain staffing situation has had an adverse impact on the school's drive to raise standards
- Until recently, the school's priorities for development have been unclear and the curriculum has not been managed effectively
- The governing body has not challenged the school enough and has had limited influence on its work
- The school's approach to financial management has been unsatisfactory and the budget deficit has increased as a result

## Commentary

38. The acting headteacher has led the school well during a time of instability caused by uncertain staffing and a large budget deficit. During her three years she has worked hard to establish the trust and respect of pupils, staff, parents and governors. She has set clear, immediate priorities and the staff have welcomed the direction and support they have received. She has also provided the drive and direction to bring about much needed improvements, particularly in raising standards by the end of Year 6. She has made sure that there is greater structure and organisation to the curriculum and has helped teachers to refine their planning to provide a higher degree of consistency across the classes and year groups. Additional resources such as library books have been purchased. With the help of financial service providers and the local education authority, the school has produced a long-term financial plan that takes account of predicted pupil numbers and required staffing levels, and which contains a prudent element for school improvement priorities.
39. The governors have an appropriate committee structure with links to special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. The governors are rightly proud of the inclusive nature of the school, with its strong Catholic ethos and secure, caring environment. These are strong features in attracting pupils from the surrounding area. However, the governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is unsatisfactory because they have not been vigilant enough to prevent the unacceptably high budget deficit that has overshadowed the school's efforts to improve the quality of education and to raise standards across the whole school. They have failed to take due account of the number of pupils in relation to the number of teachers so as to make the best use of available funds. Additionally, they have not been sufficiently vigilant in checking the school's performance.
40. The weaknesses in the management and the governance of the school have meant that not all of the issues of the previous inspection have been addressed fully. For example, standards in ICT remain unsatisfactory because too little has been done to improve staff expertise through training, and there is a serious lack of resources for the subject. Opportunities for assessment are still not a consistent part of the teachers' planning in all subjects and the setting of individual targets is not fully embedded across the school. Similarly, although a start has been made, there is still much work to be done in order that curriculum co-ordinators can confidently fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
41. Throughout her appointment, the acting headteacher has undertaken a range of monitoring and self-evaluation activities, some in collaboration with the local education authority. The subject co-ordinators check the teachers' planning and the pupils' work is evaluated, but this is not consistent in all subjects. There is a programme of lesson observations but its implementation has been hampered by staff absence and a lack of funds. It is important that this becomes more rigorous and systematic, so that it forms an integral part of in the school's evaluation programme and has a more positive impact on raising standards, particularly by the end of Year 2. The school analyses data from national tests in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and it is beginning to use this information to track the pupils' progress. However, not all staff

are using the information to set individual targets or to plan further work that challenges pupils of all levels of ability.

42. The school improvement plan is a detailed document that provides much needed structure for moving the school forward during a period of change. It is prioritised over a one-year period but the costs are not always clearly outlined, a very necessary procedure, given the school's current financial difficulties.
43. Continuing unsatisfactory financial planning and management have led to an increasing budget deficit that is now over £110,000. The deficit has increased because of unusually high staffing costs, including the high cost of supply cover for staff absences. The governors have been slow to make the savings needed to balance the budget. Expenditure has not been reviewed in relation to best value principles and there has been limited evaluation of the impact of expenditure on the effectiveness of the school. For example, with virtually no money being allocated for learning support staff in the main school, initiatives such as the Further and Additional Literacy strategies have not been used to quicken the pace of improvements in reading, writing and spelling. As a consequence of the serious weaknesses in governance and in the management of the school's finances, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

***Financial information***

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	629,786
Total expenditure	620,409
Expenditure per pupil	2,302

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 121,506
Balance carried forward to the next	- 112,129

