

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROTHWELL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Rothwell, Kettering.

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121855

Headteacher: Mr Mike Cuthbert

Reporting inspector: Mr Tim Boyce

20932

Dates of inspection: June 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> 2000

Inspection number: 188363

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Rothwell Junior School Gladstone Street Rothwell Northants
Postcode:	NN14 6ER
Telephone number:	01536 710349
Fax number:	01536 713299
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bryan Doughty
Date of previous inspection:	03/06/1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tim Boyce	Registered inspector		What sort of school it is, How high standards are - the school's results and achievements, How well the school is led and managed.
Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils, How well the school works in partnership with parents.
Georgina Beasley	Team inspector	Information technology, history, music, equal opportunities	How well pupils are taught.
Rodney Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, physical education	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are.
Anna Smith	Team inspector	English, religious education, special educational needs, English as an additional language.	
Peter Williman	Team inspector	Science, design & technology, art.	How high standards are – pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

The inspection contractor was:

Evenlode Associates Ltd  
6 Abbey Close  
Alcester  
Warwickshire  
B49 5QW

Tel/Fax: 01789 766099

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rothwell Junior School is a larger than average school, providing full time education for 416 pupils aged from 7 to 11 years. The majority of pupils come from the market town of Rothwell, which lies to the west of Kettering in Northamptonshire. The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average, whilst the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, (1.3%), is higher than that found in most schools. The social and economic circumstances of the majority of parents are broadly average. Just over 10% of pupils in the school are eligible for free school meals. A higher than average percentage of pupils, (31.8%), is included on the school's register of special educational need. The great majority of these are at stages one and two. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs (2.1%) is above the national average. Assessments administered by the feeder infant school at the age of seven indicate that attainment on entry covers the full range, but is broadly average.

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

This is a good school with many significant strengths. Pupils achieve consistently good and often very good standards in almost all subjects. Standards are particularly high in writing, mathematics, history and art. The quality of teaching is consistently good. The leadership and management of the school are good. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve high standards in almost all subjects. Standards in writing, mathematics, history and art are very high.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- The school provides a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that is relevant to the pupils. It is greatly enhanced by the very good moral and cultural provision and the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available.
- The school cares for and looks after its pupils very well.
- A good range of information is made available to parents. The quality of the annual written reports is particularly high.
- The leadership, management and organisation of the school are good, and give the school a very definite and positive ethos. Behaviour is very good overall.

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

- Standards of speaking are not high enough. Many pupils do not speak with sufficient confidence.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to use their initiative and to take full responsibility for their own learning.
- The very effective monitoring procedures that have been developed are not always used with sufficient rigour to identify strengths and weaknesses, to set appropriate targets and to share best practice.
- The planned provision for spiritual development, whilst satisfactory overall, is not sufficiently integrated across the curriculum.

*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. The school has significantly decreased the amount of unsatisfactory teaching and has developed good quality schemes of work for all subjects. This has greatly improved the quality of teachers' planning. Assessment procedures have been improved, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and work is now much better matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The school has introduced some very good procedures for monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. However, some further improvement is required in the identification of strengths and weaknesses and in the sharing of best practice. The school has very effective procedures for monitoring quality and standards in English, mathematics and science, and is aware of the need to involve the co-ordinators of other subjects more in the

monitoring of quality and standards. Statutory requirements for collective worship are now met. In addition to the items identified as key issues in the previous report, there has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved in several subjects, including mathematics, where the improvement has been very significant, art, history and music. During the same period, reported standards in speaking and religious education have shown a slight fall. The school has made good overall improvement since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	B	B	very high A*
Mathematics	B	B	A	A	well above average A
Science	C	C	B	B	above average B
					Average C
					below average D
					well below average E
					very low E*

National Curriculum assessment results for 1999 show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well above average standards in mathematics and above average standards in English and science when compared with the national average and the standard achieved in most similar schools. Standards in English have remained above average and have shown a slow and steady improvement in real terms. Standards in science have improved in the past year from a broadly average position in 1997 and 1998, whilst the recent improvement in mathematics has been most remarkable. The school attributes much of the recent improvements in English and science to overall improvements in teaching and learning. Many of the very significant improvements in mathematics are attributed to the very effective introduction and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards in numeracy are very good and are a major strength. The school's targets for improvement are appropriate and are generally being met. Inspection evidence shows that standards are generally very high and that pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to do at least as well as the pupils in last year's Year 6 classes. Standards in English and science are above average whilst standards in mathematics are well above average. Within English, standards in writing are very good, standards in reading are good and standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Inspection evidence shows that standards in information technology (IT), whilst rising rapidly, due to the improved provision in the new suite, are currently average. Standards in religious education (RE) are good when compared with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in geography and good standards in design and technology (DT), music and physical education (PE). They achieve very high standards in art and history.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils generally have positive attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall.
Personal development and relationships	The overall quality of personal development and relationships is good. However, pupils do not always get sufficient opportunities to use their initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Good. Attendance levels are better than average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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*

Teaching is good overall and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. During the inspection 98% of teaching was satisfactory or better. Teaching was good, or better in 63% of the lessons seen. Of these lessons, 23% were very good and 4% were excellent. Throughout the school the teaching of literacy is good. The teaching of numeracy is very good, and this makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved in mathematics. Teaching effectively meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Particular strengths of the teaching seen are the security of subject knowledge, the effectiveness of teachers' planning, the good use of time and resources and high expectations of both behaviour and academic work. A weakness of many lessons observed, some of which were judged to be good and very good overall, was the tendency for teachers to tell pupils the answers to questions without giving them opportunities to evaluate the available evidence and offer their own suggestions and opinions. Many teachers also offer only limited opportunities for their pupils to speak and answer questions at length. This limits the development of speaking skills and the personal development of pupils. Too few opportunities are provided in school for pupils to use their own initiative and to conduct personal research.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and richness of the curriculum is a major strength of the school. It is broad, balanced and very relevant. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well provided for and make similar progress to their peers. The quality of their learning is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The provision for pupils' social development is good. The provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the overall curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is a very caring place and looks after all of the pupils very effectively.

Parents have a very positive view of school that is greatly enhanced by the quality of the partnership that the school has forged with most parents. A small but dedicated band of parents provides very good support to the school in a range of ways. A good range of information is made available to parents. The written reports to parents are of a particularly high quality. Whilst the quality of care provided by the school is very good overall, there are particular strengths in aspects of child protection and welfare, and in the procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher, deputy, senior staff and governing body have a shared vision and provide the school with good, clear leadership and management. The school is a very organised place with a very clear ethos that is firmly based on raising the existing high standards. Subject co-ordinators work very hard and effectively support their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully involved in the running of the school and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are very supportive of the head teacher and the school and are developing their role as critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed some good procedures for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. However, these are not always implemented with sufficient rigour to enable the clear identification of strengths and weaknesses and the sharing of best practice.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the full range of resources at its disposal. Good financial planning and management effectively support appropriate educational priorities. The principles of best value are applied to good effect.

The range of professional skills provided by the staff is very well matched to the curricular needs of the school. Very effective procedures for the induction, appraisal and professional development of staff are fully in place. All staff work together very well as a team. The accommodation, which has been much improved recently, is now good overall, offering specialist accommodation for IT, a kiln room to support work in art and an attractive and spacious library area. Whilst all classrooms are bright and attractive, several of them are rather small and could not easily accommodate more than thirty pupils. The school hall is rather cramped, given the size of the school. The quality, quantity and accessibility of teaching and learning resources are very good and are a strength of the school. Staff generally employ available resources to good effect. The head teacher is very well supported in the management of the school by the friendly and very efficient school secretary, and the bursar. The site supervisor supervises his team very effectively to help create a very welcoming, clean and safe school environment.

