

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **KITWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY CLASS**

Bartley Green, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103339

Headteacher: Mrs. P. Cooke

Lead inspector: Anne Elizabeth Kounnou

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2004

Inspection number: 256645

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	243
School address:	Wychbury Road Bartley Green Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B32 4DL
Telephone number:	0121 476 0694
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. P Martin
Date of previous inspection:	5 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kitwell School is oversubscribed and successfully overcomes a significant number of barriers to pupils' learning. The school is about the same size as most primary schools with 243 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher than average at 24 per cent, and these pupils are not spread evenly throughout the school. This means that some year groups have very high proportions of pupils with special needs. For example, in 2003, 61 per cent of pupils in Year 6 and 40 per cent of pupils in Year 2 had special educational needs. The number of pupils with statements for special educational needs is about average at two per cent. Pupils' needs are wide ranging and many are troubled emotionally. A much higher proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school than is typical nationally. Vacant places are filled immediately from pupils who are waiting to join the school. Only three of the pupils who left the school in 2003 at the end of Year 6 had begun their schooling in the nursery. Forty per cent of this year group joined the school in the last three years. This is because families frequently move into and out of the local authority and private housing around the school. An extremely small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds speak more than one language at home; none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is falling rapidly along with local unemployment rates, but remains above the national average at 31 per cent. In previous years about 40 per cent of pupils were entitled to claim. Although there is a wide range of ability, most children start school in the nursery or reception classes with attainment that is well below that expected for their age. Despite these barriers the school has successfully won a number of prestigious awards including School Achievement Awards for Excellence in 2001 and 2002; the Basic Skills Quality Mark has been awarded for a second time; a National Primary Centre Award has been gained for three consecutive years from 2001 to 2003, a Healthy Schools Award was gained in 2003 in addition to a Lottery Sports Award. The school willingly takes part in a number of national and local initiatives to raise standards. These include the Sure Start scheme for the youngest children, and the national Excellence in Cities scheme. Older pupils are about to begin a new initiative to learn a modern foreign language, with Spanish and French being offered.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30810	Liz Kounnou	Lead inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Personal, social and health education Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
19740	Allan Smith	Lay inspector	
23319	Vincent Leary	Team inspector	English Religious education History Geography
25509	Judith Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Kitwell is a good school** where pupils achieve very well. Standards in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 were lower than those in similar schools in 2003 because of the exceptionally high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. Teaching and learning are good and in previous years pupils consistently achieved higher than average standards in the tests in both Year 2 and Year 6 despite their low starting point. Standards achieved by the current pupils in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. In Year 2 standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Leadership and management are good and **the school provides good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, activities provided for children in the nursery are not planned or taught effectively; and opportunities to develop pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills in Years 1 to 6 are not planned well enough in other curriculum subjects.
- Teamwork is very strong and leads to a good ethos for learning, except in the nursery.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and behave very well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution of diverse cultures to British society.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are higher now in English, mathematics and science due to the very good improvement in systems to check how well the school is performing. The use of information about pupils' progress has improved very substantially, so that the school now tracks pupils' progress very well. There has been considerable improvement in the curriculum for children in the reception class; however, the curriculum for children in the nursery has not been maintained in line with national guidelines.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Achievement is very good overall.** From Year 1 to Year 6, pupils achieve **very well** in English, mathematics and science. In the reception year, children achieve **well**, but attainment is below that expected for their age and they do not achieve the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception. In the nursery, children are **underachieving** due to an unsatisfactory curriculum. Standards seen in English and mathematics are **above average** in Year 2 and Year 6. In science standards seen are **above average** in Year 6, and **average** in Year 2. E\* in the table above means that results were in the lowest five per cent of schools in 2003. Pupils in Year 6 achieved very low results in all the 2003 national tests. Pupils in Year 2 achieved well below average results in reading and writing, and below average results in mathematics. This was because in both these year groups there were exceptionally high proportions of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, 40 per cent of pupils taking the tests in Year 6 joined the school in the last three years and so their

education had been disrupted. School data shows that the majority of pupils made satisfactory progress overall, building steadily on their prior attainment. Those pupils who made less than expected progress were all experiencing emotional troubles. Standards seen in the current Year 2 and Year 6 reflect the higher standards achieved in previous years in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Pupils are confident and have high self-esteem because provision for their **personal development, including spiritual, moral and social development, is good overall**. Cultural development is satisfactory, but does not prepare pupils well enough to live in the culturally diverse society of Great Britain. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning due to the respect and care they are shown. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**Teaching and learning are good.** From Years 1 to 6 teachers plan and encourage pupils very well so that they want to learn. In the Foundation Stage teaching is **satisfactory** overall. In the nursery, teaching is unsatisfactory because it does not follow the principles outlined in the national guidance for young children well enough and this limits children's progress.

**The curriculum is satisfactory overall.** There is good enrichment of the curriculum, but the curriculum planned for children in the nursery is unsatisfactory because it is not based clearly enough on the principles outlined in the national guidance. In Years 1 to 6, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT in all lessons. Pupils receive very good support and guidance to help them learn and their views are very well respected. The very good partnerships with parents, local schools and businesses, and the wider community contribute very well to pupils' achievement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** There is very strong and effective teamwork between all staff. The headteacher has inspired staff so that there is a drive to ensure that all pupils achieve the highest standards they are capable of reaching by the time they leave the school. Governance is good with some very strong features in the way that governors help to drive forward school improvement. All statutory requirements are met.

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

**Parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school.** Pupils love coming to school and appreciate very much the way that teachers help and encourage them. Parents particularly praise the leadership of the headteacher, who has welcomed them into the school as partners.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should improve are:

- the quality of teaching for children in the nursery, and to ensure that the curriculum in this class follows the principles outlined in the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage;
- the quality and range of opportunities for pupils to develop ICT skills in all subjects;
- the quality and range of opportunities for pupils to learn about the contribution of all cultures to the diverse society in Great Britain.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils' achievement is **very good** overall. In both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils have achieved well above average standards in the national tests for several years when compared to those achieved by pupils in similar schools. In 2003 standards in the tests were much lower in Year 6 and Year 2, partly due to the exceptionally high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. Although standards achieved by these pupils were low in comparison to those achieved by pupils in similar schools, nonetheless their achievement in 2003 was satisfactory because they made sufficient progress despite their learning difficulties. Standards for current Year 6 pupils are above average in English, mathematics, and science. In Year 2, standards are above average in English and mathematics, and average in science.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The school has won two achievement awards for excellence because in most years pupils achieve much higher than average results.
- Children in the nursery class are not achieving as well as they could because the curriculum planned for them is not appropriate.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.2 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.0 (16.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.9 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.4 (26.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.1 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

