

INSPECTION REPORT

THE RADLEYS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Rushall, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104207

Headteacher: Mr C Lacey

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 28 – 30 June 2004

Inspection number: 258157

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Kings Road Rushall Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS4 1JJ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Gilbert
Date of previous inspection:	26 April 2004

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Radleys is a community primary school that caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated in Rushall, near to the town of Walsall. There are 208 pupils on the roll of the main school: 102 boys and 106 girls. This is around the average sized school in England. The roll has decreased in recent years. The school has a 26-place nursery group within the 3 to 5 unit which is full. Children enter the nursery at the age of three years, and their attainment on entry is well below average. There are presently no children with special educational needs. When pupils enter Year 1, their attainment is below average, overall, but the intake of pupils includes the full range of ability. Pupils are organised into six classes, according to their year group – there are no mixed-age classes. Pupils come from a large, suburban catchment area, which has few signs of deprivation in the immediate area of the school. However in some parts further away there are signs of social and economic disadvantage. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private individual dwellings. The vast majority of pupils are white but minority ethnic heritages are represented. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is below average: the majority of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Six pupils (3 per cent) have a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average. The school has received an award for having the second most improved results at the age of seven in the local authority.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Physical education Religious education English as an additional language Personal, social and health education and citizenship
11437	A Anderson	Lay inspector	
8420	V Roberts	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
21159	R Derwas	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory education for all of its pupils regardless of background and ability. Standards are average overall in Years 2 and 6 and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory because the teaching is sound. Pupils achieve well in their personal development because of the school's good ethos and high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- At the age of 11, English is the best subject. Standards in mathematics and science are satisfactory, though there is room for improvement.
- Information and communication technology is not used consistently in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.
- Governance and the school's strategic planning are unsatisfactory.
- The use of assessment information to plan the curriculum, mark pupils' work and set pupils' targets is unsatisfactory.
- Procedures and practices for care and welfare of pupils are effective.
- Links with the community and other schools and colleges are good.

Since the last inspection, the school has made a sound overall improvement. In relation to the key issues identified in the last report, there have been satisfactory gains in standards. Improvement planning benefits from a more precise identification of financial commitments for educational priorities. However, more improvements are needed in the identification and evaluation of the school's educational targets. There has also been a great effort to increase the quality of assessment procedures. However, the information is still not being used well enough to bring about better teaching and learning. Other successes include: pupils' behaviour and the provision for pupils' personal development; welfare and guidance and links with the community.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	E	D	B
mathematics	D	E	E	C
science	E	E	D	B

*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.*

Overall, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those in the care of the local authority. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that reflect the full range, but are well below average overall. Children achieve well but, by the time they enter Year 1, standards are still below average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children meet the goals they are expected to achieve by this age in creative development. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are average. Standards are average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics and science. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils. In Year 2, the overuse of worksheets in mathematics leads to underachievement amongst some higher attaining pupils. By the end of Year 6, standards are average. Standards are average in English, information and communication technology and religious education and below average in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. However, standards can be raised further in mathematics and science. National test results, though well below the national average were better overall than those of similar schools. Achievement is satisfactory in English, information and communication technology and religious education. Although achievement is satisfactory in mathematics and science, there is room for improvement in these subjects. Results of the national tests are improving, but stubbornly

remain below average when compared to national figures. There is a much better picture when comparisons are made with similar schools. The trends in results are better than the national ones for seven year olds and similar for 11 year olds. Pupils from minority heritage backgrounds achieve as well as others. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. In national tests, girls are doing better than boys. This is recognised by the school and provision of resources is being adjusted in reading, for example, to overcome this.

Overall, pupils' personal development is good. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Consequently, pupils have good attitudes and they behave well. Pupils like coming to school and attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is **satisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**, but inconsistent. The best teaching is seen in the 3 – 5 unit. Overall, in Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection the amount of good and better teaching outweighed the satisfactory and the very small amount of weak teaching. However, the analysis of pupils' work shows inconsistencies in marking and in the matching of tasks to individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Pupils have satisfactory skills of information and communication technology but these are not applied sufficiently by the teachers to the pupils' learning in other subjects. However, older pupils use their skills effectively in their independent topic work.

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. The programme in the 3 – 5 unit is broad. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is satisfactory, with adequate opportunities for enrichment. The school's resources are good. The steps taken to ensure pupils' care and welfare are effective and the working ethos of the school is good. Overall, links with parents are satisfactory. Parents make an adequate contribution to their children's learning through supporting the school's initiatives and helping their children at home. However, there are too few opportunities taken to seek parents' views and act upon them and the quality of information about their children's progress is inconsistent, particularly in relation to annual progress reports. The school's good links with the community and other schools have helped to bring about improvements in provision.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher leads adequately. He has a clear vision for pupils' care and welfare, their personal development and equality of opportunity. However, the shortcomings in the evaluation of teaching results in inconsistency and standards are being raised slowly. The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory, because the governors are not clear enough about their aims for the school and how they lead to effective evaluation. Consequently, they do not challenge the school with sufficient rigour and strategic management lacks clear targets for improvement. Although the leadership of key staff is satisfactory overall, there are still inconsistencies in areas of the school's work that have not been fully resolved, such as the use of assessment. The 3 – 5 unit is led and managed effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the work of the school although there are justifiable concerns about the school's consideration of parents' views and about the quality of information the parents receive. Pupils are strongly supportive of their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics and science, particularly of the boys.
- Increase the use of assessment information to guide teaching and set targets for pupils.
- Increase the use of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum
- The quality of governance and the management of strategic planning for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. All children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in the rest of the school. Standards are well below average when pupils join the nursery, below average when they begin Year 1 and average at the end of the infants and juniors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards in mathematics and science are below average and could be improved.
- Standards are highest in English.
- Girls perform better than boys in the national tests throughout the school.
- In Year 2, there is an overuse of worksheets in mathematics and this leads to underachievement amongst some higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.3 (14.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1 The Year 2 pupils' results in the 2003 national tests were average in reading, above average in writing and below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, the reading and writing results were average but the mathematics results were well below average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. The teachers' assessments in science were above average. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection. Taken over the three-year period (2001 – 2003), the results in reading were above average, whilst writing and mathematics were a little below. Girls tend to do better than boys, particularly in mathematics. The school's results are rising more quickly than the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.1 (23.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.5 (24.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 2 In the 2003 national tests for Year 6, the results were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, results were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Overall, results were below average in comparison to all schools and above

average compared to similar schools. The proportion of Year 6 pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Over the last three years (2001 – 2003), results were average in English and below average in mathematics and science. The results vary from one year to another but the trend of improvement is in line with the national trend. Girls outperform boys by significant margins. The school has acted in a variety of ways regarding this imbalance. For example:

- extra literacy support;
- additional resources to interest boys;
- further in-service training for the staff.

