

INSPECTION REPORT

PERTON FIRST SCHOOL

Wolverhampton, West Midlands

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124177

Headteacher: Mrs B Toth

Lead inspector: Mrs J Moore

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th November 2004

Inspection number: 267493

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	316
School address:	Manston Drive Perton Wolverhampton West Midlands
Postcode:	WV6 7LX
Telephone number:	01902 750006
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Tomlinson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Perton First School is a larger than average primary school with 316 pupils on roll. It is situated in the large village of Perton, near Wolverhampton in the West Midlands. Most pupils live locally but a few travel from further afield. The socio-economic make up of the area is varied. When children join the reception classes their skills and understanding are broadly average. Most pupils are white and there is a small minority of pupils who are from a range of ethnic backgrounds including Asian British, Black British and mixed race. All of these pupils speak English fluently. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs, including statements, is below average. A small number of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. The school population is very stable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education
9411	Rosemary Last	Lay inspector	
21816	Beryl Thomas	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Geography History Religious education
19765	Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Information and communication technology Citizenship Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Perton First School is a **first rate** school which provides a very good education for its pupils. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. Teaching is very good, as is the quality of learning. Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's clear vision is well matched by the excellence of governance and the first rate management.
- Very good teaching, alongside an innovative curriculum, enables the pupils to enjoy learning and to achieve high standards.
- Children in the Foundation Stage¹ have an excellent start to their school life.
- There is very good support for those pupils who need extra help with learning, enabling them to achieve highly.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to all aspects of school life; their behaviour and their personal development are very good.

There has been a very good improvement since the school was previously inspected in 1999. Standards, teaching, learning and achievement are much stronger than they were and all the issues have been tackled successfully. There is sufficient time in the school day for pupils to access all the subjects, the provision for pupils with special needs is very good and the requirements for the collective act of worship are met fully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	A	B	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	B

Key: A - high standards; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E* low standards. Similar schools are those whose pupils are entitled to similar rates of free school meals*

The achievement of all pupils is **very good**. When children join the reception year their skills and understanding are broadly average in all areas of learning². Very good progress is made so that by the time they reach the end of the year many children are working within the national curriculum. The seven-year-olds attain well above average standards in the national tests in reading, writing and in mathematics. Standards are well above average in science and information and communication technology, and above average in religious education. These high standards are maintained in Years 3 and 4, so that when the pupils transfer to the middle school their standards are well above those expected for pupils of similar ages. Throughout the school there are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. All the pupils speak English fluently. The school's success in pushing up standards year-on-year has resulted in them receiving two Achievement Awards.

¹ The name given to nursery and reception classes.

² The curriculum followed in the reception classes.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**, and this includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy learning, they are keen to do well and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good** throughout the entire school. Teaching and learning are **very good** and the reception children get off to an excellent start during their first full year in school. Teachers have high expectations and their pupils rise to the challenges set for them. Learning is fun. Much of the teaching is innovative, especially where it links different subjects such as geography, art and design and information and communication technology. Teaching assistants support teachers very well and teamwork is strong. The very good systems for assessing how well pupils are doing enable a close watch to be kept on the rate at which pupils progress. Gaps are speedily identified and tackled. The next stage is to expand the system for setting pupils' learning targets so that all the subjects are included.

The curriculum is very good, as are the resources for learning. The accommodation is excellent. Pupils are cared for very well and there are very good links with parents, the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **excellent** and the school is constantly striving to improve on the high quality education that it provides for its pupils. Subject leaders provide firm leadership and the new deputy head has had a very positive impact on planning, teaching and learning. Governors are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are not afraid to challenge decisions. Governance is excellent. The administrative officer provides high quality support, which enables the school to function smoothly.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very well pleased with the education provided at Perton First School. Pupils are happy to attend school and they think that learning is exciting. The school is a happy place.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has no significant weaknesses. The following minor issue should be considered for improvement.

- Expand the systems for setting pupils' learning targets so that all subjects are included.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is **very good**. Standards achieved by Year 2 and Year 4 are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the national tests for seven-year-olds are well above average. Any variation in standards is quickly tackled.
- Standards for the nine-year-olds are equally high.
- Reading standards well exceed those expected for pupils of similar ages.
- Pupils' written work is very good and they write well for different purposes.
- Investigative skills in science are very good.
- Attainment in mathematics is well above average in all elements of the subject.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average.

Commentary

1. Pupils make very good progress during their time in school and their achievement is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when progress was erratic. National test results are consistently well above the national average. When compared to similar schools³, standards are well above in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Standards hold up well in Years 3 and 4, so that when pupils leave the school their attainment well exceeds the expected standard for their age.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.0 (16.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.5 (16.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.7 (17.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils start school with broadly average skills and understanding. Very good teaching, alongside a challenging and innovative curriculum, means that progress is rapid and standards are constantly pushed upwards. Parents support the school fully, and the school builds successfully on their support. Very good systems for tracking how well the pupils are doing also help staff to set future learning targets, ensuring that pupils of all capabilities learn effectively. The school has speedily tackled the dip in reading standards in 2003. A full review identified where there were gaps, which were quickly dealt with and the problem addressed. Governors monitor standards and achievement very carefully and they ask rigorous questions if they have a concern.
3. A high proportion of pupils attain levels in national tests that well exceed the standard expected for their age. Work seen during the inspection reflected this. Pupils read fluently, with very good understanding of how authors develop their characters. Written work is well presented and pupils structure their work very well, paying due attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation. Literacy skills are used very well to support learning in all the other subjects. In mathematics, pupils have a secure understanding of place value, using a wide range of strategies to solve

³ Schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.

problems correctly. Science investigations are planned, implemented and recorded very well, and the pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively when they record the outcomes of their investigations. Standards in ICT are well above average; they are above average in religious education.