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

#### Commentary

1. School data clearly shows that most pupils who took the national tests in 2003 in Year 2 and Year 6 made satisfactory progress, building steadily on their prior attainment. Nonetheless the standards they reached in Year 2 were below the national average in mathematics, and well below average in reading and writing. In Year 6, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Those pupils in Year 6 in 2003 who made less than expected progress over time were coping with a range of emotional troubles. Year 6 pupils' work seen during the inspection shows that they are on course to achieve above average standards this year in English, mathematics and science. In Year 2 this year standards in reading, writing and mathematics are also on course to be above average. This represents very good achievement from Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils achieve good standards because there is a culture of high

expectations in Years 1 to 6. The headteacher has established a very good ethos in these year groups. In partnership with other senior staff she has improved the quality of teaching and learning so that almost all pupils achieve very well in English, mathematics and science.

- The school won a School Achievement Award for Excellence, in both 2001 and 2002, due to the very good achievement in both Year 2 and Year 6, illustrated in the tables below. The tables show how well pupils are achieving in comparison to those in similar social circumstances. A very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the very high proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during each school year, explain the much lower standards in the national tests in 2003. Where A\* is included in the table, this represents standards that fall into the highest five per cent of schools nationally in this group. As the majority of pupils begin school in the nursery with attainment that is well below the standards expected for their age, the tables show that over time pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress.

**Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2: compared with similar schools**

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003
reading	A*	C	A*	E
writing	A	A	A*	D
mathematics	A*	B	A*	C

**Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6: compared with similar schools**

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003
English	A*	A	A*	E*
mathematics	A	A*	A	E
science	A	A	A	E

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

- In the Foundation Stage children are not achieving as well because the curriculum in the nursery is inappropriate for them. Although there is a wide range of ability, most children start school with well below the expected levels of attainment. There are not enough well-planned activities to promote learning through play that will help children of all abilities make progress in each of the six areas of learning. Furthermore, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in this class because it is not based securely enough on the principles outlined in the national guidance for children in this stage of learning. The teacher's expectations of how well children can learn through play in this class are too low. This means that too often children are involved in mundane activities that do not help them to learn new skills. In the reception class the activities are well matched to children's abilities; they are stimulating and well taught so that the children make much better progress. Consequently, children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall; nonetheless, standards are below those expected for their age as they do not achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very happy and confident because there is a strong sense of harmony and teamwork throughout the school community.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and contribute to the school community.
- Personal development is good overall but cultural development is less well developed.

## Commentary

4. Pupils enjoy coming to school and there have been no exclusions during the past five years. They like their teachers, viewing them as friendly and supportive, and are polite and welcoming to staff and visitors. At lunch and break-times pupils of all ages play together very well, mainly because school staff organise a variety of playground activities. Pupils understand when their behaviour is acceptable and when it is not because staff act swiftly and sensitively to deal with any upsets. As a consequence, conflict between pupils and incidents of bullying are rare and most pupils are happy and secure. An older pupil who joined the school recently summed up his views by saying, "I lacked confidence in physical skills when I first started in this school but now I'm more confident and my physical skills have improved." Pupils' very good behaviour in class and around the school is matched by their eagerness to learn. Pupils often work well in pairs or independently and are learning to think for themselves, as well as to care for each other. This positive learning climate greatly increases pupils' confidence and self-esteem as they move through the school and contributes very well to their good academic achievement.
5. Throughout the school pupils have very good opportunities to contribute to the school rules and make decisions about important aspects of their educational and social activities. The main mechanism for this is the well-established school council but this is not the only way that pupils are involved in decision-making. The school is very good at consulting pupils and acting on their suggestions. For example, the lunchtime activities and the ongoing School Grounds Development project were developed after one such consultation. Older pupils carry out many routine tasks and act as monitors and 'buddies'. Buddies have a particular duty to help other pupils, and a special duty to help the many pupils of all ages who join the school at different times of the year. This very good system helps new pupils to settle down to work very quickly.
6. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development are good and help pupils to flourish. Assemblies and lessons offer pupils plenty of opportunities to develop and think about different sets of values. Residential visits provide challenging opportunities for the older pupils. For instance, a weekend at Kingswood residential Centre in Albrighton resulted in pupils participating in a variety of demanding endeavours. The strong sense of community that pervades the school helps pupils to learn how to resolve conflicts and to reflect on their own contribution to society. For instance one girl announced in assembly that she and her friends were organising a 'bring and buy sale' during the next week to support the current *Blue Peter* appeal. Opportunities such as this are encouraged and extended by staff. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although there is a good number of opportunities for pupils to develop awareness of their own culture through local studies, art, literature and music projects; there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the valuable contribution diverse cultures make to British society.

## Attendance

7. Although pupils' attendance is just below the national average in the figures published below, the good procedures implemented by the school have continued to improve the figures so that attendance is now satisfactory overall. The school places a very high level of importance on good attendance and punctuality, displaying a board in the hall showing how well each class is doing and the school target. This simple competition is backed by rigorous procedures to investigate absence and persistent lateness by a small number of pupils. Consequently, some pupils were seen dragging their parents down the hill into school so that they would not be late.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6%
National data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6%
National data	0.4%

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in the nursery. Pupils are cared for well, receiving very good support and guidance. There are very good links with parents, other local schools, the local community and businesses throughout the city.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall, with some very good features. Assessment is **good**, with particular strengths in assessment of pupils' work and progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan lessons very effectively, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers encourage pupils to be fully involved in learning very well.
- Teaching and learning in the nursery are not consistently focused on developing learning through purposeful play.
- There is a very strong and effective partnership between teachers and teaching assistants

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (11%)	22 (58%)	10 (26%)	2 (5%)	0	0

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

8. Planning in English and mathematics is especially well tailored to meet pupils' needs because teachers make very good use of the information they have from the rigorous assessments they make in these subjects. A particularly good feature is the way that teachers in Years 1 to 6 share with pupils what they will be learning. The aims for what will be learned in each lesson are written clearly where pupils can see them. However, the strategy is effective because teachers refer to these aims repeatedly as the lesson progresses so that pupils are fully aware what will be expected of them. At the end of the best lessons, teachers review how well pupils have succeeded by checking how well the pupils think they have done. This very good practice means that teachers know which pupils need more help and those who are ready to move on. Teachers also help pupils to understand how well they are doing and how to improve their work by setting individual targets for them in English and mathematics. In addition they write helpful comments when marking pupils' work so that pupils know what to do next. In most classes teachers have high expectations of their pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where the quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. In some lessons in Years 3 to 6 the pace of lessons is too slow, and in other subjects teachers do not always focus sharply on the aims for learning they have planned for the lesson.