As a result, higher attaining boys are achieving similar results to girls in English. In mathematics and science, the results of the average boys and girls are similar. Targets related to national test results give a generally realistic picture of pupils' attainment. However, in recent years, because of shortcomings in assessment the predictions have been wide of the mark.

- 3 Children enter the 3 - 5 unit (nursery and reception) with well below average attainment in all areas of learning. They achieve well and standards, when they enter Year 1, are below average in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's attainment is average in physical and creative development. This good progress over time is promoted by effective teaching in most of the areas of learning. The exception being the satisfactory teaching in physical development. The school could help children further by:
 - providing further opportunities for children to learn independently;
 - fostering children's talk about their own writing;
 - promoting the use of basic number skills in the simple sums that they do.
- 4 In English, standards throughout the school are average. Achievement is good by the end of Year 2 and satisfactory by the end of Year 6. Particular strengths are the reading and writing skills of higher attaining pupils and the library skills of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Basic writing skills are well developed by the age of seven. However, there are some inconsistencies in 11 year olds' writing skills, and this has much to do with teachers' marking because it does not show the pupils how to improve so that they can achieve their targets. Topic work done at home provides good examples of 11 year olds' abilities to find, synthesise and present information in writing. Pupils' literacy skills are average for their age and are practised effectively in other subjects.
- 5 In mathematics, standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory, but could be better. Standards are improving, particularly by the end of Year 2, but these gains are inconsistent. The organisation of work in Year 2 does not provide pupils with the support they need. For instance, all of the work is done on worksheets, and this does not provide the pupils with a structured view of their attainment and progress. Throughout the school there are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' work and this means that work is not always closely matched to the needs of the individual. Therefore, the pace of work is not quick enough and leads to underachievement for some, particularly higher attaining pupils. Pupils' basic numeracy skills are below average and are not applied sufficiently in other subjects.
- 6 Standards in science are below average. Achievement is satisfactory, but could be improved. The issues in science are similar to those in mathematics, particularly in relation to the use of assessment. However, improvements in teaching are leading to improvements in investigative skills and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. The standard of written work is also better than previously.
- 7 Standards in information and communication technology are average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have adequate basic skills and they confidently use a range of computer software. Further progress is limited by an inconsistent use of these skills in the wider range of subjects. However, the application of information and communication technology skills is

effective amongst older pupils when they are working independently, for example, on their topics.

- 8 In religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus at ages seven and 11. Achievement is satisfactory. Knowledge and understanding of an adequate range of religions is satisfactory and provides insight into the multicultural nature of this country. Further development of skills and insights will require greater opportunities for pupils to visit, for instance, places of worship. Standards and achievement are enhanced by the use of literacy skills.
- 9 In other subjects, standards in geography and history are average and achievement is satisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement in art and design, design and technology, physical education and music.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because their needs are identified at an early stage and, through the guidance of the effective individual education plans, receive good support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' overall personal development is **good**. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are strong because of good provision for moral and social development.
- The youngest children have plenty of opportunities to learn through play activities.
- Provision for multicultural understanding is weak.
- There is little formal opportunity for pupils to express their views about the school.

Commentary

- 11 The strengths noted at the previous inspection have been maintained and there has been some further improvement in pupils' behaviour and in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- 12 In the Foundation Stage, standards in personal, social and emotional development are below average. Achievement is good. Children are provided with many opportunities to learn through play, but the fostering of independence is only adequate.
- 13 Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and this is particularly noticeable in classrooms. In the playground, pupils play well together and have good relationships with teaching and supervisory staff. There have been no exclusions of pupils from the school in the past year.
- 14 The school provides well for pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility and older ones man the school office during lunch breaks. They work as 'buddies' for pupils on their own, by being available at the outdoor 'friendship bench', supervise doorways and corridors, set out chairs in the hall and prepare the music for assemblies. However, there is no school council, which is a disadvantage because pupils do not have a formal say in the running of the school.
- 15 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for through many opportunities for working together in the classroom and by exploration of the local environment through outside visits. Assemblies, and subjects such as art, music, science

and personal, social, health and citizenship education provide a spiritual dimension for pupils' learning. In one assembly, for example, pupils experienced wonder when a glass prism, held to a candle, refracted the tiny beams of light of the spectrum sparkled to the delight of the watching pupils. Ample opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on a range of issues, such as the effects of alcohol and drug abuse on health and relationships. Moral development is fostered by the consistent application of the school's positive behaviour management system and school rules. Pupils know right from wrong and have a wide ranging understanding of challenges facing society and the world. For example, the need to look after the environment. Pupils' social development is good and can be seen in the way pupils work together and when they socialise, for example, in the dining room. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Improved provision is evident through the study of several faiths, events such as a visit by Afro-Caribbean dancers and the study of food from around the world during harvest festival. However, pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of modern Britain could be improved, for example, through a wider range of visits to different places of worship.

- 16 The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. The incidences of unauthorised absence are low and below average. There is occasional pupil lateness but the majority of parents ensure that their children attend school regularly and promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has satisfactory links with parents but **good** links with its other major partners. Overall, the quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory throughout Years 1 – 6. Assessment is unsatisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Homework is used well to reinforce and extend work done in class.
- Teachers use too many mathematics worksheets in Year 2.
- Improved teaching of investigatory science.
- Management and control of classes are good.
- Classroom assistants are deployed well.
- In Years 1 to 6, assessment information is not used well enough to plan future work and marking is inconsistent.
- Teachers do not plan for enough use of information and communication technology by the pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (2%)	22 (53%)	18 (43%)	1 (2%)	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.