4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates, which is very good. Many of them attain the expected standard for their age by the time they leave Perton First School. Carefully structured individual plans alongside accurate assessment successfully guides their work in the classroom and in small groups.
5. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are represented in all the ability groups throughout the school. All of them are fluent English speakers and they achieve very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **excellent**. Their personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, is **very good**, as is their behaviour. The level of attendance is high and punctuality is very good. The high standards achieved in all these aspects of the school's work remain a significant strength.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils enthusiastically engage in all aspects of school life and their attitudes make a very significant contribution to the positive learning climate.
- The quality of relationships is excellent, enhancing the harmony of school life.
- The school cultivates pupils' personal development very well, helping them to become more mature and grow into responsible citizens.
- The school monitors attendance carefully and takes determined action to combat non-attendance, resulting in high levels of attendance.
- Behaviour is very good overall and the school manages inappropriate behaviour very well.

Commentary

6. Pupils' excellent attitudes and very good behaviour, together with excellent relationships, are having a positive impact on achievement and help to build a climate in which learning flourishes. The pupils are proud of their school.
7. Pupils are very happy to talk about their life and work in school, readily giving details about the many things that they enjoy. They respect and like their teachers. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their lessons, work hard and want to do their best. For example, at the end of an excellent Year 3 ICT lesson, they were most reluctant to leave the computer suite when the session ended. They eagerly take advantage of extra-curricular activities, such as the quilting club, and enjoy visits and visitors, like the African drummers. Throughout the school the relationships between pupils are excellent. They share ideas and work co-operatively together happily, as when groups of Year 1 pupils put out the physical education (PE) apparatus carefully and sensibly. Working in this friendly community enables all pupils to learn and achieve effectively. In the playground, the play is constructive and Year 4 *Playground Pals*, proudly wearing their special caps, offer support to any child who wants it.
8. Behaviour in and around the school is very good overall. In lessons, therefore, learning can take place unhindered. Staff have very high expectations for behaviour, and pupils respond very well to these expectations. Occasional inappropriate behaviour is checked suitably and improvement supported. Bullying and racial discrimination are rarely issues. If incidents should occur, pupils and parents are confident that they will be dealt with well.
9. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school gives a high priority to building pupils' self-esteem and confidence, engendering a culture of *you can do it!* Pupils are clearly aware of living in a community and understand the privileges and responsibilities involved. The school

enables pupils to take on growing responsibility for their work and actions very well as they become older. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual awareness is catered for very well, with both the local churches making contributions of high quality. Pupils have a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world, which is nurtured from their early days in reception. Pupils have a very strong moral code and they value fair play very greatly. They treat each other, staff and visitors with great respect and courtesy, with even the youngest prepared to listen to others. Pupils' very good understanding of their own and others' culture continues to be as very well developed as it was in the 1999 inspection.

10. Pupils who have special learning needs have excellent attitudes to their learning. They respond enthusiastically to the excellent additional support within lessons from the teaching assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. In all other lessons they work hard and respond very well to their teachers.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003/4)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.8%	School data :	0.1%
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.

11. Levels of attendance are high and in 2003/4 improved substantially on the previous year's figures given in the above table. Authorised absence fell by 1.1% after very determined targeted efforts on behalf of the school. Registration is accurate and efficient, but friendly. Punctuality is very good and helps to ensure that no time is wasted. There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **very good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **very good**. Much of the teaching is innovative in that there are very good links with a range of curriculum areas. These are firmly embedded in teachers' plans and are developed in lessons very well through the use of interactive whiteboards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teamwork is very strong and is an important feature in the school's success in pushing up standards.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils are capable of achieving. The pupils rise to the challenges set for them.
- Planning is very good, taking strongly into account pupils' different needs.
- There are very good systems for assessing and recording how well pupils are progressing.
- Individual and group targets help to move learning forward speedily.
- Learning is enjoyed because of the high quality teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided for very well and they achieve highly, like their classmates.
- Learning targets are in place but there is more structure in some subjects than there is in others.

Commentary

12. There are many strengths to the teaching, which has improved since the previous inspection. Relationships are very good and teaching and support staff work together well. They are a strong team who support each other alongside their pupils. The main benefit of this approach lies in the common understanding of what has to be done if pupils' learning is to progress at a good pace. Another benefit is the creation of a stimulating learning environment in which every child can succeed in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils' progress is checked and monitored at regular intervals, making sure that learning does not slip.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11(21)	31 (60)	8 (15)	2 (4)	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.

13. Almost every teacher taught at least one very good lesson during the inspection. These lessons had a number of common factors, all of which are listed above. English, mathematics and science are taught very well, as are the other subjects. Individual targets are used successfully to move learning forward, but there is less structure in some subjects than others. Marking is very good and teachers draw pupils' attention to how well they are doing in meeting their targets. They also point out what needs to be done to improve the standard of work, giving pupils clear guidance about how to improve.
14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage⁴ is very good. Staff work together as a cohesive team and relationships are excellent. Tasks are carefully planned and pitched and the right level, as in a reception mathematics session where the higher attaining children were solving simple problems. Children were interested and challenged by their activities. Learning is fun and the children get off to an excellent start. They are well prepared for Year 1. Children who have difficulties with learning are identified straight away. Appropriate support is provided so that their learning is productive.
15. This high quality teaching is maintained in the rest of the school. Teaching is innovative and of high quality. Staff are very secure in the subjects they teach and this enables them to link together different aspects, consolidating and extending learning at many levels. In one excellent example, in Year 4, art and design, geography and ICT were linked together as pupils designed a range of symbols to depict four different climatic zones in preparation for making wall hangings. Pupils were fully aware of the impact of symbolism, constantly referring back to their previous ideas for inspiration. The very best use was made of the interactive whiteboard, enabling the teacher and her class to readily observe the features of the different climates, whilst at the same time checking out the tone/texture/colour/shade of their newly designed symbols. This was not the only example of innovative teaching, which was spread across all subjects and classes.
16. Pupils of all capabilities learn very effectively, including those with special educational needs and those with gifts or talents. Their achievement is very good across the board. Pupils want to learn. They are keen and eager because they are interested, and they enjoy learning what their teachers provide for them. The teaching of pupils identified on the special educational needs register is consistently very good and at times excellent. Additional focused sessions by the schools' special needs co-ordinator and the teaching assistants are lively and practical. As a result all pupils achieve very well, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils who have emotional needs are given sensitive support so that they settle easily into the life of the school.

