

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**ABBHEY INFANT SCHOOL**

**Smethwick**

**LEA area: Sandwell**

**Unique reference number: 103930**

**Headteacher: Mr M. T. Bevan**

**Lead inspector: Mrs J. A. Clarke**  
**Dates of inspection: 1st- 4th November 2004**

**Inspection number: 266265**  
**Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996**

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

<b>Type of school:</b>	<b>Infant school</b>
<b>School category:</b>	<b>Community</b>
<b>Age range of pupils:</b>	<b>3-7</b>
<b>Gender of pupils:</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Number on roll;</b>	<b>298</b>
<b>School address:</b>	<b>Maurice Road Smethwick West Midlands</b>
<b>Postcode:</b>	<b>B67 5LR</b>
<b>Telephone number:</b>	<b>0121 4291689</b>
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<b>Appropriate authority:</b>	<b>The governing body</b>
<b>Name of chair of governors:</b>	<b>Mr C. Haynes</b>
<b>Date of previous inspection:</b>	<b>07/12/1998</b>

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Abbey Infant School is a large infant school for pupils aged 3 to 7. There are 298 pupils on roll. It has 129 boys and 131 girls who attend full time and 77 children in the nursery classes who attend part-time. Abbey Infant School is located in Smethwick, near Birmingham a large urban town. Most of the pupils attending the school live in the local area. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are broadly average. The school has a stable school population. Its intake is often oversubscribed so that when there are vacancies they are quickly filled. When the children start school in either the nursery or the reception classes their attainment overall is below average. This has fallen slightly since the last inspection. The majority of the pupils are from a White British background. Three pupils are supported in the school because they are at the early stages of learning to speak English and they receive additional help. There are eight per cent of the pupils who speak English as an additional language. The pupils mainly speak Panjabi, Urdu and Somali. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average at 12.6% (national average 17.9%). The numbers of pupils who have special educational needs is broadly average (15%). There are no pupils with statements of their special educational need. This is below the national average.

The school is involved in the Healthy Schools Award, safe routes to school, Quality Mark, Kerbcraft, walking bus, Travel Plan and The Sainsbury's Taste of Success Primary Food Awards Scheme. The school places a significant emphasis on working with the parents and the community.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25509	Mrs J Clarke	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Music
13746	Mr D Russell	Lay inspector	
33245	Mrs P Russell	Team inspector	
14991	Mr A Hardwicke	Team inspector	English Religious education Design and technology Geography History Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship
21138	Mr A Simm	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Physical education English as an additional language Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Abbey Infant school is a very good school.** Achievement is very good throughout the school because teaching and learning are very effective. As a result standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are high. The very good leadership shown by the headteacher and the senior management team ensure that the school's excellent self-evaluation procedures have a very positive impact upon the way the school allocates its resources. The school provides for its pupils very well and gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement of all the pupils is very good, because teaching and learning are very good. As a result standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average.
- The very good leadership of the school by the headteacher and the senior management team is very effective in using the school's excellent self-evaluation strategies to bring about change for the better. Planning for improvements is outstanding.
- Although standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, they could be higher. The newly in place computer suite is underused and the teachers do not use ICT enough to aid learning in other subjects.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils and they learn in a very secure environment.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They behave very well. This is because the school promotes a very positive ethos of care, support and high achievement.
- The school provides a very good curriculum, which engages the pupils' interests and encourages them to learn. The accommodation for Year 2 is damp, small and taxes the ingenuity of the class teachers. They ensure that the pupils are not disadvantaged by the quality of the accommodation. The school library is underdeveloped; this is recognised by the school as an area for improvement.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection with areas identified for development resolved. The quality of teaching has improved because of the continuing professional development of the staff and the school's commitment to training. As a result, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have risen and the pupils' achievement is very good. Pupil behaviour has improved and enthusiasm for learning has developed still further. This is the result of a very good curriculum, which engages the interests of the pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

#### Year 2 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	C	C	A	A
Writing	C	C	A	A
Mathematics	C	D	A	A

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average  
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

**Pupils' achievements are very good.** Most of the children start at the school in the nursery classes. The majority transfer into the reception classes. Their attainment on entry is generally below average. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the goals they are expected to reach. This is the result of very good, patient teaching. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have continued to achieve very well and their attainment is high. The standards achieved by

the pupils in the 2004 national tests are set out in the table above. Significant improvements in standards have been achieved in 2004. In science, pupils' achievements were very high, and placed them in the top five per cent of all schools. At present standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average. In religious education the pupils' achievements are good and standards are above average. In ICT achievement is satisfactory and standards average. Although standards are average in ICT, they could be higher. The school is not complacent. It has thorough plans in place to improve the opportunities pupils have to develop their ICT skills in other subject areas.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** The pupils behave very well both in lessons and at playtimes. Their attitudes to their work are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Attendance has improved significantly over the last two years.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good.** Careful analytical checks on how well the pupils are learning means that the teachers have a wealth of information to help them to plan their lessons. This also means that those groups of pupils who need extra help with their learning are very well catered for. As a result, those pupils who are gifted or talented, those with special educational needs (SEN) and those pupils whose first language is not English achieve very well. The curriculum is very good and interests the pupils. At present the ICT suite is underused and the teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for the pupils to use their ICT skills in other subject areas. There are very good opportunities to add to the curriculum with visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. A significant number of extra curricular activities are also available to the pupils. The temporary accommodation for the pupils in Year 2 is small, damp and lacks basic facilities. The teachers are skilled in ensuring that the pupils are not disadvantaged. The library at present is underdeveloped. The school takes very good care of its pupils. There are very good links with parents, nearby schools and the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. He has a clear educational vision and has developed a collegiate approach where all staff are active in their involvement to improve provision in the school. The senior management team and co-ordinators are very effective in checking strengths and identifying areas for improvement. As a result, excellent self-evaluation leads to outstanding strategic planning which clearly identifies areas for improvement. Consequently resources are strategically managed. The governing body gives good support to the school. They are fully involved in the life and work of the school and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. All statutory requirements are met.

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

**Parents have very good views of the school** and feel the teachers know the pupils very well and have the whole child's interests at heart. **Pupils have very good views of the school;** they enjoy going to school and are proud of their school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Extend the opportunities the pupils have to use their ICT skills.
- Improve the accommodation for the Year 2 pupils and the provision in the library.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

The pupils **achieve very well** throughout the school. The pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose first language is not English **achieve very well**. Achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science is **very good**. In information and communication technology achievement is **satisfactory**. In religious education achievement is **good**. This is a very positive position from their level of attainment on entry to the school, which for many children is below the levels expected.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils achieve very well in reading, writing, mathematics and science and standards are well above average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve very well.
- Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory and although standards are average they could be higher.
- Achievement in religious education is good and standards are higher than expected.