- 17 Teaching is similar in quality to what was found by the last inspection. There has been some improvement in the 3 – 5 unit and in Years 3 and 4, and this is where the best work is done. A great deal of useful work has been done since the last inspection on assessment and the school has a fairly clear overview of standards and areas that require improvement. However, there remains too few links between the quality of marking and the targets that are set for pupils.
- 18 In the 3 – 5 unit, all but one of the lessons were good and the other was unsatisfactory. The strengths of the teaching far outweigh the shortcomings – the particular strengths are:
- good knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and of the Foundation Stage curriculum;
 - management of and relationships with the children are good, particularly in personal, social and emotional development;
 - assessment is used well to support learning and in the identification of groups of differing abilities, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematics.
- A positive emphasis is placed upon fostering good relationships with parents and children. This results in good support from parents and enhances children's personal development. In an unsatisfactory physical development lesson, there was a lack of pace which led to insufficient challenge and too little activity. Effective management has embedded good assessment procedures and created an effective teaching team in the unit. Teachers could promote further progress by providing children with more opportunities to discuss what they are writing about in communication, language and literacy. Furthermore, reception children would benefit from more practice in doing simple additions and subtractions.
- 19 In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a consequence pupils' learning is satisfactory, overall. However, a general strength of the teaching is the effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are making very good progress because of the support and guidance shown by teachers and support staff. Other strengths include:
- good management and control of pupils ensures that they remain on task and are interested;
 - the development of homework as a way to improve pupils' skills in reading comprehension. This has been a successful initiative started by the English coordinator and is beginning to bring results.
- A shortcoming relates to mathematics work in Year 2. The whole body of the pupils' work is done on prepared worksheets and there is little organisation of this work that would help pupils to organise their thinking. Assessment procedures are thorough, but the use of the information to plan work for individual needs is weak.
- 20 In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The majority of lessons observed were good and the single very good lesson was also observed here. In the best lesson, the strengths are a guide to even better lessons throughout the Years 1 to 6, namely the effective use of assessment. This led to high levels of achievement in this physical education lesson. Overall, homework is used well to develop pupils' skills in gathering, synthesising and presenting information. This is particularly strong in the individual topic work that pupils complete, and the results, generally, are very good. Although the best teaching was seen in Years 3 and 4, good lessons were taught in all classes. Management

and control is effective and pupils generally enjoy the work that they do. The use of assessment is strongest in dealing with pupils with special educational needs and the support is, therefore, well placed. However, for the majority of pupils, the obvious hard work by teachers is not having the impact that it should, mainly because the quality of marking is not sufficiently linked to the targets set for individual pupils. The marking does not give clear enough guidance to pupils on what to do to improve.

21 In science the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are strong aspects, such as:

- good organisation and questioning;
- good management;
- effective preparation for investigatory work.

However, work is not always matched accurately enough to the needs of all pupils. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not challenged as well as they might be. Further, pupils are not always given enough freedom to follow their own lines of enquiry in the experiments they do.

22 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in information and communication technology and good in physical education. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement.

23 Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught and as a result make good progress. This is because individual education plans are clearly constructed as well as effectively used in planning and review of work. There are clear expectations of good pupil behaviour, which helps a productive working atmosphere. Teaching assistants known as learning support assistants help these pupils well, in group and individual work sessions.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall and meets the needs of all pupils adequately. A lively curriculum for children in the 3 – 5 unit helps the children to make good progress. A developing programme for enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory, particularly for the older pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is interesting and broad.
- The provision for special educational needs ensures equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.
- Resources are particularly strong in the library and for the development of information-gathering skills.
- Management and checking of the curriculum has areas for development.

Commentary

24 The curriculum continues to provide a suitable range of opportunities and meets statutory requirements. The school day has been lengthened to provide extra time for extended writing and for setting up booster classes for older pupils. The provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory and links well with other subjects to encourage pupils' understanding of, for example, a healthy lifestyle. Good links with secondary schools, prepare older pupils for transition. For example, science projects organised for Year 6 pupils by secondary staff are carried over into the new school at Year 7. Curriculum planning is secure and schemes of work are clear and helpful. Curriculum monitoring is satisfactory because:

- all subject coordinators have recently prepared a position statement to identify needs for subject improvement;
- senior management has checked provision.

However, the senior staff have yet fully to assess its effect on pupils' learning. Furthermore, they do not recognise the need to increase the opportunities for pupils to understand the cultural diversity of their own country.

- 25 The curriculum is particularly interesting for children in the Foundation Stage, where a wide range of experiences, good resources and creative planning all ensure that the children's curiosity is aroused and that they are ready to learn. Teachers plan topics to make good links with all activities. Consequently, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.
- 26 Literacy and numeracy strategies are well established. Whilst the use and development of literacy skills is a strength of provision, similar links with mathematical skills across the curriculum are not as effective. The use of skills in information and communications technology across the curriculum are also inconsistent, where only the older pupils apply them well.
- 27 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and ensures that all of these pupils have opportunities which equal those of other pupils. Effective individual educational plans are regularly reviewed and updated. Pupils with physical disabilities and learning difficulties are well assessed and their support is good. The effectiveness of planning is regularly monitored and new targets are set when required to meet the needs of individual pupils.
- 28 A satisfactory range of visits and visitors enrich most subjects and out-of-school clubs are well attended by older pupils. The range of clubs is typical of those of most primary schools with the exception of the sailing club where good advantage is taken of local water sports facilities. The school choir performs well inside and outside school and makes a particularly good contribution to assemblies. Peripatetic musicians nurture talent from Years 4 to 6 in a scheme, which allows all to initially participate until committed and talented pupils emerge. There are regular opportunities for pupils to encounter professional coaching in football and cricket.
- 29 Well-qualified teaching and support staff contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly in the 3 – 5 unit where effective teamwork ensures that the curriculum is enthusiastically delivered. Accommodation is very well maintained. Learning resources are good. Library resources have been improved and there are regular visits from a public librarian for story telling with younger children and library skills for older pupils. There are plans to extend the stock of literature that will interest boys, and also develop multicultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection, welfare, support and guidance are **good**. There are **satisfactory** procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are well known by staff.
- Teaching and support staff know their pupils well.
- Personal development is a strength of the provision.
- Good risk assessments take place in advance of school trips.
- Support and guidance for pupils as they progress through the school are effective, except in relation to the use of assessment information to guide future learning.