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

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

44. Children receive a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage, which is organised into an Early Years Unit accommodating Nursery and Reception children. Nursery children attending the afternoon sessions have considerably less time in school than those attending in the morning. This is unsatisfactory, amounting to five hours differential each week. The children receive a satisfactory curriculum, which includes all the areas of learning for children of this age. The adults in the Early Years Unit work together well, and relate well to each other and to the children.
45. Children join the Foundation Stage unit in the year in which they are three. Most children remain in the unit as Reception children for the following year. Good induction procedures help children to settle quickly into school. Overall attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average and this remains the case on entry to the Reception year. At the time of the inspection there were 47 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and 30 children of Reception age in the Early Years Unit. One child in the Reception year has a statement for special educational needs. No child is identified as being at an early stage of English acquisition. Attendance continues to be irregular as it was at the time of the last inspection.
46. Teaching and the range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. Although most children make satisfactory progress in their learning, standards remain well below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and knowledge and understanding by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are below average in creative and aspects of physical development. Standards in personal, social and emotional development are average. There are some weaknesses in provision. Teachers' planning is adequate but lacks sharpness because it does not identify clearly enough the small steps that children are expected to make towards the broader end of year learning goals. Although some opportunities are provided for child-selected activities, not enough attention is given to developing independent choice. And the range and quality of activities are limited and sometimes undemanding, such as colouring-in tasks. A further weakness in planning is the lack of match of tasks for different ages and abilities for example. As a result some children underachieve because they are not challenged effectively with sufficiently demanding work or high expectations by the teacher. Satisfactory assessments are undertaken in literacy and numeracy but the use of assessment information to respond to individual needs and plan the next stages of learning has not been effectively developed for all areas of learning. Children in the Foundation Stage have regular access to a secure adequately resourced outside area, which supports their physical development satisfactorily. Resources overall are adequate but improvements are needed to most areas of learning, with more challenging and imaginative resources available.

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

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

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

- Children are happy and settled in school and their attitudes and behaviour are good
- Relationships between adults and children are good

- There are not enough opportunities for children to select quality activities for themselves and planning does not identify what children are expected to learn from activities they choose for themselves

### **Commentary**

47. Children's achievement is good overall. Most are on course to reach the standards expected nationally by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is good overall. Consequently, children are happy and settled in school. Relationships are good. The children are encouraged to share and take turns. They take responsibility for tidying away. The adults expect children to behave well. They respond positively, behaving sensibly in their classroom and in the outdoor area. There is a lack of clarity and purpose to some activities that children choose for themselves, particularly outside when there is no direct adult intervention. The range of free choice activities is limited and some are undemanding. Sometimes over-direction by the adult, such as in the creative task, making collage butterflies, limits creativity and independence and children are not always challenged as well as they could be.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Some good opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking skills
- Over-reliance on worksheets hinders the development of early writing

### **Commentary**

48. Attainment is well below average when children start in the Foundation Stage. They achieve satisfactorily in most cases as a result of satisfactory teaching. Regular activities such as sharing news, enjoying stories, such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and responding to questions provide good opportunities for children to practise speaking and listening. In planning and review time children are keen to share with the group what they have been doing, but many need prompting by the teacher. Higher attainers respond in sentences and most children listen carefully to each other. There are missed opportunities in planning time to challenge higher attainers with opportunities to record their planning in some way. Responses from many are often short, one-word answers. A small proportion of higher attaining children in the Reception class write a simple sentence independently. They form letters accurately and build simple words. For example, they pose simple questions to ask the cleaner and write simple instructions for making a sandwich. Most children write their name independently but many copy under an adults' writing and are not yet spacing 'words' correctly. Lower attainers are unable to copy accurately, writing being a mixture of marks with some recognisable letters. Children's work over time reveals a heavy reliance on worksheets, which are unexciting and undemanding for some children. Opportunities for children to write in imaginative contexts are limited. There are missed opportunities to make greater use of early writing when structuring play in the jungle and home corner for example.

49. Higher attainers are reading early books in the scheme accurately and are beginning to use expression. All take books home to share with an adult and many are supported at home. Only a small number of higher attainers will achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Games and practical activities are used well to practise mathematical skills
- Topic work, number rhymes and songs are used well to reinforce children's mathematical knowledge and understanding

### **Commentary**

50. Children enter the Foundation Stage with mathematical skills well below the expected level. They achieve satisfactorily overall as a result of sound teaching and learning, with some good features seen in teaching. However, most children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. A range of counting songs and rhymes support children's learning well. Most children count to 10; higher attainers with confidence count well beyond this but lower attainers need support. Average and higher attainers in the Reception year understand terms such as 'one more than' and can find the total number of objects in two groups by counting them all. Higher attainers can double numbers to 10. Numbers are not always formed accurately. The adults give good attention to developing mathematical vocabulary. When sorting and ordering large cut out caterpillars these children have a sound understanding of 'longest' and 'shortest' for example, but the pedestrian pace of some lessons and low expectations for higher attaining children results in underachievement by some children. Most children recognise basic two-dimensional shapes, such as square, circle and triangle. There are missed opportunities to extend mathematical knowledge and understanding through well structured play in role play areas such as 'the jungle'.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good first hand opportunities to observe the life cycle of butterflies
- Questioning is superficial at times and does not extend thinking skills
- Planning does not focus well enough on what is to be learnt
- The use of ICT is underdeveloped to support learning

### **Commentary**

51. Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below the level expected for their age. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of experiences that enable them to develop their knowledge about the world appropriately but it is not always clear from the planning what the teacher wants children to learn.