#### Commentary

1. Achievement in the nursery and reception classes is very good. When the children start school in the nursery class their attainment is very wide, overall it is below average. This has fallen slightly since the last inspection. When the children begin in the reception class, in the year that they are five, their skills are overall below the levels expected. As a result of very good teaching the children achieve very well, so that by the end of the reception year assessments show that their attainment is likely to be broadly average. Most children are likely to achieve the goals expected of them in communication language and literacy and personal and social education. The achievements for the majority in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development are above the levels expected. The children attain well in mathematical development but overall their results are not quite as strong and are generally below the levels expected. The children's problem solving abilities are not as well developed as their knowledge of shape, space and number.

#### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.9 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.1 (14.6)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.8 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 80 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

2. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well above average in 2004 National Curriculum tests and assessments. This represents a very good improvement in reading, writing, mathematics and science since 2002 and 2003 when standards were broadly average. Particularly pleasing for the school are the numbers of pupils who in 2004 achieved at the higher level 3. The school's results in science placed them in the top five per cent of schools nationally. At present standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average. This shows an upward trend in achievement for all pupils. The

school has worked hard to address a perceived weakness in the attainment of the boys. Resources have been reviewed and male role models promoted. Standards have improved because of a number of factors:-

- Rigorous assessment procedures which regularly review the pupils' performance.
  - Analysis of the curriculum to tailor it specifically to the needs of all the pupils.
  - Continuous professional development for staff.
  - Targeted support for specific groups and individuals.
  - Excellent strategic planning which targets resources and reviews the impact of the allocation of resources.
3. There are no significant differences in achievement between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, boys or girls, pupils with SEN or those who are gifted and talented. Overall, pupils with SEN achieve very well throughout the school. This is because of teachers' very good knowledge of the teaching of basic skills and the additional and very well targeted small group and individual support provided by special needs learning support assistant and deputy headteacher. The pupils also have good levels of guidance in lessons, which helps pupils to improve their work.
4. Achievement in ICT is satisfactory and by the end of Year 2 the pupils' attainment is at the levels expected for pupils of their age. ICT is an area identified on the school development plan for further improvement. As yet the newly in place ICT suite is underused, this is partly because of the unreliability of some of the computers and also because the suite is small and presents a difficult learning environment. At present the teachers do not use the computers sufficiently in lessons to enable the pupils to practice their skills in other subject areas. Although standards are satisfactory the school is not complacent and feels that achievement can be raised further. In religious education the standards the pupils achieve by the end of Year 2 are above those expected. The school's teaching of religious education is fully in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well, and are given a range of good experiences, which results in a good understanding of different faiths.

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

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are **very good**. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school promotes very good personal development within a multicultural and inclusive environment.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good. They show respect for each other's beliefs and feelings. These characteristics promote a positive learning ethos.
- Pupils' attendance is good and they arrive on time for lessons.

### **Commentary**

5. This is an inclusive school. Every consideration is given to developing pupils as well-rounded individuals. Pupils are taught, from a very early age, to respect other people's beliefs and feelings. They have a developing awareness about living in a diverse society where everyone can live in racial harmony with mutual trust and understanding. Equality of opportunity is a strong feature throughout the school.
6. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very well planned into the curriculum. For example, the school uses whole school assemblies very effectively to initiate such development. The use of reward systems encourages pupils to achieve their maximum potential and boosts pupils' self-confidence.

7. The school works hard to promote good behaviour. During the inspection week it was clear that the pupils knew right from wrong and what was expected from them. Teachers use consistent and effective classroom management strategies to promote good behaviour and positive relationships. Teachers and pupils relate very well towards each other and there is a free interchange of views and ideas. Pupils' relationships are very good. They work and play well together. For example, during group work in lessons pupils share and work collaboratively together. They say that they enjoy coming to school. The relaxed atmosphere in lessons is very conducive to pupils learning at their own pace. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help when they feel they need it.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.9	School data :	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	234	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	21	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	4	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	8	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

8. The school, by promoting the need for good attendance, achieves good attendance levels. Over the last two years there has been a significant upward trend, by as much as 3 per cent, in attendance levels. However, when compared to girls, the attendance of some boys is not as good and for some may be impacting on the continuity of their learning of basic skills. The school takes every opportunity to reinforce good attendance. For example, parents are requested not to take holidays during term time, unless it is absolutely essential. Pupils arrive promptly and enjoy coming to school. There have been no exclusions in the past two years.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **very good** resulting in **very good** achievement. The curriculum is **very good** and there are **very good** opportunities for enrichment. Opportunities for learning outside the school day are **very good**. The school takes **very good** care of the pupils and as a result, they are happy and secure and so they learn very well.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is **very good** overall. Very effective teaching throughout the school enables the pupils to achieve very well. The quality of assessment is **very good**. Teachers make very good use of very good assessments to enable them to target specific help and guidance for the pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is very good, overall throughout the school and as a result achievement is high.
- The support given for the pupils with special educational needs and for those whose first language is not English is very good.
- The learning support practitioners make a significant contribution to the children's learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers do not consistently use ICT to support the pupils' learning in other subject areas.
- There are very good assessments in place to guide the teachers in their work.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16 (39 %)	18 (44 %)	7(17 %)	0	0	0

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

9. Teaching and learning throughout the school is very good overall. Lesson observations and discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work shows that overall teaching and learning are very good. The school has improved the good teaching reported in the last inspection by rigorous monitoring and planning for improvement. The leadership of the school has been very effective in providing in-service training for staff. Continuing professional development is a very high priority in the school. Teaching and learning is consistent with strong teaching reported in each age group. Teaching in reading, writing, mathematics and science are consistently high. In information technology teaching is not quite as strong and is an area identified by the leadership and the co-ordinator for continuing improvement. Although the accommodation in the Year 2 temporary classrooms does not aid the teachers in their work, they are diligent in ensuring that the shortcomings in the accommodation do not adversely affect the quality of education the pupils receive.
10. The school has developed very good procedures for the early identification of pupils with SEN. Whilst those pupils whose first language is not English receive the same intensity of support, the school does not fully differentiate in approach between those pupils with SEN and those pupils who have language needs because of their recent arrival in the country. Pupils with SEN have a very positive attitude to their work and develop their self-confidence very well. Staff know very effectively the levels at which the pupils are working and, therefore, plan future learning that is just right. Targets are set for pupils to help in this process. Similar targets are set for those who are learning English. The senior management is very effective in checking

teachers' strengths and areas for development so that they are effective in meeting pupil targets.