Commentary

- 30 The overall care and welfare of pupils at the school are good and have improved further since the last inspection. Child protection systems and procedures are in place and the reporting person is known to all staff in the school. Relevant staff training in child protection matters has also taken place. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored both formally and informally. The strongest part of this is the tracking of pupils' achievements. However, the use of the information to help pupils progress is unsatisfactory, except in the 3 – 5 unit where it is effectively helping children to achieve well. A few minor health & safety issues came to light during the inspection which were reported to the school.
- 31 The teachers and support staff know their pupils well and they are quick to observe signs of pupils' personal difficulties and to take appropriate and action. The school operates a good first aid system for minor accidents and the necessary records for these are maintained. Regular fire drills are carried out and the school also maintains a record log of these. The school carries out occasional Health and Safety checks of the site and is proactive when considering possible risks on external trips out of school. The school is kept in very good day-to-day condition by the site manager and his staff.
- 32 Pupils personal development is promoted well through:
- an improved approach to personal, social, health and citizenship education;
 - lessons, such as circle time (class discussions), which provide pupils with the opportunity to talk about themselves and explore a range of issues important to them;
 - the school's methods of acknowledging pupils' achievements, such as praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, in weekly sharing and presentation assemblies.
- 33 The school is justly proud of the level of care, guidance and support given to pupils with special educational needs. For the review of individual education plans, class teachers arrange the expected meetings with parents to review their children's progress. The teaching and support staff are well supported by a range of external agencies, such as local authority special needs professionals and social services.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **satisfactory**. Links with the local community and other schools are **good**. Parents have favourable views of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents and children like and trust the school.
- The school utilises the community and other schools well to support the curriculum.
- There are some weaknesses in the reporting of pupil's progress, particularly the lack of meaningful targets for pupils' improvement in the annual reports to parents.

Commentary

- 34 The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is unchanged since the last inspection but links with the community have improved. The small amount of evidence from the parents' meeting with the inspectors and parent questionnaires indicates:
- that parents support the school, its aims and objectives;
 - that children like school and that they are making satisfactory progress;
 - that a minority of parents do not think they are kept well informed about their child's progress and also that the school does not seek their views;
 - that a minority of parents are not sure how they can help their children at home and also that the range of activities outside lessons is unsatisfactory.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments, but do not agree with most of the parents' concerns. However, they do agree that the annual academic reports to parents have weaknesses, such as the lack of constructive targets for pupils' improvement.

- 35 The information provided by the school through the prospectus, the annual governors' report to parents and regular newsletters is high in quality. The school holds a termly achievement week, in which pupils have an individual interview with their teacher. The resulting targets for improvement are also discussed with parents at the termly consultation evenings organised by the school. A few parents provide very welcome classroom support and assist with external visits and extracurricular activities. The school arranges occasional workshop courses for parents to assist them to understand the work of the school, for example, its implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- 36 The school's growing links with the community and other schools provide a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and is becoming a strength of the school.
- 37 Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed at review meetings, and further, the school operates an open-door policy for parents seeking advice. Two pupils with special educational needs are currently being integrated, on a part-time basis, from other schools as part of the local education authority's policy of providing pupils with equal opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ethos of the school promotes care and concern for all pupils.
- Governors do not fully understand their role as evaluators and need training.
- The school improvement plan is not rigorous or comprehensive enough to provide a clear sense of direction for the work of the school.

Commentary

- 38 The governing body supports the school very well to foster a caring ethos. The governors' committee structure is well organised; statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and the best value principles are adhered to. Governors receive sufficient information about the work of the school, particularly from the headteacher. As a result, the governors set targets and believe that these represent a suitable challenge for the school. However, they do not recognise their need to evaluate the work of the school rigorously. The aims of the school reflect a concern for the individual and development of their full potential but they do not assist in measuring the school's progress against its aims as a starting point for evaluation.
- 39 The school's aims do not provide clear direction for some very important matters, such as:
- achieving the highest possible standards;
 - ensuring pupils have a clear and developed understanding of the diverse nature of our society.
- As a result, the school improvement plan lacks clear targets and success criteria. For instance, whilst there is a correct focus on raising attainment, there is too little attention paid to the pace and challenge of improvement. There is a lack of rigour in the monitoring and evaluation, because the aims are not specific enough. Furthermore, the school is over-optimistic in its evaluation of its own performance, which means that the monitoring of its performance and provision is not leading to a sufficiently clear identification of strengths and weaknesses.

- 40 The headteacher and senior staff provide satisfactory leadership. They have a clear vision for the social development of the school. For example, the school improvement plan reflects their continuing and successful commitment to secure good behaviour. This, and the very good quality of relationships throughout the school, demonstrates the effectiveness of the school ethos. The deputy headteacher has led some useful work on the development of assessment procedures and staff are working hard to implement them. However, the impact of this work is limited because the use of the information is not effective in planning future work. The school is actively committed to treating all pupils equally and has rightly developed policies and practices that make sure that every pupil has an opportunity to benefit from all activities. The 3 – 5 unit is led and managed well.
- 41 Though the system for the appraisal and performance management of teachers is fully in place, it is not yet being used well to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning to bring about improvements. Lesson observations do not help the school prioritise improvements so that the quality of teaching develops in a unified manner. As a result, satisfactory teaching leads to pupils making satisfactory progress rather than good teaching leading to improvements in learning.
- 42 The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. There are good procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and consequently these pupils make good progress. Currently, there is no classroom monitoring by the co-ordinator though this has been identified as an area for development.
- 43 Financial planning and administration are satisfactory. The school budget is set in accordance with statutory requirements, and procedures are followed correctly. Grants are rightly used for their proper educational purposes. There are satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that the school achieves value for money in its acquisition of supplies and services.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	519,169
Total expenditure	523,729
Expenditure per pupil	2,229

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35139
Balance carried forward to the next	30,579

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the 3 - 5 unit is good overall. On entry to the nursery, children have attainment that is well below average in all areas of learning. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and the good teaching ensures good progress across the stepping stones to the National Curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well established, with an effective blend of the nationally identified Early Learning Goals and children's interests and abilities. For example, the organisation of work into topics for learning is sensible and makes the most of children's abilities. The well-organised team focuses effectively on raising standards. Assessment is constructive in meeting the needs of individual children. Relationships with parents are good and the introduction of children into the school is effective and sensitive.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage children well.
- Relationships between staff and children are very good.
- Children are well prepared for routines they will meet later in the school.
- Activities at the start of the day could be more focussed on what children learn.