52. Children learn about living things in their topic on mini-beasts. They use magnifying glasses and explore the outdoor environment. Questioning is sometimes too superficial and does not extend children's thinking skills, for example, when children find an insect, questions are not very probing and information provided is limited in spite of children finding ants, greenfly, bees and a caterpillar. Teaching does focus well on the life-cycle of the butterfly and children are very excited as they observe the change from chrysalis to butterfly. Good links are made to other areas of learning, as children are encouraged to care for living things. In creative activities they paint and print butterflies and use collage material to decorate three-dimensional models. Good links are made to literacy, for example writing shopping lists, invitations to the Ugly Bug Ball and instructions for making sandwiches. Children know how to use the digital camera to photograph mini-beasts and draw diagrams of the life cycle of a butterfly. They are familiar with stories from the Bible such as Noah's Ark and know that candles are Christian symbols and show that Jesus is the light of the world. They can identify people who help us in the community and know about some religious celebrations such as a wedding. They are developing early computer skills as they learn to control the mouse but ICT is not used enough as a tool to support learning. Most children are unlikely to achieve all the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they leave the Reception class.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children have regular daily access to the outdoor area
- Planning does not identify clearly what children are expected to learn from the activities they choose for themselves
- Resources for climbing are limited and do not challenge children well enough

### **Commentary**

53. Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average physical skills although when using wheeled vehicles and when climbing, standards are as expected for their age. Sound teaching through a variety of activities enables children to make satisfactory progress, developing increasing control of small manipulative skills, although a significant number of children still have weaknesses in brush and pencil control and when controlling scissors. Adults too often prepare cutting tasks, and over direction with cutting, sticking and pasting sometimes impedes creative development. All children have regular daily access to the outdoor area. Adequate resources enable them to use a range of wheeled toys, but resources, including apparatus for climbing, swinging and sliding are limited in range and quality. Provision for climbing is not available every day. The organisation and use of the outdoor area lacks purpose, challenge and imagination. It is not clear from planning what children are expected to learn from the activities they choose for themselves. This results in superficial play. A significant number of children are unlikely to achieve all the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children enjoy the activities and attitudes are positive
- Over direction sometimes stifles individual creativity
- Very good teaching by the visiting music specialist enables children to achieve well

## **Commentary**

54. Skills in this area of learning are well below average when children start in the Nursery. Satisfactory teaching and learning overall enables them to make steady progress in developing their creative skills. There are good opportunities for drawing, painting, printing, moulding and collage. Many children control brushes and pencils with reasonable coordination, although a significant number still have difficulty. Children enjoy the activities including cutting, sticking and pasting. Sometimes over direction by the adults limits individual creativity, for example, when making model butterflies and caterpillars the adults do much of the cutting and sticking. When painting, colours are ready mixed and there is no choice of brush size. A sound range of experiences enables most children to develop their creative skills to a satisfactory level. Satisfactory use is made of role-play areas but there are some missed opportunities to intervene to raise the quality of such play. Links to literacy and mathematical skills are not sufficiently developed through role-play. Children enjoy a range of songs and rhymes and are very well taught by the visiting music specialist. They listen well and participate fully with much enjoyment. The music lessons contribute very well to children's knowledge and understanding, focusing on the story of Noah's Ark. They name instruments such as drum and shaker and almost manage tambourine. Although standards are below average in music, the children achieve well, inspired by very good teaching. Children are unlikely to achieve all the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

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

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are continuing to improve in Year 6
- The school's focus on writing is leading to improvements, especially in Years 3 to 6
- There is underachievement by the pupils in Year 2, particularly in writing
- Most pupils listen well and the older pupils are becoming more confident speakers
- There are weaknesses in the pupils' spelling and descriptive writing skills
- Marking does not show the pupils how they can improve their work

## **Commentary**

55. In Year 2 standards are well below average and in Year 6 they are below average. Although there has been a gradual rise in standards in Years 3 to 6 over the past three years, overall standards are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection. The school's own national test data shows that more of the pupils currently in Year 6 have attained the higher level (Level 5) and that the school has exceeded its target for the pupils' achievement at this higher level. This represents satisfactory achievement because many of the pupils enter the school with well



below average speaking and language skills. The improvement in Years 3 to 6 is mainly due to the impact of the whole school focus on the subject. Training and support has motivated and improved the expertise and confidence of the staff, particularly in working to raise standards in writing. At the end of Year 2, standards are continuing to fall and the pupils currently in Year 2 are underachieving because not enough is expected of many of them, especially the higher attaining group. Due to a shortage of funds for support staff, the school is not making use of national initiatives such as the Further and Additional Literacy strategies and this is adversely affecting the overall progress and achievement of some of the lower attaining pupils.