## 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>• The progress made and the standards achieved by the pupils;</li> <li>• The quality of the teaching;</li> <li>• The behaviour of the pupils;</li> <li>• The organisation and management of the school;</li> <li>• The leadership provided by the head teacher;</li> <li>• The broad, relevant curriculum;</li> <li>• The wide range of extra-curricular activities;</li> <li>• The continuing improvement which has been made in recent years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given to pupils;</li> <li>• The information made available about the progress pupils are making;</li> <li>• The quality of the school's partnership with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all of the aspects which parents identified as strengths of the school. Of the areas identified by a small number of parents as areas for improvement, the team feels that an

appropriate amount of homework is set, that the information made available to parents is of a very good quality and that the quality of the school's partnership with parents is good overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Inspection evidence and the baseline assessment evidence available from the statutory assessments carried out in Year 2 by the main feeder infant school indicate that attainment on entry, whilst variable between year groups, is broadly average.
2. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the average Level 4, or above, in English, was higher than average. The percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the average. When the total is calculated using the average points score, the overall level of achievement was above average. The performance of boys was above average, whilst the performance of girls was well above average. The general trend is one of steady improvement, but the gap between national average and the achievement of the school is gradually closing. Pupils' performance in English is above average when compared with similar schools.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English in general, and Literacy in particular, are generally high, and that the pupils in the current Year 6 classes are on course to do at least as well as the pupils in last years Year 6 classes. Standards in speaking are satisfactory. This represents a decline since the previous inspection. Reading and listening standards are good. Writing standards, including standards in spelling and handwriting are very good and are a notable strength of the school. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
4. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the average Level 4, or above, in mathematics, was above average. The percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was well above average. When the total is calculated using the average points score the overall level of achievement was well above average. The performance of boys was above average, whilst the performance of girls was well above average. The trend is steady and the school is maintaining better than average attainment. Pupils' performance in maths was well above average when compared with similar schools.
5. Inspection evidence shows that by the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11, they have attained standards in mathematics well above those expected nationally, and well above the standards achieved in similar schools. This is a major strength of the school and is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress and achievement throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, is very good. More able pupils have been effectively targeted and are making good progress. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has been very successful. This has had a significant effect on the development of numeracy and on pupils' abilities for mental calculation and knowledge of mathematical strategies required for problem solving. Numeracy is effectively integrated across a wide range of subjects.
6. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the average Level 4, or above, in science, was above average. The percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was also above the average. When the total is calculated using the average points score the overall level of achievement was above average. The performance of both boys and girls is above average. The trend is rather variable and after two years when achievement was close to average, standards are now back to the high levels achieved in 1996. Pupils' performance in science is above average when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence agrees with this very strong position and shows standards to be above average by the end of Year 6. These standards directly reflect the good quality of teaching in the subject throughout the school. Pupils make good progress overall, but learning is accelerated towards the end of the key stage, because the teaching is particularly challenging. Progress is effectively supported by the broad and balanced curriculum, which clearly identifies the investigations, knowledge and skills to be covered in each lesson.
7. Inspection evidence shows that standards in IT are currently average. Learning in information technology is satisfactory overall and, by the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining standards in line

with those expected for pupils of a similar age. Progress during lessons is very good due to the detailed planning of suitable activities that help pupils to develop their computer skills in a range of situations. The suite of computers gives pupils very good access to IT during lessons when they work in pairs or small groups, and their rate of learning is good and sometimes very good. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress and the school's palm top computers are put to good use for work in the classroom, particularly for data handling and word processing activities.

8. Standards in RE are good and are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus particularly in knowledge and understanding. Standards are not so high when pupils are required to respond to questions of meaning and value, since insufficient attention is sometimes given to discuss and debate these key questions.
9. Standards of achievement in all of the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum are always at least satisfactory. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in geography and good standards in DT, music and PE. They achieve very good standards in art, and history.
10. All pupils make good progress irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, social circumstance or prior attainment. Pupils with special education needs make good progress. They are well supported and make good progress in literacy as they move through the school. Pupils who come from families where English is not the home language make good progress, similar to their peers, and attain levels which are at least in line with national expectations.

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

11. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and generally behave well. This has a very positive impact on the quality of their learning and the standards they achieve. The good standards identified in the previous report have been maintained in this respect.
12. Pupils are keen to attend and they take pride in their school and its achievements. They move around the school and within their classrooms in a very orderly, calm way, showing courtesy to classmates and to adults. They enjoy an environment free of bullying or discrimination and report that any bullying that does take place is dealt with quickly and effectively. Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy social occasions for because of the good relationships that exist between most pupils. They behave well in assemblies and demonstrate significant self-discipline in managing their movements within the relatively small school hall. Pupils respect each other's belongings and share equipment well. They use the well-organised resources well and tidy their classrooms at the end of lessons efficiently. This enables time to be used to the best advantage.
13. In most lessons pupils work hard and show significant self-control. They almost always respond politely and quickly to the requests of their teachers. When there are opportunities for group activities, pupils support each other well. This was effectively demonstrated in a Year 5 class when the pupils analysed the mechanism and impact of animal traps. They used well-reasoned discussion and took turns effectively in speaking to arrive at a conclusion. All pupils are interested in their work and are enthused by the topics offered, which effectively link together the strands of their learning in different subjects. This makes learning interesting.
14. Most teachers use clear explanation and well-modulated voices to convey high expectations to pupils about their behaviour. When pupils are working individually, working conversation often takes place in whispers so as not to disturb the quiet atmosphere. Such levels of self-restraint in some classes carry over to the question and answer sessions when fewer pupils than expected participate. The good attitudes and tolerant relationships reflect the good example set by teachers, who are calm, caring and supportive in manner. Pupils are, thereby, strongly encouraged to concentrate both individually and in their group work. In a minority of classes, where teachers are less assertive in their class management, a small number of pupils, usually boys, interrupt the pace of the lesson. The school has identified behaviour management as an aspect for review in its School Development Plan. In contrast to the small amount of unsatisfactory behaviour, pupils' manners and conduct are most often exemplary. This was clearly illustrated on a Year 3 day to

- two museums in Leicester. Pupils' interest, enthusiasm and good behaviour enhanced the quality of learning significantly and these characteristics were also clearly evident in the follow up lessons.
15. Pupils value the newer developments in the school, whether those be additions to the building or the newly created computer suite. Pupils equally value the established opportunities to extend their involvement in school through the School Council and the range of extra curricular sports and musical activities. Their concentration and determination to perform well in these activities is clear as they respond very positively to the good teaching. For example, pupils in the jazz recorder ensemble matched their peers in the ocarina orchestra in their commitment to playing musically well and together to a high degree of sophistication for their ages. In the gymnastics club pupils strive to give form and fluency to their movements.
16. Pupils enjoy the good opportunities provided to understand the values and perspectives of other faiths, cultures and times through subjects that include history, art and religious education. Whilst some pupils generally develop their initiative and responsibility through the incidental opportunities provided in the classroom, in many classes insufficient structured opportunities are provided for pupils to conduct independent research and to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' self-confidence in public speaking is often insufficiently developed to enable them to express their ideas clearly or to participate confidently in events such as assemblies. This is a relative weakness. Pupils with special education needs are well supported in their development. Their confidence and self-esteem is carefully nurtured through praise and rewards.

