

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Ascot Heath CE VC Junior School**

Ascot

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 109986

Headteacher: Mrs J Graham

Reporting inspector: Stephen Dennett  
13712

Dates of inspection: 8th May to 11th May 2000

Inspection number: 188327

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rhododendron Walk New Road Ascot Berkshire
Postcode:	SL5 8PN
Telephone number:	01344 883353
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Carter
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Stephen Dennett	Registered inspector	History	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Mr Keith Ross	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs Kay Andrews	Team inspector	Religious Education Art Music Equal Opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
Mrs Yvonne Bacchetta	Team inspector	English Design and Technology Special Educational Needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr Trevor Taylor	Team inspector	Science Information Technology Geography	
Mr Garry Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical Education	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ascot Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School provides full time education for 240 pupils aged seven to eleven. There are 135 boys and 105 girls. Most pupils are white Europeans, but a very small minority of pupils are of Asian origin. Two pupils speak English as an additional language, which is low in comparison to the national average. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and only five are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. There are 38 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is below the national average for junior schools. Four pupils have statements, which is above average. Two pupils have sensory disabilities. The majority of pupils come from North Ascot and their attainment on entry to the school is above the national average in English, mathematics, science and physical education. It is similar to the national average in information technology, religious education, art, design and technology, geography, history and music.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school that has made good progress over the past four years. It has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. Standards are above average in most subjects and teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are very good. It provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in English are well above average.
- There is a very clear educational direction to the school and expectations are high.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning and there are very good links with the local community.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work and standards of behaviour are very good.
- There is a very good curriculum for pupils with a wide range of very good extra-curricular activities.
- The school monitors pupils' performance very well and makes good provision for their personal development.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision for the pupils' spiritual development.
- The consistency of teachers' marking of pupils' work.
- The provision for the most able and talented pupils.
- The monitoring of spending decisions to ensure that the school gets the best value for its money.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in June 1996. At that time, inspectors identified three areas for improvement. The first was to improve teachers' lesson planning by identifying clear learning objectives. This has now been fully addressed and teachers' planning is now good, with clear learning objectives and a range of activities that are well matched to the needs of pupils. The second issue that was raised, was the need to improve systems for assessment and the use of assessment information. The school has made very good progress in this area and there are now highly effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress and setting realistic targets for improving standards. Finally, the school was asked to provide more opportunities for pupils to conduct investigations and do research. This has been addressed well, and pupils are given many opportunities for independent learning in most subjects.

In addition to the above specific issues, there have been a number of other improvements since the previous inspection. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and music. Aspects of information technology have been improved, especially in the use of the Internet and CD-ROMs. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, with the proportion of very good and excellent teaching rising from 7 per cent to 25 per cent. Also, this time, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, whereas 5 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory on the previous occasion.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	A	B
mathematics	B	A	B	C
science	B	A	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The above table shows that in the 1999 national tests, pupils achieved standards that were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and above average in science. In comparison with schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in English were above average and standards in mathematics and science were average. Over the last four years, standards in all three subjects have varied, but have generally been well above national averages. For 2000, the school expects 92 per cent of pupils to reach at least the expected level in English. In mathematics, it expects 91 per cent to reach at least the expected level.

Observed standards in English are well above average. In mathematics and science, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement in religious education is higher than that expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements in art, geography, history, music and physical education are above those generally expected for pupils of this age. Standards in information technology and design and technology are at the expected level.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes. They enjoy coming to school and clearly enjoy the work they are doing.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Most pupils listen carefully to instructions and answer questions politely.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Older pupils are mature in their attitudes and take responsibilities seriously. Relationships are very good, both between pupils and teachers and pupils themselves.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. It is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	–	–	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers provide pupils with rich learning environment. In lessons seen, 5 per cent of teaching was excellent, 20 per cent was very good, 50 per cent good and 25 per cent was satisfactory. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good and pupils are making rapid progress in their acquisition of skills in these areas of the curriculum. In religious education, the good quality of teaching means that pupils are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of religion and their own beliefs. The quality of teaching and learning in information technology is satisfactory. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning in most subjects. Teachers' planning is effective and ensures that the work pupils do is matched well to their individual needs. The pace of lessons is usually

brisk and pupils learn quickly as a result. Most lessons are interesting and teachers use a good range of different methods to ensure that pupils enjoy their work. As a consequence, pupils take pride in producing high quality work, which is generally well presented. The quality of teaching and learning is good in art, history, geography, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in design and technology.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very broad and balanced curriculum for its pupils. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama and music. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to pupils of the same age. Provision is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils spiritual education is satisfactory and for their moral education it is good. The school provides very well for pupils' social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Their academic progress is monitored very well and systems for ensuring good behaviour are very effective.

#### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and senior staff are very good. There is a very clear educational direction to all its activities, which is supported very well by careful long-term planning and a clear set of aims.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are actively involved in the life of the school and in shaping its policies. Governors make regular visits to lessons, which enables them to gain valuable first-hand information about how the school is progressing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good systems for evaluating its performance. There is a clear commitment to improvement and a good capacity for further success.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all the resources at its disposal well. The accommodation and staffing are good and the resources for learning are very good. The school's application of the principles of 'best value' are satisfactory overall, but there are no clear systems for evaluating the impact of spending decisions on the standard of education provided.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many parents made positive comments about the quality of teaching their children received.</li> <li>• Several parents of pupils with special educational needs felt the school made good provision for their children.</li> <li>• A number of parents commented that the school was a caring place and that staff were approachable.</li> <li>• Some parents felt the school offered a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits.</li> <li>• Several parents commented positively on the good leadership provided by the headteacher.</li> <li>• A number of parents found the information provided by the school informative and helpful.</li> <li>• Many parents felt the school had improved significantly since the previous inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents felt that there were insufficient extra-curricular activities for younger pupils.</li> <li>• A number of parents felt that behaviour in the playground was unsatisfactory. They also felt that the incidence of bullying had increased recently.</li> <li>• A few parents would like French to be taught as an option.</li> <li>• A few parents would like more sport to be offered.</li> <li>• Some parents would like more information about their children and others felt that the notice given about events was too short.</li> <li>• One or two parents felt that they had difficulty communicating with some members of staff and that their comments were not taken seriously.</li> <li>• A few parents felt the school did not work closely with parents.</li> <li>• A small minority of parents felt that their children did not get enough work to do at home.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments made by parents. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including suitable clubs and sports for younger pupils. Behaviour is generally good in the playground and pupils are managed effectively by the lunch time controllers. No incidents of bullying were observed by inspectors. The school has made considerable efforts to ensure that parents are kept informed of the schools activities. It acknowledges that on a very few occasions, events have had to be cancelled at short notice. The staff are readily available to parents at all reasonable times and concerns appear to have been dealt with appropriately. The school makes every effort to work closely with parents and generally links with the community are very good. In most subjects, the amount of homework given is appropriate and helps raise standards and consolidate learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education. Pupils' attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history and music is at the expected level when they enter Year 3.
2. Standards in English have been consistently above the national average for the past three years and in the 1999 tests, the results were well above average. In comparison with schools with a similar number of pupils eligible to free school meals, standards were also above average. The proportion of pupils achieving above average levels in the 1999 tests is high, which indicates that the school is successful in challenging higher attaining pupils. Current standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are all high. The majority of pupils are able to express themselves clearly, both in the spoken and the written word. They read a wide range of books and have well-developed research skills. The quality of some older pupils' writing is exceptional, showing sensitivity and insight. This is particularly evident in some of their historical writing, where they attempt to put themselves 'into the shoes' of people of the past. These well above average standards are an improvement on the good standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils make very good use of their literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum and this has a positive impact on the standards they achieve in all subjects.
3. In mathematics, standards have remained above average over the past three years. Pupils' results in the 1999 tests were above the national average, with a significant proportion getting the higher Level 5. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average. Standards are currently above average in all aspects of the subject. Pupils have a good grasp of basic number skills and are good at mental arithmetic. They are competent at solving a range of mathematical problems, working comfortably with large numbers and complex operations. Pupils can measure accurately and apply these skills well in design and technology and science. They generally make good use of information and communications technology in collecting and using data, producing a variety of charts and graphs to illustrate their work. These good standards represent an improvement on the satisfactory picture found in the previous report. Pupils' numeracy skills are good and used effectively in all subjects of the curriculum.
4. Pupils' achievements in the 1999 tests for science were above average, as they have been over the past three years. In comparison to similar schools, they are average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average, again indicating the school's success in challenging more able pupils. Standards observed during the inspection indicate that standards are above average and pupils are making good progress in their learning. There has been an improvement in the quality of pupils' work in experimental and investigative science, but otherwise the picture is similar to that found in the previous inspection. Pupils are able to make accurate predictions about the likely results of their experiments and measure accurately while they are conducting them. They have a good knowledge of materials and understand well the properties of liquids, solids and gases. Pupils know that electricity flows around a circuit and can draw accurate diagrams using conventional symbols. The presentation of their work is usually neat and clear.
5. Standards in information technology are satisfactory overall and generally meet expectations. Pupils' achievements in word processing, graphics and the use of the Internet are higher than in modelling, data handling and control technology. They have only had limited opportunities to monitor external events in science, for example. Superficially, this appears to be a similar position to the previous report, but the school has improved its provision considerably in the last four years and this has improved standards in the communications aspects of the subject considerably. The generally effective use of information and communications technology is beginning to have a positive impact on other subjects, especially pupils' ability to apply research skills. Pupils' achievements in religious education are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. They know about a wide range of world religions, as well as having a good grasp of Christianity. The

Christian ethos of the school is understood well by all pupils and they are making good progress in understanding their own beliefs and the beliefs of others.

