

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HERTFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114383

Headteacher: Ms R Smart

Reporting inspector: Mr P Baxter  
25217

Dates of inspection: 10/01/00 – 14/01/00

Inspection number: 189914  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 7-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lynchet Close  
Brighton

Postcode: BN1 7FP

Telephone number: 01273 557341

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M Wright

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Baxter	Registered inspector	HI GG SC PE English as an additional language	The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? Other specified features
Kenneth Parsons	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	DT AR IT MA Special Educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Michael Renouf	Team inspector	RE MU EN Equal Opportunities	How well are pupils' taught?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is a small junior school for boys and girls aged 7-11 years located within a large council estate to the north of Brighton. It has 183 full-time pupils, of whom 91 are boys and 92 are girls. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is generally below that found nationally and reflects the increasing proportion of pupils with special educational and social need. Seventy-seven pupils have special educational needs: a figure well above the national average. Five of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or from homes where English is not the first language and this is higher than found nationally. Twenty-seven per cent of the pupils are registered as eligible for free school meals and this is slightly above the national average. Not all the pupils attending the nearby infants school transfer to this school and approximately eight per cent of the pupils move into or away from Hertford Junior during their junior years, and this contributes to the wide range of attainment shown by the pupils attending the school.

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

Hertford Junior is an effective school and makes good provision for its relatively disadvantaged community. Learning is underpinned by a caring ethos. Although the standards attained by the pupils in National Curriculum tests have hitherto been well below average; most pupils generally achieve appropriate standards in school now because teaching is good and the work they do is interesting and offers an effective challenge. The headteacher, governors and staff work together well, to continue the purposeful development of the school and to raise standards. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The pupils achieve good standards in art and in practical investigations in science.
- Pupils and adults enjoy very good relationships; these promote the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour which support the good progress they make in learning.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and has enlisted good support from governors and senior staff in managing the school and planning for improvement.
- Teaching is good and very well monitored. Teachers work hard and effectively to make learning enjoyable and successful.
- Provision for the pupils' social development and for monitoring and supporting good behaviour and attendance is very good.
- The school provides a good curriculum for all pupils which is enriched by a good range of out-of-school clubs; pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.

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

- Standards in English throughout the school are below the national expectation.
- The standards achieved by pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the control, modelling and measuring aspects of information technology are below the national expectation.

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

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

When it was inspected last in October 1996 Hertford Junior was found to be a good school with strong leadership. Since then it has undergone significant changes to the teaching staff which initially disrupted improvement, particularly in the pupils' academic achievement. Over the past eighteen months, there has been substantial improvement in many areas, notably in the effectiveness of leadership and management, in the quality of teaching and in the planned

curriculum and these have re-established the standards of pupils' attainment found at the time of the previous inspection. The school's increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy and on practical investigation in science are promoting further improvements in pupils' learning. Key issues from the last inspection have been implemented well, particularly the improvements to the curriculum and the work of subject co-ordinators and this has supported the improved teaching and learning, and unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement and has maintained its position since the last inspection and is well placed to make good improvement in the future.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	E	E
Mathematics	B	E	E	E
Science	B	E	E	E

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Given the significant differences between the attainments of pupils in different year groups in this school, as evidenced, for example, by the varying proportions of pupils with special educational needs within year groups, care must be taken when comparing results in standardised tests from year to year. Nevertheless, the results attained by 11 year old pupils in 1999 continued a picture of well below average attainment in relation to national standards and those found in similar schools, in English, mathematics and science. Standards in mathematics and science rose in 1999, but standards in English fell. Taking the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for the four years 1996 to 1999, despite fluctuations, shows a trend of slightly rising standards in these subjects matching with that found nationally. In all three subjects a pattern of girls significantly out-performing the boys was apparent over this period. Inspection evidence, however, indicates significant improvement in standards in English, mathematics and science in response to good teaching and the targeting of weaknesses identified by a careful analysis of the test results. Pupils are now on course to attain below average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science by the age of 11 years rather than the well below average standards achieved previously. The standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, but in information technology weaknesses in controlling mechanisms indicate standards which are below average by the end of the key stage. The school is on course to achieve the targets set for this year and have re-adjusted the targets for next year to reflect the rising standards through the school. Most pupils achieve well in relation to prior attainment and reach the standards expected of pupils of this age in most other subjects, except in art where pupils demonstrate above average skills. Many pupils made good progress in the majority of lessons seen during the inspection.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES



Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to learn and show good attitudes to school and to learning. They respond productively in class and assume responsibility well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and pupils can be relied upon to use equipment sensibly.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and the pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility. Relationships throughout the school are very good and make a significant contribution to the quality of the pupils' learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	N/A	N/A	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.*

The quality of teaching is good overall and was satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed. It was very good in 11 per cent, it was good in 58 per cent and it was good or better in 69 per cent of the lessons observed. Due to the school's cycle of planning, it was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in geography and history. English and mathematics are taught well, literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented successfully in lessons and focused questioning by the teachers, for example, is challenging all pupils and is significantly raising standards. There are particular strengths in the teachers' emphasis on investigations in science and in the specialist teaching of music which motivate pupils and enrich their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and all pupils have their needs identified and clear targets for improvement set.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant and meets the pupils' needs well. It is enriched by a good range of field trips, a residential visit, by visiting speakers and by extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision which is carefully matched to the pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils' needs are addressed effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, particularly strengths in the provision for the pupils' social development, where staff set good role models and encourage pupils to show consideration towards others and to take responsibility for their actions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall, very good provision in monitoring and promoting good attendance and in promoting good behaviour. The school's ethos of care is a strength.

The school promotes a good partnership with parents and provides good information about the day-to-day life of the school. Annual reports are particularly detailed and give good information about the pupils' progress. A few parents provide good support in school. Generally this partnership supports the pupils' learning effectively. Several parents expressed their appreciation of the after-school and lunch-time clubs and of the regular visits and these are a strength of the curriculum. The systematic monitoring of the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests is underpinning the drive to raise standards and reflects the school's care of its pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall; the personal leadership of the headteacher is very good and she involves senior managers and subject co-ordinators effectively in the management of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have worked hard to restructure and to improve the effectiveness of their roles within the management of the school. They are particularly active and successful in supporting the raising of standards throughout the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has analysed the performance of the pupils most carefully and has targeted school improvement and the raising of standards diligently and to good effect within detailed school development and improvement plans. The promotion of investigative learning in science is a good example of how standards have been improved.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well to support the pupils' learning. Teaching and support staff work most effectively together. The material resources and the accommodation are well organised to encourage practical work and pupils' work is displayed carefully to improve the learning environment and to promote positive attitudes.

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources taken together are good and support the pupils' learning well. A particular strength of the leadership and management is the close involvement of all staff and governors. There is a strong determination to raise standards and to maintain the very good relationships and shared values within the school and this enables the staff and governors to function well as a team. Decisions are clearly made on the principles of best value and expenditure is carefully matched to raising pupils' achievement.

## 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>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They feel that their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents consider the teaching to be good.</li> <li>• Parents state that they are well informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work that the pupils are given to do at home.</li> <li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li> <li>• The pupils' attainment in English.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse parents' positive comments. The amount of homework required is similar to that of other primary schools, is consistent with government guidelines, and is judged to be

appropriate. Inspectors find that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and point out that a number take place during lunch-times. Inspectors find that standards in English have been improved but agree that standards in writing, in particular, should be higher.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Given the varying and significant numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each year group at this school, care must be taken when comparing one year's results with another and also when comparing results from similar schools. Nevertheless, last year's National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for 11 year olds showed that the pupils' attainments were well below average in English, mathematics and science both in comparison with the standards expected nationally and those found in similar schools. Standards in mathematics and science rose in 1999, but standards in English fell. Overall, standards were well below average over the period 1996 to 1999. Despite fluctuating levels of attainment from year to year, illustrating differences in standards and reflecting the differing achievements of the pupils in relation to their prior attainment, a trend of slightly rising standards is apparent in these subjects over this period which matches the trend found nationally. A pattern of girls significantly outperforming boys in English, mathematics and science is also evident.

2 The inspection evidence, which includes observations across the full breadth of subjects, shows that taken together, pupils' attainments on entry are generally below those found nationally. Most pupils acquire positive attitudes to learning in response to good quality teaching and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment as they move through the school. The inspection shows that most pupils attain satisfactory standards in the majority of subjects apart from English and information technology by the time they leave the school. The school has continued to implement, refine and improve their approaches to teaching and learning, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Senior managers and co-ordinators have analysed standardised test scores and have targeted weaknesses such as investigative learning in science, mental strategies in mathematics and writing in English, consequently standards have risen across the school. By the time they leave the school aged 11 years a greater proportion of pupils are on course to reach standards which are significantly higher than those achieved over the past few years in the National Curriculum tests. Most are likely to achieve standards which broadly match those expected nationally in mathematics and science and those which are expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education. Standards have risen in English, especially in reading, and in word processing and data-handling in information technology, but weaknesses remain in writing and in controlling mechanisms and standards are below those found nationally across the breadth of these two subjects by the end of this key stage. Standards in art are good and most pupils' reach standards which match those found nationally of pupils of this age in all other subjects.