11. The planning of lessons is very good. The teachers plan interesting and challenging lessons for the pupils and as a result they say they enjoy their lessons and work hard. In reading, writing, mathematics and science, the teachers' planning for the development of basic skills is very good and consequently achievement is high. In the Foundation Stage the teachers are supported by learning support practitioners and they make a considerable contribution to the learning in the classes. In classes in Years 1 and 2, the numbers of learning support assistants is not as high as in the Foundation Stage and as a result some of the lessons observed were not as successful as they would have been if there had been additional adult help. In these lessons the pace of learning for the pupils, especially the lower ability pupils, could have been quicker.
12. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very strong and as a consequence, the pupils are happy to work hard. The teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and so little time is wasted in lessons. Occasionally there is a slight delay in the start of lessons due to the restrictions of the accommodation, especially in the Year 2 classrooms but the teachers are effective in ensuring that this is minimal. The staff are very good in helping the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of different subject areas at a very good pace and so the pupils' productivity is very good. Lessons are interesting and links are frequently made between subjects, however ICT is not consistently used in the computer suite and the classrooms to support other subject areas. This is an area identified by the school's self-evaluation for further improvement. Visitors to the school and visits to places of interest add to the breadth of study and also make the pupils' learning enjoyable.
13. Assessment is very good. It is a significant tool, which is used very well by the school to drive its self-evaluation procedures. The leadership uses assessment information in a strategic way to target support for those pupils identified for specific need. Targeted help is then reviewed and adjusted accordingly. Predictions of performance are reviewed regularly and refined as an ongoing process. As a result resources are used strategically and maximum gain is derived. Information is used very well by the staff to plan the pupils work and the pupils are clear about what it is they need to do to reach the next National Curriculum level. Assessments in lessons are very well developed and the teachers use this information to inform and plan the pupils' next steps of learning. Pupils' targets are reviewed termly and pupils are fully included in these reviews. Class teachers and learning support assistants are responsible for the daily needs of pupils with SEN and those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Because comprehensive records of achievement are kept, these provide a very good record of each pupil's personal achievements and academic progress through the school.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. It is both broad and balanced and provides a very wide range of planned curricular opportunities for all pupils, which, are enhanced through **very good** opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom. Consequently, achievement is **very good**. Through regular monitoring of the curriculum, adaptations are made in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Accommodation is **satisfactory** overall. Learning resources are **good** overall.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very effectively monitored, evaluated and innovated through a whole-staff approach.
- The curriculum is very well enriched through extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Accommodation for Year 2 pupils is small, damp and lacks basic facilities. The library is underused.

- Teaching assistants are very well provided in the Foundation Stage, but are limited in Years 1 and 2.

## **Commentary**

14. The school's self-evaluation process has very effectively identified strengths and weaknesses in different areas. Very good innovation has taken place, for instance through the beginning of a development of a different teaching approach in the reception classes. This followed an evaluation visit to a neighbouring school. There followed professional discussion and consideration on a whole-staff basis, and careful planning for its introduction to the school. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach is part of the ongoing monitoring of the curriculum. This systematic approach to innovation is a strength of the curriculum.
15. Curriculum planning is very good for all pupils. Teachers plan their work with great care. Activities are well balanced between the different subjects, and are often taught through well-structured cross-curricular topics. This approach has been carefully monitored, so that the clear focus on promoting high standards is never forgotten. The adoption of challenging but realistic targets in reading, writing and mathematics has been successful in contributing to the consistent achievement of very good standards by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2.
16. Information about pupils' work is passed on so that they progress smoothly from class to class. Teachers quickly pick up their records and so there is no interruption to learning as they change classes. Transfer to the junior school is also smoothly managed. Teachers from the juniors come to the school, and the Year 2 pupils visit the juniors before they transfer.
17. The school's basic curriculum is very well enriched by extra-curricular activities. There is a good range of after-school clubs run by teachers and outside coaches. During the week of the inspection soccer, judo, and craft clubs took place. They were all very well supported by good numbers of boys and girls. The school also arranges visits to local areas such as Warley Woods, and pupils participate in musical and other cultural activities, such as the Sandwell Infant Music Festival. An annual residential visit is also undertaken which contributes well to the pupils' social and personal development.
18. The school's provision for pupils with SEN and those pupils who are learning English as an additional language is very good. The curriculum is designed to be very effective for all pupils regardless of ability, SEN or cultural background. Early identification of pupils' needs ensures an appropriate curriculum throughout the school. Very good additional help for pupils with SEN is provided by the learning support assistant and deputy headteacher and they ensure that, for example, individual education plans give full access to the whole curriculum.
19. Accommodation in the small outside classrooms is in a poor state of repair, and there is no water supply. Pupils often have to walk across the playground to use the toilets, or wash painting implements. This has a negative effect on the day-to-day work of these classes, but teachers work very hard, and successfully, to minimise the impact of these factors on their pupils' learning. They do, however, remain a barrier to learning, and put additional pressure on staff. The library is not ideally situated. It is small, making effective display of books difficult. It is also a busy thoroughfare, so that quiet reading is not possible. The ICT suite is hot, and too small for a whole class to comfortably see a computer or the interactive whiteboard. These factors have a negative impact on the teaching of ICT.
20. In the Foundation Stage classes there are a good number of learning support practitioners to provide effective support for the work. However, in the Year 1 and 2 classes their numbers are more limited, and occasions were observed during the inspection when no other adult support was available to the teachers and the pupils would have achieved better if one had been available.

## **Care, guidance and support**

The school's approach towards pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Support, advice and guidance are **very good**. The processes for seeking pupils' views and involving them in the school's work and development are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Health and safety matters are addressed very well. Teachers have caring attitudes towards the pupils.
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is helping to reinforce and encourage pupils' personal development. Relationships are very strong between members of staff and pupils.
- Nursery induction arrangements for settling the children into a structured learning environment are effective.
- Pupils confidently share their views with teachers and know they are always there in time of need.