56. With the exception of Year 2, most of the pupils achieve satisfactorily and there is no significant difference between the achievement of the boys and the girls. The pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs achieve well because they are well supported by an effective learning support practitioner. Other pupils with special educational needs lack the same level of support and achieve satisfactorily. The small minority of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also achieve well. They are well supported by teachers and their peers and they make rapid progress in their language learning.
57. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' standards in speaking and listening are broadly average with listening skills better than speaking skills. Most pupils are interested listeners. They mostly listen well to their teachers and to other adults and can make a sound contribution to discussions. However, they are less able either to challenge ideas they do not agree with or to put forward their own opinions in an articulate, fluent manner. In almost all of the classes the teachers use pertinent questions to encourage the pupils to express their thoughts and opinions and a further good teaching strategy is the use of paired discussion to encourage even the youngest pupils to share their thoughts and ideas. The pupils' knowledge and use of words improves as they move through the school and most achieve satisfactorily. Nonetheless, by Year 6, many pupils still do not have the wide and rich vocabulary needed to express their ideas articulately and this further hampers the quality of their descriptive writing.
58. The school has invested in additional reading resources to support improvements in standards and as a result, the pupils mostly enjoy reading from a range of graded or free reading material. Additionally, a short, intensive programme for some of the less able readers has led to overall improvements for some of the less able pupils and those with special educational needs. Many of the older pupils read fluently and with good comprehension and a few of them can talk about the stories of popular authors such as Jacqueline Wilson, Anne Fine and Bel Mooney. Year 1 and 2 pupils have a range of strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words. These include using their knowledge of sounds in order to build words as well as using picture and context clues. The pupils all have a home-school diary that provides a record of reading progress. This is used well in the Year 1 and 2 classes. However, for some of the Year 3 to 6 pupils, the record is either lost or not kept up-to-date and the monitoring of the pupils' independent reading is inconsistent across classes. While most parents are supportive in helping to develop the pupils' reading skills, this is variable across the school. The library is currently housed in a narrow corridor, which is inadequate for the purpose. There is insufficient room to sit and browse and the books cannot be displayed to best advantage. Additionally, the number and range of non-fiction books is insufficient to meet the needs of all the pupils. Together with the unsatisfactory provision in ICT, this seriously hampers the development of the pupils' research skills.
59. By the end of Year 6 the pupils can write for a range of purposes and audiences. This includes poems, play scripts, recounts, letters and stories as well as the discipline of writing in paragraphs. A writing challenge for the Year 6 pupils was to produce a diary entry in the style of Michael Morpurgo's *Kensuke's Kingdom*. The pupils found the exercise challenging but many of them achieved satisfactorily as they wrote in the first person, using their knowledge of the author's style. By the time the pupils reach Years 5 and 6 standards in handwriting are

average with most of the pupils using pen and writing in a joined hand. In Years 1 and 2 the quality of the pupils' writing is very variable. In Year 1 the pupils achieve well as they write independently describing where they live. In Year 2, however, the writing tasks are not sufficiently challenging for the average and higher attaining pupils. The Year 2 work also shows that worksheets are used too frequently and this restricts the pupils' ability to write freely and independently. The pupils learn the sounds for reading and spelling and they have regular lists of key words to learn. However, they do not apply their learning in their written work and spelling standards are weak across the school.

60. The overall quality of the teaching in English is satisfactory with some good teaching in Years 1, 4 and 5. This results in some good achievement from pupils of all abilities in these groups and is helping overall standards to rise again. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. All the lessons are carefully planned according to the national literacy guidelines. The pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and the work is usually purposeful and enjoyable. In the best lessons, it stimulates and motivates the pupils so that they want to succeed. Almost all of the teachers use well targeted questions to make the pupils think more deeply and they use paired discussion as a successful strategy for sharing information, views and ideas as well, as to encourage and improve the pupils' speaking skills. Where the teaching is less effective or unsatisfactory it is because pupils of all abilities are completing the same task. This means that the work is either too easy or too hard for some of them and leads to underachievement by the higher and sometimes the lower attaining pupils. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teachers' expectation of what the pupils could achieve were too low.
61. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily. Together with the headteacher, she has monitored planning, teaching and the work in the pupils' books in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Test and assessment data are used effectively to plan the focus for continued improvements. However, at the time of the last inspection, it was noted that there was little evidence of assessment information, including information from marking being used by teachers to plan the next steps in learning. This remains the case with few pupils being clear either about the targets set for them or what it is they need to do to improve.