3 These findings show that standards generally match those found at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in lessons, and illustrate that pupils are once more learning and achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. Improvements in the planned curriculum, in the overall consistency of good quality teaching and in the sharing of learning objectives with the pupils to target new learning have had a positive effect on pupils' attainment. Literacy and numeracy strategies and the promotion of investigative and enquiry based learning are having a beneficial effect on standards. Information technology is used effectively to improve the presentation of the pupils' work and to support data-handling in mathematics and science, when measuring forces, for example. The school has carefully monitored and targeted the attainment of the boys and through careful questioning teachers ensure that they are as fully involved in lessons as are the girls. As a result, at the end of this key stage, no significant differences in attainment between the boys and the girls were evident in lessons or work seen during the inspection.

4 The school has set realistic yet challenging targets in English, mathematics and science for pupils to attain by the end of Key Stage 2 in the years 2000 and 2001. These bear due regard to the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the different year groups yet reflect the determination of the school to raise standards significantly. Already, in response to improved standards being identified using the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's tests, targets for Year 6 pupils to achieve in 2001 have been increased. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach expected targets this year.

5 By the time they leave the school an increasing proportion of pupils achieve well in response to motivating and effective teaching. Focused questioning which extends the pupils' understanding, regular mental mathematics which increase the pace of pupils' thinking and more opportunities for independent research are enriching the pupils' learning and raising their achievements across the full range of subjects. As they move through the school an increasing proportion of pupils are beginning to be more fully involved in their learning which improves progress further. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and focus on targets clearly identified in their individual educational plans; most achieve well in relation to their low levels of prior attainment.

6 The pupils' improving skills in numeracy are used and developed supportively in other subjects, for example, by using time lines to illustrate the passage of time in history or by measuring forces such as friction and electrical currents during science lessons. The pupils' literacy skills are employed and are extended by comparing different communities such as Seaford and Newhaven and by speculating what Vikings may have kept in their storage chests. A significant proportion of pupils has difficulty following written instructions, but as their skills to learn for themselves improves, so the quality of their learning improves. When questioned the pupils express a shared determination to achieve well and with the consistent support of adults standards are rising.

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

7 The good standard of the pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development have been maintained well since the last inspection and have a positive effect on their learning.

8 Pupils have good attitudes to their education. Most are happy coming to school, arriving in a cheerful manner and going quickly to their lessons at the start of the day. In well-taught lessons with a content that naturally catches their interest, such as practical science experiments, they display positive and enthusiastic involvement. Conversely, in the few less interesting lessons it is sometimes difficult to maintain all pupils' attention. Overall, their interest and involvement is good. For the majority of pupils their positive attitude provides a solid foundation to enable them to learn. They show an interest in their work during whole class discussions, group work and when working individually across the range of subjects. Pupils of differing prior attainment put forward ideas and points of view with appropriate confidence in lessons and approach written and practical work positively. Completed work is discussed and shared with the teacher and others with pleasure. Pupils show that they can play a full part in their learning when given the opportunity, and even the youngest pupils are capable of demonstrating a good level of initiative. Pupils with learning difficulties have positive attitudes to learning and respond well when praised by class teachers and support staff.

9 The pupils' behaviour is good. During lessons most pupils are polite and treat each other, and adults, with respect. In a small number of lessons, some behaviour is unsatisfactory. Where this occurs it is due to the behavioural problems of a minority of pupils. Three pupils have been excluded in the last year, one permanently, all having particular behaviour problems they had

brought with them into the school and which had threatened the safety of others. Movement around the school is calm. Pupils enter and leave assemblies quietly. There is a happy atmosphere during break and lunch times. Behaviour in the playground is good, with pupils organising their own games and co-operating well together. No incidents of bullying or other oppressive behaviour were seen during the inspection and it is a rare occurrence in the school. Most parents who responded in the questionnaire or at the meeting with the registered inspector agreed that behaviour in the school is good. Pupils use the school facilities with care and there is no evidence of litter or vandalism. They are polite to each other and to adults. They are trustworthy. Staff allow the upper school, for example, to use school computers with minimal supervision at break-times and pupils do not abuse this trust.

10 The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils help with the day-to-day management of the school by assisting with the library and with audio-visual equipment during assemblies, for example. The school council, whereby elected pupils present their views, is a good example of the pupils sharing responsibility for their school effectively. Pupils mostly demonstrate good social skills. They have an appropriate awareness of the achievements of others, for example, when pupils worked as a class to refine and develop each other's ideas for a class poem. Their understanding of the impact of their words and actions on others is good for their age. During the 'Child of the Week' assembly they celebrated others' effort and achievements. Teachers of older pupils treat them as responsible individuals and expect them to take responsibility for their own learning, and this mature style of relationship is successful with most pupils. This has a positive effect on their personal development and creates a good climate for learning. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds combine well into the work of the school. The increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into classes and play a full and active part during lessons.

11 Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults are very good. All staff provide positive role models and pupils generally respond to the respect they are shown. They work well together in groups, even when these contain pupils of differing prior attainment, and all contributions are welcomed and valued at whatever level. The school specifically encourages very good relationships through, for example, the 'Buddy System' whereby older pupils help younger ones integrate into the school, and by considering moral and social issues during 'Circle Time' discussions in class. Pupils share resources amicably, for example, in a music lesson when they had to share scores.

12 The attendance by pupils at the school is satisfactory. The number of reported pupil absences is in line with the national average for a school of this type. The level of unauthorised absences is very high, a reflection of the problems with attendance by a few specific pupils and of the efficient way the school records lateness.

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

13 The quality of teaching is good overall. The teaching methods, the good pace of lessons and the management of pupils in particular make a substantial contribution to the pupils' learning and achievements. The teaching in all of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory, and in seven out of ten lessons, the teaching was good or, on a few occasions, very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson in ten and was good or better in about half of all lessons. Parents feel that teaching is good and their views are well founded.

14 Improvements in teaching have come about partly because in English and mathematics lessons the skills and content, including the match of work to the needs of different pupils, are systematically planned through the use of the national literacy and numeracy frameworks. The

teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The thorough training and preparation teachers have had for the literacy hour has enabled them to be successful in teaching the basic skills of language. In mathematics, lessons are well focused with objectives for pupils' learning based on the key elements of the numeracy strategy. Care is taken to follow the structure of the frameworks and work is pitched at appropriate levels, including returning to earlier work for review and consolidation.

15 The consistently satisfactory or better teaching in all lessons is ensuring that the quality of the pupils' achievement in relation to their prior attainment is being maintained well across the school. Good teaching is ensuring that the quality of pupils' learning in lessons is nearly always good. There is clear evidence of improvement in the work seen in lessons that is promoting improved progress and higher standards at the end of the key stage.

16 Good attention is being given to the lower attainments of boys compared to the girls and teaching generally is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Potentially higher attaining pupils are usually enabled to work to their best levels, although there are instances where tasks could include greater challenges for some pupils. This happened, for example, in an English lesson where the skills required to present the task were appropriately challenging for a higher attaining group, but the level of intellectual challenge was not.

17 Teachers plan effectively although approaches to matching the work to the needs of different pupils and the assessments to be carried out are not always clear, except in the planning for literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers set clear objectives for lessons and share these with pupils. This helps pupils understand what is expected of them in lessons. Pupils also agree targets in the longer term with their parents and teachers when they meet together. This encourages the positive and involved attitudes of pupils to their learning which are evident in the school.

18 Teachers have good subject knowledge and that is evident in the thorough teaching and discussions, for example, when revisiting the mathematical concept of partition as an aid to multiplication or when reinforcing pupils' understanding of phonics in English. Other examples are apparent when pupils are taught to plan their movements in physical education, to discuss the paintings of Kandinsky or Balla, or to explore the significance of the beliefs of Muslims. This results partly from the use of the well-formulated curriculum guidance for all subjects which is now in place. The shared team approaches to planning also help all teachers to be familiar with the material they are teaching.

19 Teachers usually set realistic expectations of what the pupils can achieve, helping to create the sense of purpose in the classroom. On occasions, teaching is particularly challenging and inspiring, for example, when pupils are involved in discussing a text and finding ways of improving it through their own efforts.