### **Commentary**

21. The school places great importance on making it a safe and secure learning environment. Pupils are able to concentrate their efforts on learning knowing there are people to turn to in the event of difficulties. The school carries out annual risk assessments. The site manager is vigilant in ensuring identified hazards are eliminated. For example, many of the doors have been fitted with 'finger safe' devices.
22. To ensure pupils arrive at school safely the school has adopted the Road Safety LEA initiatives. For example, these include: safe routes to school; school travel plan award scheme and the school walking bus initiative. The school has appointed, and formally trained, four staff as first aiders. All staff are aware of the locally agreed arrangements for child protection. They are very watchful of any injuries to pupils and rigidly follow reporting procedures with the designated person.
23. The school's positive approach towards personal, social, health and citizenship education is now having beneficial effects. Pupils willingly express their views removing any barriers to their learning. Teachers know their pupils very well. The staff use formal monitoring and assessment systems for identifying pupils' achievements very effectively. Whilst the systems for monitoring personal development are less formal they are still as effective in recognising pupils' capabilities, progression and aspirations. Copious notes made by members of staff during and at the end of lessons strongly reinforce understanding of teacher's high expectations of pupils.
24. Induction arrangements for the nursery and reception classes are good. Children quickly settle into a structured learning environment where they readily interact socially with other young learners. Not all children have prior experience of social interaction before formal classes.
25. There are no formal arrangements for seeking pupils' views. However, pupils are polite and confident to make their views heard when necessary and portray accurate descriptions. For example, in a discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils they accurately described their school. There are limited opportunities for pupils to get involved in the work and development of the school. There are plans in place to introduce a 'buddy system' in the near future, which will give older pupils an opportunity to develop their involvement in school life.

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

There are **very good** links with parents. The use of the community to enrich pupils' learning is a **very good** feature of the school. The school has **very good**, effective links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very strong links with parents. Their mutual commitment towards a genuine partnership with the school is beneficial to pupils' learning at all levels of education.
- Community links very effectively enrich the curriculum.
- The school has wide ranging links with other schools both within and outside the local community.

### **Commentary**

26. The very good partnership between the school and parents has led to many benefits for the pupils. For example, parents fully understand the impact taking their children on holiday during term time has on learning. School take every opportunity to reinforce these commitments and are currently looking at ways of involving parents further around the school. 'Abbey Friends Together' make generous donations to the school following their many fundraising activities.

27. The school communicates very well with parents via newsletters; notice boards; the school prospectus and the governors' annual report which keep them up to date with school activities. School meets statutory requirements relating to the provision of essential information. Reports on pupils' progress are easy to understand including targets for improving reading, writing, mathematics and science. Parents appreciate this target setting for pupils to improve in their work and are able to see a complete picture of their child's overall ability. School actively seeks the views of parents via questionnaires and willingly addresses any concerns parents identify.

28. The school use the local community very well to bring a new perspective to the pupils' learning and understanding of the outside world. There are several religious links ranging from visits made by a Buddhist monk for a school assembly; visits to a local mosque and links with churches of different denominations. These, and other initiatives, enable the pupils to gain wide multicultural understanding. Outside visits to Warley Woods broaden the geography and science curriculum. In their provision of extra-curricular activities the school utilise a wide range of external resources for pupils to experience keep-fit sessions, hockey, judo and cookery. These are well attended by pupils.

29. Transfer arrangements of pupils to the junior school are very good. There are well-developed programmes of visits by respective teachers and co-ordinators from each school. Last year all pupils, with the exception of one child, transferred to Abbey Junior School. Year 2 pupils have opportunities to visit the junior school to familiarise themselves with new teachers and surroundings. The school is very outward looking in its quest to link with other schools outside their own geographical area. For example, the headteacher visits schools in Kidderminster and Gloucester to observe good practices and incorporates new ideas into the school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership for the school. He is committed to rigorous self-evaluation and a collegiate approach to management, which leads to ensuring the highest standards and achievement in all areas of the work and life of the school. Management systems in the school are **very good** and have a positive impact upon standards and achievement. The governance of the school is **good**. The school is **very effective** in providing an environment in which all flourish and strive to reach their full potential.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has created a very effective team approach to the management of the school.
- The outstanding self-evaluation process provides rigour to the management of the school.
- The governing body has a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The staff work hard to overcome the barriers to learning.
- The school finances are very efficiently managed and the office staff are very efficient.

### Commentary

30. The headteacher has managed the very good improvement since the last inspection very well. He has ensured that rigorous self-evaluation and the very effective deployment of staff have created an environment where all work together to raise standards and ensure the progress of the pupils' personal development. There are no areas of complacency in the school. The deputy headteacher provides very effective support for the headteacher and together they make a significant and purposeful team. The very active involvement of all co-ordinators in evaluating accurately the provision of their subject in the school, the pertinent use of the assessment data gathered and the systematic use the data is put to, is key to the raising of standards. As a result the continuing improvement of the curriculum and refinements in the deployment of resources has a significant impact upon raising standards. Accurate data is kept on all the pupils and their individual achievements monitored so that specific help can be targeted to address specific needs. The deputy headteacher keeps careful track of work carried out by those pupils gifted in particular subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. She also makes arrangements for others with particular talents to receive specific support, for example the pupils who have violin lessons at the local junior school.

### Example of outstanding practice

**The headteacher has ensured that accurate self-evaluation has enabled a significant rise in standards. Robust review means that change is managed very efficiently and effectively.**

The strategic planning of the school is excellent. This is because of the ownership of the School Development Plan by all staff. The school targets resources to the aims and priorities set within the plan and rigorously monitors the effectiveness of the allocation. Continuous robust review and evaluation and the monitoring of outcomes ensures that the school is dedicated to managing improvement. As a result all staff are clear about the educational direction of the school and there is a common aim and purpose evident. The senior management team, which includes the senior school administrator, has a very clear overview of the school and because they represent different aspects of the work of the school provide a range of informed points of view. The school works as a community with vision and clear educational direction. This has been achieved by creating an ethos within the school where everyone tries very hard to do their best and all support one another. School targets are reflected in teacher's individual improvement targets. The results of this very effective teamwork can be seen in the improved standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

31. The governing body have a good strategic view of the school. They have a significant range of expertise and work effectively to secure the schools further development. The governors with specific responsibilities are well informed and check the work of the school very effectively. They have a very good grasp of the immediate and future developments of the school. They have a clear understanding of the need to monitor the effectiveness of the school and are very effective in fulfilling their statutory duties. All statutory requirements are met including the requirements of the race equality act. The Chair of the governing body is very committed to the school and as a frequent visitor has a clear picture of the school as a working establishment.