⁴ The name given to nursery and reception classes.

17. Parents are pleased with the range of homework, and they like helping their children to learn. Everyone is committed to making sure that the pupils at Perton First School succeed. They are successful.

The curriculum

The school provides a stimulating, rich and innovative curriculum, which is **very good**. All statutory requirements are met. The accommodation inside and outside is excellent and all issues from the last inspection have been tackled effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is very successful in providing equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils.
- There are a very good number of visits out and visitors into school, which broadens pupils' experience.
- There is improved planning of the curriculum since the last inspection particularly with links across the subjects.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Enrichment through extra curricular activities is a strong feature of school life, with a very good range of opportunities in both sport and the arts.
- The accommodation is excellent and there are very good resources for learning.

Commentary

18. The school provides a rich, relevant, interesting and vibrant curriculum, and many practical first hand experiences are provided to promote pupils' standards and achievements. The school has fully embraced the principles of educational inclusion and makes excellent provision to ensure that all pupils have full access, where possible, to all subjects and activities. Underpinning all the work in the curriculum is the, *You can do it!* philosophy. Provision for pupils with special needs is very good. Teachers and support staff are acutely aware of these pupils' individual needs. They plan carefully to make sure there are appropriate opportunities for all to achieve success. No pupils are disapplied from any aspects of the curriculum and pupils with special needs all have well planned individual educational plans, which ensure that work is matched well to their ability and personal needs.
19. There is considerable enrichment of the curriculum. This stimulates pupils to learn. From reception onwards all pupils benefit from visits to places of educational interest. These help make learning relevant and help pupils to appreciate their local community. Fieldwork is valued at the school and good use is made of the local area. The school has a very good range of visitors and events in school, which add real interest to the curriculum, are well established, and beneficial. Book and Health Education weeks, artists in residence, music and performing arts, members of faith communities and visiting theatre groups really motivate and inspire pupils to learn.
20. The school is successfully improving pupils' interest in joining the after school clubs, including quilting, football, rugby, cricket, netball, basketball, Active 8, recorder clubs, craft and French. The pupils also have opportunities to take part in a variety of other activities such as football coaching and to take part in the local schools tournaments and swimming galas.
21. Suitable emphasis is placed on English and mathematics. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been used very well by teachers as their basis for planning in these subjects and have contributed to the continuing improvement in standards. The provision, standards and the quality of learning in ICT have improved considerably since the last inspection. The school web site is well established and used by all pupils in the school. The links with geography are very well developed.

22. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Children are helped to settle in very quickly and work from an effectively planned interesting and coherent curriculum. They have a very good range of interesting and exciting experiences and are helped to develop the social skills necessary to learn successfully. As a result, they achieve very well and enjoy learning. The school now has an outdoor area, which is used as an outdoor classroom successfully to promote all areas of the curriculum.
23. Health education and guidance about the dangers of misusing drugs is planned and taught very well as part of the science and personal, social, and health and citizenship education provision.
24. The school has a very good match of well-qualified teachers to the demands of the curriculum and the learning needs of all pupils. The learning support staff for pupils with special educational needs are well employed during lessons. Accommodation is excellent. The classrooms and corridors are bright, enhanced with stimulating and vibrant displays. There is a very good range of resources to support subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is **very good**, as is the support, advice and guidance provided for them throughout their time at Perton First School. These aspects are a strength of the school. The school involves pupils in the life of the school well, valuing their suggestions and ideas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff build up excellent relationships with pupils, providing them with very good role models.
- Very good care is taken of the pupils in this happy community.
- Staff know their pupils very well and very effectively support their personal development.
- Very effective induction arrangements help to give pupils an excellent start to their life at Perton First school.
- Every child is valued and achievement in all aspects of school life is celebrated very well.
- Pupils are fully involved in the life of the school knowing their ideas and suggestions are respected.
- Pupils have a very good idea of their targets in numeracy and literacy, but are not always so sure of the next steps for learning in all the other subjects.

Commentary

25. This is a happy, caring community where pupils trust staff and the mutual respect between them helps to create a secure and safe atmosphere where learning can thrive. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. There is always an adult to turn to if a child feels the need. Members of staff are approachable and ready to listen to pupils' ideas. The very effective induction of the new children into reception is handled sympathetically, helping them to settle happily in their new environment. They are made to feel a welcomed part of the school community. Throughout the school, the staff know the pupils very well and the friendly environment encourages pupils to do their best. Pupils are prepared very well for the next stages of their learning in middle school.
26. Very good all round care is taken of the pupils by staff. The headteacher has recent and relevant training in child protection, follows local guidance, and briefs her staff when necessary. Health and safety are given a high priority and the governing body is fully involved. Aspects such as risk assessments are firmly in place. All staff are committed to making the school as safe an environment as possible and the site manager makes a significant contribution to this. Lunchtime staff are competent at supervising the pupils and the occasional accident is dealt with very well by the trained first-aiders. The before- and after-school club makes an important

contribution to pupils' welfare by providing care out of ordinary school hours. Pupils who arrive on site early and go home late are looked after well.

27. The school has an extremely positive learning environment. Pupils who have any special needs are identified early and receive high quality support. The weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection, regarding the pupils' individual education plans have been fully addressed. Targets are written so that they are easily understood. Children love using their *Success Charts* to check their own progress. There are very good arrangements in place when pupils enter or leave the school.
28. Pupils have a very good idea of how to achieve more, comprehending what they are expected to learn, especially in English and maths. In some subjects, such as PE, opportunities for self-evaluation and peer appraisal are used very well. Everyone's achievements are monitored very effectively and are celebrated in the classroom and in assemblies. The school's very good programme of personal, social and health education makes a substantial contribution to support and guidance for pupils.
29. Pupils are successfully involved in the life of the school with their views being sought both informally and more formally. In Year 4 this involvement is built into the curriculum, for example, by using persuasive writing to put forward suggestions. They express their opinions responsibly and the staff treat their ideas with respect. Pupils can see that their comments make a difference and this contributes to their feeling of being valued members of the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents, the community and other schools are **very good**. The strong position at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and all these links enhance and extend pupils' learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the many benefits of this school.
- Parents and members of the community support learning in the classroom and at home very well.
- Communication with parents and carers is very good.
- Links with the community and other schools are very productive.