Commentary

- 44 Attainment for all pupils is below average by the time they are ready for Year 1 but given their well below average overall attainment when they begin the nursery, their achievement is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' assessment shows that children work steadily towards the early learning goals but need to further their independence skills.
- 45 Nursery and reception children begin school at the same time as other pupils so they learn the school's routines very quickly. At the outset, children have a low level of social skills but these rapidly improve. For example, children approach visitors confidently and show them their books and talk about their work. However, as children come into school, there are too few structured activities that encourage them to work with others to solve simple problems and reinforce their basic skills.
- 46 By the time they are ready for reception, the children know most of the school's routines and are happy and secure when working. The children's good progress is, in good measure, due to good management by the teachers and support staff. All staff support the children when necessary and know their needs well. They encourage the children in a very positive manner, which fosters good relationships. The teachers' calm manner and high expectations of good behaviour encourage the children to work together harmoniously.
- 47 Despite a lack of space, children have good social skills and, for example, co-operate well during snack time. At story time, they sit quietly and their attention spans are increasing. Children of both age groups are willing to share together which gives a genuine sense of belonging to the early year's unit.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Group work is well planned around a central topic.
- Support staff are well deployed to meet the needs of children.
- Assessment is good.
- Children are prepared well for literacy strategy they will meet in Year 1.

Commentary

- 48 Most children start with a very low base of communication and language skills. They do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the unit. Nevertheless, because teaching is good, children achieve well, including those with special educational needs and children from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 49 Children often begin their day with a 'show and tell' session, which increases their opportunities to improve their speaking skills as well as their social skills. Often younger children allow the teacher to talk for them but older reception-age children are ready to describe the objects they have brought. Staff consistently use children's knowledge to illustrate topics. For example a child showed his bag of shells to the class and the teacher used these to encourage the group's use of vocabulary to describe the ones they saw. Teacher-led activities are planned well to encourage children to understand the purpose of writing, such as sending messages by postcard or in a bottle. This connected well with their activities in the travel agent's as well as in their topic work.
- 50 Support staff work effectively as part of the teaching team and are skilled in questioning children at story time and encourage them to explain their ideas. Consequently, children use new words confidently when describing their pictures or their story line. For example, they readily contributed words such as 'dolphin', 'shark', 'starfish' and 'octopus' in a group discussion about sea creatures. All staff keenly observe the progress of children and their ongoing assessments contribute significantly to the planning of further tasks.
- 51 The teachers introduce the literacy hour gradually so that the children recognise links between reading and writing. Reception children already have a growing technical vocabulary such as 'capital letters' from shared reading and the more mature ones are well on the way to reading the early stages of the reading scheme. Older children are confident when sharing their books with an adult and have a sound grasp of the letter sounds that help them identify simple, but unknown, words. The identification of initial and final sounds is consistently encouraged when children begin their writing tasks. To further improve children need more opportunities to talk about their writing and to use the sounds they know well.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skilled teaching leads to good progress and good reinforcement of basic skills.
- Group work is well organised for different abilities.
- Support is of a high quality.
- The quality of teacher-made resources is often good.
- Periodically pace is slow in some activities.

Commentary

- 52 Whilst standards in mathematical development are below expected levels, achievement is satisfactory as a result of good teaching overall. Teachers organise their groups well when planning for the needs of children of all abilities. Whilst pace is sometimes slow in mental activities, teachers give good time for children to work out problems they encounter. Children are well focussed on the techniques the teacher uses to help children remember number sequences, such as twos, tens and hundreds. The children's good attention helps the more mature of them mentally to calculate numbers which are 'two more than', or 'two less than'. Their ability to count and use numbers up to ten is reliable overall but the ability to add and subtract is not secure for a large proportion of reception children.
- 53 Resources are very accessible and those made by staff are good. As a result, children are attracted by the presentation and very keen to learn. There is very good support to guide children through their mathematical activities. Children enjoy being challenged when adding two number from dice in their pirate game –“Miss, I like doing this, don't you?” accepting their teacher as a player in the game on equal terms.
- 54 The support given by the teaching assistants holds the children's interest well and they encourage new learning through skilled questioning. For example, when probing and reinforcing the counting skills of less mature children as they hook their numbered fish in seaside counting games. Staff incorporate songs and rhymes in lessons to support the children's mathematical development and use sand and water play equally well to reinforce learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good connections with other areas of learning to further the children's progress.
- Children in reception are becoming very familiar with the use of information and communications technology.
- A variety of outside experiences widen children' understanding of the world.
- The quality and use of voluntary helpers support children's learning well.

Commentary

- 55 Attainment is generally below the standard expected but, because of inventive topic planning, the children's overall achievement is satisfactory. Closer monitoring of how children question and solve simple problems on how things happen could improve this. Recorded assessment of children's observations would provide information on how to extend their knowledge.
- 56 Teachers plan interesting topics to excite children's curiosity, use their senses and operate equipment such as computers, which will increase their understanding of the world. The effect of washing-up liquid and how bubbles can be made into a variety of shapes with different toys fascinate children. They use their counting skills well to count the number of bubbles and talk about the bubbles' different sizes and why they float in different directions. Well-chosen programs on the computer consolidate children's early skills in using the mouse. The more mature children are excited when creating patterns from paint programs for their windmills as they see their designs printed on acetate and become the seaside windmill they know well. Both these activities increased the children's knowledge and understanding of wind and weather.

- 57 Teachers plan a number of experiences that widen children's understanding of the locality, for example, visits to the local canal, tobogganing on the local field and seasonal walks. Equally, visitors enrich children's understanding and are selected to match the topic being taught, such as a visit from the local fishmonger to talk about the topic connected with fish. Guest storytellers regularly visit and introduce children to a variety of good quality resources, which widen children's experience of the outside world. Some visitors are talented parents who support regularly in class and ensure that the activities children do are easily managed. Children are fast becoming familiar with the beliefs of others through the telling of well-known stories from the Bible. Well told stories, such as David and Goliath, caught the children's attention well and also linked well with children's understanding of courage and bravery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for outdoor play has been improved.
- Children make good progress in manipulative skills.
- Some aspects of indoor lessons are insufficiently well planned.

Commentary

- 58 Standards overall are just below expected levels in physical development and achievement is satisfactory. However as skills on entry are well below expected levels the progress made in reception is good. This is mainly because planning and teaching for indoor lessons lack vitality. An unsatisfactory indoor lesson was not planned well enough for pupils to move confidently or imaginatively and the children's work therefore lacked energy and liveliness. Equally whilst support was adequate there were too many children in the hall for realistic improvement to take place. In this lesson, far too long was spent on the use of one piece of equipment, which was demonstrated at a very slow pace. However, planning for outdoor play has been significantly improved and new equipment has been acquired. As a result, children are more aware of space and have developed more control their movements on the apparatus. Teachers recognise the importance of incorporating class activities to increase pupils' manipulative skills and older, more mature children are secure in their use of tools, such as scissors, which they handle safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The links between all areas of learning supports children's creative development effectively.
- The range of resources and their use in all activities develops creative skills well.
- Whilst assessment is regular standards could be improved by more focussed attention to how well children use materials and operate within their chosen activity.