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

17. Teaching is good overall and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. During the inspection 98% of teaching was satisfactory or better. Sixty three percent of teaching was good or better of which 23% was very good and 4% excellent. The key issues identified in teaching in the last inspection report have been addressed and teaching has improved and is now a strength of the school.
18. The teaching of literacy is good. All literacy skills, except speaking, are developed very well through other subjects. A major strength of teaching is the opportunities provided for pupils to write for a number of subjects in a range of styles. This has a very positive impact on writing standards across the school. However, in most classes pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to talk about their work and to work independently.
19. The teaching of numeracy is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the numeracy strategy and put this into practice to good effect. A particular strength of the teaching in numeracy lessons are the opportunities provided for pupils to develop, to talk about and to use their own strategies for solving mathematical problems. Learning objectives are clear and teachers usually share these with pupils at the beginning of lessons. There are also good planned opportunities to extend numeracy skills across other subjects. For example, in a science lesson, pupils in a Year 6 class were asked to calculate the gear ratios of different bicycles. Pupils have also been required to apply their knowledge of the measurement of angles when constructing a "Mystic Rose" on the computer and to record the data obtained in a traffic survey in a variety of graphic forms.
20. Although not identified specifically in lesson plans, the teaching of IT skills is good. The planned activities for each year group ensure that pupils progressively develop and practise an appropriate range of computer skills. The teaching of geography and French is satisfactory, whilst the teaching of English, science, IT, DT, music, and PE is good. The teaching of mathematics, history and art is very good.
21. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall in all subjects. The support given to teachers by co-ordinators through the monitoring of joint planning and guidance on how activities should progress in lessons helps to overcome any weaknesses in subject expertise. Teachers generally share the objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, although this practice is not consistent across all classes. Schemes of work in all subjects are detailed and give teachers good guidance on how to

extend learning opportunities within lessons for more able pupils. Teachers' questioning skills are good and are a strength in many subjects, particularly in mathematics, science and English. Teachers ask searching questions, which helps them assess pupils' learning and give them information to challenge and set further tasks for the higher attainers. Work is matched well to the learning needs of all pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. However, the limited range of teaching styles and strategies used in the some lessons in some subjects inhibits pupils' ability to speak confidently to a range of audience. There are also insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to use their initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning.

22. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and most pupils are fully involved in lessons. In a minority of lessons where some pupils were not behaving appropriately, although the teacher managed the behaviour positively and skilfully in line with the school's behaviour policy, the pace of the lesson slowed and pupils' learning was interrupted. When opportunities are given, pupils work well together in groups, taking turns, for example, to use the computer keyboard and "mouse" and to play team games in PE.
23. The quality and use of resources is very good. The school's policy to teach all subjects through first hand experience and the well integrated and rich curriculum give pupils real and interesting contexts through which to learn. This is particularly strong in the teaching of history throughout the school. A brisk pace is maintained in most lessons and pupils spend most of their time fully involved in learning. When additional adults work in classrooms, they make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. They are well informed about the purpose of tasks and make accurate assessments which give the teacher valuable information about the pupils' learning. The use of homework is good and is based on a clear policy. Pupils are often asked to practise skills learned in the classroom, to learn spellings and numeracy facts and are given research tasks that cover a number of subjects including English, mathematics, science, geography and history. Pupils are also expected to read regularly at home.
24. Good use is made of on-going assessment to plan lessons from day to day. Detailed records for English, mathematics and science are kept up to date and informal observations are made for other subjects. Teachers mark work carefully and this is sometimes supported by the setting of targets for pupils' next piece of learning. Co-ordinators regularly monitor pupils' work and the information is used effectively to evaluate the progress made in different subjects.
25. In most lessons pupils learn well. They concentrate hard on the task in hand. They follow their teacher's direction to improve their work. They are not, however, always given sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own work, use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. The teaching of pupils with special education needs in withdrawal groups is consistently good. The good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, the special needs teacher, support staff and class teachers makes a significant and positive impact on the learning of these pupils.

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

26. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are very good and are a strength of the school. The curriculum for the statutory years of schooling is broad and balanced, containing all subjects of the National Curriculum and French for pupils in Year 6. The dedication of the school to provide a broad curriculum, particularly through cross-curricular work on topics such as Rothwell and its fair, significantly enhances the high standards achieved by most pupils.
27. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have been introduced successfully, leading to significant improvements, particularly in writing across the curriculum and number work. The curriculum includes an appropriate health and drugs awareness programme, and the governors have an agreed sex education policy.

28. All pupils are given equality of access irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, social circumstance or prior attainment. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the Code of Practice is carefully followed. Pupils with English as an additional language are well provided for and make similar progress to their peers.
29. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including musical clubs for recorder, ocarina and choir, an art club and a number of sporting activities. These include clubs for football, gymnastics, netball, cricket and aerobics. Visiting peripatetic teachers to the school provide brass, violin, cello, guitar and woodwind tuition. All Year 6 pupils gain a basic knowledge of French language and France during their last year in the school. In addition to welcoming many visitors, such as county cricketers, to the school to talk to the pupils about their own skills and knowledge, many curricular opportunities are offered through educational visits. A recent residential visit to Monmouth by pupils in Year 6 produced work of a very high quality as pupils compared this area with their own town. Pupils make regular educational trips to museums. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 3 visited Leicester to study its Roman architecture. Pupils have also visited different places of worship. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, as well as to their learning in a broad range of subject areas.
30. The school has good links with the local community and is regarded as an important and integral part of the town. Pupils have made many in-depth studies of Rothwell in connection, for example, with their study of the effect of World War II on the local community. There is good liaison with the local church and the Police. Music groups from the school regularly visit other schools and perform at community functions and celebrations.
31. The school has very good relationships with its two main partner institutions, the local secondary school and infants school. The schools are involved in shared events and there are curricular links. These have included visits from the secondary school mathematics co-ordinator and faculty to observe numeracy lessons. Nearly all pupils are familiar with the secondary school through their regular use of its swimming pool, which has a positive impact on pupils' standards in swimming. The school is used regularly by student teachers, and a number of secondary school students were enjoying work experience during the inspection.
32. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall. The previous inspection described the overall provision as being very good. There is satisfactory promotion of spiritual development throughout the school, mainly through assembly themes, such as taking care of each other, rules for living, and looking after our world. Appropriate emphasis is made through children's' popular literature on aspects of their spiritual life. However, little evidence was observed of pupils reflecting on these themes. Many pupils are shy and quiet in assemblies and some Year 6 pupils are not sufficiently confident to read their own prayers publicly. Whilst the school identifies opportunities for spiritual development, it has not yet consistently developed the ability of the pupils to gain insight into their own values and beliefs, and those of others, and to express them confidently.
33. The school's provision for moral development is very good and is reflected through all aspects of school life. Very good behaviour is seen consistently on the playground and in the classrooms, resulting in a very positive ethos for learning that pervades the school. Pupils are polite to each other and to other adults, including teachers and visitors. They work well together in small and large groups, especially in subjects such as PE and IT. Teachers work actively with their pupils in classes to promote their own rules for appropriate behaviour.
34. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Older pupils are given good opportunities to help in classrooms and with the setting out of equipment. This is especially noticeable in the consistently good practice when setting out apparatus for games and gymnastics lessons. Teachers provide good role models for their pupils, and relationships are consistently good. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in the School Council, and many pupils involve themselves, very

successfully, in charitable fund-raising projects and other sponsorship, for example, to raise money for new gymnastic and computer equipment.

35. Very good provision for cultural development is evident throughout the school. The breadth, depth and quality of the curriculum give very good opportunities to study cultural traditions, not just of the locality, but of other areas of British society. Visits to the school from musical groups and ensembles, fair ground workers, Diwali dances and the work of a local librarian are examples of the schools' efforts to provide a diversity of cultural traditions for the pupils to study. Pupils study several different religions, including Islam and Sikhism and Hinduism, and visit their places of worship. This enhances their knowledge of different countries, cultures and religions. High quality work and opportunities in art and music, for example, also effectively promote pupils' cultural awareness.