Commentary

30. Parents are very pleased with this school. They believe that the quality of education their children receive is very good and that the children make good progress. They appreciate its caring ethos and the way everyone is encouraged to be involved; there is very little they would like to see change. They have confidence in the ability of the school to meet the needs of all their children. Inspectors agree with their views.
31. All parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning, which has a beneficial impact on their progress. Great attention is paid to sharing with parents aspects of school life and the curriculum. For instance, the regular sessions run by the reception staff on numeracy and literacy offer a very good introduction to the subjects and understanding is reinforced by very helpful booklets. Sessions are not restricted to these two subjects as, for example, there was a recent course on computers for parents, which helped to update their knowledge and skills. Parents' involvement in the classroom, around the school and on school trips is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers brief volunteers well so that their contribution is maximised. All help from parents is valued by the school, as it believes strongly in the parent/school partnership and works hard to cement this.

32. Overwhelmingly parents feel the school listens to them and that their views are taken into account. They have been appropriately consulted, through questionnaire surveys, about a variety of issues, such as, equal opportunities. They are happy to talk to staff to ask for information and help. Oral and written communication with parents is very good, with a helpful range of printed material and an interesting web site. Publications such as the prospectus are very attractively produced and the parents like the informative reports on their children's progress towards the end of the school year.
33. Parents, staff and members of the local community are active in the Parent, Teacher and Friends Association, which contributes not only financially but socially to the life of the school, regularly raising large sums of money that make an important donation to school funds and benefit the children's education. Children also, supported by their parents and the community, regularly organise fund-raising activities.
34. Links with the community and a wide range of visits and visitors provide very good enrichment for the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development very well. For example, fruitful links with shops, the churches and Perton Library enhance knowledge and understanding of the local community. Pupils successfully widen their experiences and take advantage of these opportunities. They learn to interact with people from various walks of life.
35. The school works in close partnership with the parents of pupils with special needs. Information is shared at review meetings and parents are involved in the pupils' educational plans and targets. There are also informal meetings between the special needs co-ordinator, parents and staff to discuss individual pupils' needs.
36. Perton First School works with other first schools to develop and improve the quality of education very effectively. One example of this was the World of Wonder Week, which united the schools in the Codsall Partnership as well as involving the local library. The school liaises effectively with the local middle school to ensure that transfer at the end of Year 4 is a positive experience for the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **excellent**, as is the governance of the school. Subject leaders provide a firm steer and they manage their subjects exceptionally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She gives committed and successful direction to the school and has high aspirations.
- The school has created an atmosphere where children know they are valued.
- There is a very strong team spirit amongst staff with a learning environment that is highly effective.
- Other senior staff and teachers with subject responsibilities are highly successful in their leadership roles.
- The school is excellent at self-evaluation and taking effective action.
- There are rigorous systems in place for monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The governing body plays a key role in helping to shape the direction of the school.
- The use and management of finances are very good.

Commentary

37. Leadership is excellent. The headteacher constantly strives to raise standards and the quality of education for all children. She has the trust of the parents who see her as totally approachable and committed to the well being of their children. She has a clear understanding

of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and high expectations of the pupils. This is reflected in the continual rise in standards each year, which resulted in the school gaining two Achievement Awards. Improvements since the previous inspection have been very good. The headteacher's encouragement of innovation has led to a rich and exciting curriculum where there are strong links between subjects, with very good achievement in ICT. Although the deputy headteacher is quite new, the head and deputy are forming an effective partnership. The deputy is a highly skilled teacher and an excellent role model in terms of her teaching and leadership skills. The headteacher's delegation of responsibilities is extremely effective. The senior management team plays an important role in moving the school forward. The teacher with responsibility for the Foundation Stage ensures that children get a tremendous start to their school life. The management of special educational needs is excellent. Although quite new to her role she is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, providing clear support and guidance for all staff. Subject leaders are confident and are highly successful in their leadership roles. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has successfully established a united and highly supportive staff team. They are committed to high standards and the all round development of pupils. The school fully lives up to its aim to be a place *where everyone feels valued and secure*. Pupils know that all adults care about them and want them to be successful. Perton First School is a happy place in which to work and learn.

38. Management is excellent. The school has an effective Improvement Plan with priorities and targets for different groups of pupils. It is a highly effective tool for addressing any weaknesses. For example a slight dip in reading standards was swiftly addressed through focused actions. The systems for assessment, target setting and tracking pupils' performance are effective. The head and deputy analyse the performance of different groups and share all the information with staff and governors. This information is used effectively both by subject leaders and within classes to plan carefully for the different groups of pupils. Consequently target setting, tracking and the monitoring of teaching and learning are thorough and strongly contribute to pupils' continued high achievement. Performance management fully takes into account the staff development needs of all teaching and support staff together with pupil targets. The school is committed to the high quality support and training of all staff. This has contributed significantly to the high calibre of teaching and support staff throughout the school. Work force reforms are implemented following discussions with staff. The day-to-day running of the school is highly efficient. The school benefits from an extremely approachable administrator and a very capable site manager. The school uses the new technology effectively to support office systems and also to monitor standards and attendance.
39. Governance is excellent. The school has the benefit of hard working, knowledgeable and committed governors. They have the interests of all members of the school community, pupils, parents and staff at the heart of what they do. The governors have significant strengths, which they have brought to the school. Their role in shaping the direction of the school is outstanding. They work in close partnership with the school to achieve the school's aims and share the vision of the school. There is a very strong working relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governing body. The chair and governors have an exceptional understanding of their strategic role in helping take the school forward. Equally they know the school very well because they have a well thought out monitoring programme. They visit the school on a regular basis, talking to staff and pupils, helping in lessons and observing teaching. They are closely involved in the appointments of staff. There is a very strong emphasis on seeking parents' views through the regular use of questionnaires and informal discussion with parents. As a result the school works together as a harmonious community.
40. The budget is managed effectively and efficiently and always linked to school improvement priorities. The school has in place well thought out arrangements for the day-to-day administration of the school budget. All points for improvement in the last audit have been addressed. Given the balance between strengths and weaknesses and the level of funding per pupil, the school is judged to provide very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	745814
Total expenditure	735277
Expenditure per pupil	2430

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40239
Balance carried forward to the next	50779

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **excellent**, enabling all children to achieve very well and is one of the school's strengths. The children enter reception the term before they are five, and at the time of the inspection there were 54 children on roll. There were two children with special educational needs.