6. The school has been addressing the relative performance of boys and girls since 1995. It has been successful in ensuring that no significant difference is now evident between the performance of boys and girls in maths and English, and that boys perform only slightly better than girls in science. The school has identified the need to raise the standards of boys' writing skills and this is now a priority in the school development plan. Some parents in their meeting and in comments in their questionnaires, record some concerns that the most able pupils are not always well supported and fully developed, but inspection evidence shows this is not usually the case. However, occasionally some inconsistencies are apparent in provision between parallel classes and the most able pupils are not always given work suitable to their capabilities.
7. Standards in art, geography, history, music and physical education are above the expected level for pupils of this age. The quality of work produced is good and is generally well presented. A notable feature of pupils' work in many subjects is the quantity of extended writing, much of it well illustrated with the pupils' own drawings or printed computer graphics. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory overall and pupils' progress is appropriate for their age and abilities. Taking all subjects together, standards are above average overall but average when compared to similar schools.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school. There is a good level of support, both from class teachers and support assistants. Teaching assistants are assigned to each year group and they are provided with thorough guidance on what pupils are expected to learn. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress. There are only very few pupils who speak English as an additional language and they have been integrated very well into the life of the school. As a consequence, there is very little difference between the progress they make and that made by pupils who speak English as their first language. The school has done a great deal to challenge and encourage higher attaining pupils, but some of the most able do not have sufficiently well targeted work to ensure that they achieve their full potential. As a result, their progress, whilst satisfactory overall, is not as great as could be expected.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Parents' views, that their children have very good attitudes to school, are fully justified as the school has sustained its very good position since the last inspection. Pupils continue to have very good attitudes to school. This includes pupils of all ability levels and those with English as an additional language. Many pupils say that teachers make schoolwork fun, consequently the vast majority enjoy school, and are excited and enthusiastic when talking about the activities they do in lessons. Pupils enjoy working together and make relevant and positive contributions in lessons. They share ideas well, make sensible suggestions and are eager to evaluate the work of others. The majority listen attentively, usually in silence so good is their concentration and they appear absorbed in the lessons. A good example is when pupils in Year 6 work in almost complete silence in art.
10. Pupils are usually confident and alert in discussion. They are eager to 'have a go', even when the answer might be wrong. They are keen to participate in practical activities, take turns appropriately and persevere well to complete their tasks. A good example of this is when younger pupils create their own mental sums for the group in a numeracy session. This has a very positive impact on the progress that pupils make. They support each other well in group work without automatically giving the right answer. They readily seek help from the teacher if necessary. Most are well motivated and show pleasure when they complete a task successfully. Even in a minority of lessons, where work lacks pace, most pupils still apply themselves diligently to their tasks. Occasionally, teachers do not capture the interest of younger pupils.
11. Behaviour is very good and pupils respond to the high expectations of them. They understand the school's system of handling behaviour problems, and the vast majority of pupils take care to abide by the rules. They listen carefully during lessons and are not easily distracted by events around them. When moving around the school, between lessons and at the end of break there is order and

evidence of self-discipline. All pupils have a high degree of awareness of the effect of their own behaviour, and have respect for the feelings of others. No instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen, and no pupils have been excluded since the last inspection.

12. Good personal development is a particular focus of the headteacher and the school is very successful in this area. Many good examples were seen during the inspection. For example, younger pupils talk very positively about the help and support they received from their Year 6 mentors on entering the school. They enjoyed pairing with them for reading sessions and appreciate their friendship in the playground and at lunch times. Relationships are very good throughout the school, both between pupils and adults, and between pupils. Pupils are encouraged to take full responsibility for the day-to-day organisation of the classrooms and older pupils have similar responsibilities around the school, such as preparing for assemblies. Pupils are expected to take responsibility for their own actions, which is stated in the home/school agreement. They set their own rules for the classroom at the beginning of each year and are fully involved in setting their own targets for development throughout the school. They display good initiative, such as when older pupils, discuss and appoint a 'captain' to lead discussion in group work and present feedback in plenary sessions.
13. The development of individual potential is seen as a very important aspect of school life and the celebration of achievement, both in and out of school, is a prominent feature. Examples of this are the weekly achievement assemblies and an annual achievement celebration at the end of each school year. At these times pupils from all year groups prepare their own presentations of their own interests, hobbies or successes. During the inspection, pupils from Year 5 effectively described how they are organising regeneration of part of the school garden. They raised funds through a raffle in school, prepared and presented a bid to the parent/teacher association and hired a professional gardener to clear the ground. They also presented and described the types of plants they wished other pupils to donate. Another good example is the very good use of 'circle time' and religious education lessons where pupils effectively open up discussion on personal matters and are seen to be developing self-confidence and self-esteem.
14. A good degree of harmony exists in the school, with pupils demonstrating tolerance of the views and beliefs of others. All groups of pupils play and work well together. Personal and social education is firmly based on Christian ethics when lessons such as religious education and 'circle time' are well used to open up discussion on personal matters. Good policies are in place to ensure that issues such as sex, drugs and health education are appropriately addressed.
15. Attendance for the year 1989/99 was well above the national average and has remained consistently at this level since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is zero, which is commendable. This very good standard of attendance has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils arrive on time and settle in class promptly at the start of lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. In lessons seen, 5 per cent of teaching was excellent, 20 per cent was very good, 50 per cent was good and 25 per cent was satisfactory. This is a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. In many subjects this good quality teaching is having a positive impact on standards, which have improved substantially. With the exception of information technology and design technology, where the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, the good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning towards the end of the key stage.
17. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. Teachers are successful in raising standards from above to well above the national average. In lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well to take account of the needs and abilities of the pupils. Their teaching of basic literacy skills is very good and they have made good use of the national literacy framework to ensure pupils acquire all the skills they need to read and write well. Teachers pose very effective questions to encourage thinking skills, and to promote the use of language and listening very well. Large books are used

well to stimulate and interest the pupils and to make sure that they enjoy their literacy lessons. The enthusiasm of teachers promotes a positive learning environment in which pupils become confident. Teachers' expectations are high and as a result, pupils put great effort into their written work and their attitudes are excellent. The use of many different kinds of texts by teachers ensures that pupils have the opportunity to develop their own reading interests. In all English lessons, pupils benefit from very effective management strategies, which means that they learn at a very good rate. In all lessons, pupils concentrate very well and demonstrate very good knowledge of their learning. All pupils make very good progress in their learning, irrespective of their ability. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is generally effective and very good use is made of homework, especially in encouraging pupils to read very well.

18. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in numeracy, especially towards the end of the key stage. Teachers are also successful in increasing the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels in national tests. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, and sometimes very good. The structure provided by the introduction of the national numeracy strategy has contributed to this improvement. As a result, the quality of learning in most classes is good overall and in several lessons, pupils made very good progress. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good provision for all the pupils in their class. They manage the pupils well and this leads to good levels of concentration. The pace of lessons is generally good and teachers ensure that pupils keep working all the time. Teachers make effective use of questioning to find out what pupils know and can do and then help them to overcome any difficulties. As a result, pupils are acquiring new mathematical skills at a good rate. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, but there are inconsistencies between classes. Where marking is weak, it consists only of a 'tick' or unqualified praise. Some books are marked more effectively and in these instances, pupils are given clear targets for improvement. Homework is used well to support learning and it prepares pupils well for their next phase of education.
19. The quality of teaching in science is good overall. Teaching of investigational work is strong, where pupils are taught to devise their own experiments and seek solutions to problems by the end of the key stage. In lessons with very good features, the lesson objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lessons, and staff ensure they are met by the end. The staff have good subject knowledge and always use the correct scientific vocabulary. This ensures that pupils develop the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the different terms and to what they relate. The planning of lessons is good, and well matched to the attainments of the pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning. They concentrate well and show interest in their work. There are good assessment procedures, and staff use assessment very well in lessons to assist the pupils to improve their work and to support those who need help. As a result all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, make good progress. Marking tends to be variable, and at times does not inform pupils how to improve, or offer extension guidance to foster further investigation.
20. The teaching of information technology is satisfactory overall. Teachers generally have appropriate subject knowledge and expertise. Teachers do not assess pupils' capabilities with sufficient regularity to ensure that tasks are well matched to their prior attainment. Teachers' planning regularly identifies opportunities for the use of technology and the time allowed for pupils to work on computers is sufficient in most classes. As a consequence of this and well-focused individual support, pupils make generally satisfactory progress overall. The quality of teaching in religious education is good overall. In lessons observed, a significant proportion of the teaching was very good. In the best lessons, pupils are provided with a vocabulary about a subject in religious education and are encouraged to use this in structured opportunities to reflect. The activities planned, especially those which involve first hand experiences, promote pupils' learning of the knowledge aspects of religious education well.
21. Outstanding features of the best teaching seen in other subjects during the inspection include high expectations of behaviour and academic performance, generally good subject knowledge and effective pupil management. Less effective teaching is characterised by over-long introductions, ineffective marking of pupils' work, and occasionally insecure subject knowledge, for example in information technology. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is effectively focused on their individual needs. Teachers and classroom assistants use a

wide range of effective strategies to support their learning. As a consequence, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The few pupils with English as an additional language are taught well and they make good progress.