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

62. This is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 but unsatisfactory by the end of Year 2 as much of the writing for younger pupils is not independent and there is an over-reliance on worksheets. There are some opportunities for the pupils to use their spoken language and their writing skills in a range of other subjects and this is most evident in Years 3 to 6. For example, in a geography lesson with the Year 3 pupils the teacher used the 'hot seat' strategy effectively as the pupils used their speaking skills to ask questions and to discuss changes to the environment over time. In Year 4 the pupils use their letter writing skills as they write home as evacuees during World War II and their recounts of the life of Henry VIII show a sound understanding of the reasons behind his six marriages.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in mathematics are improving in Year 6 but are declining in Year 2
- The teaching is satisfactory in most parts of the school but Year 2 pupils have underachieved because the teaching for them is unsatisfactory

- The management of the mathematics has not been rigorous enough to track the pupils' progress closely

## Commentary

63. The teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in some lessons where target setting is much sharper. The pupils' assessment records show that the school had, for some time after the last inspection, not done enough to provide tasks that closely matched the needs and abilities of the pupils. In the last three years, the acting headteacher has ensured that standards improve and this has led to marked improvement in standards by the end of Year 6. However, the efforts of the school have not had the same impact on standards by Year 2 where there has been a steady decline over the last five years. Inspection evidence points to inconsistencies between the expectations and learning targets set in Year 1 compared with Year 2. As a result of this, the pupils in Year 2 make unsatisfactory progress in their learning over time than would be expected when compared with their attainment on entry. In this respect, there has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.
64. By the end of Year 6, the standards seen during the inspection, although below average, show continued improvement on last year's results in the national tests and the projections for Year 5 are also positive. This has come about because the acting headteacher has managed the teaching well so that the pupils have been provided with effective teaching despite staffing changes and the large budget deficit facing the school. This good leadership and management by the headteacher has helped to reverse the decline in standards as seen in national test results for Year 6 after the last inspection. Consequently, over the last three years the test results show a steady but sustained improvement in Years 3 to 6. However, a significant number of average attaining pupils in Year 2 who have the potential to reach the standards expected for their age fail to do so. This is directly linked to some unsatisfactory teaching and consequently standards by the end of Year 2 are well below average.
65. The school has an average proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and an average number with a Statement of Special Educational Need. Nearly all of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties with particularly delayed development in literacy and numeracy skills. They are well supported by teachers but the school lacks support staff because of its budget shortfall so that teachers are having to do most of the support and monitoring of these pupils. Parents volunteer support in some classes and this helps the pupils to make satisfactory progress.
66. Evidence from the school's assessment records shows that, over time, the pupils have made satisfactory progress but it has been uneven in parts of the school, particularly in Year 2 where there is underachievement. Inconsistencies in the teaching and staffing changes partly explain the obvious disruption to the pupils' learning. In Years 4 to 6, the picture of achievement becomes more consistent, with more pupils reaching and exceeding their targets. The effective leadership of the headteacher has led to significant improvements. In the most effective lessons tasks are better matched to the abilities of the pupils with the added benefit of extension tasks that challenge the more able. This was evident in a good lesson seen in Year 4, where the temporary teacher provided different tasks that extended the pupils' understanding of decimal fractions. The pupils were able to compare decimals with regular fractions and their learning improved as they began to apply other number skills, such as factorisation, to work out equivalent fractions. Although other good examples of this were observed during the inspection, the pupils' workbooks show that some of the work provided in the past, particularly for pupils of average ability, was mundane and only served to re-visit what the pupils already know.

67. In most lessons, the pupils develop a good understanding of numbers and number operations. Teachers ensure that they learn the correct mathematical vocabulary and the strong emphasis on mental mathematics helps the pupils to have a reasonable recall of number facts. Year 1 pupils can recall number facts to 10 and 20 and some can count in 5s and 10s with confidence. In Year 2, the pupils recognise coins and can calculate change when role-playing shopping in the 'Seaside Shop' but average attaining and more able pupils are not being sufficiently challenged to record their calculations and explain their methods. In Year 3 the pupils apply multiplication facts well and they have rehearsed these in lessons often enough to have gained in confidence when applying these to number problems. Year 5 and 6 pupils make satisfactory progress, although some Year 5 pupils find it difficult to use timetables, such as bus timetables, to calculate the durations of journeys.
68. Improvements in the teaching are sometimes, although not always, reflected in teachers' marking which is informative, supportive and provides a steer to the pupils as to how to improve their work further. The headteacher has kept a close oversight on standards in mathematics and has concentrated her efforts on sustaining the improvements to test results in Year 6. This has been successful, but the management of mathematics is unsatisfactory given that national test results in Year 2 continue to decline. This mixed picture has come about because of the temporary nature of the management of the school and the uncertainties facing staff in establishing consistency in the teaching and target setting in particular.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

69. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for the pupils to apply problem solving skills. However, there are weaknesses in the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum and poor computer resources, so that mathematics is not being used enough in this important part of the curriculum. Paper exercises are adequate to help the pupils develop their understanding of graphs, tables and simple matrices and these are used to record data in geography about populations and other demographic information. Year 6 pupils have investigated number patterns and these were applied to other patterns, including those seen in shapes and measures. Good use is made of the pupils' knowledge of weights and measures in design and technology as they weigh ingredients before cooking or measure nets when designing food packages or making solid shapes. In a good science lesson, Year 3 pupils were able to read calibrations to measure capacity and volume when investigating the filtration of water through different soils.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6 but national test results show an improving trend because the expertise of some staff is being used effectively
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are too low because the teaching in this part of the school is unsatisfactory

- The organisation of time to teach science in large blocks is sometimes ineffective and does not sustain the interests of the pupils

## Commentary

70. The management and teaching of science is satisfactory overall and has had an impact on raising standards by the end of Year 6 after a period of decline soon after the last inspection. The acting headteacher and science co-ordinator have ensured that some issues related to teachers' lack of expectation have been addressed. However, there has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection overall because teachers' assessments show that standards are too low by the end of Year 2. Test results show an improving trend by Year 6 because the acting headteacher and science co-ordinator have determined to track how well the pupils are doing to ensure that key learning objectives are covered. Teachers' expertise has also been better utilised in Years 3 to 6. For example, a good lesson was observed in Year 3, where the Year 3 and 4 teachers exchanged classes so that specialist knowledge could be used.
71. Standards are too low in Year 2. The pupils' workbooks show many examples of mundane tasks, time wasted by pupils colouring in pictures and not enough assessments of the pupils' progress to provide targets for further learning. There has not been enough progress since the last inspection in developing and improving the teaching in some parts of the school to ensure that standards keep pace with those seen in Years 3 to 6.
72. The school is aware of its shortcomings in science and recent monitoring and analyses of the pupils' performance are beginning to have an impact on raising standards, but the pupils' achievements remain inconsistent in Year 2. The science co-ordinator has made a satisfactory start to revising the science curriculum and most of the improvements seen are in Years 3 to 6. The lack of funding limits what he is able to do in Year 2, but the over-use of worksheets and the lack of tasks being provided for Year 2 pupils have led to a decline in standards despite the rise in standards by Year 6.
73. In the lessons seen, the pupils enjoy their science work, particularly when they engage in practical experiments. Year 2 pupils enjoyed watching the changes to chocolate as it melted and could explain what was happening to wax as a candle cooled down. They are responsive to teachers' questions in most lessons and well motivated to remain focused on the tasks set. However, this level of response is inconsistent between groups depending on how well they are being challenged and what expectations are set by adults. Some adults ask pertinent and challenging questions, such as the teaching assistant with the lower attaining group in the Year 2 lesson when they focused their observations on the changes to wax as it melts. However, average attaining and more able pupils did get enough opportunities to form simple hypotheses or to predict what might happen.
74. The school organises its timetable so that science and some other subjects are allocated large blocks of time, for example, a whole afternoon. Inspection evidence indicates that this is not helping to sustain the pupils' concentration and enthusiasm for science and, perhaps, other subjects too. In what began as a good Year 5 science lesson the pupils investigated shadows and light sources as part of their work on the solar system. The work was not sufficiently varied to sustain the pupils' interest so that, by the end of the afternoon, the lesson was only just satisfactory. The pupils made reasonable progress with this particular topic but the lack of variety and match of tasks to their abilities led to some inconsistent progress during the lesson and to time being wasted.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and should be higher
- ICT is not being used well enough to support pupils' learning in other subjects
- The leadership and management of ICT has been unsatisfactory as are the school's resources and accommodation

### **Commentary**

75. Teachers have been hampered by the lack of resources and staff training. The large budget deficit has not helped the school to develop the curriculum and has hindered the professional development of the staff to apply the curriculum appropriately to the needs of the pupils. Some good examples exist across the school, for example, the increasing use of digital cameras.
76. Pupils have underachieved, so standards have been below national expectations for some time. Although the pupils use their ICT skills in other subjects there is large gap between those who are capable and those who need support. This is evident in the word processing of extended forms of writing where some pupils can edit and re-draft work with confidence but many need support and guidance. Some Year 6 pupils interviewed could explain with reasonable confidence how to combine text and graphics using a special multi-media program. However, from the evidence of pupils' work displayed and discussions with some staff and pupils, most of the ICT work done is catching up on work that has previously been covered in insufficient depth. Most pupils are confident and adept at applying basic ICT skills; they can edit written work with confidence using spelling banks and self-correct text by refining and editing. Year 5 and 6 pupils make satisfactory progress learning to access information on the Internet but the work seen is not always linked to other subjects or topics because there is no systematic monitoring of what is being covered across the school. There has been unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.