Main strengths

- Excellent leadership and management ensures children receive a flying start to their education
- Achievement is very good because children are keen to learn and their needs are effectively met through an excellent planned exciting and enriching curriculum, which includes a strong programme of outdoor activities where children sustain their enjoyment very well.
- Teaching is consistently very good and results in very good learning taking place.
- Very good induction arrangements in reception together with very good links with parents enables children to settle quickly and happily into this very happy secure environment.
- Very comprehensive and analytical assessment procedures are organised precisely to give the school a very clear insight into children's progress, within and across stages, and for achievements of children with special educational needs.
- The provision for special educational needs is excellent.
- The classrooms celebrate all areas of learning. They are bright and welcoming, stimulating and spacious. They are used very well to support learning.
- There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. The opportunities for imaginative role-play, time limitations and the outside area resources have been improved and are now very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and high expectations of the staff.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's confidence and independence.
- Relationships are excellent with both adults and peers.
- Behaviour is very good at all times.

Commentary

41. Teaching is always very good and as a result children make very good progress and achieve very well in their social development. All children are on course to achieve more than might be expected, far beyond the early learning goals. This reflects the emphasis the school places on developing the whole child. All the adults have established secure routines so that children feel safe and confident. Children have many opportunities to work alone and in small groups. Staff use every opportunity to praise children, constantly reinforcing the excellent relationships and rewarding them. Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour. They set clear boundaries and the consistent role models set by the adults ensure that children know clearly what is expected of them. *'Rules are rules for fair play'*. Assessment and record keeping for this area of learning is excellent. Pupils with special educational needs receive the best in care. All children have developed their independence in dressing and undressing and to take care with their personal hygiene.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because very good teaching and learning are focussed on developing children's skills through an interesting curriculum and in classrooms that celebrate language.
- The very good teachers and nursery nurses take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Very high expectations ensure all children take great care with the presentation of their work.
- Children enjoy handling books and are making very good progress starting to read and write.

Commentary

42. Early indications are that many of the children will exceed the expectations in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Already children are achieving very well as a result of the very good teaching and the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen. All staff take every opportunity during all activities to develop the children's vocabulary through probing, very good questioning and consistent insistence that children answer in sentences. For example, when the children were delivering their letters, the teacher insisted the pupils used a sentence rather than hand it to a person or just post it in the post box. Children use extended sentences well in role-play situations. The children's listening skills and their confidence in answering questions is developing well through the use of focused texts, structured activities, and music lessons. Children enjoy books and have had great fun sequencing activities relating to a very wide variety of nursery rhymes. Children are beginning to recognise the early words in the chosen reading scheme. The majority can hold their pencils properly, attempt to write their first name and are making very good progress with their writing, with good progression evident from mark making to starting to write.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's mathematical development through a very exciting curriculum.
- Children achieve very well because they are given many opportunities to develop mathematical skills across all areas of learning, inside and outside the classrooms.

Commentary

43. Most children enter reception with the levels expected for their age. This area is taught very well, with a focus on first hand practical activities. Children are on course to achieve their early learning goals by the end of the year with a number exceeding their targets. Children are already beginning to count well and predict what might happen next. They repeat in unison, *'Yes, but is there another way?'* Staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children daily take an active role in practising mental strategies, counting and recognising numbers. Excellent practical activities in the role-play areas prepare the way for future learning. These reinforce recognition and use of early numbers. Children learn from action, learn from seeing, and develop a strong sense of pattern. They learn to manipulate, to observe, and notice. Teachers sustain children's interest very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.
- Visits, visitors into school, the use of computers and celebrations develop children's understanding well.

Commentary

44. When the children enter reception they have good experiences to draw upon. Teaching and learning is very good and children achieve very well. There is an excellent variety of appropriate interesting activities planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding, for example, using the story, *'The Jolly Postman,'* as a stimulus for visiting the post office, learning where they live, and some of the key features of their local environment. Children have great fun exploring the senses of smell, touch, hearing, and sight. They use magnifying glasses to explore properties of materials, sunflower heads and seeds and make boats from different materials to begin to understand floating and sinking. They write their address on envelopes using different writing tools and wrap parcels in different materials to investigate, which are waterproof. Staff build up children's confidence in using the computer and a programmable toy. As a result, they have positive attitudes and display equally good skills. For example, the children showed great delight when the 'pixie' delivered the letter to the correct place, and they enjoyed looking at the school web site in the ICT suite. Very good use is made of the digital camera to capture the children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**. Outdoor facilities are now very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very well for learning outside the classroom.
- Children enjoy their physical education lessons.

Commentary

45. A change of timetable and the newly acquired outdoor area and playground facilities means that the standards the children achieve are far higher than they were at the last inspection. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by July and some will exceed them. Teaching and learning are very good. The children are beginning to show a good awareness of space, of themselves and others. They experiment with different ways of moving as they safely use the wheeled vehicles and climbing frame outside. High expectations, and evaluation pushes up standards. There is very good support for children with special educational needs.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because they are taught very well and experience a wide range of creative activities.
- The imaginative play areas are very well resourced, used well to encourage children's creative response.