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

36. The overall standard of care provided by the school for its pupils is good. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good and are a strength of the school. They compare very favourably with the previous inspection. Procedures to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress and personal development are good, and outcomes are used effectively to guide teachers' planning.
37. All adults make a positive contribution to the school's caring ethos. They pay close attention to protecting pupils from harm and to promoting their health, safety and general well being. The governing body has shown its commitment to ensuring high levels of care by establishing a pastoral committee. Pupils' confidence in the security and support that the school provides helps them to concentrate on their learning. Child protection procedures are very effective and well understood by the staff, who handle issues in a sensitive manner. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and is vigilantly overseen by the site supervisor and the governing body. There are no health and safety concerns and the whole school site is extremely clean and well maintained by the hard working site supervisor and his staff. The school secretary and bursar dispense first aid in a very kind and caring manner, and fire drills are held regularly. All pupils are well supervised in school and in the playground. The quality of care provided by lunchtime supervisors is good.
38. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and there is good liaison with outside support agencies. Learning support assistants are patient and encouraging and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. There are clear procedures to identify pupils early who need extra help and the school follows all the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. There are good induction procedures for pupils entering Year 3 from the Infant School and pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for their transfer to Montsaye and other local secondary schools. Close curriculum links have been developed with these schools. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
39. There are very good procedures to promote good behaviour and the school functions as a very calm and disciplined community. Ninety six percent of parents who replied to the questionnaire felt that behaviour was good. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment and pupils are very clear that any incidents of oppressive behaviour must be reported to an adult. There have been no exclusions. There are effective measures to promote good attendance and it is made clear to parents that they must inform the school if their child is absent. The vast majority of parents are very co-operative and there are good systems in place to follow up any absences that have not been correctly notified.
40. The previous inspection report identified arrangements to assess pupils' work as a key issue for improvement. The school has worked hard to remedy this and there are now good procedures to ensure that pupils' work is regularly assessed in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Assessment information and records of achievement in these subjects are readily accessible and the data gained is used effectively to help teachers plan and target their lessons.



However, there is no agreed system to record what pupils have learned in non-core subjects, and work in these areas is not always as well matched to pupils' individual needs.

41. Teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond quickly to them. They make good use of information passed on from the Infant School. Teachers meet regularly in year groups to discuss pupils' progress, and work together well to seek remedies for any problems. Pupils are not yet involved in working regularly with teachers to set their own targets, although pupils contribute to their own annual reports by listing their strengths and weaknesses. The school regularly acknowledges pupils' achievements, particularly when they have tried hard. There is a good system of certificates, awarded by the head teacher in school assemblies, which are greatly prized and which encourage pupils to achieve high standards. The school demonstrates real commitment to the care of its pupils with special educational needs. Meticulously kept individual folders, rigorous assessment, and evidence of work and targets met all support the progress made by these pupils.

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

42. The school has a strong commitment to working in close partnership with parents and this has a beneficial impact on the quality of life within the school and on standards achieved. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting parents registered their strong support for the school and expressed no significant concerns. Inspection evidence supports parents' high levels of satisfaction with the way in which the school works in partnership with them. The good partnership with parents that was found in the last inspection report has been maintained.
43. The school has put considerable thought and effort into the way it communicates with parents. The quality of information it provides for them is very good. There are well-written letters and newsletters that keep parents up to date with the current curriculum and with school activities. The prospectus and a helpful induction programme give clear information about school routines, and introduce ways in which parents can support their child's learning at home. There are regular meetings to discuss various aspects of the curriculum including the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Consultation meetings and open afternoons are held when parents can discuss their children's progress and observe work. Annual reports are very good indeed and give parents a very clear idea of the standards their child has achieved as well as the efforts made. Parents of children with special education needs are kept well informed of their children's progress during reviews of their individual education plans.
44. The school actively encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and provides a welcoming environment for them. All teachers are helpful and approachable. School policies encourage teachers to involve parents. A few parents make a regular commitment to help in classrooms and to accompany pupils on outside trips. The school values any help that parents feel able to give. Most parents have signed the home/school partnership agreement and co-operate readily, by reporting absences promptly and supporting school activities. Although parents demonstrate their interest in the school by attending consultation evenings and supporting school activities, there is evidence that some parents do not support their children's learning at home by listening to them read and helping with homework. Attendance at curriculum evenings is sometimes disappointingly low.
45. There is an active Friends' Association which contributes generously to school funds and which cements good relationships between parents and staff. Pupils benefit from the funds raised on their behalf and by the quality of relationships forged between home and the school. Parents are appreciative of the support given by the school to the Association's events and see this as practical evidence of the school's commitment to building a strong home/school partnership.

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

46. The head teacher, who is much respected in the local community for his hard work and dedication to the school, has a very effective working partnership with his deputy, his senior staff and the governing body. Together they provide the school with good, well focussed leadership and management which manifests itself in a happy, well organised and effective school where good teaching and effective learning result in the pupils achieving generally high standards. The aims of the school are generally well met, with the exception of those that concern themselves with aspects of pupils' expressing themselves confidently. All members of staff work together very well as a team with shared aims and values and all teaching staff are effectively organised into year teams under the management of a year co-ordinator.
47. Subject co-ordinators provide good management in their subject areas and are developing effective means of evaluating quality and standards throughout the school. The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have been given some opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in other classes and to share best practice in other classes and year groups. It is planned to extend this practice to other subjects in the coming year. After discussions with the staff and the representatives of the local education authority (LEA), the head teacher has devised some very good monitoring procedures. These have been used to generally good effect but are not always fully effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses, in detailing appropriate targets for improvement and in sharing best practice throughout the school. The management of special educational needs is good and the resources allocated for these pupils are used appropriately.
48. Governors meet regularly as a full body and in their various committees. They are fully involved in the running of the school, gaining a generally good understanding of the many strengths and the small number of minor weaknesses that exist. They are very effective in meeting their responsibilities, and in addition to their contributions to the School Development Plan they make a major contribution to the overall management and organisation of the school. They are very supportive of the head teacher and the school and are developing their role as a critical friend. The head teacher and staff are very appreciative of the level of personal support they gain from the governors.
49. The school is well staffed in the number, qualifications and experience of teachers in order to meet the demands of the national curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The number and experience of the support staff is good. Whilst deployment of such staff is well matched to targeted pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, there are a number of classes who would benefit from support for pupils who have behavioural difficulties. The school has very good procedures for the induction of new staff and particularly newly qualified teachers, who are very well supported. The school has a well-established and effective strategy for the appraisal and professional development of its teaching staff.
50. The School Development Plan is a detailed and comprehensive document, produced after due consultation with all interested parties and which includes most of the key priorities for development. The school has set appropriate targets for improvement and is very well placed to achieve them on schedule.
51. Whilst the costs of running the school are a little above the national average, the quality of education received by the pupils and the standards they reach show that the school gives good value for money. The very good resources are used well and this has a positive impact on standards. The head teacher and governing body manage the school's finances carefully and have recovered well from the deficit budget of several years ago. Strategic planning is based upon an expected fall in numbers on roll shortly, so the governing body is prudently retaining an appropriate contingency. The financial systems of the school are well managed by a very efficient bursar.
52. Major expenditure is carefully evaluated using the principles of best value to ensure that the school gets good value for money, as in the recent extensive building programme. The most recent auditors report last year indicated some minor items for attention, which have since been dealt with satisfactorily. Whilst the governing body, through its resources committee, is vigilant in its

monitoring of the finances of the school, it is still in the early stages of developing its systems for evaluation of the effectiveness of expenditure. New technology is well used by the secretary and bursar, and through the new information technology suite, teachers are now making much more effective use of computers to support their pupils. Specific grants, for example to provide 'booster' classes in Year 6 and for building improvements, are used appropriately.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

In order to raise further the existing high standards the school should:

1. Raise standards in pupils' speaking in order to develop further their communication skills and self confidence (paragraphs 17,19 – 22), by:
  - a) providing better and more frequent opportunities for them to speak to a range of audiences in a variety of different contexts;
  - b) providing regular opportunities for them to evaluate their own work and that of others;
  - c) ensuring, through monitoring, that all teaching staff use a full range of teaching and learning strategies which will encourage pupils to discuss their work and develop an appropriate range of speaking skills.
2. Improve the personal development of pupils by providing them with better and more frequent opportunities to use their initiative and to take full responsibility for their own learning. (paragraph 17)
3. Improve the implementation of the very effective monitoring procedures so that strengths and weaknesses are identified more clearly, targets for improvement are set, and best practice is shared throughout the school.
4. Improve the integration of the school's provision for spiritual development into the whole school curriculum. (paragraph 34)

Other very minor areas for development that the governors may wish to include in their action plan include the following:

- a) Develop agreed procedures for the assessment and recording of the attainment of pupils in non-core subjects. (paragraph 42)
- b) Ensuring that pupils' reading books are changed more regularly in some classes and are more effectively matched to levels of reading skill. (paragraph 57)
- c) Ensure that work in mathematics is always appropriately matched to the needs of lower achieving pupils. (paragraph 64)
- d) Developing still further the integration of practical and investigative work in science. (paragraph 68)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	124
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	23	36	35	2	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)	N/A	416
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	42

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	138

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
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	31	49	79

<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	22	25	28
	Girls	41	40	41
	Total	63	65	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80	82	87
	National	70	69	78

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	24	25
	Girls	43	40	44
	Total	63	64	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80	81	87
	National	68	69	75

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	411
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	92

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	643629
Total expenditure	635859
Expenditure per pupil	1656
Balance brought forward from previous year	41500
Balance carried forward to next year	49270

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	416
Number of questionnaires returned	121

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	33	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	51	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	51	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	59	40	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	48	11	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	40	7	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	65	33	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	42	4	1	4

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents raised no other significant issues.