20 Teachers use good methods that encourage learning and progress. Lessons are well organised. Teachers explain new ideas well, using well-chosen resources to establish understanding, such as texts, artefacts and pictures in English, religious education and art, and instruments and recordings in music. Teachers give good direct teaching; describing, explaining and instructing well, and seeking responses, for example, when teaching about the techniques of an artist, or reviewing previous work with pupils. Teachers emphasise the use of the correct technical vocabulary in all subjects.

21 There is much good questioning which probes pupils' understanding or encourages thoughtful answers from the pupils. Teachers are careful to ensure that questions are matched

well to the pupils' prior attainment so that all pupils can take part in discussions with the whole class. As pupils work, teachers often check on their understanding and progress and make thoughtful interventions with a good combination of questioning and further individual teaching.

22 Teachers' management of the pupils is good. Teachers establish an orderly, working atmosphere and pupils know what to do. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school, and boys and girls are treated equally. Pupils are given praise and feedback on their work and they respond with positive attitudes.

23 Teachers use time and resources well. Lessons start promptly and nearly always proceed at a lively and brisk pace. This maintains pupils' attention and interest and a productive rate of work. These strengths underpin much of the teaching and are clearly evident in discussions in English, during mental strategies in mathematics and in the lively investigations in science. Only occasionally is the pace too slow and limits learning. This happened in a design and technology lesson and some pupils became bored and lost focus on the task. In physical education, the pace slipped as some pupils, unusually, needed to be quietened or too much time was spent on instructions. In one information technology lesson, a few pupils were left investigating for too long without guidance and new learning was restricted. However, learning was good for those pupils working with the teacher. Information technology is being used to support work across the curriculum, but this is at an early stage of development, with new hardware only recently delivered to school. Word processing is used regularly, computers and a floor robot were used to support design work in religious education, although this was not particularly successful as the pupils' lacked understanding of controlling mechanisms. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

24 The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Teachers make evaluations during the course of lessons that inform their immediate teaching and help them to know the pupils well. They keep notes of some day-to-day assessments, using checklists customised to the specific learning intentions they wish to evaluate. However, few specifically planned assessment opportunities are identified in teachers' planning and opportunities to reinforce learning are not always taken. The links between assessment and planning are not well developed although there are some examples of very effective use of information from assessments to inform future planning. This happened in a mathematics lesson where the intended content was altered to take into account some weaknesses in pupils' understanding that became apparent. Generally, teachers know pupils well but there is a need for more consistent approaches to the use of assessment information in the short term.

25 Pupils' work is regularly marked, often with useful comments on how they may improve their work. A programme of homework has been established and the school has taken steps to make homework a useful and interesting extension of activities in school. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire appreciate this provision and help to ensure that work at home makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

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

26 The curriculum provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities. The curriculum has been strengthened in areas such as using mental strategies and writing in order to meet the pupils' current needs and to raise standards. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place, which is an improvement from the previous inspection when the curriculum for information technology did not fully cover the National Curriculum programme. It gives prominence to literacy through allocating a higher than average amount of time to it each week in order to raise standards. It gives particular emphasis to providing a good art curriculum to round pupils' education and promote their cultural development. The planning of the strategies for teaching



mathematics and numeracy are good. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced and their effectiveness has been evaluated on the basis of the standards pupils achieve. The curriculum has undergone a total review and evaluation in the last academic year in order to strengthen weaknesses and to promote more effective teaching and learning. Where standards were not high enough it has been strengthened, such as in using mental strategies and writing. It is now well-planned into subject schemes of work with clear objectives which ensure pupils' knowledge and skills increase systematically at appropriate levels as they move through the school. Design and technology is currently not planned in this way and teachers have little guidance in their lesson planning. Provision for information technology is planned well, but this has not had time to impact on raising standards in controlling mechanisms in the upper school. Consequently, the pupils' skills in these aspects are below those expected nationally. The use of information technology is not yet included in a sufficiently detailed form within the schemes of work of individual subjects and as a result it is inconsistently used and not fully exploited to raise standards.

27 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good with work well matched to the pupils' needs. Appropriate targets are set in well-devised individual educational plans and are followed, either in classrooms or withdrawal groups, as most appropriate, by experienced learning support assistants in close consultation with the teachers. This enables these pupils to make good progress and to have full access to the curriculum.

28 A good range and quality of extracurricular activities provides an enrichment of classroom learning. After school clubs cover sporting, musical, craft and information-technology interests and are well attended by both boys and girls. Visitors including sculptors, artists, storytellers, authors and musicians inspire pupils to higher achievement. Visits to places of educational interest are well planned to give pupils first hand experiences to support their class lessons. For example they visit Seaford to study rocks and the British Museum to study ancient civilisations. Year 6 has a four-day residential visit to the Isle of Wight, which enriches the majority of curriculum areas and their personal development.

29 The curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. It supports teachers well in promoting equality of opportunity for boys and girls and for pupils of different prior attainments. For example, in physical education, groups contain equal numbers of boys and girls, and during information technology lessons, the computers are used equally by both sexes. However, there is a pattern of girls attaining higher levels in the end of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests. The school has carried out an analysis to consider this. Teachers have received input from pupils, have taken note of national research, and have worked closely with the local authority advisor. As a consequence they have changed several curriculum areas to address this. For example, by recognising that boys are more interested in certain types of writing and books, more relevant work and materials have been provided. The changes have recently been put in place, and whilst the pupils' responses in lessons are positive, the school has not yet assessed the pupils' attainment to judge the impact fully.

30 Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The curriculum is suitable for the ages of pupils attending the school, who consequently develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of health issues. Sex education is provided appropriately and pupils are taught the effects of drug misuse. Much of the provision for this takes place within science lessons and issues are also explored in 'Circle Time' class discussions. In order to support the teachers more fully, a scheme of work is being devised by a newly appointed co-ordinator to provide a structured programme of learning in personal, social and health education.

31 The community contributes well to pupils' learning. The school benefits from a rich and

diverse local community in Brighton and the majority of visits and visitors are from and within the locality. There is a growing, formalised partnership between the local schools, which is strengthening the usual curriculum and sporting links. Joint arts projects, a shared homework club and the sharing of the teachers' expertise are examples of this effective liaison. A supportive 'Buddy System' whereby pupils in this school visit and work with pupils in the nearby infant school encourages a positive transition. In Year 3, older pupils help younger pupils with reading, for example and this is most effective in promoting positive attitudes and in raising standards in reading.

32 There is good provision to cultivate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with significant strength in the provision for pupils' social development. The curriculum and daily acts of collective worship provide good opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences in a way that develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. Themes in collective worship and religious education are planned well to promote these areas as are the 'passports' in which pupils record their feelings about themselves, their friends and families. These help to give the pupils a sense of identity, to develop an awareness of what makes them special and to raise their self-esteem. 'Circle Time' discussions enable pupils to talk about what is important to them. Several curriculum areas have a good input to the provision, such as pupils expressing their feeling through the use of colour and shape in art, but generally, the provision for the pupils' spiritual development is not specifically planned into all subjects of the curriculum and this limits the opportunities provided.

33 Good provision is made for pupils' moral development. The school effectively promotes principles which distinguish right from wrong through its good ethos and expectation of pupils to be truthful, fair and honest. The strong, popular leadership of the head promotes good behaviour and all staff consistently enforce the clear school and class rules which are agreed in consultation with the pupils themselves, both for the whole school and in the separate classes. Consequently pupils are encouraged to see the consequence of their actions and be responsible for them. Themes in collective worship such as equality of opportunity and equal rights are discussed to help pupils to extend their personal understanding of moral values. Several different subjects within the curriculum extend the provision well in this area. For example in geography, pupils debate the moral issues surrounding the cutting down of the rain forests. However, this provision is not specifically planned within all subjects and is inconsistent.

34 Provision for pupils' social development is very good and results in high levels of friendship and co-operation between pupils and between them and all adults and the wider community. An effective and happy learning environment is created where everyone collaborates well and receives equal benefit. The school reward system and 'Child of the Week' awards provide good incentives for pupils to achieve highly in both moral and social development as well as in more academic pursuits. All the staff set very good role models of how to conduct relationships. They give children stickers for good behaviour and social interactions, which lead to the head teacher's special 'Child of the Week' awards. Pupils who have behavioural or emotional needs are well supported. Individual targets for improvement are agreed to promote good behaviour. All pupils have more general personal development targets to aspire to and these are effective in maintaining good discipline within the school. Pupils learn to work well together with pupils from other schools, including the local school for pupils with special educational needs, through joint projects in art and physical education. Responsibility and friendship is effectively promoted through older pupils helping the younger ones develop good reading skills, and through pairing with children at the infant school to ease their transition. Appointed pupils express their views as members of a 'School Council' and this promotes a good sense of community and citizenship. There is a strong emphasis on co-operative and collaborative activity in lessons which supports the pupils' learning. The 'Buddy System' between pupils in the junior and infant schools also encourages the very good relationships.