Commentary

46. This area of learning is particularly well planned. There are daily opportunities for children to develop creativity. Children have access to a very good range of materials, with many opportunities to paint, draw, and make models. Teaching is very good. The children will achieve their learning goals, with many exceeding them by the end of the year. Children really enjoy their music lessons. They have composed their music to accompany nursery rhymes and taped it to listen to in the classroom. They are introduced to the elements of music and ways of describing it well as they choose their instruments to the sounds they became aware of when they walked to the post office. They create music and say what they like or do not like about the sounds they make. They sing particularly well. The very attractive mature drawings and paintings of sunflowers and spiders on display show that teachers respect the children's efforts and help to stimulate further learning. The areas for imaginative role-play are very exciting. This strand is excellently well organised and has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 2 and 4 are well above average in all aspects of English.
- Pupils' achievements are high because of the very good and often excellent teaching.
- Pupils with special needs receive excellent support.
- Leadership of the subject is highly effective, with very good assessment arrangements.
- There are many opportunities in most subjects for pupils to extend their literacy skills.

Commentary

47. Teaching is very good, with examples of excellent teaching in most year groups. Planning in year groups is thorough and caters for the needs of all different groups. Consequently pupils make rapid gains in their learning and therefore achievement is high. All teachers pitch questions skilfully at the children's different levels of learning and share the learning objectives for each lesson in a way that children clearly understand. Pupils' targets are also written in a way that pupils understand. However a few children do not remember their targets because they are not readily available when they are working. There is a culture of high expectations by staff for the work of all pupils. Pupils rise to this challenge, work extremely hard and have excellent attitudes to their learning. Above all, teaching is always delivered in an interesting and lively way with attractive resources that really motivate and stimulate pupils.
48. The school has a well thought out range of intervention programmes to help the lower attaining pupils. The additional support given by the learning support assistants and the special needs co-ordinator both in and out of lessons is outstanding. Consequently, by the time children with special needs reach the end of Year 2 and Year 4 most attain the national average.
49. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average across the school. Pupils make very good progress and achievement. In all subjects children are given opportunities to talk using either talk partners or through small group discussion sessions. Their views are respected by staff, which gives children real confidence to explain their ideas. They in turn listen well to the teachers and their classmates. Pupils are praised for using subject language and encouraged to answer in sentences. In literacy lessons teachers actively develop in pupils a love of imaginative vocabulary. Consequently by Year 4 pupils are extremely confident and articulate communicators. The atmosphere of the school is highly inclusive and care is taken to ensure both boys and girls extend their language skills through drama and assemblies.
50. Pupils' reading skills are well above average throughout the school. The teaching of reading is very good, with pupils achieving very well. The strategy of taking guided reading sessions out of lessons in Years 1 and 2 is highly effective and has led to a sharper focus on specific reading skills. The staff build on from the excellent start children get in reception. By the end of Year 2 pupils have very good strategies for working out unfamiliar words. By Year 4 pupils are confident fluent readers, with a significant number of pupils reaching the higher level 5, with many attaining the levels expected of Year 6 pupils. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of fiction, information books and books that reflect other cultures. Care is taken to include books that appeal equally to boys and girls. Classes have attractive reading corners and all classes make good use of the school library. From discussion with Year 2 and Year 4 pupils, they enjoy reading and can identify preferences for different types of books such as mystery, humour and poetry. Parents and carers support the school very well by hearing their children read and helping them practise their spelling.
51. Pupils' writing skills are well above average across the school. There is a clear focus on basic skills such as spelling, handwriting and grammar. Teachers provide a wide range of writing

opportunities. Pupils have regular opportunities to write extended pieces and poetry. A key feature of the school's success is the school's focus on developing in pupils a love of words and imaginative writing from a very early age. For example in an excellent Year 1 lesson, the teacher used poetry to fire the children's imaginative writing about fireworks. The writing produced independently by some very able children was exceptional:

Fireworks crash like lightening, sizzling like burgers on a bonfire.

52. The calibre of support for the children with special needs by the school's special needs teacher ensures a very high level of participation from all children. She helps them to explore rhymes and experiment with vocabulary before attempting to record any work. By Year 4, many children have a real flare for words and regularly produce stories and poems that show a subtle use of language:

It was the end of the day, everyone watched the sunset going down. Everyone's eyes were filled with light. They thought the sky was on fire. The trees so peaceful and beautiful.

53. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their work, which is consistently neat and well organised. High quality booklets around the school in other subjects such as history and geography set high expectations and show pupils that their work is valued.
54. The leadership of English is exemplary. The subject leader is a highly skilled teacher and therefore an excellent role model. She gives very good support and uses her monitoring effectively in order to identify any weaknesses and take rapid action. For example when reading results dipped, strategies were swiftly and successfully put in place to raise the attainment of boys. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection in the standards pupils attain and the quality of teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. There are excellent opportunities to use language and literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils are given time to explain their thinking in subjects such as mathematics and science. Pupils develop their subject vocabulary in history and geography and write at length in all subjects. There is regular evidence of pupils using ICT to support English.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff share a common understanding of numeracy and how best to promote it. As a result standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils enjoy the challenge of mathematics and have excellent relationships with their teachers and peers.
- There is a strong focus on teaching mental calculation.
- Assessment is a strong feature.

Commentary

56. Standards in mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 4 are well above average. The work of current pupils suggests that these standards will be maintained in Year 2 and in Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving very well in relation to their prior attainment.
57. Since the last inspection the excellent subject leader has worked very hard to raise standards for pupils so they attain the higher levels in mathematics. The teaching programme is based on identified learning objectives, and is planned thoroughly, to ensure high expectations, consistent approaches and good progression throughout the school. The proportion of pupils achieving beyond the expected level by Year 2 and Year 4 has risen dramatically as a result.
58. Teaching is very good overall with some excellent teaching. Lessons are planned thoroughly with a range of extension activities that challenge and extend pupils of all capabilities. Additional extra activities and regular homework boost standards successfully. Mental calculation and recall of number facts are established thoroughly before written methods are introduced, enabling younger pupils to have a very good understanding of number facts. The structured step-by-step approach works well, ensuring that pupils' understanding is secure. As pupils move up the school the speed and range of mental calculations increases. Pupils develop a very good range of mental strategies, using these to good effect in lessons and when solving problems.
59. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, the initial question and answer session was lively, consolidated previous learning well and helped the teacher adjust the material effectively to the needs of the whole group. The teaching captured the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The teacher encouraged the pupils to feel secure and contribute with no fear of failure as they progressed from locating specific points, using coordinates involving single, two and four quadrants. Learning points were drawn together very well at the end of lessons so that they were consolidated for every pupil.
60. Assessments are used to identify pupils' strengths and difficulties, to set group and individual targets for them to achieve and to plan the next stage of work. These have been used very successfully in each year group to set the children according to their mathematical ability. Assessments include formal observations and oral questioning, with regular tests on tables. Recording systems give teachers the information they need to plan and report successfully.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils use mathematics very effectively to support their work in other subjects and there is evidence of this in many subjects. The interpretation of charts and graphs in geography and ICT in Year 4 is particularly good.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good.
- Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge about how to set up and record their science investigations, especially those that include a fair test.