Commentary

- 59 Attainment is close to expected levels and the children achieve satisfactorily. Teaching is good. Teachers organise six zones in the classroom for learning imaginatively, in which children learn about the seaside in a range of creative activities. Role-play is challenging, for example, in the travel agent's shop, and outside in the beach huts. Children use the sandpit to search for buried treasure and to create a picture of a beach scene. The children have

used their computer-generated images of a flag and windmills effectively to decorate their sandcastles. The children's holiday postcards increase their decorative and writing skills. They use a wide variety of materials to create their fish-shapes; for example, using dough to make a collage of a seaside scene. The children sing songs and repeat rhymes connected with the topic and teachers provide resources such as shells, beach ball, spade and bucket as musical instruments.

- 60 Staff are very supportive in all activities which are independently chosen by children and consequently children approach activities confidently. Whilst there is observation on the activities children choose, the recording of future performance or possible targets would be helpful.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Early indications from 2004 show results that exceed the school's targets, at the age of 11.
- By the age of 11, pupils' library and information-finding skills are good.
- The use of literacy across the curriculum is good.
- Marking does not give a clear enough guidance on how well pupils' targets are being met.
- Achievement is highest in Years 1 and 2.
- Teaching is best in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

- 61 Standards and provision have improved satisfactorily since the last inspection because:

- assessment procedures are better than they were;
- there is a greater emphasis on using and developing reading and writing skills across the curriculum;
- higher attaining seven-year-olds are achieving better standards.

As a result, the school's national test scores are improving at a faster rate than the national trend for Year 2 pupils and similar to the national picture for those in Year 6. Girls are doing better than boys in national tests and the school recognises this. Extra resources have been bought to motivate boys' reading and inspection evidence points to greater interest on their part. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior learning.

- 62 By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are average and achievement of all pupils is good, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. In lessons, pupils' oral work is accurate and they listen well for long periods. The majority of pupils are fluent readers who have a good understanding of the varied books they read. However, the higher attaining pupils are very accurate readers and they also show a good understanding of expression. The school has introduced homework that targets specifically the improvement of reading comprehension. In writing, most pupils have made good progress in the basic skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and use of grammar. However, some of the average pupils make recurring spelling mistakes that are not picked up in the marking. Higher attaining pupils have above average skills and an interesting and humorous style.

- 63 By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are average. Achievement of all pupils is satisfactory, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Speaking and listening are well developed, because pupils have many opportunities, individually, in groups and as a class, to express their views and answer questions. Pupils

benefit from a good library and the teachers place an emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to gather information. Higher attaining pupils are very accurate and fluent readers who read challenging books and understand them well. Although achievement in writing is satisfactory, pupils' standards are inconsistent. Higher attaining pupils have good basic skills and work very productively. Average attaining pupils have good skills, but they do not always use them in all their written work.

- 64 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. The best practice was seen in the Year 3/4 groups because, in these classes:
- work is matched accurately to pupils and this leads to pupils being stretched;
 - the pace of lessons is quick and energetic and this captures the attention and interest of pupils, most obviously in the lower attaining group;
 - resources are used well to develop understanding. For instance, the use of the overhead projector to follow a story and using small whiteboards to jot down notes;
 - there is a strong and successful insistence on good behaviour and only the best possible work.

The system of grouping pupils according to their prior attainment is helping to raise standards. However, care is not always taken to stretch the highest attaining pupils. Part of the difficulty here lies with the quality of marking. For instance, teachers' written comments do not relate sufficiently to pupils' targets and do not provide enough guidance on how well pupils are doing to achieve them.

- 65 Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The strengths are:
- development of the library, library skills and working relationship with the local library;
 - the recognition of areas for development, from tracking of pupils' achievements and analysis of trends in test results.

However, the analysis of pupils' work in books has not clarified the need to standardise marking and ensure that it relates directly to pupils' targets. However, there is satisfactory monitoring of the quality of teaching and this has led to the sound raising of standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 66 This is a strength of provision. The pupils' reading and writing skills are sound and extended well by the work pupils do in subjects, such as science, geography, history and religious education. In some good lessons seen during the inspection, such as a history lesson in Year 4, the literacy learning objective was always made explicit in the planning. The quality of pupils' work in other subjects is enhanced by the use of literacy skills, particularly in science. Older pupils produce some interesting and well-researched work for their homework topics.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The coordinator's commitment and subject knowledge.
- Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are good and they work well together.
- Standards are not rising quickly enough.
- There is insufficient emphasis on how pupils can take the next step in their learning.
- Some higher attaining pupils are underachieving because their work is too easy for them.
- The teachers are not clear how to improve the quality of their lessons.

Commentary

- 67 Overall, standards seen are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory. The school is working hard to raise standards but they have remained similar to those at the previous inspection. The results of the 2003 national tests were well below

average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. By Year 6 pupils are achieving as well as they can, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Girls results are better than boys at ages seven and eleven. Though there has been an upward trend in standards in recent years the improvement has been inconsistent. Pupils with special educational needs have good support from learning support assistants and achieve well. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress.