32. Finances are very efficiently managed with the school finances targeted towards school improvement. The senior school administrator with her staff ensures that the budget is carefully monitored and the principles of best value are meticulously applied. The staff in the school office provide a welcoming approachable introduction to the school. The school has worked effectively to remove the barriers to learning. Aspects of the accommodation present some challenges for the leadership of the school and the staff. However the teachers in the Year 2 temporary classrooms are very effective in making sure that the pupils are not disadvantaged and that they have a full entitlement to the curriculum. There are plans in place to provide new classroom spaces in the not too distant future. The school library is also an area identified for

improvement along with the provision of ICT in the school and these areas are clearly identified for improvement in the School Development Plan.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	786803	Balance from previous year	97617
Total expenditure	872553	Balance carried forward to the next	11867
Expenditure per pupil	2345		

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

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

33. Most of the children join the school in the nursery class after they are three. The children attend the nursery part time. Their attainment on entry to the nursery class is very wide but viewed overall it is below average. The children achieve very well in the nursery class. This is the result of patient supportive teaching. When the children start the reception class their skills are overall below the levels expected. Most of the children in the nursery transfer to the reception classes. This year a third of the children who started the reception classes did not attend the nursery class. These children had been to some other pre-school settings before they started in the reception class. The children start in the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five.
34. Teaching and learning are now very good in all classes. The staff in the nursery and reception classes work very well together. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is very good and has been instrumental in bringing about innovations in the way the reception day is organised. There is now a carefully planned day, which allows the children to have structured learning sessions and opportunities to become independent and plan their own learning. The Foundation Stage leader has been responsive both to parental anxieties and the need to create a common approach to the school day in both the nursery and reception classes. The staff are committed to providing a high quality provision for the children. Teaching and learning are very good overall, in all areas of learning, throughout both the nursery and reception classes. The accommodation in the nursery is very good with a bright attractive classroom and spacious outdoor area. The accommodation in the reception classes is satisfactory, with the outdoor area allowing only limited access for the children. Resources are satisfactory overall. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The staff are very effective in providing a safe and secure environment in which the children learn very effectively.

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

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

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

- Very good teaching enables the children to feel happy and secure.
- Staff encourage the children to be polite.
- The curriculum is very well planned to promote children's independent learning.

#### **Commentary**

35. Very good teaching in this area of learning allows the children to achieve very well, so that by the end of the reception year the children are on course to attain the standards expected of them. The teachers and learning support practitioners have established clear routines so that the children feel confident and happy as they work. The children know the school routines and so they find this familiarity comfortable. Some of the children show more confidence than others. The nursery children try hard to fasten their own coats and with support and encouragement they do well. The reception children get changed for physical education lessons responding to the careful, methodical approach promoted by the teachers.
36. Snack times in all classes are happy and sociable times. All the children are encouraged to be polite and are praised when they remember to say 'thank you'. The children chat happily as they eat and drink. This session provides a good opportunity for the children to develop their social skills. The children try hard to tidy up at the end of sessions, some of the children are

really good at this and tidy away without being asked. In these ways the children learn to develop their social responsibility.

37. The children work cheerfully together in a pleasant working atmosphere. The older children in the reception class share their equipment well and work alongside each other. In the nursery class the staff engage and encourage the children to help them share and work with each other to become effective learners. The staff in all classes work with focused groups supporting the children in their learning. The children plan their own learning well and generally persevere with the tasks they have chosen. The nursery children show a growing ability to sustain their interests in the tasks they have chosen and persist with their learning. The children are growing in confidence and developing very positive attitudes to work.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good teaching results in very good learning and achievement, with many opportunities for the children to develop their speaking skills.
- The children are developing their reading and writing skills effectively.
- Children try hard with their writing

### **Commentary**

38. Very good, carefully structured teaching in small groups enables the children to learn very well with their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. As a result achievement is very good and the children are likely to reach the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year. The staff employ a wide range of strategies to encourage the children to develop their vocabulary and confidence in speaking. For example, in the nursery class the children listened carefully to the visiting fire-fighter and answered questions about his uniform. In the reception class the children were confident as they reported exactly what they had to do if they found a fire. They know why it is important to crawl along the floor and alert the rest of their family to danger.
39. All the children enjoy stories and rhymes. The nursery children play letter recognition games with the teacher incorporating the letters into simple word patterns, for example, 'funny fish'. The children in the reception classes are beginning to learn high frequency words and talk knowledgeably about the illustrations in their reading books. They chat confidently about the story and what they think will happen next. The children enjoy their reading and have made a good start. They all take pleasure in looking at the books on display in the classroom and outdoor areas.
40. The children are encouraged to become writers. In the nursery class the children write on their magic boards and chalkboards. In the reception classes the children write their own names on their paintings and are developing good skills. Focused teaching at appropriate levels means that the children are learning to formulate their own sentences. The children learn letter sounds and how to compose simple sentences about the reading books they have been sharing. The children use the interactive displays to make their own sentences, for example about 'Story Street'. Lower attaining children identify which words they need to make their sentence and place them in the correct order, whilst higher attaining children can make their own sentence and copy it. The children are encouraged to write in a range of contexts, for example shopping lists, using the wide variety of tools available for them.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Exciting teaching enables very good learning.
- Focused teaching groups allows good achievement and clear promotion of mathematical language.
- The children's skills in solving problems, is not as well developed as their knowledge of shape, space and numbers.

### **Commentary**

41. As a result of very good teaching and learning the children achieve well in developing their mathematical awareness. Although achievement is good most of the children are not likely to reach the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year. The children in the nursery enjoyed working with the teacher recognising shapes of circles, squares and triangles. This learning was reinforced in an exciting way as the children played a game using the shapes outdoors. When the teacher raised a red triangle the children knew they had to stop and when she raised a silver square they had to march. In this way the children's mathematical learning was re-enforced by exciting physical activity. In the reception class the children had to find nuts in the outside area that the learning support practitioner had hidden. In this activity the children had to find as many as they could and then decide who had the most and who the least. This made their learning fun.
42. The staff make good use of a wide range of activities to promote the children's learning and because their activities are at the correct level of demand the children do very well. They learn good mathematical vocabulary and talk about 'more' and 'less'. The staff use a wide range of contexts to explore differences. For example, water play, role-play in the shop and weighing materials. However many of the children find this concept hard. Because the children in the nursery and the reception classes are all taught in small focused groups the children's learning is carefully matched to their needs. This is a very good feature of the teaching and learning in all classes. The learning support practitioners make a significant contribution to the learning of the children as they work with their groups.
43. The school has identified that the children do well with their basic number skills and shape work. However the children's skills in applying their knowledge to basic number problems is less well developed and is an area identified by the school for improvement.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A rich curriculum supported by visits and visitors to the school contributes very well to the children's understanding of the world around them.
- A very wide range of learning experiences enriches the children's learning.

### **Commentary**

44. Very good teaching in this area of learning allows the children to achieve very well. So that by the end of the reception year the children are on course to exceed the standards expected of them in knowledge and understanding of the world. The classrooms and the outdoor areas are used effectively to motivate the children and to encourage them to learn. The children have

been eagerly anticipating 'bonfire night'. The nursery children have been making fireworks from card, tissue and glitter. A visit from the fire fighter reinforced the need to take great care with fireworks and also that matches were dangerous. This message was developed further with the reception children who were helped to recognise the dangers of playing with fire. In these very carefully organised sessions the children received a timely reminder of the dangers of fire and at the same time they enjoyed a firework demonstration supervised by the fire fighter and also the 'hot dogs' provided by the staff.