Commentary

62. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning have all improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is because teamwork is strong and the subject leader and the staff have worked collaboratively to improve the delivery of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessment, with good results.
63. Pupils leave Perton First School at the end of Year 4, and many of them attain standards that well exceed those expected for pupils of similar ages. For example, they appreciate the impact of different habitats on feeding habits and they know and understand how the properties of various materials result in them being classified into solids, liquids and gases. A similar situation exists at the end of Year 2 with most pupils able to make predictions, set up a fair test and record their findings accurately.
64. Across the school, teaching and support staff make the best use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science. Older pupils create charts and diagrams confidently, highlighting their predictions and recording their findings accurately. In a number of lessons the interactive whiteboard was used to good effect, enabling pupils to refer back to their previous findings and using this information to structure their current investigation.
65. Lessons are planned very well and the curriculum is covered in depth, allowing pupils enough time to really get to grips with their learning. Tasks are pitched at the right levels with a suitable degree of challenge for pupils of all capabilities. Higher, average and lower attaining pupils have extension activities, enabling the faster workers to move on at a very good pace and not waste any time. Teaching is very good, which is the main reason that pupils achieve so well.
66. The subject leadership is excellent. There is a clear vision of what has to be done next, which is to formalise the system for setting individual targets for the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 2 and 4 are well above average.
 - Teaching is excellent and as a result pupils achieve highly.
 - Leadership is exemplary with a well developed innovative curriculum in place.
 - The school's technician makes an outstanding contribution throughout the school.
 - ICT contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.
67. There are many strengths in the delivery of ICT. The subject leader provides excellent leadership. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and ensures staff are well supported. The weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The way the subject is organised and delivered is imaginative and utilises other staff's expertise. For example, the innovative work using ICT to link subjects together, particularly, geography, art and design, history and English. Resources are very good. The school makes effective use of laptops and interactive whiteboards. The two ICT suites are bright and inviting. The award winning web site, organised by the school technician is outstanding. It is informative for pupils, parents and other schools and captures very well the atmosphere of the school and the range of work undertaken.
 68. Pupils' attainment well exceeds the expected standard for their age and their achievement is very good. The three lessons observed in Year 3 and 4 classes were all excellently taught. The brief visit to a Year 2 class also indicated excellent teaching qualities. Discussions with Year 2 and Year 4 pupils confirm pupils' highly positive attitudes to ICT. Teachers are confident role models, showing pupils the value of ICT. The school's technician provides excellent support

during the timetabled sessions in the ICT suites and also provides high quality training for staff when required. The newly purchased interactive whiteboards have been quickly assimilated into daily teaching, with more planned for all classes. Staff have very high expectations. They demonstrate and explain extremely well and teach in a lively and interesting manner. Lessons *buzz* with pupils' hard work and enthusiasm!

69. ICT makes an excellent contribution to pupils' social development, with many opportunities for pupils to work together and collaborate. From the time children join the school in reception, all staff encourage pupils' independence. By Year 2, pupils use the correct vocabulary and the clear demonstrations by staff remind them how to follow their tasks. By Year 4, pupils expect to work alone and are happy to help each other rather than rely on adults. Consequently pupils across the school are very confident and enthusiastic computer users.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. There are many examples in most subjects of pupils using ICT to enhance their subjects, undertake research and further their ICT skills. Children email each other's classes and regularly email the headteacher! Older children deliver Powerpoint presentations. Pupils talk enthusiastically of the regular opportunities they have to use computers.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good innovative curriculum and very good assessment criteria that fully reflect the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Children demonstrate a developing understanding of their own and other faiths.
- Provision in whole school assemblies develops different religions and celebrates festivals effectively.
- The very good level of new resources and artefacts, including visitors and visits to places of worship ensures teaching and learning is of high quality.
- All the issues raised in the previous report have all been addressed successfully.

Commentary

71. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 were above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve very well across the school. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge of all four aspects of the curriculum – Issues, Religion, Meaning and Lifestance.
72. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use a wide range of very good teaching strategies to involve all the pupils in discussions, which effectively promotes the pupils spiritual development. Overall teaching was very good. Planning has improved, teachers have gained confidence, and learning has become very exciting. Pupils have a very good understanding of the place of celebration in religions and are knowledgeable about the major Christian celebrations of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. *'Let's join hands around the world and celebrate what we have and look after Gods' creations for the future,'* is the hope in Year 4. There was a very good display based on Diwali in preparation for the school celebration the week following the inspection.

73. A celebration of our multi-cultural world, a '*World of Wonder*' week has helped to raise the profile of religious education with members of faith communities coming into school to help with the arts, crafts and dance. Leadership of the subject is excellent. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to address all the issues from the last inspection. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively. Differentiated objectives for all units of work are in place. These are used well to help set tasks at the appropriate level for the pupils and to assess their progress, thus providing invaluable information for teachers, pupils and parents.

Geography and history

74. Very few lessons were observed in **geography** and no lessons in **history**. These subjects were sampled in the inspection.

75. This is a school that celebrates humanities and encourages the pupils to become little historians and geographers through a very well planned, 'hands on', exciting curriculum. Learning is great fun, challenging and investigative. Enquiry skills are built into every planned unit of work in geography and history. The very good vibrant displays around the school challenge and celebrate pupils' work and ask challenging questions of pictures, photographs and artefacts. Relationships are very good. Teachers' enthusiasm has infected the pupils.