9. Teachers encourage pupils very well and most do their best to ensure that pupils enjoy learning. Pupils in Year 6 say the teacher “makes you want to learn”. Pupils from the reception year to Year 6 are confident to ask questions because teachers value their contributions very well. A particularly good feature of lessons in Years 1 to 6 is the way that teachers plan activities for pupils to do together in pairs or groups. They frequently provide short opportunities for pupils to talk to one another in these groups, so that they are fully engaged in learning. Team points are awarded judiciously when pupils show they are attentive. As a result of all this encouragement and praise, pupils are keen to rise to the challenges they are set. Pupils who are more able have high aspirations and aim to achieve as well as they can; many sit tests for local selective schools at the age of eleven. Most pupils say that teachers trust them and have faith in them so that they believe they can succeed.
10. Although teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, teaching in the nursery class is unsatisfactory. Nursery sessions are not based well enough on the principles outlined in the national guidance for this stage. The activities planned are not sufficiently challenging and are not designed well enough to meet children’s needs. This is because the teacher is new to the class and lacks experience and training in teaching children the Foundation Stage curriculum. She has not received sufficient training to help her successfully make the transition from teaching older pupils.
11. Teaching assistants are invaluable in supporting pupils with special educational needs so that provision for these pupils is very good overall. In the nursery, the ‘integration assistant’ is well tuned to the needs of a child with specific learning needs, and quick to respond to the needs of other children. [The local education authority provides an integration assistant to support each child with a statement of special educational needs.] In other year groups teaching assistants regularly support small groups of pupils well to help them make better progress. In some classes they use the same good techniques as teachers, for example sharing the aims for learning planned for special group activities so that pupils in the group know what they will be learning. This is particularly effective, especially in mathematics and English. Pupils hold teaching assistants in high regard due to the strong level of partnership that is evident between adults in all classes.

## The curriculum

The curriculum overall provides a **satisfactory** range of worthwhile experiences which cater for the interests and needs of all the pupils. There are **good** opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum and a **good** range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is satisfactory overall; however, some improvements are needed in the nursery curriculum and the use of ICT in other subject areas.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for.
- Visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich the opportunities available for the pupils.

### Commentary

12. The school provides a relevant and broad curriculum for the pupils. All statutory requirements are met in all subjects. The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and as a result the pupils’ achievements in these subjects are high. The school has begun to improve the curriculum further by encouraging and developing links across different subject areas. There are also plans for the pupils in Year 6 to have access to modern foreign languages. ICT is at present under-represented in other subject areas. As a result the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and use their ICT skills in these subjects.

13. The curriculum for the children in the reception class is satisfactory and planned to extend and develop the children's learning through play. For the children in the nursery class, however, their curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because the planned activities are not developed securely enough to promote effective learning for all the different ability groups of children in the class. The outside area designated for use by the nursery children is a difficult area to manage but at present is not used effectively enough to promote achievement in all the six areas of learning for young children.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for in the school. The pupils are all carefully checked and individual plans are constructed to enable them to achieve well. These plans are used in the classroom to make sure that the pupils' learning in lessons is planned very accurately to match their individual needs. As a result of this very careful organisation and very good support from the learning assistants, from the teacher working with pupils with special educational needs and from the class teachers, these pupils make good progress and achieve well. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school. There is good provision for some pupils that the school identifies as being particularly gifted and talented, to help each of them achieve their full potential.
15. The school makes good use of a wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest to enrich the pupils' learning. The pupils speak enthusiastically about the many opportunities they have to visit a wide range of places of interests and the many visitors to the school who give them an understanding and experience of their different talents. The pupils take part in many sporting activities and experts from local teams come to the school to coach the pupils and pass on their skills. The school choir is both enthusiastic and large; it often joins with other local schools to create a local choir that sings at a national venue. The pupils have opportunities to learn about local government and have attended council meetings to see how local democracy works in practice. Pupils can learn to play the keyboard, and attend an art and design club in school. Parents spoke very positively about the commitment the teachers demonstrate in ensuring the pupils have a wide variety of educational experiences.

## Care, guidance and support

The levels of care, guidance and support for pupils offered by the school are **very good**. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is **very good**. This very positive level of care contributes very well to the welfare and security of all pupils and plays a very strong part in lifting their confidence and attitudes to learning.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- High quality relationships between all members of the school community result in a very strong family atmosphere.
- There are very good systems for monitoring academic and personal development.
- Very good induction arrangements give children an easy start into school.
- Pupils are very well involved in school life and feel valued because of it.

## Commentary

16. The school has successfully generated a very strong 'family atmosphere'. This encourages pupils to feel safe and valued. Very good arrangements for personal security and first aid, well-known child protection arrangements, and fire precautions combine effectively to provide an atmosphere of warmth and security that successfully promotes pupils' well-being and emotional health. For example, pupils are aware of the restrictions that apply to their use of the Internet. Pupils with special educational needs are made welcome and are integrated very well into the school family. The sensitive arrangements to help new children and their parents when they start school in the nursery are mirrored in Year 6 when pupils transfer to various schools

as well as to the main feeder college. This good level of support for families makes the transitions smooth and secure.

17. The deputy headteacher has introduced very rigorous systems to check how well pupils are achieving as they move through the school. ICT is used effectively to analyse the information gained from the assessments that teachers make. As a result staff are well aware of the rate of progress that individuals as well as groups are making. They use this information very effectively to promote higher achievement. Staff are also very well aware of pupils' personal circumstances and any difficulties or successes in their lives. This information provides staff with the knowledge they need to support all pupils so that they are comfortable and confident in school. Staff throughout the school know pupils' qualities and backgrounds very well and treat them respectfully as individuals. Pupils feel very well supported. They have tremendous trust in their teachers and all school staff, sufficiently so to be confident to discuss any concerns they might have. The school has successfully introduced an effective school council. This, along with other systems, has created in pupils an active participation in all aspects of the school. This provision, along with the strategies for consulting pupils and involving them more directly in the life of the school, contributes very well to their active involvement. For example, older pupils support younger pupils at break-times and in the dining hall, as well as confidently participating in developments and innovations across the school.