45. The staff are skilful in providing a wide range of opportunities to extend the children's experiences. For example, in the reception classes, after an assembly about Diwali, one of the teachers brought some Diwali sweets for the children to try during their snack time. In this way the children's experiences of other cultures was developed further. The computers are used well to re-enforce learning in a range of areas and the children enjoy using them.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The outdoor area is used well by the staff to develop the children's physical skills.

### **Commentary**

46. Very good teaching in this area of learning allows the children to achieve very well, so that by the end of the reception year the children are on course to exceed the standards expected of them in physical development. The children in the nursery have opportunities to use the outdoor area to work with tricycles, cars and other wheeled vehicles. They play games where they need to listen very carefully to instructions given. This is a large attractive area for them to work in and they clearly enjoy the activities planned for them. The reception children have a smaller outdoor area but they also use the adventurous play equipment available in the playground. This allows them to show how they can make shapes on the equipment. The teacher used the opportunity very effectively to ask the children to demonstrate their shapes, to praise them for their work but also to give the other children ideas so that they could extend and refine their own skills. The children clearly enjoy using this equipment and are developing co-operative play. The reception children have sessions in the school hall improving their balancing skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of experiences are used to stimulate the children's imaginations.
- The staff make good links with other areas of learning.

### **Commentary**

47. Very good teaching in this area of learning allows the children to achieve very well. So that by the end of the reception year the children are on course to exceed the standards expected of them in this area of learning. Children enjoy a very good range of well-planned art and design and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. The nursery children have made large cardboard boxes into fire engines, they have hard hats and hoses and rush around shouting 'fire, fire' which they then busily put out. The reception children are at present working in shops and supermarkets as they role-play their buying and selling activities. They write their shopping

lists and purchase what they need from the shops. The children are beginning to relate well to each other and play and share imaginative ideas.

48. The children are at present busy painting and making items in response to the anticipated excitement on bonfire night. In the nursery class the children are decorating beautiful coloured solid shapes in card, using glitter and tissue. Here the children are learning how to affix the tissue and the glitter and with careful and patient teaching they achieve very well, producing quality fireworks. In the reception classes the children have many opportunities to develop their artistic abilities and are creating explosive pictures representing sparks and firework flashes using paint and glitter. The staff are effective as they theme the children's activities so that the children see the relevance of their learning and vocabulary and ideas are developed securely.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- Very good teaching and learning in all year groups promote very good standards by the end of Year 2.
- The subject is very well managed. Pupils' attainments are analysed very well and work is tailored to meet the needs of all the pupils.
- Teaching and learning are very good and the pupils are set realistic yet demanding targets.
- There is a need to develop the library so as to provide a better environment in which to promote positive attitudes to books and reading, and to give better opportunities to develop higher order reading skills.

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening are well above the national average. Achievement is very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were above the national average. The work of the current Year 2 pupils indicates that results at the end of the year are likely to maintain the previous standards in all areas. The school's targets for 2005 in reading and writing show that there is an expectation that current standards will be at least maintained. This shows the consistent work of the school focusing on high standards.
50. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well promoted from the youngest classes. In lessons in all subjects they are encouraged to express their opinions, saying what they think will happen, or commenting on their own and other people's work. Teachers are very good at using correct subject language, for instance in science lessons, and they also expect their pupils to do the same. Reading skills develop well and are fostered through a variety of positive strategies. Pupils are taught good attitudes towards books and reading, so that they enjoy them and are keen to read. Books are taken home frequently and parents and carers regularly fill in reading record books. The teaching of basic reading skills is very good, so that pupils of all abilities are taught a range of strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils read with increasing fluency, accuracy and independence. These positive approaches encourage enjoyment and challenge in reading, and ensure that pupils become confident and capable readers.
51. Factors which contribute to the very good standards achieved by the pupils include very good teaching throughout the school resulting in very good learning. The school's recent analysis of pupils' work suggested that, particularly with the more able pupils, standards were better in writing than in reading, and that boys did not do as well as girls. Taking all the wider evidence

considered during the inspection, neither of these variations was found to be significant. Standards in writing were found to be very good, including that of the more able pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils of all abilities to build on the skills they have learnt during their literacy lessons. For example, in an extended writing lesson the pupils wrote instructions for making a jam sandwich. This interesting task gave good opportunities for pupils of all abilities. The teacher used a good, practical approach, which quickly gained the pupils' interest, and inspired them to use their writing skills well. Handwriting is systematically developed, so that pupils develop a consistent, joined, cursive style by the end of Year 2. Spelling and punctuation are thoroughly taught, so that accuracy is developed.

52. The subject co-ordinator manages the subject very well. Together with the Senior Management Team, she has sustained the high standards expected in the school. The school self evaluation process has been very well used to identify issues related to standards. There has been an unrelenting effort to evaluate the curriculum and identify what needs to be done in order to improve. Curriculum and subject managers have been particularly successful in sharing aspirations with colleagues, so that everyone is working together with a common purpose. Strategies such as the regular use of small group work for the teaching of basic skills to targeted pupils have been very effective.
53. Pupils with SEN and those learning English as an additional language achieve equally as well as the others. A good combination of in-class support from teachers and teaching assistants, where available, and withdrawal for individual or group support, ensures that these pupils achieve very well. Their work is carefully planned in line with their Individual Education Plans. Pupils who the school has identified as being gifted and talented are also well provided for. They are given challenging work, which extends their understanding and enables them to achieve at higher levels.
54. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Lessons are very well planned, and work is carefully matched to the different abilities in the class. Teachers are very good at motivating their pupils, so that they enjoy the tasks and are keen to behave well and try their best. The teaching methods used are very effective, and teachers skilfully use a combination of teaching strategies, which exactly match the needs of the pupils. This approach ensures that pupils of all abilities are motivated to concentrate well and work hard. Pupils are set realistic and yet demanding targets, which are arrived at through careful analysis of previous work and test results. Teachers know their pupils well and are good at telling them how to improve. Homework is appropriately used to support work done in school. The use of ICT to support learning is inconsistent. Some good examples were seen, but in many lessons computers were unused, when they could have helped with pupils' learning.
55. The subject is very well resourced, although the library is underdeveloped. It is a small and busy space. This means that it is difficult to display books in an accessible way, or to create a pleasant atmosphere for reading. Accessibility of books was also an issue in the last inspection. There are sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum, although the number of teaching assistants could be better.