76. It is evident that a range of visits and visitors play an important part in bringing the subjects alive and making the work interesting and relevant. For example, the visit to Brewood to learn more about the physical and human features of this type of environment and to help pupils recognise similarities and differences with Perton, the visit to the Black Country Museum which really enriches the work on Victorians.

77. Younger pupils enjoy finding out about other places in the world from the adventures of Barnaby Bear. An excellent photographic record of Pertons' Barnaby Bear's extensive travels is on the schools web site. The very well planned '*Passport to the World*,' extends this knowledge of people and places for the older pupils very well. In Year 4 the excellent work in geography is everywhere, creating real links across the curriculum particularly in art and design, ICT, religious education, literacy and numeracy. Teaching seen was very good and pupils had a high level of understanding about world weather and climatic zones. Appropriate assessment procedures are in place.

78. The subject leaders are hard working, committed and responsible for the very good improvement since the previous inspection. Particularly exciting is the very successful integration of most subjects into geography by the excellent co-ordinator. It was so good the National Geographical Association used some of the work to share very good practice at their conference. Resources for teaching and learning are very good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Very few lessons were seen in these subjects, which were sampled in the inspection.

79. **Art and design** is one of the school's strengths. Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good, an improvement since the last inspection. Perton is a large school, which has many areas to display pupils' creative work. Without exception, pupils' two and three-dimensional work is high quality, and is displayed with sensitivity and feeling for texture, colour, shape and space. All of which contributes to the positive ethos in the school.

80. Very good use is made of visiting artists to extend pupils' awareness of the skills and processes that create first-rate art work. Colours are mixed effectively to achieve appropriate tones and shades in individual paintings, as well as enhancing three-dimensional models. Pupils are adept at working with different fabrics, producing creative shades in their tie-dye activities as well as interesting designs in weaving and cross stitch. Work from different cultures enhances pupils' own creative experiences, giving an extra dimension to a wide range of

creative activities. Staff and pupils successfully promote all aspects of creativity by using ICT extensively. The use of the interactive whiteboard enables all pupils to have speedy reference points for colour, texture, fabric and paint, for example when they were creating symbols to represent their ideas for a wall hanging based on four different climatic zones. There is some innovative work taking place, which is based on excellent teamwork and very good leadership.

81. **Design and technology** has a high profile throughout the school and is taught as part of a theme or as a group of lessons. Planning is of a high standard, as are the systems for evaluating the success or otherwise of the pupils' designs. Standards are well above average and pupils' skills are well honed. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are adept at planning and designing their activities, and pupils are well used to producing objects with a high quality finish. Pupils' evaluative skills are very good. In one lesson pupils were testing and evaluating their drinks, which they had made from soft fruit, putting forward ideas and suggestions about how the flavour could be enhanced by adding different fruits. The ensuing discussion frequently resulted in further modification to the recipe to improve the flavour. Pupils' many innovative designs for a drinks container demonstrated how effectively they drew on their previous learning when designing an attractive container. The very good leadership is a significant factor in the success of this subject.
82. The school has a long tradition of high quality provision in **music**. It is clear from the extent of music making activities that music is valued throughout the school. Parents rightly identify music as one of the strengths of the school and pupils are clearly proud of their own performances. The standards achieved throughout the school are well above national expectations. Children sing tunefully and with real enjoyment. In an excellent lesson Year 4 pupils demonstrated high skills in singing and in using instruments to compose. The CD produced to celebrate Perton First School's 25th Anniversary is both delightful to listen to and shows the high standards pupils attain in all aspects of music making. It also demonstrates that all children's contributions are highly valued, from the youngest to the oldest pupils.
83. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform in public, such as Years 1 and 2 taking part in special assemblies and older pupils performing in the wider community, such as visiting the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, or taking part in a local festival in Lichfield Cathedral. Leadership of the subject is excellent. The subject leader has high expectations and a great deal of enthusiasm! She organises many enrichment events, including a choir, orchestra and recorder tuition. She and the deputy head generate a real sense of fun and enjoyment in clubs, lessons and assemblies. Many pupils also have external specialist tuition to a very high standard in string and brass instruments. All these musical experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural experiences. Resources are very good, with a dedicated music room well used.
84. The **physical education** (PE) curriculum is planned very well, with pupils having many opportunities to develop their skills in gymnastics, games and dance. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Very few lessons were observed but in these lessons standards were above average and pupils' achievement was good. There are no issues linked to the amount of time devoted to PE, as there were at the last inspection.
85. Pupils' skills are developed successfully, and staff are adept at using many ways to encourage pupils to gain confidence in their own ability. Pupils are always keen to 'have a go', as in a Year 1 dance lesson where they responded to the stimuli of their own *Firework* poems, jumping and stretching and using every part of their bodies to develop their ideas. There are no missed opportunities for the pupils to evaluate their movement and sequences, helping standards to improve and pupils' achievement to be enhanced all round. The subject leadership is very good. Strengths and weaknesses are identified and dealt with, enabling learning to move forward at a good pace.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This subject area was sampled.

86. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has a very high profile within the school and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development. The school is a very happy, well-ordered community. All pupils are valued, encouraged to feel special and helped to care about each other and the environment. A combination of set lessons, special events such as the *Healthy Living* days, the *Travels of Barnaby Bear* ensure that pupils learn about being safe and healthy and belonging to the wider world. The school's programme for personal, social and health education includes the highly effective *You can do it* approach. This embraces all aspects of school life. For example as pupils sing *You can do it, you can do it, you can meet that challenge* or become the *Stars of the Day*.
87. A very successful approach in reception classes helps the youngest pupils make very good progress in their personal development. Pupils continue to develop their sense of personal responsibility. The school provides carefully chosen assembly themes, opportunities to undertake jobs around the school and regular fund-raising for charities. Excellent trusting relationships between pupils and all adults who work in the school underpin the caring support and advice, which promotes their personal development extremely well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
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	2
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
The leadership and management of the school	1
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3);

satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).