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

The school's partnerships with parents, community, business, other schools and colleges are **very good** and broaden pupils' potential learning opportunities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a very good range of information available to parents.
- Parents, pupils and the local community have very high regard for the school.
- The wide range of business links the school has made is very helpful in preparing pupils for the wider world.

### **Commentary**

18. Partnerships have been well maintained or improved since the last inspection. Parents are very well informed about the work their children do through the school's website, the termly *Kitwell Chronicle* newspaper, and regular class newsletters. The school prospectus is detailed and readable and along with the governors' annual report to parents, complies with legal requirements. Pupils' annual reports inform parents about what their children have achieved in each subject as well as identifying areas for further improvement. Pupils' individual targets are particularly helpful and contribute well to their very good achievement. The school seeks the views of parents and pupils with regular questionnaires, and acts on the information gained, so that they are fully involved in the school.
19. Good relationships are developed with parents through meetings and home visits prior to children starting the nursery. The headteacher and deputy maintain a highly visible presence allowing parents to chat and there is also very good contact with teachers who are available for informal discussion. As a result parents inform staff whenever there are any problems that might affect their children's learning. The school's partnership with parents has some very effective features, not least of which is the support of the overwhelming majority of parents. The very positive comments of parents on almost every heading in the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors underline the school's success in securing parental support in the education of their children. Such high levels of support result from the improved communication with parents and are a significant factor in pupils' good achievement. Some parents work as volunteers, helping pupils in class by preparing materials and supporting in

lessons. The parents who provide this support make a considerable contribution by enriching pupils' learning experiences.

20. Very good links exist with Bartley Green Technology College, to which the majority of pupils transfer at the age of eleven. These include appropriate arrangements for transfer, exchange visits and the sharing of information, so that pupils make the transition from one school to the next with little disruption. Very good links in the community involve connections with the local church and retirement home and educational visits into the area. For example, pupils took part in a traffic survey that helped them develop geographical and mathematics skills. Pupils have also been involved in area competitions, both sporting and cultural. There are very good connections with business and industry in the area. These links make a very positive contribution to pupils' education, enriching the opportunities they have for learning very well.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher is a **good** leader who inspires staff and has the confidence of the local community. Leadership of other key staff is **good**. Management is **good**. Governance is **good** overall with some very good features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very strong and effective teamwork enables the school to improve.
- The good ethos of the school is based on high aspirations for all the pupils.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage have not yet brought about the changes needed in the curriculum for children in the nursery class, partly due to inexperience.
- Governors are effective in their support for the school.

### Commentary

21. A very strong sense of teamwork permeates the school. This is mainly due to the skills of the headteacher who instils confidence in staff and inspires the whole school community to offer pupils a good education. Other senior managers are held in high regard due to the effective support and leadership they provide for all staff. There is a good learning ethos based on high aspirations. The focus is on raising standards and giving pupils a strong sense of belief in themselves and their capacity to learn, and this has resulted in higher standards from Years 1 to 6. The effective management systems that are in place contribute to this. Professional development is of high quality, because almost all staff, including non-teaching staff, are keen to improve their skills and subject knowledge. Senior managers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for them to do this. This means that most staff are knowledgeable, particularly in the subjects they lead. Consequently, the many students, and any newly qualified teachers, who work in the school receive very good support from staff to improve their skills. Systems to evaluate the work of the school are good. The deputy headteacher has led the very good improvement in tracking the progress that pupils make each year. This means that staff know how well pupils are doing, and use this information to be proactive in trying to improve standards, tailoring their lessons to meet pupils' needs very well.
22. Recent staff changes have resulted in a slower pace in improving the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. Circumstances have combined so that the co-ordinator has only held the post for one term, is new to a management role and has not yet received any management training. The other teacher has no previous experience or training for teaching the Foundation Stage curriculum and has also been in post for only one term, although she has many more years experience in teaching older pupils. This teacher has not yet received the high level of support she requires to adjust to the high demands of teaching in this stage of education. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator has made a good start, using her expertise to provide a good example of how to organise a classroom and plan effectively to meet the needs of young children. She has introduced a suitable planning format and systems for assessing children's

progress. These have not been implemented well enough to ensure that the opportunities provided for children in the nursery are sufficiently challenging. This is partly due to the lack of training for transition to the Foundation Stage, and partly because there has not been enough evaluation of how well the new planning format is used to provide high quality activities across all the areas of learning. Consequently, weaknesses have not been addressed and the curriculum for children in the nursery class is unsatisfactory. It is not based securely enough on the principles outlined in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Currently the co-ordinator lacks experience in leading improvement and bringing about change. Nonetheless, she is fully aware that more support needs to be provided in order to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching for children in the nursery.

23. The governing body has a clear vision for the school. Governors want it to be the best primary school in Birmingham. Step by step they are working in partnership with staff to achieve this challenging aim. Governors have a clear view of what they want education to provide for pupils in the local community. They place a high value on ensuring that pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop personal skills as well as succeeding in achieving high standards in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Governors support the school very well with their individual expertise, providing guidance for improving the school buildings and involving pupils in a high quality citizenship project in partnership with the Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal and the City Council's Education Department. Governors expect staff to account for the school's performance, receiving good reports and presentations from senior managers and curriculum leaders. As a result they are knowledgeable about how well pupils are achieving, particularly in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6. However, they do not have the same good level of information about provision in the Foundation Stage. Nonetheless, they have made some improvements to the outdoor areas for children in this stage of the school since the last inspection, and are fully aware of the limitations provided by the site.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	700,092
Total expenditure	658,926
Expenditure per pupil	2,405

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-3,475
Balance carried forward to the next	41,166



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

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

The inspection focused on children's personal, social and emotional development; their development in communication, language and literacy; and their mathematical development. Other areas of learning were sampled; however, there is not enough evidence to judge the quality of provision in each of these.

Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall. Nonetheless, the curriculum requires urgent review, and monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet been effective. This is because a newly appointed co-ordinator, who works alongside a teacher who has no previous experience or training in teaching the Foundation Stage curriculum, manages the Foundation Stage. Although some appropriate support has been provided there has not been enough time, since September when both were appointed to their new posts, for the new co-ordinator to guide her colleague sufficiently.