35 Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good overall. Good opportunities are provided within most subjects and in the extracurricular provision for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. Many visits and visitors enrich their understanding. For example, pupils study Islamic patterns and Japanese water-colour painting in art, visit places of worship for different faiths in religious education and study the social geography of India. They visit the theatre, museums and art shows, and know about the history and geography of Brighton and further afield in the British Isles. The pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society is developed effectively through assembly themes such as 'Refugees' and 'Celebrating Differences', by posters displayed around the school and by visiting speakers from local ethnic communities.

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

36 The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. Procedures for pupils' welfare health and safety and the arrangements for child protection are good. Staff genuinely care about the well-being of the pupils and they provide both personal and academic help when pupils need it. The school has a strong sense of community and within this the staff have created an emotionally secure environment within which pupils can feel respected and valued.

37 Appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that the school provides a safe environment. All required safety tests are carried out and safe practice was seen in all lessons observed during the inspection. Staff are aware of their responsibilities under local child protection guidelines, and are rigorous in promoting constructive links with social services. The school has the necessary monitoring and recording procedures in place. The promotion of attendance has been very good, with the educational welfare officer working in classrooms with children to emphasise the need to come to school on a regular basis. Registers of attendance are completed properly. Routine monitoring of non-attendance and lateness is good, with further steps taken as needed to contact parents as soon as possible.

38 The school's measures to encourage discipline and behaviour are good and help to make the school an orderly community. There are both school and class rules, which pupils help to formulate and which they know well. They are encouraged to behave in line with them by a good range of rewards. Being selected as class Child of the Week is a particular source of pride to the pupils achieving it. Pupils are also encouraged to behave well through their personal targets. The school contains a number of pupils who find it hard to behave consistently well, and teachers deploy appropriate strategies to modify such behaviour, supported where necessary by the headteacher. Procedures for dealing with the minimal bullying or other oppressive behaviour are very effective. The lunchtime supervisors contribute well to the school's behaviour management.

39 The school has a sound range of strategies for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the use of this data is satisfactory. Detailed analysis of National Curriculum test results is undertaken, for example, in identifying the relative performance of boys and girls and planning a strategy for remedying the specific weaknesses in English. These are evaluated well to promote the raising of standards. Teachers keep track of individual attainments in all subjects, as well as assessed National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science. There are half termly assessment tests matched against key objectives, and progress in all subjects is measured against the school's 'Ladders of Progress' evaluation sheets. Teachers find these manageable and useful and they are used consistently, including input into the weekly lesson planning process, to identify key objectives and to support future learning. Further evidence of pupils' attainments is kept in the pupils' assessment wallets which contain examples of pupils' work that are regularly updated. Target setting has involved the school in a careful review of the pupils' individual progress prior to the identification of what should prove to be attainable yet challenging targets. This action has focused the school community effectively on the need to raise standards.

40 The school carries out good monitoring of individual pupils' academic progress and uses the results well to support their further development, for example, through the reorganisation of groupings within the class to match current needs. The weekly planning specifically includes provision for children expected to have particular strengths or problems. On-going monitoring is used to adapt the planning to meet the pupils' specific needs. For example, in a numeracy lesson the teacher spent additional time with a group of pupils which monitoring had shown not to have fully grasped the concept taught in previous lessons. Each pupil has a 'passport' document in which personal development is recorded, and the perceptive comments in annual reports indicate that teachers know their pupils well as individuals. The school has plans to strengthen the formal personal, social and moral education programme later this year. Discussions in 'Circle Times' assist pupils' personal development and enable the teachers to support their pupils effectively when they have specific difficulties. The school has good procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs and to monitor their progress through regular reviews and these have a positive impact on the pupils' progress. The school has maintained its good provision for the pupils' welfare since the last inspection.

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

41 Approximately 20 per cent of parents completed the Parents' Questionnaire and only eight parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector. However, based on the limited sample available, parents appear to hold a positive view of the school. They think it is well led and that teaching is good. Children are seen to like school, to behave well and to make good progress both academically and in maturation. Parents feel welcome in school and believe that communications are good. A small minority of parents would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons. Some are dissatisfied with the amount of homework provided, although opinions are equally divided as to whether more or less is needed. There is strong support and appreciation of provision in mathematics and science, whilst some parents think there is room for improvement in English.

42 Parents are provided with good quality information about the school. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are very readable documents that give a good picture of the school. Parents appreciate the way that the weekly 'Hertford Newsletter' keeps them in touch with the life of the school. In the spring term, parents attend with their child to discuss with the teacher the setting of individual targets personal to that child. This process contributes well to pupils' progress. Although a few parents would like more details of progress in them, the written reports on pupils' progress are very good. They contain considerable detail on pupils' attainment, particularly in English and mathematics, and there is a useful section on pupils' personal development. Areas for improvement are clearly highlighted and this enables them to form the basis for future learning.

43 The links parents have with the school are sound. Many parents assist their children's learning through their support for homework, although this is not universal. The school has provided very good home-school homework and reading logbooks to encourage parental involvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well in the reviews of progress and contribute to the setting of targets for these pupils. The school held a well attended meeting to illustrate the literacy strategy to parents, but despite the school's best efforts, parents' attendance at meetings to explain other curriculum developments has been disappointing. The vast majority of parents have signed the home school agreement, a positive act of support, although it is too early to discern any effect on the pupils' achievement from this initiative. Several parents help in school on a voluntary basis. Although there is no formal parent association, a group of supportive parents regularly help with visits and have recently helped the staff to organise specific fundraising events. The good quality of the school's partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44 Leadership and management were considered to be strengths of the school at the time of the last inspection. Since then there have been significant changes to the staff and governing body and for a time these changes disrupted the development of the school. Over the past eighteen months, however, and particularly in response to the actions of the relatively new headteacher, senior managers, subject co-ordinators and governors have established effective management strategies and have promoted improved provision which is now impacting strongly on pupils' attainment and is raising standards.

45 The headteacher has enlisted the full co-operation of governors and staff by introducing an effective, corporate style of management, by which all are included as team members in the management of the school. A key issue of the last inspection, namely developing subject co-ordination has been implemented well and co-ordinators now play a successful role in monitoring and developing the provision and the standards achieved by the pupils in their subjects. The headteacher provides very good leadership and ensures that information gathered is used to target the raising of standards through improved teaching and learning. She receives good support from senior teachers and governors. The newly convened quality and standards committee of the governing body is an effective mechanism to promote higher standards and is a clear indication of the school's commitment to raise pupils' attainment. Already standards have returned to those found at the time of the previous inspection and through the promotion of investigative learning and by setting agreed targets for improvement, standards continue to improve. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach their targets by the end of this school year and in order to continue the improvement governors have recently raised the targets for Year 6 pupils' to attain in 2001.

46 The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and effective leadership in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the school and with support from senior colleagues have brought about significant improvements to the quality of the teaching. The proportion of good or better teaching has increased and unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. As a result the great majority of pupils now build consistently on previous learning in most subjects as they move through the school. Senior managers are now focusing on improving the pupils' writing to raise standards further in English.

47 Members of the leadership and management team are effective in maintaining an environment where pupils enjoy very good relationships and show respect for the feelings of others. The ethos of the school is good and successful partnerships have been continued with the parents and with the local community. Through their committees the governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met in full. With staff, they know that the full impact of their actions has yet to bear fruit, are aware of the challenges ahead and are targeting the raising of standards, particularly of the boys and in English. Specific grants for pupils with special educational needs are used well. Governors are planning to continue the good provision to meet the needs of an increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs and are promoting the strengths of the school in the local community in order to increase the number of pupils seeking admission.

48 The school's well-formulated development and improvement plans and clear action indicate its commitment to raising standards. Information from a detailed analysis of standardised test results informs the decision making process well. Clear and appropriate priorities include the purposeful development of the curriculum and the careful and successful implementation of literacy and numeracy strategies. These are impacting positively on the quality of the pupils' learning. All priorities for development are costed in detail and expenditure is carefully directed

towards improving provision in order to raise standards. Good staff development and the acquisition of relevant resources to support literacy and numeracy illustrate this well.

49 Financial planning is good and appropriate staffing, good resources and accommodation are maintained and organised well to support effective teaching and learning. When weaknesses in provision are identified the school is rigorous in its endeavours to remedy the situation. Information technology is such an example where the planned curriculum has been improved to ensure that in future pupils receive appropriate tuition in controlling mechanisms and can attain appropriate standards. Decision-making is good and includes a purposeful consideration of making best use of resources to promote the pupils' achievement, for example, the good use of the library to support the pupils' personal development. Consequently the school uses its resources well. In consideration of the budget available, in relation to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils, the school provides good value for money.