22. The quality of pupils' learning is good overall and their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is rapid. Pupils' intellectual, physical and creative effort is good overall and they work especially hard in English. In some classes there are good opportunities for pupils to work independently and good use is made of information and communications technology for research projects. The pace of most lessons is generally brisk and progress is generally good. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own capabilities and their rate of learning. They are generally appreciative of the opportunities they are offered to learn.
23. Teachers present very good role models in their efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all pupils. For example, they plan for suitably differentiated work to be available in all lessons to ensure that equality of access is available for all groups. Providing good opportunities for both boys and girls to develop their speaking and listening skills is also a priority in teaching. Good opportunities are provided for independent learning in the majority of classes, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

24. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils are very good. The curriculum contains all subjects of the national curriculum and is well planned which contributes to the pupils' good rate of learning and overall high standards of attainment. The school has maintained breadth in the curriculum, which provides stimulating experiences and contexts for the development of literacy, numeracy and information technology. Because of good management, the curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils for example, by organising pupils across year groups for literacy and numeracy. The school's policy of maintaining a wide and varied curriculum means that pupils have many good opportunities for writing at length and to develop their interests in music, for example. Parents are told of forthcoming topics and respond well by taking their children to specific places such as the British Museum to view Egyptian artefacts. This helps pupils' learning considerably and improves the quality of information they offer in class discussions.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special needs co-ordinator the (SENCO) has full classroom responsibility and is well placed in Year 3 to meet all pupils as they enter the school. Teaching assistants are assigned to each year group and they are provided with thorough guidance on what pupils are expected to learn. They make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. All teachers are involved in writing individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils in their class. Several teachers use an electronic programme to assist them and consult with SENCO on an informal basis. All IEPs show specific targets for literacy and numeracy, where relevant, that are easily measurable with clear indications on how these will be achieved and by whom. All pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum and make very good progress.
26. The school policy for the most able pupils ensures that they generally have a balanced programme of work to enable them to reach their full potential. Although targets have been set, some pupils' writing ability does not reach the high standards expected of the most able. In addition, there are inconsistencies in the provision for these most able pupils between classes. Some opportunity is provided for specialist teaching in Year 6 and the headteacher, who has worked with the National Association for Able Children in Education, offers advice to teachers and parents.
27. The school has an appropriate health programme that includes education about drug misuse and implements an agreed policy for sex education sensitively. Parents are involved in making the decision about the acceptability of the programs used. The school has excellent resources for information technology but these are insufficiently exploited in several lessons. The school technician is effective and contributes to extending skills.

28. The national strategy for literacy is implemented very effectively and has had a positive influence on helping pupils to focus on specific aspects of English such as discussing texts. Literacy is used well across the curriculum. The numeracy strategy has been implemented very effectively and this has a positive impact on pupils' mental arithmetic as well as other aspects of mathematics.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Pupils have opportunities to learn recorder and handbell ringing during lunch time and, after school, voice and drama. After school sporting activities are available and comprise seasonal sports such as short tennis, netball, football, dance and athletics. A residential visit in the Peak District is provided for Year 6 pupils which increases their awareness of industry and extends their cultural experiences. These experiences form the basis of pupils' work for the following term which raises their level of interest and enhances their research skills and written work. Visits to places such as Legoland are used to enhance their understanding of the applications of science and technology.
30. The provision made by the school for social and cultural development is very good, moral development is good, and spiritual development is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection this shows overall that the school is maintaining the good provision it provides for the pupils. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory with time given to reflect during acts of collective worship. Religious education makes a positive contribution to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to consider their own feelings and those of others. However, there are limited opportunities for this to be practised in other areas of the curriculum. The school is very active in promoting principles, which distinguish right from wrong. The school consistently uses a positive approach to discipline throughout the school. The procedures are very clear and the pupils understand the requirements of the school, and the expectations placed upon them. Pupils are encouraged to accept responsibility for their own actions and choices they make. This leads to an effective self-discipline internalised by the pupils.
31. Very good social responsibility is developed by the pupils in all aspects of the life of the school. Pupils are active in their help in and around the school. For example, they take the registers, give out and put away equipment, pupils in Year 6 act as mentors for Year 3 during reading sessions, and pupils in many classes help with setting up the computers, and assist other pupils. Another very good example is the environmental work of a group of Year 5 pupils in firstly seeing a need to enhance an area of the school grounds, planning what they should do, finding funding and then purchasing plants and seeds. They work very well in-groups in class and enjoy team games in which they support each other. Relationships are very good and pupils are encouraged to be tolerant and respect the wishes of others. During residential visits, pupils gain insight into their own needs, which promotes their personal and social development and self-esteem. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions when they learn about settlements, and this is enhanced by a variety of planned educational visits such as a residential week in the Peak District. The cultural and ethnic diversity of the wider society is explored through a range of activities throughout the curriculum, for example through the religious education lessons where they learn about major religions, in art where they develop work in the style of Matisse, and in Year 5 where pupils have regular Internet contact with a school in Edmonton, Canada.
32. Equal opportunities are appropriately addressed in all curriculum documentation. All new books and other equipment such as CD-ROMs are thoroughly checked to ensure that they provide good role models for equal opportunities and ethnicity. Extra-curricular opportunities are also available to all pupils, whatever their gender or ethnicity. This includes provision for those girls who wish to participate in contact sports such as rugby and in cross-country running. Achievement is equally well celebrated for all groups of pupils. All groups share opportunities for responsibility.
33. The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school and their contribution to children's learning at school and at home are very good. A significant number of parents effectively help in school on a regular basis by listening to children read, helping with swimming, sewing, information technology and cooking. Parents are encouraged to attend information evenings and these are well attended. Homework diaries provide effective two way links. The school has very good links with its partner institutions. The arrangements to welcome new pupils into the junior school are very good. These include visits from the infant school by pupils in Year 2 and a buddy system linking

Year 6 pupils to Year 3 pupils. The school has very good working relationships with the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer and there is also a well established and appropriate programme in place to ease pupils' transfer at eleven.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

34. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good overall. All staff are caring and know pupils well. Good levels of pastoral care have been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents are appreciative of the care and support provided. They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible and believe the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspectors support this view.
35. The school's procedures for child protection are satisfactory. They meet the statutory requirements. The school does not have its own child protection policy, but has adopted the guidelines from the local education authority. The school is a safe environment and there are effective procedures to report health and safety concerns and to record any remedial action taken. Regular checks of equipment are completed and fire drills occur at regular intervals. These are correctly recorded. Risk assessment has been completed for all areas of the school's work. Good procedures are in place to care for pupils who become ill or get hurt whilst at school. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and injuries are recorded systematically.
36. The school's analyses of national and school tests, and close observations of pupils' work, has raised teachers' expectations and helped teachers to set targets for further improvement as pupils move through the school. Teachers track pupils of different abilities in each year group and use appropriate tests to identify pupils' needs and compare their achievement with their potential ability and predicted national curriculum targets.
37. There is inconsistency in the quality of annual reports to parents. Insufficient information is provided to enable parents to interpret what pupils can and can't do, know and understand about subjects, or gain a clear idea of the progress in each subject over the past year. Frequently comments refer only to enjoyment or literacy skills. In Year 5, pupils usefully include their own evaluations of how they have improved and set their own targets for improvement. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and is not used effectively to improve pupils' responses. There are few developmental comments to lead pupils to the next stage of learning.
38. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are very good. Parents are fully aware of the need to keep the school informed of any absences and readily comply with this requirement. There is an effective partnership with the educational welfare officer. Registers are completed in a satisfactory manner, ensuring the accurate recording of absence.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good and they are applied consistently throughout the school. All adults on site provide good role models and reinforce expected levels of behaviour. Lunch time routines are well established and midday controllers work closely with teachers to ensure that the lunch time break is an orderly and pleasant social occasion. They have their own yellow and reward card system and this works effectively at lunch times. Pupils understand the school's rules and are clear about what kind of behaviour is acceptable. This good understanding results in very good standards of behaviour. This in turn encourages pupils to want to learn.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

40. The school's partnership with parents is good overall and this makes a suitable contribution to pupils' academic progress and personal development. The previous report was also positive about the support from parents. At the parents' meeting and in the questionnaires completed before the inspection, the majority of parents were supportive of the school and believe it encourages their involvement, that staff are approachable and their children like school. However, a small but



significant number of parents have concerns, for example, about how well they are informed about their child's progress and how closely the school works with parents. The inspection team think that the schools' procedures for keeping parents informed are good, although occasionally short notice has been given of the cancellation of clubs and events. There are appropriate home/school agreements in place, which clearly identify the responsibilities of the school, of parents and of pupils.

41. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is good overall. The school prospectus is detailed, well presented and gives parents a valuable insight into school life. The governors' annual report contains much useful information about the work of the school and of the governing body. Both these important documents meet statutory requirements. Suitable newsletters written in an appropriately friendly style are sent home half termly. These keep parents informed on such matters as class topics, medicines in school and information about the school environment.
42. The Ascot Heath Junior School Parents Association is an enthusiastic, hard working group that organises many fund raising events and makes a substantial contribution to school resources. Recent purchases include a summer house, a special printer, overhead projectors and refurbishment of the library. Parents, at their meeting, expressed their delight at how successful the school is in including pupils with special educational needs in the full life and work of the school.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

43. The quality of leadership and management in the school is very good. The headteacher has a clear vision of the future development of the school and has established a team with a shared commitment to improvement. She provides very clear leadership and has developed effective management systems to ensure continuous improvement. The school's aims and values are seen threading through the school day. Very good relationships are effectively maintained. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection and are above average in all subjects except information technology and design and technology. The quality of education provided for pupils is very good.
44. The headteacher is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher. They work well together and the management of the school is all the more effective because of their different styles of management and expertise. There are clear systems of management in the school which ensure effective delegation of responsibilities, good communications and opportunities for all staff to contribute to school improvement and the raising of standards. The senior management team comprising of the head and deputy head meet regularly to discuss day-to-day routine management and effective ways of introducing new initiatives and managing change. The effectiveness of this team is a strength of the school. The curriculum co-ordinators have job descriptions and are fully aware of their responsibilities. They monitor planning of their subjects to ensure coverage and are developing systems to improve the quality of the monitoring of learning, teaching and standards by observing teaching and scrutinising pupils' work.
45. The headteacher, senior management team, staff and governors have addressed the concerns of the previous report. Standards have been maintained in all areas and improved in some, for example, mathematics and music which are now above national expectations. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Lessons now have specific learning objectives by adopting a consistent approach to teachers' short term planning. Assessment and recording procedures are more systematic and pupils' investigative and research skills improved with a greater range of opportunities. The headteacher, who works closely with teachers and the governing body to monitor provision for this aspect throughout the school, effectively manages equal opportunities. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the very positive ethos of the school successfully promotes equal opportunities.
46. The headteacher supports the special needs co-ordinator well by arranging meetings with parents and outside agencies. Learning support assistants work closely with the class teachers in the day to day support of pupils with statements. There is very good collaboration between all who are

involved with pupils and all concerned write observations in a communication booklet. Pupils make very good progress according to their abilities and relate well socially to their peers. The special educational needs governor is knowledgeable and provides good support in visiting the school to observe the effect of procedures for supporting pupils with special needs.

47. The governing body, class teachers and the headteacher monitor pupil's personal development throughout the school well. Pupils' contributions in lessons and assemblies are carefully and appropriately recorded to ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute and develop. Parents are encouraged to support the school's efforts from entry through the home/school agreement.
48. The quality of monitoring in the school is good. The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well implemented and the monitoring of core areas has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Curriculum co-ordinators monitor the quality of teachers' planning to ensure coverage of the national curriculum programmes of study. Effective systems to ensure continuity of pupils' learning through the school are in place.
49. The staff are effective in analysing school assessment data and use it to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that all have equal opportunities to learn and that areas of weakness are identified. This is having a positive impact on standards which have shown an upward trend since the previous inspection. The school has carefully monitored the progress of boys and girls and there is no significant difference.
50. Members of the governing body are well informed, knowledgeable and influential in the development of the school. The governing body meets all of its statutory responsibilities well and operates a number of appropriate sub-committees to monitor and support different aspects of the school. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their links with the headteacher and staff. They work in close partnership with the staff, visit classrooms, observe and talk to teachers and discuss school development issues which enhances the quality of education provided.
51. There is a good level of teaching and support staff, who are appropriately experienced and qualified for their roles. The professional development of all staff is good. Teaching staff are well trained and the expertise of experienced staff supports newly appointed staff. Learning support assistants are provided with opportunities for training. The headteacher promotes opportunities for the professional development of staff and annual reviews are held with all staff to discuss in-service training that will respond to school and professional needs. The school works in close partnership with the local education authority to support newly qualified staff. Together they carefully monitor progress, offer advice and provide opportunities for these new teachers to observe best practice in their own and other schools.
52. The school effectively monitors the use of its financial resources and day-to-day expenditure. The school improvement plan is an effective document which identifies appropriate priorities and has set clear targets for improving standards and the quality of education provided. The priorities for school development are appropriately funded and the headteacher and governing body have a good view of the impact of these priorities on future spending. However, there are no clear mechanisms for analysing the effect of spending decisions on raising standards and improving the quality of education. This weakness reduces the effectiveness of the otherwise effective management of the school by the governing body. Grants that the school receives for specific projects, for example Additional Literacy Support, are used well. In this case, the impact can be seen in the very good standards all pupils achieve in literacy. The accommodation is of very good quality. There are enough resources that are of very good quality to respond to the effective delivery of the national curriculum. Resources are checked regularly to ensure that they reflect gender and cultural diversity in a positive way. The school makes good use of new technology, especially the Internet for pupils' research projects and by the headteacher for administration and communications.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to further improve the already good education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ensure that the quality of teachers' marking is consistent throughout the school and that teachers regularly provide pupils with evaluative comments and targets for improvement when marking their work;

*[Paragraphs: 18, 19, 21, 66, 70, 80, 83]*

- improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development in all subjects by giving them opportunities to reflect upon their own values and beliefs and the beliefs of others, as well as providing moments for quiet reflection;

*[Paragraphs: 30, 73, 91]*

- ensure that the most able pupils are regularly challenged to do work at the highest levels of which they are capable;

*[Paragraphs: 6, 8, 26, 54, 59]*

- ensure that systems for evaluating spending decisions are revised to give effective information on their impact on standards and the quality of education provided by the school.

*[Paragraph: 52]*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	20	50	25	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	240
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	28	32	60

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	23
	Girls	27	24	28
	Total	47	45	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (73)	75 (75)	85 (88)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	22
	Girls	25	25	27
	Total	44	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (88)	77 (80)	82 (93)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	231
Any other minority ethnic group	7

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

***Teachers and classes*****Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30:1
Average class size	30

**Education support staff: Y3 - Y6**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	393,688
Total expenditure	389,765
Expenditure per pupil	1,625
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,536
Balance carried forward to next year	11,459

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	196
Number of questionnaires returned	77

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	57	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	17	75	6	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	16	68	10	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	74	8	1	1
The teaching is good.	26	64	3	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	52	25	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	40	16	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	52	6	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	22	42	30	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	34	45	10	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	60	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	42	27	12	4

### Other issues raised by parents

Many parents made positive comments about the quality of teaching their children received. Several parents of pupils with special educational needs felt the school made good provision for their children. A number of parents commented that the school was a caring place and that staff were approachable. Some parents felt the school offered a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits. Several parents commented positively on the good leadership provided by the headteacher. A number of parents found the information provided by the school informative and helpful. Many parents felt the school had improved significantly since the previous inspection.

A few parents felt that there were insufficient extra-curricular activities for younger pupils. A number of parents felt that behaviour in the playground was unsatisfactory. They also felt that the incidence of bullying had increased recently. A few parents would like French to be taught as an option. A few parents would like more sport to be offered. Some parents would like more information about their children and others felt that the notice given about events was too short. One or two parents felt that they had difficulty communicating with some members of staff and that their comments were not taken seriously. A few parents felt the school did not work closely with parents. A small minority of parents felt that their children did not get enough work to do at home.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

54. Pupils enter the school with standards which are above average overall. They make good progress in their learning, and by the time they leave at eleven, standards are well above average. They have consistently remained well above the national average since the previous inspection and above the average for similar schools. Throughout the school pupils' achievements, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, are above those expected. Lower attaining pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 receive additional literacy support in small groups during the literacy hour. These sessions are very effective in raising these pupils' overall attainment. For example, these short sessions provide greater opportunities for pupils to speak in complete sentences and this improves their ability to write at length. Higher attaining pupils work to the best of their ability in classes where pupils' knowledge and understanding are carefully monitored and individual targets, identified in the marking of written work, are used by the pupils. The group of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 benefit from the good quality teaching they receive. However, the processes of monitoring the quality of their writing and the setting of targets to challenge them further are not used to their full advantage.
55. Pupils' attainment in speaking is above average. For example, pupils in Year 6 read a play for radio with good intonation, appropriate interpretation of punctuation, and emphasis on the type of character. Most pupils display above average speaking skills for their age in all classes. Nearly all pupils speak confidently in a variety of contexts using vocabulary which is often descriptive and interesting. They organise what they say appropriately, using correct grammar and precise vocabulary. Pupils in Year 3 offer clear explanations about why they like a story and clearly describe similarities between those with a similar setting. Pupils in Year 4 consolidate their understanding of rhyme through discussion and improve their understanding of words that they find difficult. They confidently ask questions to clarify what is expected of them in lessons. In one Year 5 literacy hour, for example, pupils eagerly explained their findings from homework and developed their ideas about conservation well through a lively discussion. They spoke with confidence and responded to questions with complex answers. Pupils in Year 6 explain and discuss newspaper articles eloquently and enunciate clearly.
56. Throughout the school most pupils listen carefully. The few pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 identified as having difficulty in concentrating are targeted by class teachers, who find and use effective strategies to improve their attention. This has a positive impact on their learning and the standards they achieve. Most pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have high levels of concentration and interest and make good gains in understanding. Generally, pupils have very good attitudes and respect the viewpoints of others, which contributes positively to the high quality of their speaking and listening skills.
57. Pupils' attainment in reading is well above average. Younger pupils read their own work quickly and accurately, and explain characters' different points of view. Their progress is assisted by reading with pupils from Year 6 twice per week. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of books. For example, higher attaining pupils read books such as 'The Tales of Narnia'. They interpret the language used well and explain clearly the meaning of metaphors such as 'hard eyes' and 'staring deeply'. Almost all pupils read fluently and expressively. Lower attaining pupils are able to correct themselves as they read. They make comparisons between stories in a similar setting and pupils with special educational needs successfully make notes about the sequence of a story. Pupils in Year 4 are enthusiastic about poetry and read texts fluently and accurately. Overall their comprehension and understanding of speech marks are above those expected from pupils of this age. They recognise many styles of poetry and sight read them with good expression. Many pupils in Year 6 skim and scan text well to retrieve information quickly. They select books that extend their vocabulary and use contextual clues effectively to explain words such as 'archetypal'. They have opportunities to select books from a 'mobile library' to extend the range of fiction that they read. However, the choice of books is not guided sufficiently to encourage pupils to read more sophisticated books and to extend their appreciation of traditional authors. Pupils in all year groups read regularly for pleasure and name a good range of favourite authors. Pupils in Year 6 include



autobiographies that they enjoy. All year groups know how to use the school library and pupils in Year 3 explain how books in the school library are organised and use the catalogue to search for specific information books when working independently. They undertake research for homework to extend their knowledge about class topics. Pupils in Year 6 find pleasure in explaining the Dewey system of classifying books and that the school library contains all the information books they need for their subjects. Class libraries are well organised and well used for daily, silent reading sessions.