Teaching and learning in all of the areas of learning where sufficient evidence was gathered are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has introduced an appropriate new planning system that covers each area of learning. However, the nursery teacher has not had sufficient support and guidance to enable her to implement the new system effectively. Consequently, teaching and learning in the nursery class are unsatisfactory overall and children in this class do not make enough progress. This is because the style of teaching and learning in this class is not based clearly enough on the principles outlined in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. In particular, children in the nursery class are not always provided with well-planned, purposeful activities that engage them in learning. In the reception class the co-ordinator implements a stimulating curriculum that is well tailored to the needs of all the children. Teaching and learning are consistently good and consequently children in the reception class make good progress.

The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory because in the nursery class the experiences planned for children do not build successfully on what they already know and can do. In addition, in both classes, too little thought is given to planning a curriculum that provides purposeful activities and opportunities for teaching and learning outside as well as inside the classroom. The outdoor spaces available for each class are limited; for example, there is no cover for inclement weather. However, these limited spaces are not used effectively enough to promote learning in each area of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

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

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

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

- There are not enough opportunities for children to work together in well-planned activities that will increase their personal and social skills.
- Teaching assistants in both classes support and encourage children well so that they gain confidence and develop a sense of belonging.

#### **Commentary**

24. A great many children starting school in the nursery have very few skills in this area of learning. Before children start school in the nursery, the teacher and teaching assistant make visits to their homes. This good practice means that parents quickly develop a good partnership with staff and children feel confident quite quickly to stay in the nursery without their parents. Nonetheless, they lack confidence when faced with new experiences, and show little curiosity,

mainly following adult instructions and choosing to play with familiar games and toys. They have little understanding of how to share toys and games with other children. The way that the activities in the nursery are organised does not help children to develop curiosity and confidence well enough. There are not enough clear routines to help children learn how to play together without squabbling, and many activities are mundane. In the reception class there are plenty of stimulating activities to promote curiosity and children happily select from these independently. Nevertheless, children in this class are still not confident in taking the initiative; they rely heavily on adult support and guidance. Children rarely respond to another child's ideas when they play a game together, instead they play companionably but are absorbed in their own individual games or activities. Satisfactory teaching and learning lead to satisfactory achievement. However, the majority are unlikely to reach the goals expected by the end of the reception year.

25. There is particularly good support for children with special educational needs. An 'integration assistant' in the nursery works tirelessly and sensitively to ensure that a child with very specific needs is fully included and their needs considered at all times. [The local education authority provides an integration assistant to support each child with a statement of special educational needs.] As a result, the child is developing confidence and works happily with others despite multiple special educational needs. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses in both classes work in close partnership with teachers, often anticipating their needs and playing a full part in guiding learning and supporting children. They have very good relationships with the children so that there is a good level of trust. There has been limited training available to help teaching assistants working in the Foundation Stage to understand the requirements and principles of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This limits their overall effectiveness, as they are reliant on teachers for direction.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Methodical planning and preparation for children in the reception class ensure that they build on their skills well.
- There is not enough purpose for learning in the activities provided in the nursery class.

### **Commentary**

26. Most children are unlikely to reach the goals expected at the end of the reception year despite the good teaching in the reception class. Their achievement overall is satisfactory due to satisfactory teaching and learning. This area of learning has a very high priority as children start school with very low skills. Few know any nursery rhymes, but begin to join in the repeated lines as they learn these at school. Many children speak indistinctly, and find it difficult to express their ideas, particularly to other children. In the reception class children are more confident at speaking to one another due to the well-organised routines that provide children with a safe environment for learning. Most of the work seen in this class focused specifically on developing early skills in reading and writing. Working in small groups with the teacher, children increased their skills well because the activities planned matched their abilities. For example, some children played a game matching and drawing pictures that began with the letter 't'. Other children worked in a small group with the teacher looking at and talking about a book together.
27. In the nursery class, language activities are planned around a theme, as they are in the reception class. However, the activities are not designed well enough to help children develop early language skills. There are few opportunities for children to use writing in their play; for example, the doctor's surgery is not equipped with an appointment book for children to write down the names of other children who want to see the doctor. Children acting out the story of

the Gingerbread Man dressed in all the costumes are restricted by the fact that this takes place indoors, so that they are unable to run safely when the story tells them to run as fast as they can. This is because planning for these activities is not detailed enough and does not show how children will develop key skills as they play.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good teaching in the reception class helps children develop their skills step by step.
- There are not enough activities for children to learn and practise mathematical skills as they play in the nursery class.

### **Commentary**

28. Teaching and learning are satisfactory so that children's overall achievement is satisfactory. By the time they reach the end of the reception year standards are below those expected for their age and most children are unlikely to reach the goals expected despite the good progress they make in the reception class. Activities in this class are well planned to help children build up their skills step by step. For example, when working together as a whole class in a short focused session, reception children learned to recognise numbers from one to 15. The teacher carefully directed the questions to individual children so that those who were more able were asked to identify and count up to the higher numbers, whilst those who lacked confidence in recognising numbers were asked to count up to the lower numbers. This helped children of all abilities to remember what the numbers look like and helped them to gain confidence because they worked successfully. Small group activities built on the games that children played together as a whole class, so that more able children counted two sets of frogs and found out how many were in the pond all together.
29. In the nursery class children are not building their skills in the same systematic way because there is not a clear enough structure to their learning. The activities planned for them are not well thought-out to provide them with opportunities to practise and develop number skills as they play. For example, all the children worked with an adult and played games or coloured pictures with four objects, even though some children were unable to consistently count two objects correctly, and a few already recognised four. This lack of tailoring activities to meet children's needs limits their progress. Whole-class mathematics activities in the nursery are not always well matched to the children's needs; for example, counting to ten was too difficult for many so that they gained little from a class activity to do this. The sessions are sometimes too long in length and the resources used are not stimulating enough to gain children's interest. There are not enough opportunities for children to sing number rhymes together to help them begin to remember the sequence of numbers correctly.

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

There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision in this area of learning, as only a little work was sampled.

### **The main features of the work seen were:**

- Children in the reception class are developing confidence in using ICT by themselves due to the high expectations of the teacher. For example, children know which buttons to press to print out their pictures and other work.
- The outdoor areas are not used effectively to allow children in either class to work and play on a large scale, for example with construction toys.

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision in this area of learning, as only a little work was sampled.