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

77. The ratio of computers to pupils is below that seen in most schools. This limits the use and application of ICT to support the pupils' learning in other subjects and this is unsatisfactory. Some of the work covered is anecdotal and relies very much on the confidence and expertise of staff. In English, most of the work displayed in classrooms involves editing and refining extended writing using word-processing skills, but in other subjects, such as geography, history and art and design, word-processed or graphic work is limited and the pupils are only using cursory skills. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 have enhanced their recorded work in say, history, with graphics and images imported from the Internet but the subject specific skills are not being learned using the power of new technology, so that most of the work done is largely a 'cut and paste exercise' for display purposes. Teachers' planning across the curriculum lacks opportunities to utilise ICT. This is a reflection of the fact that some teachers lack confidence using ICT.

## **HUMANITIES**

78. No history lessons were seen during the inspection, but the inspectors looked at a sample of the pupils' previous work. Standards in **history** are as expected for the pupils' ages and achievement is generally satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a sound knowledge of famous people in history such as Florence Nightingale. Their understanding of how things change over time is reinforced as they compare the toys of their parents and grandparents with their own. The pupils' work and discussions with them show that as they move through the school they develop a sound understanding of the past through their learning about the Vikings, the Anglo-Saxons and the Tudors. The Year 4 pupils show a sound understanding of how past events shaped people's lives and they learn the importance of first hand evidence as they hear about life during World War II from a grandparent of one of the pupils. Learning in history is enlivened and enriched by a range of visits and visitors to the school. In both history and geography not enough use is made of computers either to reinforce learning or for research into the topics.

## **Geography**

The provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a strong environmental emphasis to the work in geography
- The pupils' learning is well supported by visits that provide practical, first-hand experiences
- Most pupils complete the same task and this restricts the achievement of some of the lower and higher attaining pupils who find the work either too challenging or too easy
- Not enough use is made of computers to support learning

### **Commentary**

79. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average and the majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection.
80. The Year 2 pupils learn about different locations as they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear. They also have links with a school in Hastings and receive postcards showing the landscape and features of that area. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils explore changes to the environment. Social issues concerned with land use and litter problems are well emphasised and walks and visits within the local area help to make the pupils' learning interesting. Although recorded work by the Year 6 pupils is limited, the pupils have studied physical features such as mountains, lakes and rivers and there is some evidence that they are beginning to understand the associated vocabulary such as 'tributary', 'estuary' and 'delta'.
81. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons seen, it was good in one and satisfactory in the other. In the good lesson the teacher's enthusiasm, good subject knowledge and skilful questions enabled the Year 4 pupils to achieve well as they learned about the local environment. After a visit to a local derelict park, they produced thoughtful designs and ideas for its regeneration. The good teaching helped them to explore their ideas further and to begin to understand some of the practicalities involved in re-designing the park. The scrutiny of the work in the pupils' books shows that across the school, they are frequently completing the same work and that much of it is copied text or uses worksheets. This inhibits opportunities for the pupils to record their thoughts independently and does not provide sufficient challenge for pupils of different abilities. Additionally, the current system of using blocks of teaching time

means that some of the geography sessions are too long. The result is often that the pupils' interest and enthusiasm wanes and this has an adverse effect on overall levels of achievement.

82. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and oversees the teachers' planning to make sure that the elements of the curriculum are covered appropriately. However, there is little monitoring of teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and bring about further improvements.