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

56. Opportunities are taken in a wide variety of lessons for pupils to use their language and literacy skills. In physical education lessons, for example, pupils are encouraged to comment on each other's performance, and to suggest ways to improve. In music they are given opportunities to use correct terminology to describe qualities such as pitch, tempo and pulse. Good attention is paid to the use of technical and subject specific language, such as when pupils talk about the 'ordering' of numbers in a Year 1 mathematics lesson.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very clear about what is working well in the subject and those areas that, whilst satisfactory, need improvement. One such area is the more consistent use of ICT in lessons.
- Lessons are very carefully planned and taught so that all pupils' needs are very well met. This is because staff know where all pupils are up to in their work and recognise anything they find difficult.
- The school's drive to improve teaching and learning results in constant improvement in pupils' achievement.

### Commentary

57. Standards in mathematics in 2003 were average for the number of pupils who reached national expectations but below for those pupils attaining higher. Standards in 2004 were much stronger for all pupils, with standards well above average. Pupils' current attainment exceeds expectations. Considering many of the pupils started in the Foundation Stage in the school at a level that was just below that of similarly aged children, this is very good achievement. This very good achievement includes pupils with SEN and those who are identified as gifted and talented regardless of ethnic background. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
58. This very good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection is due to improvement in the quality of teaching and use of assessment. Throughout the school staff are very aware of pupils' individual needs and levels, which are targeted very well. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed a very good understanding of basic number activities, such as correctly working out fractions involving halves and quarters, day-to-day requirements for telling the time and simple sums requiring addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Higher attaining pupils double numbers accurately up to four figure numbers and are very clear on place value involving hundreds, tens and units. Lower attaining pupils work on halves rather than quarters and tell time to the nearest hour.
59. Teaching and learning in mathematics is very good overall. Teachers provide very well prepared lessons. They also explain the work very well so pupils are clear what is expected of them. Teachers are very clear about what their pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next. Teachers explain what needs to be learned and then check later to see if pupils have been successful. In the best parts of lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss and explain their understanding of number. This is helped significantly by teachers who 'tease out' pupils' thoughts very well but without giving them the answers. Also, the work builds step by step so pupils can see the links between different parts of their work. In just such a Year 2 lesson, pupils were reminded and questioned about numbers that were one less than a given number before moving onto numbers that were two less. On rare occasions, the very strong opening to lessons was not quite maintained in individual and group work when some pupils, both lower and higher attaining pupils, had work that was either too hard or too easy for them.
60. The subject is very well led and managed. The quality of teaching and learning is checked on in classrooms and pupils' work is analysed closely. This data is used to identify pupils to target for extra support, which is having a positive effect on raising standards. Staff are not fully confident in the use of ICT to enliven pupils' learning, which has been identified correctly by the school as an area for further development.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is good. Teachers identify occasions when pupils need to use their mathematical knowledge. For example, the understanding of how to record information on graphs is built frequently into learning such as 'how we get to school' in geography or 'our favourite foods' in PSHCE at Year 1. Also in recording work on forces and movement at Year 2. Other examples are in shape and space work in physical education at Year 1. However, because the use of ICT in lessons could be stronger, the link between mathematics and data handling is not as strong as it might be.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved very well in the last 12 months and are currently well above average.
- Teaching and learning is very good overall because staff know where pupils are up to in their understanding and deal systematically with areas that need further explanation.
- Staff have correctly identified that more resources are needed to help them use ICT more effectively to support pupils' learning.

### Commentary

62. By the end of Year 2 in 2003, standards were average for the number of pupils who reached national expectations but below average for those pupils attaining higher. Since then, because the school has improved very well the way it knows how well pupils are doing and targets what they find difficult, standards have increased considerably. As a result standards in 2004 were very high. This reflects a very good improvement since the last inspection particularly because the attainment of higher attaining pupils is now as strong as the attainment of the other pupils. The emphasis that the school places on practical and investigative activities is a key factor leading to the high standards and the pupils' very good achievements.

63. The very good quality of the teaching ensures all pupils achieve highly. For example, by the end of Year 2, pupils have conducted experiments to find out whether changing the height of a ramp will change the distance a toy car will travel when rolled down it. They know, understand and have made sure that their tests are fair. They have also predicted and tested accurately what happens to materials when frozen or heated. Overall, the very good teaching ensures that pupils are very clear on what is expected of them both in their work and behaviour. This means that pupils concentrate fully in lessons and learn very effectively. Lessons are designed so that regardless of ability, pupils are fully included. This means that all pupils regardless of ethnic background, including those with SEN or who are higher attainers, achieve very well.

64. The subject is very well led and managed. Staff are very clear how well pupils' are progressing in their work. This is tracked closely. Teachers' planning for lessons and pupils' work are checked to make sure that lesson objectives are achieved. Lesson observations by the headteacher and subject leader result in issues for development. The school has correctly identified the need to increase resources for ICT and to strengthen the way numeracy and data handling are built into lessons. However, the school has yet to identify in their subject policy how their teaching approaches will take into account the small but growing number of pupils whose first language is not English who may or may not have additional learning difficulties.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are at the levels expected nationally by the end of Year 2.
- The computer suite is at present under-used.
- Co-ordination in ICT is good.
- ICT is used satisfactorily to support other subject areas.

### Commentary

65. By the end of Year 2 standards of work are at the levels expected nationally. Achievement is satisfactory. This is a broadly similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The subject is recognised in the school's excellent self-evaluation as an area for development and consequently features clearly on the School Improvement Plan. By the end of Year 2 the pupils use the computers to write their imaginative stories. They create adventurous pictures by importing 'clip art' onto a set scene. They draw pictures using a drawing program and create repeated patterns by using their own illustrations.

66. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection both in the computer suite and in the classrooms was satisfactory overall. The teachers tended during the inspection to use the computer suite for a small group of pupils. The computer suite has not been in place long and is proving to be too small and inflexible for the staff to use effectively. This is because some of the computers were not working and the staff report that they are not always reliable. The interactive white board in the computer suite was not used during the inspection. The teachers show new skills by demonstrating on the computers in the classroom and then the pupils have opportunities to work with the learning support assistants in the computer suite or on the computers in the classroom. Because of the way the teachers organise the pupils' learning the pupils have individual support and so the pupils with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.

67. There is good leadership and management of ICT. The co-ordinator has not been in place long but she has accurately evaluated the provision in the school. The school recognises that although standards are at the level expected they could be higher and as such is an area for further development. The co-ordinator has sought advice and support from the Local Education Authority adviser who has offered staff training in the use of the Interactive Whiteboard. The scheme of work has been strengthened by the co-ordinator and an assessment procedure is clearly in place, which indicates the attainments of the pupils. There have been improvements in resources in the school since the last inspection. The strategic management of the subject is effective and it is clear that the school is well placed to raise standards further.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. ICT is used satisfactorily to support the pupils' learning in other subject areas to enable the pupils to develop, refine and use their ICT skills. ICT is used to support learning in mathematics as the pupils create tally charts of the most popular fruits and to create a visual database. The digital cameras are used to support work in design and technology to give a visual representation of the fruit salad the pupils made.