### The main features of the work seen were:

- Good support for small groups in the reception class helps children learning how to write to control their pencils correctly. In addition, there are always plenty of stimulating and well-planned activities that help children learn to manipulate small toys and tools in this class. Children in both classes particularly enjoyed rolling out and cutting shapes from play dough that had glitter mixed into it.
- The way that teachers in both classes plan to use the outdoor spaces to develop physical skills is ineffective. This results in an over-reliance on the whole class playing on large wheeled toys, such as bikes and trikes for short outdoor 'playtimes'. As a result, the space outside becomes overcrowded so that children are not always working safely. In addition the aims for these sessions are not clear so that children are not improving key skills effectively outdoors.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about the quality of provision in this area of learning, as only a little work was sampled.

### The main features of the work seen were:

- Good quality resources are provided in the role-play areas in both classes; children in the reception class particularly enjoyed playing in the 'building site', smiling happily as they hammered and sanded, dressed in hard hats and luminous jackets. However, there was not enough interaction with adults in these areas to develop children's creativity fully.
- There is limited use of the outdoor areas to provide children with opportunities to develop their own ideas.
- Some activities restrict children's ability to explore and express their creativity. For example, adults guide some art and craft work too much. This limits children's ability to create their own pictures and artwork.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for developing literacy skills helps pupils to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well, resulting in good achievement.
- The improved assessment and monitoring arrangements are detailed, accurate and secure, and help teachers and pupils have a clear idea of how to raise standards.
- Literacy is promoted effectively through other subjects of the curriculum thereby reinforcing and improving pupils' skills.
- Very effective and committed leadership and management have helped raise standards.
- ICT is used insufficiently in English lessons.

## Commentary

30. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. In the last year's national tests the results in English in Year 2 were well below average and were very low in Year 6. The school expected these results because there were a very high number of pupils with special educational needs and a lot of new pupils, particularly in Year 6. However, standards in previous years were much higher. Pupils achieve highly as standards in English are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There are several reasons why standards have improved. Teaching is more challenging and a clear focus has been given to meeting the needs of all pupils. Teachers carefully build pupils' speaking and writing vocabularies and plan opportunities for them to talk to one another. This enables pupils to use a varied spoken vocabulary and achieve good standards for their age. Teachers create a climate in which pupils are confident to speak because they know that their contributions will be welcomed and appreciated. Many pupils in all year groups exceed the expected levels for their age and read accurately, fluently, and with good understanding. They speak enthusiastically about books and enjoy reading. This is because teachers fire pupils' imagination and interest whilst developing good technical ability. Achievement in writing is very good throughout the school because there are opportunities to write for a variety of different purposes in all classes. For instance, a pupil in Year 6 caught the essence of good quality 'report' writing in her article in the *Kitwell Chronicle* on the visit to a Hindu temple by pupils from Year 6.
31. Knowledgeable staff very closely support pupils with special educational needs so that they make very good progress and achieve very well. Staff plan work specifically to help them, and they receive very good support in small groups from teaching assistants. This results in motivated learners who are aware of their targets and know when they have achieved them. Of particular note is the teamwork of teachers and the teaching assistants who work together to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
32. Teachers are able to provide a well-tailored curriculum for all pupils because they make very good use of the detailed information they gain from assessing pupils' work. Teachers identify and check on pupils' attainments in reading and writing. Assessment takes place regularly and identifies the level that each pupil has reached. Teachers use this information to plan lessons that will help pupils of all abilities reach the next level. In addition they have begun to share targets with pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers also provide useful comments for pupils when marking their work. As a result pupils are highly motivated and are very clear about their own performance. They work hard to achieve the next level and this has been a significant factor in the improved standards achieved in the national tests.
33. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and contribute to rising standards. A lot has been done in a short time. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to further improve literacy standards. For example, she intends to improve the existing good quality assessment procedures further by monitoring pupils' speaking and listening skills. Building alterations have enabled space to be available to house a library. The co-ordinator is very clear about how this will be developed to help pupils improve their reading skills further so that the completed library should provide a spur to yet higher standards in reading. The co-ordinator is aware that only some teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use ICT in English, for example, when presenting final drafts of their writing for display. She is monitoring this situation carefully and providing good support to ensure that ICT is used more effectively in English lessons throughout the school.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

34. Provision for language and literacy across the curriculum is good. There are many examples of pupils being encouraged to discuss work together in all subjects. In science, pupils' learning was enhanced by the use of specialist vocabulary in writing up their conclusions. If they are 'Star of the Week', pupils in Year 1 take home a model of ET [The Extra Terrestrial] for the

weekend and write about what they have done together. The *Kitwell Chronicle*, the school newspaper, is another very good way for pupils to develop and celebrate their writing skills throughout the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievements in mathematics are very good.
- Teaching and learning throughout the school are good overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good help with their learning.
- ICT is used insufficiently to promote mathematics.
- The co-ordination of the subject is having a positive impact upon standards.

### **Commentary**

35. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils' achievement in mathematics is very good. In the 2003 national tests the standards the pupils achieved were low; this was because of the very high levels of mobility and of special educational needs pupils in these year groups. These results were not typical of the standards generally achieved by the school's pupils in the end of Year 2 and Year 6 tests. The school expected these low results from this year group because they keep a careful watch of the achievements of all the pupils in the school.
36. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The result of this consistently good teaching, which is clearly focused and targeted to the needs of the pupils, is that they achieve very well. Very good features of teaching are the way teachers share the aims for learning with pupils at the beginning of lessons. This means that pupils are very clear about what they are going to learn. As teachers revisit the aims of the lesson as the lesson progresses, pupils are constantly reminded about what they are learning and so they remain focused. Teachers plan their lessons with great attention to the abilities of pupils in the class. Often their planning indicates very clearly the different levels at which the pupils are working. This means that tasks are very carefully matched to pupils' individual needs and so they make the maximum gains. The pupils are keen to work hard, they respond very positively to their lessons and as a result achievement is very good.
37. Clear planning and careful attention are given to the work for the pupils with special educational needs. The learning support assistants give these pupils very good help in lessons and ensure that they remain focused on their learning and make very good gains during their lessons. The result is that these pupils achieve very well.
38. Although the pupils work with computers occasionally to create shapes and patterns, ICT is not used regularly to support the teachers' planning and the pupils' work. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their skills to promote their learning in mathematics. This limits their progress and achievement overall.
39. The leadership and management of the subject are good and are having a positive impact upon raising standards. The co-ordinator has analysed the pupils' test papers and has implemented a whole-school action plan with areas identified for improvement. The co-ordinator works with a monitoring cycle, which enables her to have a clear grasp of the strength of the subject throughout the school.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

40. There is good use of mathematics in other subjects. In science, pupils record their findings using graphs and charts. They accurately interpret information from graphs and weather maps showing a range of air temperatures. This gives pupils opportunities to practise the skills they have learnt during their mathematics lessons. In history, pupils use timelines to help them to develop a sense of chronology and identify the correct decade for artefacts. The use of correct mathematical terminology by teachers means that pupils use specific mathematical language to explain their work and this has a positive impact upon the way they learn.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the national tests.
- Teaching and learning are good with a clear emphasis in lessons on teaching of scientific vocabulary.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good help in lessons and so they achieve very well.
- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject effectively.
- The use of ICT is at present under-developed in science.