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

### **ENGLISH**

53. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the average Level 4, or above, was higher than average. The percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was close to the average. When the total is calculated using the average points score, the overall level of achievement was above average. The performance of boys was above average, whilst the performance of girls was well above average. The general trend is one of steady improvement, but the gap between national average and the achievement of the school is gradually closing. Pupils' performance in English is above average when compared with similar schools.
54. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English in general, and Literacy in particular, are generally high, and that the pupils in the current Year 6 classes are on course to do at least as well as the pupils in last years Year 6 classes. Standards in speaking are satisfactory. This represents a decline since the previous inspection. Reading and listening standards are good. Writing standards, including standards in spelling and handwriting are very good and are a notable strength of the school. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.
55. Standards of speaking are satisfactory overall in English lessons, but vary significantly between classes, spanning the range from very good to satisfactory. Listening skills are good and pupils listen attentively to teachers, responding polite and following their instructions quickly. When teachers ask questions, pupils respond well and are keen to become involved in discussions, but in some classes opportunities are lost for pupils to use and extend speaking skills. Several good examples of speaking and listening were seen during a number of literacy lessons, as for example when pupils in a Year 4 class discussed how people cope with death when reading 'Come Back Grandma' and 'The Diddakoi'. In a Year 5 class, pupils shared eloquent views on the rights and wrongs of fox hunting as a result of reading 'Fantastic Mr Fox'. Pupils in a Year 6 class made imaginative suggestions and inferences about fairground poetry. However, the over emphasis on the more formal aspects of written English has led to limited opportunities being offered for pupils to participate in a range of communication activities where they can express themselves creatively in a wide range of situations.
56. The school places an emphasis on developing reading skills and this, together with the Literacy Strategy, results in good standards. The majority of pupils experience a wide range of reading texts, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry and use appropriate strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. In Year 3, pupils find out information about Romans, using the index, contents and glossary pages of reference books very effectively. Pupils in a Year 4 class make predictions about story endings as in 'Fred' by Posy Symmonds. Pupils in Year 5 understand and are able to write about the main points of their reading, for example, of 'The Hodgeheg'. Pupils in Year 6 read poetry with expression and fluency. Pupils with special educational needs use letter sounds, word blending and picture clues to help them with their reading and they make good progress in relation to their abilities. Individually, pupils talk about their enjoyment of reading, their favourite authors and their preferences for poetry or prose. However, there were a significant number of times when pupils felt that the texts they were being given from the reading scheme were too easy. Evidence from hearing pupils read, particularly the above average and average groups, identifies that, in many cases, texts are inappropriately matched to ability.
57. Standards in writing are very good and are a major strength. Pupils rapidly acquire a good understanding of grammar and the conventions of language. Most are able to apply this knowledge effectively and use words very appropriately in their writing both within the English curriculum and in many other subjects. Handwriting skills are applied across all areas of writing and presentation skills are of a very high standard for a large majority of pupils. Spelling is taught regularly throughout the school and there is much evidence of systematic and appropriate spelling tests set in all classes with good application of what has been learnt in pupils work. Across the school, pupils write in a wide variety of styles, contexts and to varying audiences. Pupils in Year 3

write detailed and well structured diaries related to 'The Iron Man' story, easily followed recipes on how to make cheese on toast and some most interesting Battle poems. Pupils in Year 4 write detailed newspaper reports linked to historical work on The Tudors, imaginative creative stories entitled 'Hidden Treasures' and informative 'buddy' letters to internet "friends" in New Zealand. Pupils in Year 5 compose careful and interesting poems on 'The Seven Ages of Man/Woman' and write well constructed play scripts. Pupils in Year 6 use research skills very effectively to create Millennium projects. They write interesting short stories and engage in character studies linked to 'The Hobbit'. Pupils with special education needs are taught spelling conventions, write sentences using correct grammar and punctuation and complete dictation exercises to speed up their pace and accuracy. Pupils have many good opportunities to practise, develop and refine their writing skills, sometimes to the detriment of their speaking and listening.

58. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers understand the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and work within it with confidence and expertise. Lessons are suitably structured to meet the needs of pupils. Most lessons have clear introductions, but however, there are times when the learning objectives within lessons are confused with the tasks to be carried out. In very good lessons teachers pose effective questions to encourage thinking skills and to promote the spoken use of language. They use a wide variety of teaching strategies. These result in stimulated and engaged pupils who are challenged to learn and their progress and attainment is very good. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and in the majority of lessons pupils' behaviour is well managed. Where classroom support staff are deployed in literacy lessons, particularly when working with groups, the pace of work and the progress pupils make is significantly enhanced.
59. The subject is led by two co-ordinators, who have successfully steered the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and who are currently examining the implications of the revised curriculum. Monitoring of the subject has taken place through the observation of lessons in extended writing and the sampling of books. However, the evaluation of this monitoring has not yet had an impact on the development of all aspects of the subject. Assessment strategies, especially in reading through regular testing and miscue analysis, are good. Reading records although inconsistently maintained are thorough. The quality of literacy across the curriculum is good overall, with particular strengths in the writing strand.

## **MATHEMATICS**

60. The results in the National Curriculum tests for 1999 showed standards to be well above the national average. The number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was above the national average, and those reaching the higher Level 5 were well above average. Pupils' performance was well above that of similar schools when compared on an average points score basis. During the last three years attainment has varied and after a drop in 1998 there was a marked improvement in 1999. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
61. Inspection evidence shows that by the time pupils leave the school aged 11, they have attained standards well above those expected nationally, and this is a major strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The progress achieved by all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs, is very good. The needs of more able pupils have been targeted effectively and they make very good progress. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced successfully, and has had a significant effect on the development of numeracy and pupils' abilities for mental calculation and knowledge of mathematical strategies for problem solving. Effective use is made of numeracy across a broad range of curriculum areas so that pupils apply their skills in a variety of interesting and meaningful situations.
62. Pupils in Year 3 learn to use appropriate number operations and methods of calculation to solve real life problems. As for example in a shopping problem when 5 toy owls will cost 35p each, calculated by working out  $30 \times 5$ , and then adding  $5 \times 5$ . Most pupils understand and use these

strategies rapidly and correctly. Pupils in Year 4 have devised their own rules for measuring areas and perimeters. They use methods such as counting squares, but also devise accurate formulae for measuring the area of triangles and irregular shapes. Most of them have also learned the meaning of 'square' numbers and can identify them up to 81. Pupils in Year 5 have a good knowledge of place value and decimals and can divide and multiply correctly numbers such as 7.5 and 750,000 by 100 and 1000. They can calculate very quickly mentally, halving and doubling numbers up to 100, understanding number relationships and concepts such as 'inverse'. Pupils at the end of the key stage effectively use their very good skills in number work in a wide variety of practical situations through a fairground theme, for example. They know the properties of circles, including correct mathematical language such as circumference, radii and chords. They use circular protractors effectively to measure angles correctly. Progressively they move to the use of percentages to calculate practical examples mentally e.g. 80% of 320, 30% of 280. They then use this strategy to establish how many people will use a fairground ride at different times. Pupils in Year 6 apply information technology to data handling for example in their analysis of traffic trends in Monmouth.

63. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Nearly all teachers have good mathematical knowledge and are confident when teaching the subject. Very good lessons are characterised by a fast pace, well considered and challenging questions and good on-going assessments of pupil understanding. They set clear lesson objectives and make good use of deadlines. Teachers sometimes present new concepts too quickly for some less able pupils who become confused and do not understand why they have made mistakes. On occasions this leads to some pupils becoming distracted. At these times the quality of learning is less effective.
64. Pupils work well in groups, even when not directly supervised by their teachers. Their behaviour is generally good and most enjoy their lessons. However, in some classes pupils rely too much on the directions given by teachers and show insufficient independence in their work. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs who receive good support from the special needs teacher and the effective classroom assistants.
65. The co-ordinator is a very good leader and has managed the introduction and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively. Her teaching of the subject is very good and has been identified as exceptional practice by the LEA, who have asked her to demonstrate the application of the National Numeracy Strategy to the staff in other school in the authority. She has been given very good opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and has ensured that the school is developing the subject at considerable pace. Detailed assessment procedures and well-focussed target setting has played a large part in the very good, recent improvement in pupil standards.

## SCIENCE

66. Standards in science are good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection with pupils attaining scores above the national average both at the average Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Pupils' performance was well above that of similar schools in 1999 when compared on an average points score basis. The good standards achieved directly reflect the good quality of teaching found throughout the school. Pupils are given many good opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of interesting contexts.
67. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good overall progress. Progress accelerates in the upper years of the key stage because of the high proportion of very challenging teaching which is provided. The good progress made throughout the school is underpinned by a well-considered scheme of work that effectively supports the development of concepts, skills and understanding. However, insufficient links are sometimes made between the subject content to be taught and the methodology for investigation and experimentation. As a result, pupils do not always have sufficient hands on experience in some of their work. The co-ordinator is aware of this weakness and has plans to improve this aspect through professional development.

68. Pupils' knowledge of the subject is consistently good throughout the curriculum. The breadth of experiences and the quality of the teaching that they receive effectively extend the quality of pupils' scientific thinking. Pupils in Year 3 take seeds from a commercially grown tomato and follow their life cycle through to the extracting of seeds to grow a further crop. They make in-depth studies of the conditions that affect growth and are given good opportunities to compare the growth of a variety of plants. This contributes to their understanding of fair testing. Pupils in Year 4 visit a local environmental centre. This enables them to extend their understanding of mini-beasts and the classification of animals. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good knowledge of classifying plant and animal life. They know the characteristics of vertebrates and invertebrates well and use this knowledge to develop their own classification and identification charts. Their knowledge of the subject is effectively reinforced by the high quality of teachers' explanation, the challenging questioning and the very high expectations that teachers have of their pupils. Pupils enjoy the subject, are interested in their work and concentrate hard in most lessons. They take care when recording their work and make good use of their writing skills. Relationships in lessons are harmonious and supportive.
69. The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good teaching in most year groups. Teaching is of a more consistent quality in the upper years of the key stage. Teachers prepare their lessons well and make good use of the good quality resources. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan interesting lessons that challenge pupils' thinking. They revise pupils' knowledge effectively at the beginning and end of lessons and this information is used effectively to assess learning and to inform future planning. Teachers make good use of IT within the subject, as for example when pupils in Year 4 created computer models of the balance of life in a virtual pond.
70. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and has a clear vision for its development and further improvement. He provides good leadership. In addition to revising the subject policy, which is now more detailed, further good work has been carried out to make assessment records more helpful when identifying areas for improvement. This development is still at an early stage and its implementation is not yet consistent through the school. The monitoring of curriculum planning is good. Good opportunities have been provided for the co-ordinator to monitor quality and standards in other classes and he is aware of the need to share best practice between different classes and year groups.

## **ART**

71. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6 the majority attain very good standards. This is an improvement on the situation reported at the last inspection. The significant strength in the standards of pupils' work lies in their ability to observe closely and to interpret their observations and ideas successfully in a wide range of media and in two and three dimensions. Their work is guided by good and often very good teaching that effectively develops the core skills of the subject. Pupils are consistently encouraged to sustain their concentration when working, to very good effect.
72. Pupils in Year 3 use their knowledge of a range of pencil shading to record, with sensitively drawn lines, observations of flower heads, which are then tinted delicately. Good use is made of sketchbooks throughout the school and, by the end of the key stage, pupils are very adept at using it as a test and record of the various skills and techniques they have learned. For example, a pupil in a Year 5 class checked the pressure needed to gain a pencil effect several times in his sketchbook, before applying the skill to this work. At this later stage, pupils paint preserved birds, for example, with great subtlety in their choice of coloration and in conveying texture. Again sketchbooks are used well to inform decisions about tint and tone. Pupils' creativity across a range of media is well developed. This is especially evident in their three dimensional work. Pupils show a very good sense of form and awareness of space when, for example, making multi-material abstract sculptures. They show good control whether they are using malleable or carved materials. Sketches of local houses are interpreted into well-constructed clay relief forms, which are

beautifully glazed to represent the colours of building materials.

73. The use of graphical computer programmes and IT is at an early stage of development, but already pupils are using the medium with sensitivity and control to illustrate their work in a range of subjects. Pupils have a sound knowledge of a range of artists, mainly of European origin, although they are introduced to some art from non-western cultures. They respond to these experiences very positively, using the styles of the various artists in their compositions rather than merely copying a work.
74. Pupils show high levels of interest and work independently, maintaining their concentration well over a series of lessons. This continuity contributes significantly to their learning and to the success they achieve. They are careful in their work and in the use of equipment. Pupils share their resources well and look to the needs of others around them.
75. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Planning is very detailed and effectively supports those staff with limited subject expertise. Pupils are given very good opportunities to express themselves using a wide range of media and techniques. A strength of the teaching is in the systematic development of art projects, which enables pupils to work in the manner of an artist or craftsman. They are given the opportunity to develop their work from original sketches through a chosen medium to a finished product over time, making adjustments on the way. In most lessons good class management supports pupil concentration. Too few opportunities are given to pupils to evaluate the progress of their work and that of classmates in order to give them opportunities to improve their speaking skills and to apply their good knowledge of the technical vocabulary of the subject in realistic situations. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to participate in class projects, this is usually achieved through contributing their individual work to a whole class project, rather than planned projects, which require initiative in a group.
76. The co-ordinator gives good leadership to the subject. She has a very sound understanding of the subject that she communicates clearly to colleagues. A good range of good quality, well-managed and accessible resources are available. The co-ordinator has been very successful in supporting staff in producing very attractive displays of pupils' work, which enliven classrooms and most public areas.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

77. Pupils make good progress and attain much higher standards than are usually found. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection when attainment was judged as higher than the national expectation. The provision for the subject is good and effectively enables pupils to develop the essential skills of designing and making.
78. Pupils in Year 6 draw detailed full-scale plans of fairground models and apply their knowledge of numeracy to good effect through the accurate measurement of length and angles. They make their models directly from their plans, with care and skill, using tools and fixatives appropriately and confidently. They investigate gear ratios effectively to translate the electric motor drive rates to more appropriate speeds to control their models. Pupils are given progressively more challenging tasks to evaluate as they move through the school. Pupils in Year three study commercially produced mobiles in order to discuss their target audience whilst pupils in Year 5 make well considered assessments of the workings of modern and historic animal trap mechanisms, debating whether they are humane or not. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, develop good levels of knowledge and understanding.
79. Although the standards achieved by pupils are good, most projects relate directly to extending knowledge or illustrating aspects of topics for other subjects. Pupils, therefore, are often engaged in making predictable products and have insufficient opportunity for individual design or to take risks and make mistakes. This reduces the potential for learning through identifying a need.