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

83. It was not possible to observe lessons in design and technology but the evidence from previous work displayed around the school shows that the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in line with those expected nationally for their age. Only one lesson was observed in art and design. Pupils' work was sampled in each of these subjects.
84. In **art and design** standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and indications are that pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. Observation of pupils' work on display indicates that the curriculum is appropriately planned. Good use has been made of specialist teaching on a residential experience to Ingestre Hall for Years 5 and 6 to develop pupils' interest in the subject and this work was of a good standard. A good display of artwork in the hall reflects the range of media and skills developed throughout the school. There is evidence of steady progression in knowledge skills and understanding in the subject. Pupils are introduced to a range of skills, materials and techniques and there is good use of art to support learning in other subjects such as history. There is no identified subject leader. There is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, although the available evidence indicates that it is at least satisfactory. However, the use of ICT in art and design has yet to be developed. Visits to art galleries and museums enhance pupils' work.
85. In **design and technology** standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and indications are that pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily. The pupils have appropriate opportunities to plan and design their work before construction, such as the playground designs in Year 1 and the model bedrooms with a light in Year 4. In the Year 4 task, good links are made with science to incorporate an electric circuit with an on/off switch. The weaker aspect of design and technology is the evaluation process, with little evidence of written evaluations of their work by pupils. There is no identified subject leader. The use of ICT has not been developed.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching by the visiting music specialist is very good – pupils achieve well in these lessons as a result
- Teachers lack expertise and confidence in order to build on the input of the specialist teacher
- Pupils enjoy music lessons and attitudes to teaching are good

### **Commentary**

86. Standards are below average in Years 2 and 6, although singing when supported by the music specialist is in line with expected standards. Achievement is good in the lessons taken by the



visiting music specialist, as a result of her very good teaching. However, this is not followed up by class teachers who lack expertise and confidence in the subject and rely on the weekly lesson from the visiting teacher.

87. Very good teaching by the visiting music specialist enables pupils to make good gains in their learning of hymns and songs and in the use of simple percussion in the limited weekly lesson time. She has very good subject knowledge. Imaginative teaching methods and good planning result in a high level of interest from most pupils who are keen to learn. The brisk pace set ensures pupils cover a lot in the short time available. There is a good focus on improving singing skills and techniques. Pupils acquire an appropriate technical vocabulary and in Year 2 pupils are introduced to graphic notation. In the Year 4 lesson pupils consolidate their knowledge of 4/4 metre and rhythm patterns. Improved resources since the last inspection contribute to the steady progress made. Skills in composition and the use of instruments for accompaniment remain below average in all year groups. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition from a visiting teacher. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in concerts, for example, at Christmas and Year 6 are currently practicing songs from 'Joseph' for the end of term performance to which parents are invited.
88. There is no identified subject leader. This is unsatisfactory and affects the progress pupils make in music. The implementation of national guidelines in music has ensured better coverage of the curriculum.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils experience a good range of activities, they enjoy PE lessons and work hard
- Resources for physical education are adequate but some are old and in need of replacement

### **Commentary**

89. From the evidence of the three lessons observed in Years 2, 5 and 6, and from discussions with staff and pupils, standards appear to be in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory overall. The planned curriculum ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and residential and day visits are used effectively to provide wider outdoor adventure experiences. Some activities, such as a gymnastics club, are offered outside of the regular lessons but these are not always well supported.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of the teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in the other two seen. The Year 5 lesson was well taught. It was delivered at a good pace with activities that built up the pupils' confidence and skill as they learned the correct throwing techniques for a javelin and a discus. The pupils responded well and most of them achieved well, as they worked at mastering the correct grip and posture. A strength in this lesson was the teacher's own good subject knowledge and enthusiasm which was conveyed to the pupils. The lesson was adequately resourced, but not all the pupils had access to a piece of equipment and this resulted in some loss of time as the pupils waited their turn to throw. In the satisfactory lessons with the Year 6 and Year 2 pupils, there was a clear focus on skill development. The Year 6 pupils showed good control in dribbling a football and were able to work well together in threes, dribbling and passing the ball. In Year 2 the pupils showed their confidence and skill in balancing with good control and an awareness of their body shape. In all of the lessons, all the pupils tried hard and showed good levels of physical

exertion. They obviously enjoy lessons and want to do well. A common strength of all the teaching was the way in which the teachers intervened throughout the lessons to develop and extend the pupils' skills, sometimes using the performance of individual pupils to demonstrate good practice

91. Physical education has not been a whole school priority for some time and this means that the co-ordinator's overview of standards and achievement across the school is limited. The curriculum guidelines ensure that all the elements of the curriculum, including swimming, are covered and that skills are taught and learned progressively as the pupils move through the school. However, whilst the resources are adequate, some are old and in need of replacement as soon as the budget allows.

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

92. No specific personal, social and health education or citizenship lessons were seen during the inspection. However, teachers set high expectations for behaviour and attitudes in lessons and this helps the pupils to conduct themselves well in and around the school. Health and environmental education is taught satisfactorily in science and physical education lessons, as part of topics about healthy living, the body and exercise. The pupils learn about different cultures and beliefs in geography lessons and when visiting one of the school's TRIAD partner schools.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>4</b>
Attendance	5
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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>5</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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