### Commentary

41. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and by the end of Year 6 are above average. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school pupils' achievements in science are very good. This is the result of consistently good teaching and the very positive attitudes to their learning displayed by the pupils. In 2003 national science tasks and tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6, the standards the pupils achieved were low. This was because of the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the significant numbers of pupils who joined the school at times other than in the reception class. These results were not typical of the science standards generally achieved by the pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6.
42. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons well and are clear about the learning intentions of the lesson. The work set for all pupils is carefully matched to their needs and builds securely on previous science learning. The use of technical scientific language is a common feature throughout the school and helps to improve the pupils' skills of explanation and discussion. Teachers are effective in engaging the interests of pupils and ensuring that they remain focused on their work and develop their skills of observation, enquiry and investigation. For example, in Year 6, pupils worked together to set up their own investigations about light and shadows. The pupils worked very well together to complete their experiments, record their findings and begin to interpret their results in the time allocated by the teacher for the task.
43. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good help during lessons so that they can work successfully alongside their peers and achieve very well. The learning support assistants and class teachers make sure that they are fully included in the work of the class. For example in Year 2, pupils experimented with wires, bulbs and batteries to make an electrical circuit. This they found extremely difficult, but because all the pupils in each group worked together successfully and collaborated fully with their investigation they did well and they managed to create a circuit and so the bulbs lit up.
44. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The science co-ordinator has been effective in helping and supporting her colleagues. There is a carefully structured approach to monitoring the work of the school and evaluating test results and as a result the co-ordinator is

clear about the strengths and weaknesses of science throughout the school. The use of ICT is at present under-developed in the school. The co-ordinator has recognised this as an area for development and there have been recent purchases of software to support learning in science.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most lessons using the laptop suite are taught well overall, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- There is not enough ICT taking place in other lessons and this limits pupils' progress overall.
- The school website and newspaper provide very good opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills.

### **Commentary**

45. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils continue to achieve standards that are about average, as they did when the school was last inspected. Since then there has been a good improvement in the amount of hardware available to teach ICT skills, and a further good improvement in teacher training in the subject. In specific ICT lessons most pupils throughout the school make good progress because they are taught well. Teachers make good use of the laptop suites in lessons so that pupils develop confidence and key skills well, such as selecting and opening the program they need from the desktop screen. In the very best lessons the pace of learning is electric. For example, in Year 2 pupils select from the icons on the computer desktop in a flash, to load up their previously saved writing. A very clear focus to the lesson helped them to edit the writing to include speech marks and to continue writing directly onto the keyboard with a greater emphasis on including punctuation. As a result, pupils know how to edit written work very capably, achieving good skills in this aspect of ICT. Their very good behaviour shows how enthusiastic they are to learn.
46. In Year 6, pupils explain how confidently they can use the laptops to prepare and present a presentation on screen using a well-known program and the data projector. They are enthusiastic about ICT due to the skilled way they are taught. In other year groups some pupils worked out how to present and collect data for a branching database that will be entered onto the computers at a later date. The slower pace of some lessons in Years 4 and 5 restricts pupils' learning, sometimes too much moving about in the lesson disrupts it, and other lessons are not designed well enough to help pupils build on the skills they already know. For example, work using a search engine to find information on the Internet did not take account of the wealth of skills that a number of pupils have learned at home when they use computers by themselves to do this daily.
47. Leadership and management of ICT are good, so that teachers are developing their confidence and skills. The support of the deputy headteacher in most ICT lessons means that teachers concentrate on teaching their pupils ICT skills rather than solving technical problems. Nonetheless, the co-ordinator spends a great deal of his management time on technical issues after school each day, and this has prevented him from effectively addressing the weakness in using ICT across the curriculum that he has correctly identified as an area to improve. The co-ordinator has developed the school website very effectively so that it provides a useful resource for both pupils and parents. The newspaper published each term is a showcase of good practice and values the contributions of pupils of all ages who have made a significant effort in their work.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

48. For a variety of reasons teachers do not use ICT well enough in other curriculum subjects. Teachers are not confident that the elderly or the newer computers [PCs] in their classrooms will work without failing and freezing, and there is not always enough stimulating software to support learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the PCs are rarely turned on except when lessons are planned to teach ICT skills to the whole class, when they are used to complement the laptop suite. This means that pupils are not using the good skills they learn in ICT lessons and at home effectively enough to promote learning in other subjects.

## HUMANITIES

### History and Geography

Not enough evidence was gathered to make a judgement about the quality of provision in geography and history. Only one lesson was seen in geography, and none in history. Pupils' work and teachers' planning, in addition to discussions with pupils, indicate that the subjects are covered well.

### Commentary

49. In both subjects good quality policies and planning provide a good guide for teachers and ensure that pupils build on their skills as they move through the school. There has also been an improvement in resources since the last inspection. There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' enquiry skills; this is seen in the 'hands on' approach to teaching and learning in the Year 6 topic on 'investigating rivers'. Pupils talked with sound understanding about the characteristics of the local River Thames, using appropriate geographical language such as 'source', 'tributary' and 'current.' The monitoring of work in geography is effective and so the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve 'mapping' skills. Pupils in Year 3, using good quality Ordnance Survey maps, were able to identify features of Bartley Green correctly and talked enthusiastically and knowledgeably about map symbols. Pupils' history work shows that the local environment, including Birmingham City museums and facilities, are used well for developing historical skills, and are complemented by research using ICT. Nonetheless there are few planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the valuable contributions made to Britain by all the diverse cultures who live here, and this limits pupils' cultural development. For example, the history topics planned mainly study White European culture.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a positive attitude and respect for other people's points of view.
- The school makes good use of its strong links with the local clergy.
- Assessment procedures are under-developed as there is no subject manager.