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

50 In order to continue the successful development of the school and to bring all aspects of pupils' achievements to an appropriate standard, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Raise standards in English throughout the school by ensuring that:
  - the effective approaches already introduced are followed consistently;
  - teaching always builds on what pupils know, understand and can do;
  - tasks are consistently matched to the needs of different pupils.

(paras 1-6,13-25,26,52-60)

- Improve the standards achieved by pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the control, modelling and measurement aspects of information technology by:
  - implementing all areas of the planned curriculum;
  - providing sufficient opportunities for the pupils to acquire and practise their skills by using computers on a regular basis.

(paras 2,3,23,26,92-100)

### **Other issues which should be considered by the school;**

51 In the context of the school's improving provision in many areas the following points for development should also be considered for inclusion in the Action Plan:

- Further develop the use of assessments of the pupils' work to inform lesson planning;
- Continue the development of planning in design and technology so that the pupils acquire skills progressively as they move through the school.

(paras 24,26,39,82,83)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11%	58%	31%	0%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	183
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.3
National comparative data	94.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	17	22	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	8
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	19	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49	49	62
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	22
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	19	19	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49	49	69
	National	68	69	75

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	178
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		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	5	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

*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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.1
Average class size	26.1

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	329486
Total expenditure	314902
Expenditure per pupil	1790
Balance brought forward from previous year	10853
Balance carried forward to next year	14584

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	183
Number of questionnaires returned	40

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	58	40	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	45	18	0	4
The teaching is good.	58	40	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	45	0	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	15	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	65	33	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	75	18	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	28	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	45	18	0	2

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

The vast majority of the eleven parents who attended the meeting with the registered inspector felt that Hertford Junior continued to be a good school. A small minority wondered whether the pupils could be rewarded more for their effort in relation to their prior attainment. Inspection shows that pupils across the range of prior attainments are rewarded appropriately and teachers, particularly in the celebration assembly, are careful to ensure that effort is rewarded fairly and publicly.

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

### **ENGLISH**

52 An increasing proportion of pupils, including the oldest pupils in Year 6, attain at appropriate levels for their ages across the school. However, in 1999 the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attained the appropriate levels was low and this led to the well below average performance of pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The National Curriculum test results reported at the last inspection were low but standards of work seen in the school at that time were in line with the national expectations. This was largely borne out by the National Curriculum test results the following year but the higher attainments were not sustained in subsequent years. Standards in the National Curriculum tests have been well below the national average in the intervening years and there has been no improvement in the overall standards achieved by the pupils in the National Curriculum tests at the end of the key stage.

53 However, the work seen in the school shows that there are improvements in teaching and learning. This is beginning to lead to improved achievement by pupils. Although the proportion is still below average overall an increased number of pupils are on course to achieve the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that improved and consistently good teaching, supported by the literacy strategy, is enabling the school to rebuild standards despite an increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils across the range of prior attainments are appropriately challenged and are making satisfactory progress.

54 Attainment in speaking and listening is generally sound for many pupils across the school. They listen carefully, but younger pupils are not always confident in answering. Some good teaching strategies, such as getting pupils to discuss ideas in small groups for short periods of time, for example in a lesson in religious education in Years 5 and 6, enable them to make contributions and think about the ideas of others. However, in whole-class discussions, including those involving the oldest pupils, some pupils lack confidence and take little active part. While others speak confidently and convey their own points or responses to the teacher, there are fewer occasions when they build on or respond to the views of others, and responses tend to be to the teacher rather than to the group. The teachers encourage the good use of technical and other appropriate vocabulary, and many pupils respond well.

55 Standards of attainment in reading are broadly satisfactory in relation to the national expectation. Pupils read fluently and accurately in relation to their levels of attainment in all years. They often show good attitudes to books and talk about them with interest. By Year 6, many pupils understand the significant ideas and characters in stories. They explain the events and draw conclusions appropriately. Pupils use dictionaries, thesauruses and reference books to find information and understand how to use the library and reference books. The identification and support of pupils with special educational needs is good and has a positive effect on the pupils' skills in reading and interpreting text. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are on course to attain the national expectation in reading.

56 The school has rightly identified pupils' writing as a significant weakness and is focusing attention on it. With care, guidance and support many pupils, despite starting from a low base and lacking self-confidence, approach or reach the expectations for their ages. Letters written by younger juniors, acting as if they were an ancient Roman soldier, show text that is organised, imaginative and often clearly expressed. Older juniors were redrafting text in a mystery genre to give it greater effect, making decisions about the use of the most effective adjectives or, occasionally, a weakness in the overuse of adjectives. Pupils have written stories, book reviews,

news stories, accounts of work done, in an art lesson, for example. In some cases, there is a good use of language that provides interesting openings to sentences and which keeps the reader engaged. Pupils who are capable of attaining at a good level are enabled to do so, both in class and within specially organised groups for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Overall, the profile of the pupils' attainment in each year group is below expected nationally for pupils of this age. There are examples of good handwriting, spelling and punctuation, including the accurate use of speech marks, commas and apostrophes. The overall attainment in these writing skills, however, remains below average. The school's prediction of performance of the current Year 6 cohort shows an improvement on present standards, although they are still likely to be below the national average.

57 A significant proportion of pupils have special educational needs or lack confidence and self-esteem. Several lack the fluency in language and need encouragement and support with their approach to learning. Teachers are providing this support consistently and more pupils are improving their progress. The quality of teaching is good overall and this leads to at least satisfactory learning in all lessons. In half of the lessons seen, learning was good or very good. On the few occasions where learning was not as good as the teaching, pupils work diligently but slowly. They are well behaved and have good attitudes to learning, but have not learnt the most effective work habits. However, pupils' good attitudes and the very good relationships between teachers and pupils support the quality of learning in lessons.

58 Teachers use a range of effective methods. Good questioning is used to extend the pupils' vocabulary, for example when picking up on words in a shared text, or drawing out the pupils' ideas for effective words to use in a text. These approaches hold the pupils' interest and are also used to encourage them to explain their reasoning. Lessons have a good pace and this keeps the pupils actively engaged and makes the lessons purposeful and productive. In the strongest lessons, the very good teaching enables all pupils to develop their ideas and understanding, for example, of what makes for an effective description, and encourages high levels of effort and productive work. Where there was some weakness in teaching, the teacher focused on securing the 'right' answer rather than using pupils partly accurate answers as a basis for developing their understanding further. Work is routinely matched to the needs of different pupils but in some instances the same level of challenge is simply presented in different ways, and does not provide opportunity for pupils to extend their learning sufficiently. Teachers know their pupils well. They gauge the pupils' responses and learning by monitoring and supporting their work effectively in lessons. However, information from these sources is not always clearly taken forward to inform planning for the next lesson and is not used to best effect in promoting the pupils' learning.

59 The school is teaching the skills of literacy well, using the Framework of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) to improve standards. The teachers across the school have a sound understanding of the framework and have worked hard to implement new and consistent approaches. This has been done to good effect. Teaching has been monitored and teachers have been given effective feedback. The pupils' literacy skills are often promoted and consolidated well in other subjects, for example when they write in accounts in history, discuss the use of language in music, and discuss experiments in science. The subject is resourced well and this supports the teaching successfully.

60 The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. The school recognises weaknesses in the subject, particularly in writing and in the weaker attainments of boys. Positive steps, such as identifying more relevant writing opportunities and providing more interesting books for the boys are beginning to have a beneficial effect on their performance. There is a clear commitment to improvement, a well-focused action plan for literacy and the use of practical strategies to address the weaknesses and to promote higher standards. Additional funding for "booster teaching" in

Year 6 has been used thoughtfully and effectively. Support staff work well with pupils who need extra support in all classes. The attainments of pupils in all years are monitored and agreed targets are set and reviewed and this promotes the pupils' progress. Targets for Year 6 pupils are challenging and appropriate in relation to national targets.

## **MATHEMATICS**

61 Inspection shows that overall standards of work observed in the classrooms meet national expectations in Year 6, and pupils are working at appropriate levels throughout the school. This is a significant improvement from the standards attained in the 1999 National Curriculum standardised tests, which in turn were a significant improvement from those attained in the previous year. Observations of the work in school also show that the numbers of pupils achieving at a higher level is also improving and pupils are now attaining at a similar level as recorded in the previous report. Whilst the National Curriculum tests, in 1999 showed that girls out-performed the boys quite significantly there is little evidence of this during lessons. Discussions with pupils and the scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils achieve at a broadly satisfactory level across all strands of the subject and are strongest when handling data and in understanding symmetry. Pupils are less secure in understanding the concept of time, in being able to analyse data or knowing how and when to use calculators effectively. Many pupils have low literacy skills and this affects their ability to follow written instructions and fully understand the wording of questions. The school has a high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register most of whom achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The increased emphasis on pupils developing their own mental strategies is challenging potentially high attaining pupils effectively and their achievement too is improving.