58. Observed standards in writing are well above national expectations. The quality of the majority of pupils' handwriting is of a high standard throughout the school. Most pupils in Year 3 attained writing standards that were similar to national expectations before entering the school. Currently the observed standards of pupils of all abilities indicate that they make good progress. Higher attaining pupils write imaginatively from different viewpoints. For example, their writing about being frightened created an effective atmosphere, with phrases such as 'trees waving, rumbling underground'. They wrote well in similar style to the author of a story presented to them. Pupils write quickly and most spell accurately with appropriate grammatical conventions of apostrophes and speech marks. They use interesting vocabulary. For instance, one pupil inquired about the collective noun for many bats to include precise vocabulary in his story. Pupils accurately substitute pronouns for nouns in their written sentences. They make effective use of the computer to select colour and letter shapes for words to illustrate the emotion words convey. Pupils in the average and lower ability group write fluently in a range of narrative styles and styles of poetry such as Haiku. Several pupils, however, neglect the use of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and are uncertain of speech marks.
59. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in their learning. They write extensively, use precise vocabulary and punctuate accurately with at least half of the pupils achieving above expected levels. Handwriting is generally joined and legible. They confidently write in a range of styles in poetry such as limerick, rhyming couplet and song using alliteration and relevant vocabulary. Pupils of all abilities generally have good keyboard skills which contribute to their ability to use word processing for writing. A pupil with special educational needs uses a laptop to write poetry of a high standard. Pupils in Year 5 rapidly increase the range of forms of language and uses of words to produce, for example, leaflets using persuasive language. They extend their range of vocabulary by contributing to an 'Adjective Thesaurus Book', but there is no evidence of pupils using this skill to edit their own descriptive work. However, many pupils reach high standards in writing. For example, they transpose 'The Pied Piper' into a play script, adapting the form of language to the characters. They add verses to 'The Cataract at Ladore' in a similar style and create their own myths. Pupils' analyses of poetry provide a good insight to what the poet is alluding to. Pupils use the computer effectively to draft and redraft their work. Their choice of vocabulary such as 'escalates', 'global', 'resumption', is often interesting and used well for effect. Sentences are complex with agreement of tenses, and are correctly punctuated. Many higher attaining pupils in Year 6 use subordinate clauses in sentences and organise their extended writing into paragraphs helpful to the reader. There are examples of good analytical writing about characters as, for example, in their work on 'Alice in Wonderland'. Pupils use the computer to publish newspaper articles. They use type size and punctuation effectively for emphasis. They empathised well when writing about how Anne Frank depended upon her diary. Using their own diaries, which they kept on a residential visit to the Peak District, pupils consolidate their ability to write many forms of narrative to a high standard. However, several of the most able pupils in Year 6 write extended pieces of writing that are not paragraphed and include inaccurate spelling.
60. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. Teachers are successful in raising standards from above to well above the national average. In lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well to take account of the needs and abilities of the pupils. Their teaching of basic literacy skills is very good and they have made good use of the national literacy framework to ensure pupils acquire all the skills they need to read and write well. Teachers pose very effective questions to encourage thinking skills, and to promote the use of language and listening very well. Large books are used well to stimulate and interest the pupils and to make sure that they enjoy their literacy lessons. The enthusiasm of teachers promotes a positive learning environment in which pupils become confident. Teachers' expectations are high and as a result, pupils put great effort into their written work and their attitudes are excellent. The use of many different kinds of text by teachers ensures

that pupils have the opportunity to develop their own reading interests. In all English lessons, pupils benefit from very effective management strategies, which means that they learn at a very good rate. In all lessons, pupils concentrate very well and demonstrate very good knowledge of their learning. All pupils make very good progress in their learning, irrespective of their ability. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is generally effective and very good use is made of homework, especially in encouraging pupils to read very well.

61. Literacy hours are planned well and worthwhile literacy learning objectives are adhered to in the three teaching and learning sections, which increases pupils' rate of learning. Effective use is made of classroom assistants to support pupils, such as when they are working on the computer or to assist with literacy skills. Most teachers effectively review the learning at the end of each lesson to reinforce the main teaching points which extend pupils' knowledge. Literacy is used well in all subjects for a purposeful range of forms of writing, and pupils use precise technical vocabulary related to discussing subjects in the context of lessons and when explaining activities to visitors or in assemblies. Pupils' good literacy skills promote their progress in most subjects. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of their teachers. For example, pupils in Year 4 apply their knowledge of poetry to use a theme to write in three styles during the group session of the literacy hour. Presentation of lessons in one class in Year 5 is excellent. Good links are made with several aspects of the curriculum and challenging questions extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The learning environment created by the 'Rain Forest of Brazil' display stimulates pupils' use of English and range of vocabulary. Teachers present pupils with effective purposeful activities based upon pupils' diaries of visits, such as to Chatsworth House, during a week long residential course in the Peak District, which furthers pupils' research skills and presentation. In some literacy lessons insufficient use is made of the computers for writing. The school's analyses of national and school tests and close observations of pupils' work have raised teachers' expectations in English and helped teachers to set targets for further improvement as pupils move through the school. Teachers in several classes assess and record pupils' progress towards national literacy targets, and include useful comments when marking pupils' work, effectively setting targets for improvement. Pupils in Year 4 place these in front of them as they write, which raises their standards of writing. Implementation of the school's marking policy is inconsistent and it is not used effectively in all classes to set targets and improve standards of work in pupils' books.
62. The headteacher provides very good leadership in managing change and development in literacy by involving the staff in identifying curricular and management targets for the school to achieve. The headteacher, subject co-ordinator and special needs co-ordinator audit literacy annually. Evaluations of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement are used effectively to promote school improvement. The school's detailed action plan has led to clearly observable improvements in each year group, improved provision of the range and type of books, and in the use of the school library. The headteacher systematically monitors literacy lessons to identify a priority area for development to share with the staff. The co-ordinator's monitoring of the subject is satisfactory. Opportunity to observe a literacy hour in Year 3 has increased awareness of how raised standards will affect pupils' future progress as they move through the school. The subject leader has good subject knowledge, has made good use of literacy training materials with staff, extends moderation expertise and contributes to the evaluating progress towards established targets. The policy provides good guidance and the scheme of work is well matched to the national literacy strategy which ensures progression in standards. The Chair of Governors is very supportive of developments in literacy.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. When pupils enter the school at age seven, their overall standard of attainment is above average. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in learning, and in numeracy they make good progress. By the time they leave school at eleven, the majority achieve standards that are above average, with a significant minority who achieve standards that are well above average. Standards of achievement in the 1999 National Curriculum Assessment tests indicated that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was close to the national average whilst those reaching Level 5 or above was well above the national average. These results were close to the average for similar schools and there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Lesson observation during the

inspection and a scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed that the standards in mathematics are above the national average, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well catered for and supported effectively both in class or withdrawn. Over the last three years standards of attainment have steadily improved.

64. Standards in numeracy are good throughout the school and pupils apply these skills well in other subjects. At the end of the key stage, standards are generally well above average. Pupils in Year 3 quickly add the numbers ten to twenty to two- and three-digit numbers. They have very good recall when adding on or back in tens. Pupils are able to add together three-digit numbers accurately, using informal methods, and can count on adding a hundred to three-digit numbers. In Year 5, pupils use their understanding of place value appropriately to multiply whole numbers by ten. Higher attaining pupils are able to recall accurately multiplication facts up to ten times ten. They are also developing their own effective strategies for solving multiplication problems. Pupils in Year 6 are able to use their number skills very well to solve practical problems. They have very well developed mental arithmetic skills and know all their tables up to 10x10 by heart. Lower attaining pupils can multiply decimals accurately. For example, they correctly worked out that  $2.99 \times 3$  was equal to 8.97. Higher attaining pupils are able to work out percentages accurately, using a good range of strategies. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 knew that 25% of £600 was £150 and quickly worked out 34% of 46. Pupils effectively work out percentage discounts on various items and know well how to calculate simple interest on loans.
65. Standards in other areas of the subject are above average. All pupils apply their skills in measuring well in other subjects, for example in design and technology and geography. In Year 4, pupils measure length, capacity and mass confidently and competently. They are able to accurately estimate the capacity of various containers and recognise well the relationship between various measurements, for example, between millilitres and litres. Older, higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and can accurately work out the area of a triangle using the correct formula. They understand that the three angles of a triangle add up to  $180\frac{1}{4}^\circ$  and can use both parallel and opposite angles to work out if triangles are similar. They show considerable skill in their ability to draw accurately when they construct geometric diagrams. Pupils make some appropriate use of computers when working with data, but insufficient use is made generally of information and communications technology to support learning in the subject. Standards in data handling are satisfactory and pupils can produce an appropriate range of graphs, including line graphs and pie charts, using collected data.
66. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in numeracy, especially towards the end of the key stage. Teachers are also successful in increasing the proportion of pupils who reach higher levels in national tests. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, and sometimes very good. The structure provided by the introduction of the national numeracy strategy has contributed to this improvement. As a result, the quality of learning in most classes is good overall and in several lessons, pupils made very good progress. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good provision for all the pupils in their class. They manage the pupils well and this leads to good levels of concentration. The pace of lessons is generally good and teachers ensure that pupils keep working at all times. Teachers make effective use of questioning to find out what pupils know and can do and then help them to overcome any difficulties. As a result, pupils are acquiring new mathematical skills at a good rate. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, but there are inconsistencies between classes. Where marking is weak, it consists only of a 'tick' or unqualified praise. Some books are marked more effectively and in these instances, pupils are given clear targets for improvement. Homework is used well to support learning and it prepares pupils well for their next phase of education. Pupils display confidence in recognising and assembling the properties of different shapes and can classify them accordingly. Progress throughout the key stage is good. Pupils are given a good grounding in all aspects of mathematical work and take care with their presentation. Overall, pupils are confident and have positive attitudes to mathematics. They are well behaved and show good powers of concentration. Pupils listen well and respond well to effective, probing questioning. They act appropriately on the teachers' instructions, particularly during mental agility mathematics sessions when they are encouraged to work quickly and independently to write their answers down. There is a good working atmosphere in classes and they work at a crisp, brisk pace.

67. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator ensures that teachers' planning covers the programmes of study fully and that resources are sufficient. Teachers long- and mid-term planning is good and teachers in parallel classes plan together to ensure equality of opportunity and access. Teaching is monitored effectively by the co-ordinator and the headteacher. The grouping of older pupils by prior attainment has had a positive impact on standards of numeracy. This has been aided by the effective introduction of the national numeracy strategy. The school uses an appropriate published scheme that supports teachers well in their planning. As a consequence, tasks are well matched to the needs of pupils and they make good progress in learning. The school has appropriate procedures for assessment and pupils' progress and class improvement is tracked. The information gained from both teachers' marking and data from published tests is analysed and used effectively to set future targets. Homework is appropriately used. Resources are of good quality and pupils take care of their equipment ensuring it is kept in pristine condition. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

## SCIENCE

68. Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school at eleven. These above average standards are confirmed by pupils' consistently good results in national tests over the past four years. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is well above the average. However, in comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment is average. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be above average and since then the school's pupils' attainment has improved in line with the national trend. Attainment on entry to school is good and the progress in learning made by pupils is good overall, particularly at the end of the key stage. Standards of work in pupils' books indicate that continuity and progression in learning in experimental and investigative science is having an impact on achievement. Older pupils are recording investigations by including details of their hypotheses and methods, including reasons for, and explanations of fair testing, accurate measurements and explanatory conclusions. Younger pupils record their findings on a less sophisticated level, but a focus is maintained on scientific recording using appropriate vocabulary. This level of investigative work shows good improvement since the previous inspection, with an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5.
69. Pupils in Year 3 consider the properties of different materials and know how these affect their use, and are beginning to carry out simple fair tests and make accurate predictions of likely results. Pupils in Year 4 know how to separate a variety of mixtures such as sand and gravel by sieving, and water and sand mixture by filtering. They carry out experiments well, knowing that fair testing is an important factor in ensuring accuracy. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the principles of evaporation and understand that one can recover dissolved solids such as salt from water. Older pupils are able to predict outcomes accurately and set their own fair tests on a variety of problems. For example, they are able to set up an experiment to compare the heat retention of different mugs, and correctly predict the outcomes. Where pupils make good progress it is often linked to the teacher's enthusiasm, high expectations and good questioning technique, together with positive praise and encouragement. Where satisfactory progress is seen there is a lack of pace in the delivery and organisation of the lesson. The majority of teaching throughout the key stage is good and this ensures that concepts and scientific vocabulary are consistently developed, and that most pupils are confident in the use of scientific terms such as condensation, evaporation and filtration. Since the previous inspection, planning has been improved. There is now good curricular planning on a two-year programme and pupils cover all aspects within the first two years. The areas are then re-visited in more depth. This is a strength of the school and ensures that pupils build progressively upon their knowledge and investigative skills. Pupils use a variety of methods to record their results, including graphs, charts, and diagrams, which contribute effectively to develop their data handling skills. Their written work shows an increasing complexity and accuracy as they get older. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.
70. The quality of teaching in science is good overall. The teaching of higher attaining pupils is particularly effective. The teaching of investigational work is strong, where pupils are taught to devise their own experiments and seek solutions to problems by the end of the key stage. In lessons with very good features, the lesson objectives are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the

lessons, and staff ensure they are met by the end of the lesson. The staff have good subject knowledge and always use the correct scientific vocabulary. This ensures that pupils develop the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the different terms and to what they relate. The planning of lessons is good, and well matched to the attainments of the pupils. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning. They concentrate well and show interest in their work. The good relationships between pupils and staff make a significant contribution to their learning. Pupils are attentive to their teachers, listen to instructions and explanations well, and are enthusiastic about completing their work. Pupils handle equipment carefully and safely. They work well independently and in groups and this has a positive impact on the progress they make in their learning. Assessment procedures are good and are used very well by teachers in lessons to assist the pupils to improve their work and to support those who need help. As a result all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, make good progress. However, teachers' marking tends to be variable, and at times does not inform pupils how to improve, or offer extension guidance to foster further investigation. Teachers make appropriate use of information and communications technology to support learning in the subject and pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well in their scientific studies. Both have a positive impact on the progress they make in their learning.

71. There is good conscientious co-ordination of the subject and a commitment to raise standards. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Challenging achievable targets are set to ensure individual progress in the subject. Monitoring of teacher's planning takes place and there has been some monitoring of teaching and scrutiny of work by the subject co-ordinator. Resources for science are good, covering all topics and programmes of study outlined in the school's schemes of work. They are easily accessible to staff and are used well to support teaching and learning. The school grounds are a valuable resource for the teaching of science, and are used to good effect in the study of life and living processes.

## **ART**

72. When pupils enter the school at seven, their achievements are similar to those expected from pupils of this age. By the time they are eleven, they achieve standards which are above those expected nationally. This good position is similar to the one found by the previous inspection. The progress in learning made by all groups of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, is good. Younger pupils make good imaginative drawings. For example, a group of pupils were seen working in charcoal on a setting from a Harry Potter novel. Their standard of drawing was good and they created effective atmospheric pictures, using a wide range of techniques. They record well from experience, as when they draw and paint images from their Millennium celebrations. For example, they made good quality pencil drawings of Big Ben striking midnight. They also create good quality observational drawings of plants, pots and vases. Pupils choose materials such as tissue paper and manipulated them well in their pictures to give the illusion of, for example, fur and other features. After learning the technique of weaving in Year 3, using paper and wool, pupils in Year 4 select ideas to use in their work and make preparatory drawings and outlines for a weaving which represents a landscape. Individual weavings are of a very good standard. Older pupils, after their visit to Chatsworth House, explored the concept of quality in portraits. After thoughtfully appraising four portraits of the duchess, they gave sensible relevant reasons for choosing their favourites. When confidently creating their own portraits, in pastel, in the same style, they paid good attention to detail and form. Study of the work of famous artists is evident throughout the school and many examples show that pupils have clearly understood the style of these artists. For example, when younger pupils created a collage in the style of Kandinsky, using sponge-printing techniques and applied shapes, the resulting work was colourful and interesting. When older pupils, as part of their rain forest topic, created jungle paintings in the style of Rousseau, they showed good colour mixing skills and the resulting work was vibrant and exciting, although sometimes the form of the animals was immature.
73. The quality of teaching is good overall. The good subject knowledge of most teachers is immediately apparent and pupils respond well to this. Learning objectives are usually laid out in a lively, exciting way, with good stimuli and good structure to the practical activities. Consequently, pupils are very well motivated and interested in their artwork. Teachers' expectations are usually

high and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Good emphases on skill development are evident in some classes and, through effective questioning, pupils are encouraged to improve their work. However the developmental teaching of skills is sometimes not sufficiently rigorous, as when pupils use rulers to draw lines in buildings they have observed. Good cross-curricular teaching is evident across the school, as when pupils in Year 6, after studying the plays of Shakespeare, display lively imaginative characterisation in their paintings and drawings. Of particular note is a very good drawing in pastel of the witches in Macbeth made by pupils working collaboratively. They created a very good atmosphere and mood in the work. However, on other occasions valuable opportunities are missed to develop pupils' spiritual awareness by contemplating the aesthetic aspects of art and design. Pupils clearly enjoy their art experiences and attitudes are very positive. They co-operate well in groups when discussing their artwork. They offer thoughtful comments in discussion. They persevere well to complete their tasks, sometimes working in silence. Behaviour is very good throughout.

74. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed to manage this subject and her enthusiasm and knowledge of art teaching is already having an impact on standards. The scheme of work is undergoing review and an exciting action plan is in place, with a well-planned time line for development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

75. Pupils enter the school with levels of achievement which are similar to those expected nationally for seven year-olds. When pupils leave at eleven, standards are also close to national expectations. This is a similar picture to that found by the previous inspection. Most of the pupils in Year 3 have good designing and making skills when working with materials. Their designs for buggies and instruments are neatly drawn and clearly indicate length, width or diameter where relevant. The more able pupils' designs for the chassis for the buggies are more detailed and indicate clearly how the wheels will be joined to the axle. Pupils use tools safely to cut with accuracy, and shape and join wood to good effect, using triangular card to strengthen the corners. They use correct terms to describe the vehicle and the problems they had in constructing it and suggest how they might strengthen the base by using thicker material. Pupils explore a range of fastenings suitable for using their embroidered fabric for making a purse. They display a high ability in using a variety of stitches, colours, patterns and pictures for decoration. They list the sequence in which shoe box guitars were made, using precise vocabulary such as the 'bridge' of the guitar, and record difficulties they had in making it. Pupils in Year 4 explore information from a variety of sources, which includes the Internet, to produce an extensive variety of imaginatively designed kites. More able pupils expand the original purpose of making a kite, for example, in selecting delicate transparent fabric for advertising a name in the sky. Pupils provide knowledgeable reasons for their decisions. They knew, for example, that a Concord shape is aerodynamic, that larger kites might catch more wind and more strings improve control of the kite and enable it to fly longer. They explain well how a hot day with a light wind would help a kite rise from the ground.
76. Pupils in Year 5 are at an early stage of using control technology to control a mechanism. They follow instructions to build robotic insects using a technical construction kit and apply their knowledge to design a robotic arm. Pupils towards the end of the key stage test structures carefully and understand how to strengthen the structures and use a scientific method of testing bridges, noting carefully how and when they collapse. They consider the most cost effective way of constructing a bridge to hold a given weight. In their original designs for lamps, pupils drew diagrams from different aspects and proposed a sequence for making. They clearly indicate how an electric circuit will be incorporated and explain how their lamps can be used. The lamps are interesting, but pupils' finishing techniques are underdeveloped. Pupils evaluate existing advertising leaflets for places they have visited and redesign them for younger pupils. They have good ideas and make use of the computer to combine text and graphics to good effect.
77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that pupils work systematically towards designing and producing products that are appropriate to the user and purpose. The good teaching of safe procedures and practical tasks improves pupils' ability to work with greater independence. Pupils are motivated to be imaginative and to test carefully, which allows them to be creative and

to be aware of the importance of the design process. The lack of progression in teaching pupils to draw up step-by-step plans for the main stages of making have a negative impact upon pupils' standards. There is insufficient emphasis on finishing techniques. Lessons are well presented, organised and have a good working ethos where pupils concentrate and persevere with tasks. The topics support several subjects in a practical way but are not referenced to match the progression in knowledge and understanding in the scheme of work, which is unhelpful in planning objectives for learning. The subject co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped and does not allow appropriate monitoring of progression. As a result, the leadership and management of the subject are only just satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

78. When pupils enter the school, their achievements are in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment is good at the end of the key stage, including those with special educational needs, and all pupils make good progress in their learning. This is a similar position to the one found by the previous inspection. Pupils at the end of the key stage have good knowledge of their own locality and they easily compare and contrast it with their residential visit to Derbyshire. They are able to make geographical observations and record results of investigations. The quality of work produced in their diaries of the visit is of a high standard and well illustrated with accurate maps and diagrams. In Year 5, the pupils study the impact of human activity on environmental issues and the effects of pollution. They know many facts about the rain forest and can name a wide range of animals found at different levels in the forest. In one lesson, for example, pupils were able to draw accurate diagrams of a section of a forest, correctly labelling parts such as the 'canopy', 'forest floor' and 'over storey'. Pupils in Year 6 relate their investigational work well to the historical developments of settlements. They show that they have good mapping skills. This was a development of work carried out in Year 5, where the pupils studied mapping skills, and the use of signs and symbols.
79. The quality of teaching is good and pupils look forward to the next lesson with excitement. In good lessons, pupils are managed effectively, there are high expectations of listening, good questioning of pupils and lessons have been well planned. In Year 5, the teacher insisted on the pupils using the correct terms for the various layers within the Rain Forest, the lesson was at a good pace, and pupils worked productively using the correct geographical vocabulary. Pupils' attitudes to geography are good and they work quickly and sensibly together. They can discuss their work and are keen to help each other. They use information technology within the subject to enhance learning, as is the case in Year 4 with investigational work on major rivers where pupils had downloaded pictures and information from the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 came into school early, and used their own time to word process their Derbyshire work and find further information from the Internet.
80. The good standards in geography and the provision made for the subject have been maintained since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm for the subject. There is a good, recently updated policy, and a subject portfolio. This ensures that good progression takes place throughout the school. Assessment is regular using good teacher assessment to standardise the work, however the marking of written work is of a variable standard. When it is good, it offers pupils ideas on how to improve and guidance on further areas to investigate. The reverse is when there is only a tick with no comments for improvement. Overall, leadership of the subject is good with good resources, which contribute to the pupils' good knowledge of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

81. Pupils enter the school with achievements that are in line with those expected from seven year-olds. They make good progress in their learning throughout the school and by the time they leave at eleven, they achieve standards that are above those expected from pupils of this age. A significant proportion of higher attaining pupils achieve standards that are well above expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make good

progress, as they are well supported in lessons. This is a better picture than was found in the previous inspection, as pupils have improved in their knowledge of the topics covered, their understanding of past events and their historical skills.

82. Younger pupils have a good knowledge of life in ancient Egypt. They can make accurate comparisons between the kind of homes the Egyptians lived in and the pupils' own homes today. Other pupils have studied the Tudors and have a good grasp of the chronology of the period. They can accurately place the names of monarchs on a time line and recount correctly major aspects of their reigns. For example, one pupil in Year 4 was able to name all the wives of Henry VIII in the right order. Pupils are able to write sensitively in a range of historical contexts. For example, pupils in Year 4 have written good accounts of the Royal Progress of Queen Elizabeth I through the eyes of a child of the time. Pupils in Year 5 have written exciting accounts of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in the style of a newspaper report. Older pupils show detailed knowledge of the history of Britain since 1930. They recall well the major events of the Second World War, giving good reasons for the cause of the war and the effects of decisions made by the major powers. Pupils are able to empathise well with historical characters. For example, pupils in Year 6 have written very moving accounts of evacuees, imagining what it would be like to be separated from their parents. Higher attaining pupils have written detailed accounts of the events leading up to the declaration of war. These showed that they understand why Neville Chamberlain's appeasement policy did not work in stopping Hitler's advances into Eastern Europe. Pupils are good at selecting information from different sources. For example, they use the well-stocked library, CD-ROMs and the Internet to create well-written reports. They know which pieces of information are relevant for different tasks and select those best suited to their purposes. Standards of presentation are high and pupils make good use of information technology, creating tables, graphics and charts to illustrate their work. The quality of pupils' word processing is good.
83. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the periods studied. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in their acquisitions of skills and their understanding of historical themes. Teachers have high expectations and as a result, pupils produce good quality work. For example, the diaries produced after the residential visit to Derbyshire were very well produced, covering many aspects of the history of the area. They demonstrated well pupils' ability to concentrate for considerable periods and to work effectively on their own projects. Pupils are very interested in the subject and are very aware of the need to produce their best work at all times. This applies to pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs. Teachers manage pupils well and they employ a wide range of teaching methods to engage pupils' interest. These include the use of drama, appropriate television programmes and visitors to give talks on historical themes. Good use is made of information and communications technology, especially the Internet as a research tool. For example, pupils in Year 3 were observed accessing a web site on the Ancient Egyptians as part of their research project. Planning for the subject is thorough and teachers make good use of national guidelines to ensure continuity between classes and year groups. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory overall, but some teachers' marking is very brief and does not provide sufficient guidance to pupils when their work requires improvement. Homework is used appropriately to support learning and provides some good opportunities for pupils to conduct research in their own time.
84. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject and the curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils. There is good monitoring of standards and teaching, through some observation of lessons and scrutiny of books. She has ensured there is a good range of resources and this has had a positive impact on the standards achieved in the subject.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

85. When pupils enter the school at seven, their attainment is in line with national expectations. By the time they leave at eleven, standards are in line with national. As a result of the substantial investment in resources, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic technical skills such as word processing and the use of the Internet, and this includes those with special educational needs. Since the previous inspection the school has significantly improved its provision



for IT. However, the potential of the very recently introduced multi-media systems in each classroom and library, linked to the Internet has yet to be fully developed throughout the school.

86. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic technical skills to allow them to create simple images, enter, store, retrieve and amend data to enhance the presentation of their work. For example, they successfully copy pictures from the Internet and paste them into word processing to enhance their diary of their residential visit to Derbyshire, using formatting tools and special effects to emphasise text and create interesting titles and simple graphic images. Pupils in Year 3 were able to make notes and organise the information when gathering information related to their Egyptian topic. Pupils in Year 4 are beginning to learn how to give instructions to control the movements of a screen turtle. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply these skills so that the procedures can be programmed to produce a shape and then continue to show how the shapes can be nested inside each other.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was observed where the teachers are confident with the subject. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is insecure. The school has planned training to increase teachers' confidence in using the new-networked computers and software resources that are now available. The behaviour of pupils is good, and they enjoy working collaboratively on computers. They concentrate on their work, are generally attentive and show interest. Pupils cope well with the unexpected and are prepared to try different possible solutions to problems. The majority of pupils are confident in their approach to this subject. This was evident when a group of pupils in Year 5 and 6 were developing an Ascot Heath web site and they were sharing their knowledge and skills. Confident pupil mentors assist in some classes to help other pupils who meet a problem when working on the computers. The use of computers to assist learning across the curriculum is well developed, especially in the use of word processing and data analysis. Examples were seen where IT was used in Years 4 and 5 in Mathematics, and English lessons to enhance the learning opportunities of the pupils.
88. The recently appointed co-ordinator is leading the subject through a period of considerable change, and she is giving good support and guidance to the staff. Although she has not had time to monitor the teaching and learning in all classes, she has built up a portfolio of work showing progression. She is aware of the areas, that are now most in need of revision and her ideas for taking the subject forward are included in the school's plans for development. The good work of a part-time technician has enhanced the delivery of the subject within the school, offering support for staff to ensure that programs are available on the system, and preparing the programs in readiness for the start of each lesson.