### Commentary

50. Pupils in Year 2 and 6 reach the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Their work shows that achievement is good throughout the school as they make good progress. Pupils are provided with a comprehensive religious education curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on world faiths. This helps them to develop positive attitudes and respect for other people's points of view. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, pupils were given the opportunity to learn about and discuss the importance of the Ten Commandments in helping people to live good Christian lives. The good quality questioning allowed pupils thinking time and opportunities to talk through ideas. This resulted in most pupils improving their knowledge of

the Ten Commandments and some reflecting on how these rules can guide how they should live. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where the teaching is particularly effective good use is made of literacy links such as discussion and writing. Teaching is less effective when there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect and to ask questions.

51. The very good community links established with local clergy help to broaden pupils' experiences. For example visitors come into assembly to give presentations and involve pupils in discussions. This is complemented by well-organised visits to different churches and places of worship and a range of visitors. An example of this good practice was a visit to a Hindu temple, which gave the pupils a valuable insight and respect for other faiths and cultures. However, the opportunities for pupils to study different religions and their cultures are limited and do not provide pupils with sufficient understanding of life in multi-cultural Britain.
52. Currently there is no co-ordinator so that the subject is not improving as well as it could. This has meant that no assessment procedures have been developed and little checking of the standards that pupils reach takes place. Nonetheless, the headteacher has drawn up a detailed action plan setting out the immediate improvements that are required that will provide a satisfactory basis for future improvement.

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

These subjects were sampled during the inspection but there is not enough evidence to make a clear judgement about the provision in each. No physical education lessons or design and technology lessons were seen, one music lesson in Year 3 was observed, and two art and design lessons, one in Year 1 and one in Year 6, were observed. In addition the inspection team looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning, and spoke to both pupils and staff about teaching and learning taking place.

### **Music**

#### **Commentary**

53. The pupils experience an appropriate programme of musical activities. Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about their music lessons. They enjoy listening to music and singing songs and were particularly enthusiastic about their most recent learning, writing their own lyrics to the tune of 'John Brown's Body'. They compose their own music using untuned instruments and talk knowledgeably about their work. In Year 3, the pupils spoke about pieces of music reflecting whether it made them feel happy or sad. They were clear that individual responses to one piece of music might be very different. The pupils are involved in many enrichment activities. Pupils learn to play the recorders and keyboards in school. The school choir is large and the pupils have had the opportunity to join with other choirs and sing at the National Indoor Arena as part of 'The Young Voices 2003' performance. Many visitors to the school give the pupils exciting opportunities to listen to accomplished performances. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to learn about the music of all the different cultural groups living in Britain.

### **Physical education**

#### **Commentary**

54. The curriculum for physical education is appropriately planned and covers a wide range of interesting activities, including gymnastics, swimming, dance and games. The pupils have opportunities to work with professional dancers and basketball and rugby players who pass on their considerable levels of expertise to the pupils. The pupils value these opportunities and enjoy the involvement of these experts. Pupils in Year 1 wrote about their gymnastics lessons and commented on their learning and their enjoyment. Year 6 pupils also spoke about how they had improved their work and how the class teachers helped them to develop and refine their

skills. The pupils have many opportunities to play as a team and they recognise that although they are generally successful they still need to improve even further. A residential experience gives the older pupils an opportunity to take part in adventurous activities such as rock climbing.

## **Art and design**

### **Commentary**

55. The curriculum is planned to help pupils develop their skills carefully as they move from one year to the next. However, there is not enough monitoring of pupils' work to provide the new co-ordinator with enough information about how well the plans are helping pupils to make progress. As a result the lack of work in some year groups, for example in Year 2, has not been identified. This limits pupils' progress in developing art and design skills as they move through the school. Some imaginative teaching in Year 1 helped pupils who were looking at the way that different materials and textures can be used. In Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic about the Lowry painting of VE day celebrations they are asked to examine carefully. They talked animatedly to their partners about the way that Lowry paintings portray both figures and buildings. However, pupils did not have enough time to complete the planned activity – to sketch a small section of the work and improve their drawing and observational skills. This was because the lesson moved from art teaching into history teaching. An exciting lunchtime art club allows pupils to be creative and experiment with a good range of techniques. Planning for art and design does not include enough opportunities for pupils to study work from all the cultures represented in British society.

## **Design and technology**

### **Commentary**

56. Pupils' work and teachers' planning show a limited but appropriate range of activities taking place in each year group. In Year 6 a good link with the local technology college means that teachers from the college work alongside the Year 6 class teacher during a project to help pupils design and build a powered moving vehicle for a funfair. This provided pupils with good support for moving on to the next school as well as providing some expert support in lessons. However, the way that the project was planned and implemented as a whole class exercise restricted pupils' opportunities to take part in the process of planning, designing and evaluating their own vehicle, but improved pupils' understanding of how to power a vehicle.

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

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective monitoring of what is taught ensures that pupils have good opportunities to develop their personal skills.
- The very good links with the wider community contribute to pupils' learning very well, for example through the junior citizenship project.

### **Commentary**

57. Very clear policy statements set out how each teacher should approach the key elements of personal, social and health education. The co-ordinator and headteacher regularly monitor what has been planned to ensure that pupils take part in good opportunities to develop their personal skills in all subjects. This ensures that pupils develop maturity and take increasing responsibility as they move through the school. Year 6 pupils of all abilities show a tremendous

pride in the school and their own contributions to the school community. Clear guidance is provided for staff to help them plan effectively for teaching about sex and relationships, and education about drugs. This has a high priority in the school, as pupils are likely to come into contact with drug users in the local community. There is no regular weekly timetable slot in each class when personal, social and health education skills are taught, but provision is nonetheless effective. Staff use circle times, when all the pupils sit in a circle to discuss difficult issues, whenever they feel the need arises. This limits the number of opportunities for pupils to listen to the opinions of others and to think about how they would respond to difficult situations. However, provision for personal, social and health education is effective because staff place a very high priority on developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem in all lessons.

58. Each year, pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a Citizenship Week Project, run in partnership with the Lord Mayor of Birmingham. This innovative project involves pupils in raising funds for the Lord Mayor's Charity Appeal. It provides them with very wide-ranging experiences, including a debate in the Council Chamber. Pupils learn about the charters that have enabled Birmingham to become such an important city, and how local democracy works through the council. This memorable project has been initiated by one of the school's governors and contributes very well to the pupils' personal development.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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