## HUMANITIES

69. Inspectors did not see any lessons in **geography** or **history**. In **religious education**, two lessons were observed and as a result, judgements have been made about teaching and

learning and the standards the pupils reach by the end of Year 2. Judgements have been aided by talking to pupils and staff about their work and looking at a wide range of the pupils' work.

70. In **geography** and **history** there is a good curriculum with a good range of interesting activities provided, with the accent on cross-curricular topics. Good use is made of local resources, particularly for geography. Younger pupils go on observational walks around the school grounds, while the older pupils go further afield, such as when they visit Warley Woods. Such activities enable pupils to develop an understanding of the similarities and differences between different localities and between features of their own lives and those of people in the past. The resulting work is often attractively displayed around the school, and these displays make a valuable contribution to the visual attractiveness of the school. Subject co-ordinators for both subjects have a good awareness of their roles, and have a good overview of their subjects. Both have monitored teaching and learning in other classes, and have audited resources. Both have been involved in the school's self-evaluation process, and this enabled them to develop a clearer picture of all aspects of their subjects. The management of both subjects is good.

## **Religious Education**

Provision for religious education is **good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good coverage of a range of world religions.
- Good teaching of the traditions and practices of different faiths.
- Very good promotion of positive attitudes, preparing pupils for life as citizens in a diverse community.

### **Commentary**

71. The school's teaching of religious education is fully in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 2 the pupils' attainment is above that expected in the locally agreed syllabus. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are well taught, and consequently learn well. They achieve well. Pupils learning includes a range of good experiences, which result in a good understanding of different faiths. Stories, practices and traditions from Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism are all given good attention. A local minister who is also a governor makes a valuable contribution as she regularly takes whole school assemblies. Resources such as Big Books and recorded television programmes are well used to show pupils aspects of different faiths from beyond their own local area. In a lesson about festivals of light, for instance, Year 1 pupils watched a programme about a Hindu family preparing for the festival of Diwali. They also studied together a Big Book entitled 'My Hindu Faith'. Such activities make very valuable contributions to pupils' understanding of world faiths. During such lessons pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their own feelings and beliefs.

72. In discussion pupils can recall recent work, such as that on the festival of Diwali and the story of Ramah and Sita, and a range of Bible stories, such as the Last Supper and Daniel in the Lion's Den. They also understand the role of prayer in different religions, describing it as 'talking to God' and 'saying what you want Him to do'.

73. The subject is very well resourced, with all religions well provided for. The subject co-ordinator has identified the need for further resources to support teaching about Buddhism. Further links are also needed with outside faith centres, such as those for Sikhism and Buddhism. Subject management is good overall.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. In **art and design** no lessons were observed during the inspection. In **design technology** and **physical education** one lesson was observed during the inspection. Three lessons were observed in **music**. However, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision in these other subjects, as they were not the focus of the inspection.
75. In **art and design** the teachers develop the pupils' artistic ideas through organising good creative opportunities for the pupils. The pupils develop a variety of skills and produce some effective pieces. The pupils study a range of artists and paint expressively in response to a range of stimuli. For example, the pupils have studied portraits painted by a number of different famous artists. They have studied the different clothes the subjects wore and how the artist portrayed the subjects and then created their own portraits. The pupils use a range of media and explore the marks that different types of pencils and charcoal make. The scheme of work is clear and gives good guidance to staff. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and has sought the views of the pupils about their learning. She has used the outcomes of this survey to refine and polish teaching. The pupils clearly enjoy their art and design lessons and feel that they are accomplished.
76. In **design and technology** the school provides a variety of interesting activities, often as part of cross-curricular topics. These are well planned to capture pupils' interest and are effective in ensuring that pupils of all abilities are fully included. Work is often imaginatively displayed. In the one lesson observed during the inspection the pupils were making drinks using a variety of ingredients. They were working in groups, squeezing lemons, mixing cocoa and water with artificial colouring, and designing labels for the containers of the finished products. The activities gave them very good opportunities to work through the design, make and evaluate process and so to develop their understanding of the principals of design technology. The work also made a worthwhile contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as their speaking and listening skills.
77. In **music** the pupils experience an appropriate programme of musical activities. The pupils sing tunefully and are keen to learn new songs and to improve their performance. The pupils enjoy singing and this is very evident in assemblies and lessons. The teachers make good use of musical instruments in lessons to help the pupils keep to the beat. Some of the pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder whilst others join in the choir. At the time of the inspection the pupils were busily learning songs for their Christmas carol concert. Some of the pupils' music lessons are taken by the peripatetic music teacher from Sandwell Youth Music Curriculum Support and she provides good support for the teachers. In this Year 2 lesson the pupils showed that they could sing and clap in rhythm and were helped to learn correct musical vocabulary as the result of effective challenging teaching. The co-ordinator has audited the provision in the school and has used the outcomes of this exercise to change the music scheme of work and has offered in-service training for staff. As a result of this self-evaluation provision in the school has improved. The pupils are involved in a very good number of enrichment activities throughout the school year.
78. In **physical education** pupils take part in a very wide range of sporting activities, some of which take place outside of the school day. There is a very good range of after-school clubs run by teachers and outside coaches, including soccer, and judo. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and participation in these and after school events makes a positive contribution to their self-confidence and personal and social development. The physical education curriculum shows a good balance of units, which include gymnastics, dance and games. In the lesson observed the pupils worked confidently holding their balance on the floor and began to adapt their learning to include activities on low level apparatus. In this lesson the teacher helped the pupils to develop and improve their skills by pointing out good examples and encouraging the pupils to learn from each other. As a result learning was good.

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

79. The school works well to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship. A well-structured programme of personal, social and health education includes citizenship issues. Pupils are given an awareness of the community and society beyond the school through a range of activities. They are well prepared for their future lives in a diverse society. Through activities such as 'Kerbcraft, walking bus and Travel plan' the pupils understand the need to be responsible in their approach to travelling to school. The school's involvement in the 'Healthy Schools' initiative promotes the ideas of healthy eating. The school has clear strategies for working in partnership with parents to help pupils to develop good social and personal skills. There are very good role models provided by adults in the school. The quality of concern and care shown to the pupils is very good. The pupils are encouraged to care for their school and the people present and this creates a positive ethos for the personal and social development of all pupils. Pupils' attitudes mature as they progress through the school.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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