## MUSIC

89. Pupils enter the school with achievements that are similar to those expected of seven year-olds. They make good progress throughout the school in most areas and by eleven, they achieve standards that are above national expectations. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection where standards were in line with expectations. Music has a very high profile in the school and evidence from this inspection shows that the school has improved its position and standards in music are now above those expected of pupils of this age. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their music making and talk about their activities knowledgeably and confidently. Music making activities are open to all pupils and pupils with special educational needs contribute well to musical activities and their standards are at least in line, sometimes above expectations. Instrumental playing, which was reported as high in the last inspection, and which is a particular focus of the school, has continued to develop and is a strength. A very wide range of instrumental teaching is offered, both in and out of the school day, and well over half of pupils play at least one instrument. Pupils are very enthusiastic about successfully developing their talents in instrumental playing. There are, however, some weaknesses in the quality of pupils' singing in assemblies.
90. Pupils listen to and appraise a very wide range of music from other times and other cultures and then create their own compositions in the same style. Standards vary from at least in line to very good. A good example of this is when younger pupils, after listening to a piece of Punjabi music, quickly recognise repeating patterns and changes in pitch. They explore, select and order sounds

well, using a good range of pitched and unpitched instruments to compose, confidently and competently, a short refrain of repeating patterns. Standards are at least in line and often good. Another good example is when, after listening to a traditional Jewish song, older pupils sing an accompaniment to the song, very tunefully, in two parts and in unison. They demonstrate good technical knowledge when improvising, for example when creating their own compositions to accompany a song on pitched instruments, piano, computer and recorder. They are eager to evaluate the work of other groups. Standards are often very good. Pupils in Year 6 also demonstrate good technical knowledge when, in response to poems such as 'The Snowflake', they record their own feelings, creating images on chosen instruments, before making interesting musical scores for compositions to accompany the poetry.

91. Standards in teaching, although this does vary, are now good overall and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers carefully weave music into the life and work of the school, particularly through the very good cross-curricular links that they provide in their planning. A good example of this is when, in their study of the Tudor period in history, pupils appraised Tudor music and created their own Tudor dances to perform in a local festival. In these instances, learning is very good. Newly introduced musical terms, such as 'accelerando' and 'refrain', are clearly explained and through suitable questioning teachers ensure that pupils fully understand their meaning. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good, sometimes very good. This, linked to suitable questioning, enables pupils to respond thoughtfully and accurately. Expectations are clear and pupils are encouraged to perform to a high quality. They respond well to this, both in discussion and in music making. Lessons are well organised with plentiful, good quality resources to enable all pupils to participate and they do so with enjoyment and interest. Occasionally, in some lessons, resources are not fully exploited and good learning opportunities are missed. Sometimes, when year groups join together for lessons, organisational difficulties occur, due to the noise level generated by such a large group and some pupils become boisterous. Pupils' attitudes to music are very positive. They talk confidently about their activities and eagerly show off their skills to visitors. However, on occasions valuable opportunities to develop the spiritual aspects of the subject are missed. There are insufficient opportunities to listen quietly to music and respond by expressing the feelings the music generates. Pupils enjoy experimenting with instruments and work well in pairs and groups to compose. They concentrate well and persevere well to complete their tasks and behaviour is usually very good. Sometimes, in large group singing, such as in assembly, they lose concentration and interest.
92. Management of the subject is good with the co-ordinator working closely with other teachers, with good musical expertise, both from within and outside the school, to develop the curriculum. This has a good impact on the quality of provision for music, particularly with instrumental teaching, and is helping to raise standards. Visiting musicians are used to good effect. For example, after the enthusiastic welcome evident during a visit from a bell ringer during a recent Music Week organised at the school, new resources were purchased to enable a hand bell group to be set up. A Sponsored Music Day successfully raised £1300, which was used for the purchase of new resources. Musical links within the community, such as when pupils sing and play to senior citizens at the annual 'Forget-me-not' Christmas lunch for the elderly and for pupils in the nearby infant school, are all used well to enhance standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

93. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above those expected nationally. They make satisfactory progress and at the end of the key stage standards are above national expectations. These above average standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. They develop good throwing, catching, bowling and batting skills and use them effectively in small controlled games. In warm up exercises, pupils demonstrate good athletics skills in their running and strengthening exercises. They understand that their hearts work hard and beat faster and test their pulse rate after robust activity. They understand and use the techniques of efficient batting, bowling and fielding and work together as a team. They understand the rules of small, controlled games that are related to major games.

94. No swimming was observed during the inspection, but evidence shows that by the end of the key stage, almost all pupils have achieved the basic twenty-five metre award. Pupils are given a range of games opportunities, for example, football, netball, cricket and rounders and the school plays competitive sport in football and netball. Extra tuition is provided for interested pupils in these sports in extra-curricular activities that also provides opportunities to acquire skills in short tennis and badminton. In gymnastics, pupils are well disciplined in warm up exercises in the hall. They use their body shapes well in both floor movements and on apparatus. Pupils' response is good. They evaluate their own performance and the performance of others well to improve style and techniques and many good sequences on the apparatus were observed.
95. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. However, the impact of teaching over time is satisfactory, as pupils make satisfactory progress in learning through the key stage. In lessons, teachers were observed teaching gymnastics and games skills. They led lessons well using pupils to demonstrate skills and offered opportunities for pupils to evaluate the performance of their peers. In all lessons seen teachers clearly enjoyed teaching physical education and did so with commitment and enthusiasm prompting pupils' motivation and enjoyment. They expected high standards and the pace of the lessons was brisk. Planning is good and pupils are now being assessed on their performance. Teachers' knowledge is secure and they teach the subject confidently. Pupils are well managed, and health and safety issues are taken account of appropriately. They enjoy their physical education lessons and are committed to high standards. They work well individually, in pairs and small groups. They listen to teachers' advice and act upon evaluation well to improve the quality of their work. Pupils act responsibly in collecting and returning the games equipment or when assembling or returning gymnastic apparatus.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

96. Pupils enter the school with standards that are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave at eleven, standards are above expectations. Good standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. The school is successful in its provision by ensuring that good attention is given to both what pupils know about religion and what they can learn from religion. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, which is reflected well in the Christian ethos of the school and in the work of the pupils. They also have a good knowledge of Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism and some knowledge of Islam. They respond well to the many opportunities offered to them in religious education lessons to reflect on moral and social issues. The quality of discussion and the sustained open-ended personal writing, which often follows, is a strength in this subject throughout the school. Progress for all ability groups is good.
97. When younger pupils compare aspects of their own experience with that of others, they recognise that there are some similarities and talk about them confidently. For example, they begin to understand the significance of singing in school assembly and compare it to chanting in Hindu services. In their study of winter festivals, such as Divali, the Jewish Festival of Light and Christmas, they learn that each religion has special books, rituals, signs and symbols. They describe them with good understanding of their significance. In their study of Christianity, they reflect on lifestyles in Palestine at the time of Jesus and have good recall of the special celebrations in his life, such as The Passover. This is reinforced in good quality writing. They also show clearly in their writing that they understand the contribution to Christianity made by the saints, David, Patrick and Andrew. Older pupils show a mature understanding of moral issues. A good example of this is when, after studying the parables of Jesus, they relate them to modern day life and create in their own writing, thoughtful and sensitive modern day parables, which contain the same message. Another example is the good understanding they demonstrate when they describe how the welcome that Jesus received on his entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was a prelude to his betrayal by his friends. After their study of Spring Festivals they clearly describe the significance of the special meal eaten in celebration of Pesach. They understand well the reasons for fasting in Ramadan and the celebration of Eid.
98. The teaching in religious education, although it varies in standard, is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and this helps them move the pace of lessons along quickly with good challenging questions that excite and maintain pupils' interest. Planning is thorough with

clear structure to most lessons and pupils respond well to the good opportunities for discussion. Opportunities to research on The Internet are generally well used, but sometimes too much time is spent on this activity and the pace slows, although pupils continue to maintain a degree of interest. Occasionally, when teacher subject knowledge is insecure, the pace of the lesson slows, pupils become restless and this has a negative impact on learning and progress. Attitudes and behaviour in religious education lessons are usually good and often very good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work in lessons and their interest in the good variety of artefacts that they see. In lessons they listen attentively and respectfully and are usually eager to contribute to discussion. They usually behave very well. They understand the need to reflect. For example, some pupils in Year 6, after discussing Biblical text on the sightings of Jesus after the Crucifixion, were slow to start their personal writing. When asked why, they said that they 'were allowed some time to think'.

99. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator, who keeps a close eye on the development of the subject and reviews policy and the scheme of work regularly. She is keen to ensure that fundamental Christian moral values are well reflected in the teaching and learning and permeate the life of the school, but also, that the school is sensitive to beliefs in religions other than Christianity. Pupils' own interpretations of religious writings and beliefs are also well emphasised. The school is successful in promoting these aspects.