62 The pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. The majority of pupils concentrates well, show interest and make good gains in their knowledge. They meet challenges very well, persevere, and are pleased when they get the correct answer. Pupils behave well as they are interested in what they are doing and this creates a positive learning environment, so lessons proceed without interruption. Relationships with each other and with teachers are very good and have a positive impact on the pupils' learning by developing a climate where pupils confidently share thinking, ask for help when needed, and respond well to the teaching. As a consequence, they make good gains in their learning in lessons. Pupils in Year 6 say they enjoy mathematics because the teachers explain it so well and express regret when the lessons finish. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils find numbers fascinating and are interested in the variety of answers obtained by putting brackets in different places. Pupils take full responsibility for raising their own levels of attainment by setting termly targets for improvement in combination with their teachers and parents. Pupils respond well to these targets, which are used as part of the school reward system, and stickers are presented in assembly to mark success. Several pupils in each class are highlighted for intensive support to raise their standards. They are keen to discuss with teachers how they are progressing at the end of each day. Occasionally attitudes are less positive. There is a minority of pupils, identified on the special educational needs register who lack concentration and are not fully engaged by teaching. A few pupils, especially in the lower school have difficulty working well independently when their teacher's focus is elsewhere, and therefore they make fewer gains in their learning. In the few lessons where the pace of learning is too slow a few pupils become easily distracted and learning is restricted.

63 Teaching is good overall and this results in good learning by pupils. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons observed. One very good lesson was observed where pupils made very good gains in their application of what they already knew to unfamiliar situations. Teachers' knowledge of their subject and the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy are good, resulting in purposeful, well-focused lessons with teachers able to give clear explanations. They know how to teach the basic skills and place a good emphasis on developing

pupils' mental strategies. Teachers plan the structure of their lessons well, basing this on the format suggested by the numeracy framework. Lessons are well focused with objectives for pupils' learning based on the key elements of the numeracy strategy. Teachers ensure pupils know the purpose of the lesson through sharing these with them at the start of the session and reviewing them at the end, so both teacher and pupil can assess achievement. Work is planned well to meet the needs of pupils of differing prior attainment through devising different levels of worksheets, planned use of classroom support assistants and attention to meeting the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs.

64 The teachers promote very good relationships and manage the pupils' behaviour well. This results in a purposeful working atmosphere where pupils feel secure to ask and answer questions to further their understanding and having confidence to admit their difficulties and seek help. Teachers make accurate assessments of what pupils know and can do well and where they need to improve and set targets with them for further development. Questions are well used to assess pupils understanding through pitching them at different levels to interest all pupils appropriately. Teachers use the technique of asking pupils to explain their mental strategies to assess the quality of learning and understanding and this also strengthens the pupils' learning. Marking is used well to assess pupils' understanding and there are good examples of marking containing comments to help pupils to improve. Teachers generally have realistic expectations of their pupils and set work which is appropriate to their differing levels of achievement. Evaluations of the effectiveness of previous lessons, judged in terms of what pupils know and can do, are used well to plan future lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in classes based on their prior attainment. In these classes lesson planning is most effective when it is closely based on an accurate assessment of what pupils have already achieved. This allows all groups of pupils to be very well challenged and results in a very good level of learning. In the very few lessons where teaching is less effective this area is weaker, for example work is pitched at a level which is too low for the pupils to make sufficient progress.

65 Teachers incorporate a good range of methods and interesting activities to engage pupils' interest. For example rolling a dice to determine the numbers to be added together mentally, or setting money sums to pay for a 'Millennium Party'. Learning support assistants are used well to support pupils' with special educational needs. For example, during the introduction to a Year 4 lesson the pupils worked effectively with an assistant slightly apart from the rest of the class. By using smaller numbers and practical equipment where necessary the support assistant enabled these pupils to take part in the lesson successfully. On another occasion, a pupil in Year 6 was helped to cover work missed through absence and elsewhere an assistant worked with a group of higher attaining pupils to allow the teacher time to help with the lower attaining pupils. Information technology is well used to develop understanding of data handling with pupils making a good range of graphs and charts based on science experiments although it is underused in other areas of mathematics. Lessons are generally conducted at a good pace, which ensures pupils stay interested and learn well. They cover sufficient work during the term. In the lower school the pace of lessons occasionally slips resulting in pupils losing interest and concentration and consequently making fewer gains in knowledge and understanding.

66 The management of mathematics is good and this has been a significant factor in raising standards. The extensive monitoring of lessons by the head teacher has brought about improvement in the quality of teaching. The curriculum has been improved by adopting the National Numeracy framework and by the planning of daily lesson objectives based on its key elements. The co-ordinator has evaluated the strengths and weaknesses shown in the results of standardised tests and has modified the curriculum to place extra emphasis on weaker areas of understanding to raise future standards. As a consequence, the pupils' ability to develop their own mental strategies is improving well.

67 Advisers from the local education authority have worked closely with the teachers to raise standards through more effective lesson planning. All teachers and learning assistants have taken part in training connected with delivering the numeracy strategy. Individual pupils are monitored and targets are set for their maximum development. These are shared with pupils and parents and are regularly reviewed with them. The identification and support of pupils with special educational needs is good and has a positive effect on areas of learning concerned with reading and interpreting text. Strategies are less successful in helping the pupils to grasp mathematical concepts. The use of information technology within mathematics is not effective at this time. Other material resources and equipment are good and are used well to promote the pupils' learning.

## **SCIENCE**

68 In response to continuing low scores in the National Curriculum standardised tests over the past few years the school has set higher expectations of what pupils should achieve and is strongly promoting practical investigations in lessons. These are developing the pupils' attitudes purposefully and are having a significant impact on the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. Inspection evidence shows that across the school, most pupils are now achieving well in relation to their prior attainment. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to achieve the standards expected nationally of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2. The key elements in this significant improvement in standards are the good quality teaching which challenges pupils rigorously through questioning, the well planned practical opportunities which enable the pupils to find out for themselves and the higher shared expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The overall standards of pupils in Year 6 are now close to those identified by the previous inspection, but the pupils' skills in conducting fair tests and in following meaningful lines of enquiry are much improved. These pupils use planning boards effectively to set out their approaches to investigation, they plan the purposeful use of resources and predict outcomes, for instance of what might happen to a light bulb in an electrical circuit if they lengthen or coil the wires. The pupils question each other productively during such investigations, respond to the teachers' questions and record and analyse their findings. Such learning is most effective and consequently the pupils, including potentially higher attaining pupils, acquire a good understanding of experimental technique and use this well to gain appropriate knowledge of materials, physical processes and life and living creatures.

69 Increasingly information technology is used to improve the presentation of the pupils' ideas and to record the findings of their experiments in bar charts or graphs, for example of distances travelled by objects when measuring forces and this in turn uses and encourages the pupils' numeracy skills. Literacy skills are used and promoted effectively by the careful and accurate use of scientific vocabulary and by sharing ideas and conducting experiments with a partner or in groups. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an appropriate understanding of prediction, variables and fair testing. This was illustrated in lessons in Year 5 and 6 classes where the pupils tested electrical circuits by changing variables systematically to study the effect on the current conducted and where the sharing of ideas through discussion promoted the pupils' learning well.

70 Observations of lessons and of the pupils' work shows that pupils develop their skills effectively as they move through the school. Pupils have good opportunities to conduct practical experiments and investigations and pupils achieve well in all lessons and learning is good. The development of investigative skills has been a successful focus of school development since the last inspection when it was found to be weak. All pupils have benefited from this consistent approach, not least those who have special educational needs, who as a result of carefully managed support also achieve well, in relation to their previously identified needs.

71 When questioned many pupils readily express the view that science is a popular subject, several have noticed the increased emphasis on practical work and state that their skills have

improved. These feelings engender confidence and the positive attitudes promoted are underpinning the rising standards. The pupils enjoy using resources and show care when creating electrical circuits in Year 5 and 6 or when studying vibration in Years 3 and 4. They work well together, share ideas productively and respect the views of others. Behaviour is often very good in lessons and there is a buzz of excitement when investigations begin and good attention when findings are shared as a class.