- 68 By the end of Year 2, most pupils have average skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects. However, the higher attaining pupils are not consistently finding success when doing their more difficult work, for instance when estimating the capacity of containers. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have average problem-solving and number skills. Higher attaining pupils have greater accuracy in the way they use their knowledge and understanding of number in problem-solving. They are more succinct when describing their method of working, than the other groups of pupils. Lower attaining pupils have weaker skills in mental mathematics and this slows down their work.
- 69 Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good teaching seen. In all classes:
- teachers have a high expectation of pupil behaviour and this leads to pupils being attentive, and keen to take part in lessons;
 - teachers clearly share learning objectives with pupils and this gives the lesson a good start and focuses pupils' thinking;
 - mental activities begin lessons, though teaching and learning is less effective where the pace is insufficiently brisk or where there is too much repetition of skills and knowledge already acquired;
 - pupils work very well with each other and this helps to promote learning.
- 70 In Years 1 and 2, pupils are suitably grouped according to levels of prior attainment within classes and there is an appropriate emphasis on practical activities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are busy and often learn well when working in a group supported either by a teaching assistant or by the teacher. However, in Year 2, the whole body of pupils' work is set down on prepared worksheets. This is a weakness because:
- there is little organisation to the work that would allow pupils to check back on work done and lessons learned;
 - pupils are not showing enough care and pride in their work;
 - the work is similar for all pupils and not matched closely to their level of attainment.
- 71 In Years 3 to 6, pupils make most progress when teachers and learning support assistants are continually supporting and encouraging pupils' learning through effective questioning and brisk pace. Although pupils' work is regularly checked, there is not enough emphasis on identifying what individual pupils need to do to improve. Teaching in Year 6, is sufficiently challenging. However, marking does not give a consistently clear picture of the next steps in learning. In lessons, the expectation for higher attaining pupils is often that they should do more rather than have a different and increasingly challenging task. This results in some higher attaining pupils underachieving. Homework supports learning well.
- 72 The subject coordinator is committed to improvement and has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Areas for development have been identified and action taken to raise standards. Monitoring of teaching is in place though the checking and evaluation of learning does not provide enough information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Annual test and assessment tasks are closely analysed and used to target particular groups. However, teachers are not clear about how to improve their work. The plotting of pupil progress and setting targets is well established but the lack of careful scrutiny of work to help next steps in planning is a weakness. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 73 Pupils' mathematical skills are below average and they need to practise them more frequently in other subjects. Though they use calculators, and construct graphs and charts in science, there are few occasions when they use their mathematical skills in other subjects such as geography or design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- The teaching of investigative science has improved and is good.
- Lessons are well organised.
- Expectations are not always high enough, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils' literacy skills are being extended in their written work.
- Pupils' practical work is good – they have a clear understanding of a 'fair' scientific test.
- Marking is unsatisfactory.
- Lower attaining pupils do not always achieve satisfactorily.

Commentary

- 74 Since the last inspection, improvement is satisfactory. The teaching of investigative science is better and pupils at all stages are now more confident in recording their investigations. Furthermore, their ability to express their findings, using good and accurate scientific language, is improving. Standards are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Given the low attainment levels on entry to the school, achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, is satisfactory.
- 75 By the end of Year 2, the strongest work is the experiments, particularly in the work on life-cycles, forces and electricity. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty when writing about their work in detail. By the end of Year 6, most pupils investigate and make predictions well. This is particularly clear in their work on skeletons and forces. However, for higher attaining pupils there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to raise questions about what they have learned.
- 76 The improvements in investigative work have yet to impact on overall standards. The pace of development is slower than expected because:
- assessment, and marking in particular, does not provide sufficient information for teachers to plan challenging lessons for all, particularly for higher attaining pupils;
 - marking does not provide pupils with enough information to determine whether or not targets have been reached successfully;
 - planned work does not always widen understanding for lower attaining pupils because of weak literacy skills and this leads to recording that does not support their planned investigations.
- 77 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are well organised and teachers open with good questioning sessions. Pupils' ready response and good behaviour indicate that teachers' management of pupils is good. There are good features in teachers' preparation to ensure that pupils understand how to follow a line of investigation and plan a fair test. Subsequently, most pupils' record well and presentation is very clear. This was particularly evident in Year 3, where teacher expectations were high and good presentation was consistent across the whole class. On occasions, however, expectations of work for different abilities are not sufficiently accurate. For example, this leads to insufficient opportunities for higher attaining pupils to extend their understanding. Whilst experiments

are planned in detail there is not enough scope for pupils to use their initiative or follow their own lines of enquiry.

- 78 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to raise teachers' confidence in experimental work, as well as providing training which is helping to raise pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in using scientific language. A clear analysis of the subject has ensured that the National Curriculum programmes of study for the subject are covered satisfactorily. Booster classes have been organised and the regularity of gathering assessment information has been increased. As a result, pupils progress well over time, in the development of conclusions from experiments. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' social and personal development by increasing pupils' understanding of health and safety. Their work on light and sound links well with music and art. Literacy skills are used and developed effectively in Year 2, including note-taking and the use of bullet points. Links with information and communication technology are inconsistent, with some good work in Year 5. Good links with the local science college have enhanced opportunities for Year 6 and these prepare pupils well for their transition to secondary school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been recent improvement in resources and staff expertise but resources are still insufficient for Year 3 and staff still need training.
- Pupils work well together when solving problems.
- Pupils use a range of software confidently and effectively.
- Assessment procedures need to show the next steps in learning.
- Information and communication technology is not used consistently to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

- 79 By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils are working at expected levels and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds show satisfactory achievement. Since the last inspection, additional funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved. Staff confidence and expertise have improved through training.
- 80 Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show they are confident in accessing the internet for research, recording data and presenting text. For example, pupils in Year 6 have researched a World War II topic, used spreadsheets for recording results, posed questions and made calculations, using a spreadsheet. They have undertaken a multimedia presentation to pupils in Year 1. In lessons they were interested and knowledgeable about their work and were able to use a range of skills and software to support their learning. Throughout the school, pupils have very good relationships with each other and their teachers. Consequently they work very well together, supporting each other and solving problems.
- 81 Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons, teachers have consistently high expectations of behaviour and, as a result, pupils respond well and are enthusiastic about their work. There are some good features of teaching and learning, particularly involving the older pupils. For example, when pupils in Year 5 used sensors to monitor change linked to work in science and technology, the quality of their work was good and they achieved well because the activities were well planned and there was a high level of effective adult support.

82 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator is knowledgeable and has appropriately identified priorities in developmental planning. Of particular importance is the need to continue to build resources, and to provide further professional training for staff in order to raise standards and achievement. Planning is based on national guidance. This helps to ensure that all pupils experience the required subject strands. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and give a clear indication of pupils' progress through each unit of study, as well as a summary judgement in relation to national levels of achievement at the end of each year. However, the impact on the plans for further learning is weak because there is unclear attention to individual pupils' needs. All classes have access to a mobile resource, that houses a digital projector and eight laptops that are wireless networked to allow use of the internet. This resource adequately supplements desktop computers in Years 5 and 6. However, lack of sufficient computers in a Year 3 lesson resulted in half the class planning and writing their e-mails on paper before transferring them to a computer in a future lesson.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83 Pupils have average skills but are not applying them sufficiently to enhance their learning in other subjects. There are some useful links made with science, for example, pupils in Year 5 looked at seeds through a digital microscope, used the Internet to look at our earth from space and used a digital camera in physical education. Furthermore, many pupils use the internet and graphics programs to find and present information for their individual homework topics. However, there is clearly still some way to go before information and communication technology effectively supports teaching and learning across the curriculum. The school is aware of this with all subject policies to be updated imminently.