80. Pupils apply themselves well to their work. They respond particularly well when teachers ask challenging questions and present new concepts in a lively and interesting way. Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic. They settle quickly as they move between the different aspects of lessons, working with good levels of concentration, often for prolonged periods of time. They show great pride in what they are making. When working in small groups they support each other by, for example, collecting and sharing tools. They listen to each other's ideas and are polite in their conversations.
81. The overall quality of teaching is good and this has a very positive impact on the learning, which is also of a generally good quality. Lessons are carefully planned and well prepared for. Teachers explain the objectives of the lessons clearly, providing detailed explanations of the processes to be followed. They support the learning of skills well by close support, careful questioning, clear guidance and appropriate demonstration. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They have effective classroom management and ensure pupils make good use of their time to meet the objectives of the lesson.
82. Although he has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject, the co-ordinator gives sound leadership and recognises clearly the developments in teaching and the curriculum which will be required to enable the subject to develop further. The scheme of work provides a good structure to the work but at times is too closely linked to the study of topics driven by other subjects. As a result pupils are given insufficient opportunities to plan and devise their own solutions to more open-ended problems. Good use is made of literacy and numeracy skills in the planning and building stages, but the co-ordinator is aware that the use of control technology to power models is, as yet, underdeveloped. The quality and range of resources together with their efficient management contributes significantly to the quality of the school's provision.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

83. Pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 6 the majority have a good knowledge and understanding of their own locality and can compare it with a range of other places. This is clearly evident in the good quality of work displayed around the school about aspects of Rothwell and Monmouth. Comparative studies are particularly well linked across other curricular areas. Literacy skills are well developed through writing and numeracy skills are improved by opportunities for data handling. Work is generally well matched to the needs of higher achieving pupils and those of average ability, but does not always effectively meet the needs of lower achieving pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils sometimes find aspects of the subject too difficult to understand and consequently lose interest. Overall standards in geography are similar to those found by the last inspection.
84. By the end of Year 6 pupils have developed satisfactory mapping skills, many being capable of identifying places through six figure co-ordinates. They define the meaning of contour lines on maps and produce their own map keys and symbols. Many are able to describe aspects of rivers such as 'erosion', 'sedimentation', and 'meanders' although their practical experience is somewhat limited. Pupils have good recall of geographical facts, and talk with enthusiasm about countries of Europe they have studied during their topic on World War 2. This thematic work makes good use of effective links with literacy through a close study of books, such as 'Room 13', with its detailed description of Whitby, and pupils writing about the experiences of evacuees during the war. Pupils in Year 5 have studied a local quarry and have a good understanding of certain aspects of their environment. Studies of India and Egypt have helped pupils gain an appropriate knowledge of countries other than their own.
85. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. Their most effective work is seen when teachers have sufficient time to develop geographical skills in addition to providing factual knowledge. This is evident in the detailed mapping and data analysis completed when pupils visited Monmouth for a residential stay, and when they examined routes around their own town. Geographical knowledge is developed well

by teachers, but the development of skills and concepts is less secure as pupils are generally given too few opportunities to pose their own questions or study independently.

86. The co-ordination of the subject is generally good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and, when given the opportunity, informally monitors the planning and the outcomes of the subject. He has, however, yet to be given opportunities to monitor quality and standards in other classes and to share best practice, although there are plans for this to happen in the near future.

## **HISTORY**

87. Pupils' learning in history is very good and they attain standards that are very high when compared with pupils of a similar age. This is due to the very well planned curriculum that is suitably enriched through visits to places of local interest. Pupils have the opportunity to study an excellent collection of artefacts and when these are not available in the schools own excellent resource cupboard, are found by the teachers, the co-ordinator, or are provided by visits and visitors. History drives the whole school curriculum and provides pupils with many lively, interesting and motivating learning opportunities.
88. History was described in the last inspection report to be a strength of the school. The subject has improved further and now makes an even greater contribution to pupils learning. Pupils talk about history with great enthusiasm, remembering the exciting visits and the opportunities to handle the many interesting and diverse artefacts. Pupils in Year 3 willingly volunteer that history is their favourite subject because they enjoyed learning about soldiers and battles. Pupils in other year groups have many fond memories of previous lessons and still remember what they have been taught in previous years about the history of Rothwell.
89. Pupils have a very good knowledge of their local area by the end of year 6. Throughout the school, each year group is given the opportunity to study another period of time or event in the history of Rothwell. Pupils in Year 3 study the local area in the times of the Romans to very good effect. They consider the places and the aspects of social life at that time, including what it was like to visit the local baths. Aspects of local life are developed still further in Year 4 when pupils develop a very good understanding of life in Tudor times. Pupils in Year 5 gain a very good understanding of life in Victorian times through their study of a local street. This is effectively illustrated by regular visits to Manor House Museum and Holdenby House. Pupils are also given opportunities to find out what it was like to be a servant during Victorian times, dressing up in clothes of the time and living the life of a scullery maid or valet. Pupils in Year 6 continue the theme of local history by living out the life of an evacuee during the Second World War. The recent school building work provided pupils with excellent opportunities to study the history of the school and they are able to describe in some detail everything they found out about the different ways their grandparents and parents were taught at school.
90. The teaching of history is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and plan very interesting and exciting lessons. They give pupils many good opportunities to study the good quality artefacts directly. The Year 3 visit to Jewry Wall Museum is a very good example of how historical skills, knowledge and understanding are developed so successfully in the school. Pupils enjoyed the day listening to stories about how the Romans used to live and were fully involved when imagining what it would be like taking a bath in Roman times. Teachers, who stimulate pupils' curiosity to find out more about the lives of the people they are studying, bring history to life. History provides very good opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles and has a very positive impact on standards of writing across the school.
91. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well, making sure that his enthusiasm permeates all other teaching across the school. He has collected an excellent range of resources that support the teaching of the subject very well. The scheme of work effectively guides teachers' planning and identifies the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils are expected to learn. Although he

has taken opportunities to monitor planning and pupils' work and, to some extent, to influence teaching through giving ideas and other advice, he has not as yet been able to monitor teaching and learning in all classes and to share best practice throughout the school.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

92. Learning in information technology is satisfactory overall and by the end of the key stage pupils are attaining standards in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age. Progress during lessons is very good due to the detailed planning of suitable activities that help pupils to develop their computer skills in a range of situations. The suite of computers gives pupils very good access to computers during lessons. They work well in pairs or in small groups, and their rate of learning is good and sometimes very good. The lack of access to computers at other times means that this rate of learning slows down when they are in their classrooms as pupils are unable to build on the good and sometimes very good learning which takes place during specific IT lessons. The school is aware of this problem and plans to update the computers in the suite so that the existing computers can be returned to the classroom.
93. Pupils in Year 6 make good progress and the school's palm top computers are put to good use for work in the classroom, particularly for data handling and word processing activities. There have been recent, rapid improvements in IT and it is beginning to have a significant impact on pupils' learning throughout the curriculum.
94. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are motivated to learn through the constant access they have to computers during lessons. They take it in turns to use the keyboard and mouse to alter the information on screen and work very well together making concentrated efforts to use their time in the suite purposefully. They talk openly to each other and ask questions if they get stuck.
95. Pupils in Year 3 use the keyboard and mouse effectively to input text and to produce short reports, posters and advertisements about the forthcoming school Summer Fayre. They use two word processing programmes independently to change the style, size and colour of their writing. Pupils in Year 4 successfully obtain information about animals from a CD-ROM to support their work on food chains in science. They can scroll down pages using the mouse and keyboard and move in and out of windows independently. They are also able to build a simulated pond and to see how their model is changed by various decisions, such as when the farmer empties his slurry into the pond. Pupils in Year 5 build on an earlier activity in science and successfully create decision trees to classify animals and fruits. They have a good understanding of the need to write questions, which support the sorting of animals into groups according to their various features. They understand that if they put the wrong or insufficiently detailed information into the computer, then they will get appropriately wrong or insufficiently detailed information out. Pupils in Year 6 are able to write instructions and procedures to build a 'Mystic Rose' using different shapes, successfully building on their understanding of shape work covered in mathematics lessons. The activity is well planned and the open ended teaching style allows the more able pupils to extend their learning. A group of three more able pupils showed excellent perseverance and concentration when using their shape procedures to write a programme to use the least number of instructions to build their ten-sided rose.
96. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers' planning is good and identifies clear progression in the structure of the lessons. An area for further development in planning is the writing of clear learning objectives to support teachers whose subject knowledge is weaker. This will ensure the development of information technology skills rather than the learning of knowledge from other subjects. The teaching of the subject sometimes relies too much on explanation, direction and instruction. It does not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the ability to evaluate, to improve their own work and to take responsibility for their own learning.