72 Observations of lessons show that the teachers work hard and with good effect to involve the pupils in their learning. The quality of teaching is good and is underpinned by the sharing of lesson intentions with pupils consistently at the beginnings of lessons, which raises the pupils' interest and expectations of what they can achieve. This was illustrated in a lesson in Year 3 where prior to investigating vibration, the teacher reminded pupils of the ideas which stemmed from a "brainstorm" discussion on sounds. The teachers use well focused questions to challenge pupils and to encourage independent thought. This enriches the pupils' learning as in a lesson in Years 5 and 6 when the teacher successfully questioned the pupils about an earlier experiment using an auto-gyro to develop their understanding of a fair test. Such links with previous work raised the pupils' awareness and understanding prior to investigating variables in relation to electrical circuits and this enriched their learning. The teachers promote good relationships by encouraging group discussion and the sharing of ideas and this further develops the pupils' understanding as they learn from each other. No teaching of science was observed at the time of the previous inspection, but it is clear that teaching has improved in recent years as a result of the teachers using their good knowledge to develop and support practical investigation, and this is significantly raising standards in the subject.

73 The curriculum is planned well and fully complies with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and direction. He has promoted investigation successfully by introducing planning boards to focus the pupils' thinking and by encouraging teachers to identify key objectives related to investigation in their planning. This key issue of the previous inspection has been addressed well. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' plans, has evaluated pupils' work and has analysed pupils' scores in standardised tests. The results of such monitoring have been used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The subject is well resourced and these have been organised efficiently to support the planned themes. The spacious accommodation is used to the full to support practical work and to enable the pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry. The subject is managed most effectively and standards are rising.

## **ART**

74 Pupils in Year 6, and in other classes across the school, achieve well in comparison with pupils of a similar age nationally and the good standards have been maintained well since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, produce good quality work using many different techniques. Their displayed artwork contributes well to a stimulating learning environment. Pupils develop their awareness and skills well by using colour and form to express feelings and by listening to other people's points of view that may be different from their own, for example, when reflecting on works of art.

75 Most pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well in lessons. Most pupils acquire good skills in drawing and use a range of media, such as paints and pastels to show detail and form. For example, pupils in Year 6 show above average skills when representing light using pastels, in the style of Giacomo Balla. Pupils in Year 3 also mix pastel colours well and create good quality expressive patterns in the style of Kandinsky. They become absorbed by the activities and show interest in their work. The pupils develop a good level of perseverance through experimenting and many are not content with their initial effort and strive to improve their



performance. They show politeness to each other, enjoy good relationships with teachers and share resources sensibly. These create a purposeful atmosphere conducive to the good quality learning.

76 Teaching is good. All teachers have good subject knowledge, having received recent training in areas where they felt less confident. They plan lessons well, using the agreed objectives and these are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons so they are clear about what is expected of them. Generally these are used well at the end of lessons to assess how well pupils have learned. Teachers ask questions effectively to assess what children have remembered from the previous lesson and build their lessons well into a unit over several weeks to ensure pupils make good progress within themes such as expressing feelings or considering mood. They use a good range of activities using different mediums to extend the pupils' knowledge and to enable all pupils to learn effectively. The works of well-known artists, such as Kandinsky or Balla, are particularly well used to inspire the pupils' own creations. Direct whole class teaching is effective in imparting information about the artists' life and work. Teachers generally manage pupils well, although where teaching is less successful it is usually because too much noise leads to poor concentration by the pupils. Where explanations are insufficiently clear, some pupils cannot get started as they are unsure how to do so and this very occasionally leads to poor behaviour and disrupted learning. Most teachers maintain a good pace and the enthusiasm they bring to the lesson promotes the pupils' interest and encourages them to work hard

77 There is a well thought out curriculum, based on the National Curriculum programmes of study which promotes pupils social, moral, cultural and spiritual development, although these are not explicitly written into it. For example pupils study Japanese watercolours, and Islamic patterns. Extra curricular activities play a very good part in enriching classroom learning with pupils taking part in community art projects with local schools and the Brighton Children's festival workshops. Visiting sculptors and artists talk about their work and pupils visit the annual art degree show at Brighton University. The use of several art programs in information technology makes a good contribution to the mediums that pupils use for creating pictures and patterns. The curriculum is well designed to complement learning other subjects and through the emphasis on the correct use of vocabulary it supports literacy well.

78 The subject is well led and managed by the headteacher, with a conviction that good quality art rounds pupils' education and should have a high profile within the school's curriculum.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

79 Pupils in Year 6 achieve standards similar to those expected of pupils of this age in both the design and making elements of the curriculum. Most pupils have a good grasp of the design process. Having decided what they want to make, pupils draw a picture of it and make plans showing detailed measurements, choice of materials and decide which tools to use. For example, they produce models using a cam to make a moving part. They embark on producing a prototype, using readily available materials. Original plans are then amended where necessary and the final artefact made, decorated and displayed. They use a range of tools such as drills, glue guns, sandpaper and saws competently. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, are supported well by a strong emphasis on planning and make good progress. This is an improvement from the previous inspection where pupils' achievements in designing were less strong.

80 The pupils' attitudes are good. They work well collaboratively to produce finished models in Year 6 and musical instruments in Year 3, sharing the resources well and are proud of what they

achieve. Behaviour is good although occasionally a few children in Year 4 are unable to work independently, find concentration difficult, and disturb others.

81 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are several good features such as providing well for pupils with special educational needs by making worksheets so they can concentrate on design rather than recording text. Teachers provide a range of interesting resources including designing using information technology. They emphasise correct vocabulary, which benefits the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by showing the need for accurate measurement. Class teachers promote pupils' social development well by providing opportunities to share and collaborate. All teachers use well-developed skills of questioning to assess and extend pupils learning. Where teaching is less effective activities are less appealing, a lower standard of behaviour is tolerated and teachers do not ensure that pupils not working directly with them remain concentrating. Learning in these lessons is less successful.

82 Teachers' planning of individual lessons is generally satisfactory, but is hampered by a lack of longer-term planning as a consistent reference point. Consequently teachers do not always emphasise designing and making sufficiently. For example, there is an over-emphasis on developing learning in the curriculum area it is supporting rather than developing design and technology skills. In the best teaching seen in the upper school very good subject knowledge and a clear focus on purpose of lesson allows well-directed questions to guide pupils' learning. Teachers' knowledge of what pupils know and can do is not routinely used to plan future lessons because systems for doing so have not been developed.

83 The curriculum offers a satisfactory range of opportunities, but its planning, management and monitoring is unsatisfactory. It was reviewed and evaluated last summer and a new curriculum suggested, based on the nationally available guidance fitted to match topics. This is being tried out for effectiveness, but unlike other subjects, it does not focus lesson planning on developing skills progressively. The curriculum organisation promotes good social development through providing opportunities for pupils to work together. It aids personal development well through presenting challenges for pupils to meet and overcome. Leadership of the subject is not effective at this time as the co-ordinator is away from school on maternity leave. The school recognises the weaknesses in the subject and has identified it as an area for improvement in the school development plan.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

84 The subject is taught across a two-year cycle and no lessons could be seen during the week of the inspection. Consequently judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, of topic books and on display, and on discussions with pupils and teachers. These show that standards have been maintained well since the last inspection and pupils continue to achieve the standards expected for pupils of this age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, build satisfactorily on previous learning as they move through the school. Most pupils achieve well in their acquisition of skills, particularly in their ability to identify physical and human features of the environment and to see the changes that are taking place.

85 In Years 3 and 4, the pupils develop their confidence of mapping the local area. During the topic of "Where we live," they acquire appropriate skills in linking direct observations with interpretations of maps. They develop a satisfactory understanding of symbols and use these correctly to draw simple plans. Increasingly they differentiate between physical and human features, begin to understand the reasons for settlement and can explain the impact of human activity on the natural landscape. As they grow older, pupils in Years 5 and 6 relate their knowledge to places further afield. They learn to contrast and compare differing areas, for example Seaford with Newhaven. They gain good knowledge of coastal erosion from their

studies of the sea and can explain the factors which led to the differences between coastal communities. In their studies of tropical rainforests, the pupils learned effectively about the impact of climate on the landscape and on plant and animal life. Generally most pupils acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding of the factors which bring about changes to the environment.

86 When questioned, the pupils remember the several opportunities they have had to visit different areas, to use maps and to look at photographs. They welcome the opportunities to make their own observations and to interpret evidence for themselves and feel that this enriches their learning. The scrutiny of their work, in their books and on display in the classrooms supports this view and indicates an improvement in this form of learning since the previous inspection. The pupils speak enthusiastically about their work, and their positive attitudes to the subject are further illustrated by their neatly drawn maps and diagrams. The pupils' numeracy skills are supported effectively by their recording of temperatures when studying climates and by their use of scale when drawing maps. Literacy skills are extended usefully when pupils compare and contrast areas such as Seaford with Newhaven or when they describe the force of the sea in coastal erosion. Generally, however, limited writing skills frequently restricts the pupils' ability to describe features in depth and this slows learning. The scrutiny of work indicates that word processing and data-handling using information technology are used effectively to enrich the pupils' learning.