HUMANITIES

84 It was only possible to observe one lesson in each of religious education, history and geography. Consequently, there is not enough evidence to make a secure judgement about provision, teaching and learning.

85 In **history** and **geography**, work was sampled. From looking at pupils' work and talking with pupils the indication is that standards are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory.

86 In both subjects a range of visits play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. For example, Year 4 has the opportunity to study Tudor life and Year 5 pupils have been to Llangollen for a geography field trip in order to help understand a United Kingdom locality which contrasts with Walsall. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their work and demonstrated good research and presentational skills in the work they had completed on mountains and rivers.

87 Subject co-ordinators seek ways to develop cross-curricular links and have started to monitor their subjects but this has not been done in enough detail to monitor the quality of teaching in order to improve it and raise standards.

88 In **religious education**, discussions with pupils and staff and the analysis of pupils' work in books and on display, lead inspectors to the judgements that:

- standards meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in Years 2 and 6;
- pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

89 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christian festivals/stories, such as Easter. They write at length about the events leading up to and including the Crucifixion. Appropriate attention is paid to faiths other than Christianity, such as Sikhism. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, pupils showed good knowledge and

understanding of the 'five K's' of Sikhism and they made interesting comparisons with their own experiences. This good lesson was strong in:

- its planning, that linked the content of several lessons;
- its provision for pupils to participate, particularly in the collaborative activities to work out pupils' own five favourite things;
- good questioning that begin to introduce pupils to the similarities and differences with Christianity.

90 By the end of Year 6, pupils have built on the knowledge and understanding of a range of religions, such as Christianity, Sikhism, Islam and Judaism. Stories from these religions are known by the pupils, such as the story of Jairus' daughter, which is studied in Year 3 as an example of a miracle. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of festivals and celebrations. Older pupils are keen to give their opinions, for example, about marriage and they express their views strongly about what they would look for in a marriage partner.

91 Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strengths of subject leadership include:

- the checking of standards, through work analysis and lesson observations;
- the development of a good range of resources, such as religious artefacts, books for the library and audio-visual tapes.

The work on different faiths provides some insights into the diversity of cultures in this country. However, the lack of visits to different places of worship means that pupils do not have enough direct experience of the full range of religions that they study.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

92 Art and design, design and technology, and music were sampled and secure judgements on provision, teaching and standards were not made. However examination of work in these subjects and some lesson observations indicate that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Much of the success of pupils' work is a result of good planning, links with other subjects and positive management by subject coordinators. The levels of presentation in art and design and design and technology are good. The picture overall is similar to that of the last inspection.

93 There are clear links with other subjects, such as history and design and technology. In **art and design** teachers use a variety of materials for pupils to do observational work and some of the work seen was on a good scale, for example, those depicting historical characters. The portfolio kept by Year 4 showed some good examples of observational drawings. Much of the art seen on display was presented well and pupils obviously enjoy their artwork.

94 Pupils work in **design and technology** shows a good standard of finish. Infant pupils plan their designs and list what they need to make their moving pictures and begin to record how well they had done. The scale and finish of '*Joseph's coat*' was colourful and bold but not all pupils followed their computer-generated designs in the finished product. Pictures of moving vehicles made by junior pupils suggested good imagination but a need to refine the finished product more carefully. Equally, kites made by Year 6 could have been larger in scale but pupils were obviously proud of their finished design.

95 In the **music** lessons seen, pupils are acquiring a satisfactory grasp of composition on simple percussion instruments. All pupils have the opportunity to play the recorder and the peripatetic music service is involved in a project which will encourage musical talent, with wind and string instruments to emerge, by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils have a growing appreciation of how to make music and a growing confidence in performance particularly in singing. There was a good performance seen in Year 4 where pupils quickly learnt a song, sang with great rhythm and lively actions and were accompanied lightly on percussion by pupils in the class. There was a high level of enjoyment here and the teacher exploited the new scheme of work well. The school also has a choir, which makes a good

contribution to celebration assemblies as well as performing for groups outside the school. Their performance from 'Joseph' was confidently performed and harmonious. Resources for this subject are very good.

96 Although four lessons were observed, only a small part of the overall **physical education** programme could be seen. Consequently, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision or leadership and management. Equally, no lessons were seen in Year 6 and, therefore, no judgements are made about standards and achievement.

97 By the end of Year 2, as before, pupils have average skills when using a bat and ball. Achievement is satisfactory, and in the lesson it was clear that progress was being made with most pupils developing, at least, adequate control. Higher attaining pupils strike the ball cleanly and move their feet and hands in a well co-ordinated manner.

98 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the very best lesson in Year 4, the main strengths of this dance session were:

- effective management and control of the class meant that pupils had the space and confidence to work freely and expressively;
- good choice of music to accompany the activities;
- very good discussion at the end of the lesson identified areas for improvement in the next lesson.

In the main, appropriate attention is given to warm-ups, providing examples of good work and ways to cool down. However, this was inconsistent, with the Year 2 teacher giving the pupils too little warm-up on the parts of the body that were going to be mostly used.

99 Swimming tuition is provided in Year 4 and the lesson observed was good. By the time pupils leave the school, the majority achieve the nationally expected standard of being able to swim 25 metres.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with other subjects, such as science and English.
- Approaches to drug and alcohol awareness are good.
- Good subject leadership and management.

Commentary

100 The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education is better than at the time of the last inspection because its organisation has improved. . The school has adopted the national guidance and this has led to timetabled lessons, rather than the programme taught through other subjects. Nevertheless, important parts of the programme are taught, for instance, through science. This is particularly true of lessons on the human body.

101 At all stages in the school, personal, social, health and citizenship education has a full part in the overall programme of work. For example:

- by the end of Year 2, pupils learn about democracy through simple debates about why rules are important;
- by the end of Year 6, sex and relationships education and alcohol and drug awareness are taught at appropriate times and pupils talk freely about the issues.

- 102 In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory, with some good sessions. In the best lesson in Year 6, the strengths were:
- good planning that brought out the differences between rich and poor countries;
 - the brisk pace that ensured that all pupils contributed and they retained interest;
 - good levels of challenge stretched pupils and encouraged them to formulate comments and arguments.
- 103 The coordinator manages the subject well. The main achievements are:
- formalising the curriculum and identifying time for its implementation;
 - providing impetus for initiatives, such as healthy eating.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
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	3
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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