97. A particular strength of the subject is the strong links made with other subjects. These are appropriately identified through the scheme of work. Pupils learn and apply their computer skills through a number of subjects, particularly science and mathematics. Other subjects seen to support the development of IT are English, art, history, and geography. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there are suitable opportunities for pupils to work with programmable toys and to monitor external events. The provision for developing the control aspect of the subject is also good.
98. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is well able to support teachers with their planning and teaching. He has identified very clearly the school's next stages of development and learning is now moving forward at a very fast rate.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

99. Pupils in the Year 6 classes are given suitable opportunities to learn simple French conversation and the majority achieve appropriate standards by the time they leave the school. Most pupils have a simple knowledge of the French words for numbers and days of the week and just over a half can introduce themselves to each other. Pupils generally lack confidence when answering direct questions and many have yet to develop an appropriate standard of pronunciation.
100. The teacher, who has good subject knowledge, is working very hard to prepare interesting, well-structured lessons which actively involve pupils in their learning. However, the quality of learning, which is satisfactory overall, is very dependent on the amount of enthusiasm and interest that each child has for the subject. Most pupils have generally positive attitudes to work in the subject and try to do their very best, but approximately one third of the pupils in one class, mainly boys, are not interested in their studies and pay little attention.
101. The study of French, even at this simple level is effectively preparing pupils for their transfer to secondary school and is making a significant contribution to their cultural appreciation of the lifestyles of our European partners.

## **MUSIC**

102. Pupils make good progress in music and standards are above average in all areas except singing, where they are average. Standards of singing by the choir and playing by the ocarina players are well above average and the jazz recorder players have extremely high musical and technical skills. Many aspects of music were judged to be unsatisfactory in the last inspection report. Extremely good progress has been made since then and music is now a strength.
103. By the end of Year 6, pupils perform songs with a simple accompaniment by reading a musical score. The very good scheme of work ensures that pupils develop their learning in increasingly more difficult steps as they move through the school. Songs are chosen which are not only relevant to the topic being taught at the time in each year group, but are matched to the intended learning outcomes. For example, Pupils in Year 5 were learning a song about a fox. This provided a very good context for thinking about how mood and effect is created by the music.
104. Pupils are confident with musical vocabulary and have a good knowledge of musical terms. Although listening and appraising skills are good, pupils have few opportunities to evaluate their own performance and are not given sufficient opportunities to develop these skills independently, relying too much on direction from teachers to improve. This is reflected in their singing when they seem to lack confidence to give it their all because they are waiting for direction from the teacher. Pupils who play a musical instrument give confident performances because of their ability to listen to each other and evaluate what is good about their singing and playing. They play well together and reach very high standards.

105. The quality of teaching is very good. All pupils follow a well-planned curriculum and teachers' skills are generally good. Teachers whose personal skills are not quite so secure actively seek support from the co-ordinator and other teachers, and make good use of tapes and the expertise of pupils. This successfully helps teaching and learning. Behaviour in lessons is good except in a small minority of lessons where a small number of pupils misbehave. Teachers handle this sensitively although the time taken to control these small groups of pupils sometimes slows the progress in learning made by other pupils in the class. Although planning is good overall, learning objectives are not always sufficiently clear. As a result, teachers who lack subject expertise are not always clear how to develop skills and to extend learning opportunities.
106. The curriculum is very well organised and is enriched through a range of suitable opportunities to perform at a variety of events, at a wide range of extra curricular activities and during peripatetic instrumental lessons. During the inspection the ocarina club were getting ready to play at the Carnival Queen festival and the choir were rehearsing a very complex song to sing at the local music festival. These activities make a major contribution to the subject and the high standards reached by pupils.
107. The co-ordinator leads the subject extremely well. She has excellent subject knowledge and gives teachers very good support. Improvements in music since the last inspection are very good and are due in no small part to her commitment and hard work. Higher attaining pupils are given excellent opportunities to extend their skills and they enjoy helping in class music lessons by playing the melody and melodic accompaniment to support singing. The co-ordinator monitors the subject through discussion with teachers but has not yet had opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in other classes.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

108. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in physical education throughout the school and are reaching standards above those expected for their age. Standards in swimming are very good. Standards in gymnastics are good overall, and often very good. Standards in games are satisfactory. Standards in dance are good in the lower years. No dance lessons were observed in Years 5 and 6 and it is not possible to make a secure judgement about standards. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection.
109. All pupils have the opportunity to swim from Year 3 onwards, and by the time they leave the school almost all have achieved the expected national 25m standard. Their skills are developed progressively and they show considerable quality in their strokes.
110. In the lessons observed during the inspection pupils in Year 4 were seen to work closely together in groups. They recorded accurately their own performances in throwing, skipping and running. Pupils in Year 5 used space very effectively during in warm up activities and devised imaginative balancing movements that demonstrated good body control. Pupils in Year 6 showed intense concentration and listening skills as they learned to follow instructions to the letter, developing some very good counter balancing positions in pairs both on mats and on a range of apparatus, including climbing ropes. Some pupils effectively evaluated each other's movements, but pupils are generally offered insufficient opportunities in this aspect of their physical development.
111. A very strong feature of pupils' work in physical education is their ability to work well in pairs and larger groups. Behaviour in most lessons is very good overall and ranges from good to excellent. Pupils' co-operation and knowledge of how to erect complicated large apparatus both quickly and safely is exceptional. Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and this greatly enhances the quality of learning in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
112. The overall quality of teaching is good. The teaching observed was always at least satisfactory, mostly good or very good and on one occasion excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge,

explain tasks very clearly and approach their lessons with great confidence. Teachers make very good use of the limited time available and are careful to sustain activity throughout the lesson so that learning is maximised.

113. Extra curricular provision for sport is very good. A number of clubs are organised, such as football, gymnastics, netball, aerobics and cricket. These are well attended by the enthusiastic pupils. Pupils have represented the school in various local sporting competitions with some success. Resources are very good and the spacious outside areas are used well. The school hall is rather small for some of the larger, older classes, but is used effectively by all staff. The co-ordinator provides the subject with strong and very effective leadership. She has observed and worked with newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school but has had few other opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in other classes.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

114. Pupils learn effectively throughout the school and the majority achieve standards that are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Pupils have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of religious facts and events. Standards are not as high when pupils are asked to respond to questions of meaning and value since there are insufficient opportunities to discuss and debate key aspects. Standards are not as good as those reported in the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be very good.
115. Pupils in Year 3 effectively learn the Christian version of the creation story, which is developed into a detailed Bible study in Year 5. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of the importance of Ramadan in the Muslim faith and know the associated symbols, traditions and rules of the religion. They know that the Quran is a Holy Book and make pertinent comparisons between it and the Holy Bible. Pupils in Year 6 are able to transfer the meaning of popular New Testament stories such as “The Good Samaritan” into modern day settings and to understand the significance of these parables. However, pupils’ abilities to talk about and discuss their own feelings, the feelings of others and to reflect on their actions and responsibilities are insufficiently developed. As a result, the impact of religious studies on pupils’ spiritual development is sometimes limited.
116. The quality of teaching is good overall but ranges from satisfactory to very good. Lessons are well planned. Pupils are given many valuable first hand experiences of religious artefacts and make regular visits to local churches and places of worship. These have a very positive impact on pupils’ learning. In one very good lesson observed during the inspection there was a very good balance between the teaching of how God created the universe, and the very good opportunities given for pupils to discuss in small groups their understanding of the Spirit of God and how it affects them personally. Pupils learned to reflect on the quality of their lives and the impact of the decisions they take. The co-ordinator provides the subject with effective leadership. He monitors planning and samples pupils’ work to good effect. The school has a good stock of good quality resources, including Bibles and artefacts from other faiths.