87 The curriculum is planned well. Recent reviews ensure that the pupils are taught skills progressively as they grow older and this enriches learning. There are many planned opportunities for the pupils to find things out for themselves and this promotes their personal development. Planned assessments of the pupils' learning are now completed at the end of each topic and it is intended that these will inform future teaching. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and direction for the subject. The curriculum has been updated to ensure appropriate breadth and balance and to support practical enquiry. The co-ordinator is usefully encouraging a strong emphasis on the latter aspect and this is promoting the pupils' learning well. She has collected examples of the pupils' work and is using these successfully to raise expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The subject is well resourced and the resources available are of good quality and are well organised. Visits to the local area and a residential visit to the Isle of Wight extend helpfully the curriculum provided and make a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

## **HISTORY**

88 The subject is taught across a two-year cycle and no lessons were planned for the week of the inspection, evidence is, therefore, based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, in topic books and on display and on discussions with pupils and teachers. These show that standards have been maintained well since the last inspection and pupils continue to achieve the standards expected for pupils of this age. Through studies of the invaders and settlers who colonised our country in Roman and Anglo-Saxon times, pupils in Years 3 and 4 know the differences between then and now and are able to sequence events correctly. By looking at the impact of such invasions they develop a satisfactory awareness of change over time. In Years 5 and 6 most pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of different periods in history. By creating their own museum of Ancient Egyptian "artefacts" and by experiencing a "Victorian" day the pupils enjoy practical opportunities to analyse historical periods and to collect information for themselves. As a result, many pupils develop the skills of organising information and relating their conclusions to their own situations. For example, when questioned, pupils in Year 6 explained knowledgeably why important people were entombed with possessions for a journey when they died. In this regard, the pupils' skills have been improved since the last inspection.

89 In relation to prior attainment, most pupils achieve satisfactorily and build on their previous

knowledge systematically and consistently as they move through the school. They have many and varied opportunities to study first hand evidence through visits to the British Museum, for example, and by examining artefacts brought to school by visiting speakers. These widen the pupils' understanding and enable them to observe and deduce things for themselves. They are encouraged to be 'archeologists' and to interpret historical evidence. Pupils study the changing landscape over time. Pupils use this knowledge and successfully extend their understanding, for example, in Year 3 they illustrate and describe battles with Boudicca, and in Year 4, pupils speculate what a Viking might wish to keep in a storage chest. These activities develop the pupils' skills of interpreting historical evidence effectively. The teachers' planning and classroom displays show an increased emphasis on open-ended research questions and this enables the pupils to research and come to conclusions for themselves. The pupils' literacy skills are promoted effectively for example, by encouraging them to be Julius Caesar writing about his invasion of Britain. The scrutiny of work indicates, however, that frequently the pupils' under-developed writing skills, limits their ability to record their ideas fully which restricts learning. Numeracy skills are supported by reference to time lines which record the passage of time. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in relation to their previously identified needs.

90 When questioned, the pupils show much enthusiasm for the subject. Their neatly presented work and imaginatively created models, of Viking longships and Ancient Egyptian artefacts demonstrate their positive attitude. These judgements are consistent with the findings of the last inspection. The pupils readily refer to visits and visitors and clearly welcome these opportunities to observe evidence at first hand.

91 The subject is planned well, particularly in the medium and long term and much thought has been given to the pupils acquiring skills progressively as they grow older. Evidence from displayed work and from the pupils' books show that the pupils are learning skills effectively and interpret their findings confidently and accurately by the time they leave the school. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has promoted a consistent emphasis on developing pupils' skills through practical research. Regular assessments of the pupils' work ensure that learning is effective. She has encouraged neat presentation of work and this is reflected in the good quality of classroom displays which celebrate and extend pupils' learning successfully. Resources are of good quality, are well organised and are enriched by regular visits and by visiting speakers.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

92 Standards overall are below those generally achieved by pupils of a similar age because until this academic year the incomplete curricular provision did not enable them to do so. In the communicating and handling information strands of the curriculum, pupils reach suitable levels of expertise. For example, Year 6 pupils confidently combine different forms of information such as graphics and text to create a poster to discourage running in corridors. They have a good technical knowledge, and are skilled in saving their work in different ways to allow retrieval and amendment at a later date. They competently change the size, style and colour of fonts to achieve different effects and use a spell check program when redrafting text. Pupils access information stored on CD-ROMs connected with their topic work such as finding out about different aspects of life in Tudor times. They enter their own information to make databases and produce graphs showing which shoe has the best grip or the results of their food survey. They access facts stored on the Internet to find out details about their locality for their local studies in history and geography. They also know how to frame questions carefully, use the search tool and refine questioning when necessary.

93 Pupils who attend the after school and lunch time computer clubs reach a higher level and are starting to make a school web site and visit those made by other schools. In the modelling,

controlling and measuring aspects of the programme of study pupils achieve at too low a level. There is little evidence of older pupils having covered much of the national programme of study in these areas except for using computer models to investigate options such as making a plan to explore different classroom layouts to decide where the furniture would best fit. The school recognises this and has amended the curriculum to raise standards in these areas. In the lower school pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level in all but the modelling element, developing suitable technical skills and using information technology to enhance and extend other curriculum areas.

94 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in lessons, which enables them to learn well. They enjoy the lessons and explore and experiment purposefully, persevering and overcoming problems and becoming very involved in what they are doing. They develop independent learning skills well and are keen to try out new programs. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with teachers and learning support assistants and others who help in school. They share well and take turns when working together. This contributes well to their personal development and the good quality learning in lessons.

95 Teaching is good in the upper school. No teaching was observed in the lower school. The well prepared lessons combined with good organisation of pupils in the IT suite allows all pupils to make good gains in their knowledge of how the new computers work and of how to use select different program tools for their effects. Good subject knowledge ensures that teachers know the possibilities of the programs and can guide pupils to find out rather than telling them what to do. Teachers plan well for lessons, giving proper consideration to class management and organisation as well as lesson structure. For example, they give clear explanations and instructions to focus pupils' minds on the lesson objectives before using the computers and explain sharing arrangements which enables pupils to make the maximum gains in their learning when engaged in the set activity. Lessons are well structured to build knowledge in a series of steps towards the objectives and are conducted at a good pace with constant attempts to inspire pupils and develop their skills.

96 Teachers ensure equality of access through ensuring pupils working in pairs and groups take fair turns. They develop pupils' enquiry skills well by encouraging them to experiment, resulting in pupils developing confidence in using information technology. Teachers' emphasis on the use of correct vocabulary aids pupils' literacy skills. The use of praise to encourage and motivate pupils works well and encourages pupils to make an even greater effort. In a good lesson an activity to assess how far pupils had progressed in their skills during the lesson was used. Pupils were asked to draw a picture using specific tools. In less effective lessons the balance was lost between pupils experimenting and being directed towards the lesson objective and pupils made fewer gains in their knowledge and understanding.

97 The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection and now meets in all respects the requirements of the National Curriculum. It now provides a satisfactory range of opportunities, and is strengthened through access to the Internet. However, until this academic year, the school was not providing a curriculum that enabled older pupils to achieve at high enough levels across all elements of the programmes of study in the subject. The curriculum has been developed well into medium term plans, which identify learning objectives and expected levels of achievement for different groups of pupils including those with special educational needs. This is helpful to teachers in planning their lessons and carrying out assessments. The curriculum is very well thought out to enrich learning in other subject areas, through linking activities with topics. It develops pupils' skills of literacy soundly through providing opportunities to create text in different forms, read instructions and develops the higher order skills of skimming and scanning when finding information. The pupils' numeracy skills are not sufficiently supported by the use of

information technology. The computer clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and are well attended.

98 Much needs to be done to ensure teachers gain a clear picture of what individual pupils know and can do. At present, teachers only keep records of which programs they have used. The school has no information as to which level within the national curriculum pupils are working at or have achieved in order to plan for their development.

99 The subject is well led and managed by the two co-ordinators, who have worked hard to revise the curriculum to enable unsatisfactory standards to improve. They show determination and drive to implement the changes, and had already identified the subject's strengths and made plans to address the weaknesses prior to the inspection. There is an awareness that teachers need extra training to build their expertise in the newly developed areas and money is set aside to do so this term. The acquisition of new computers and the development of the technology suite and of access to the Internet has been well managed. These good resources provide a greater opportunity for whole class teaching to raise standards.

100 Although there has been some improvement in using information technology to handle data, the weaknesses in controlling mechanisms identified in the previous report have not been remedied. However, the school is now well placed to do so as identified in its school improvement plan.

## **MUSIC**

101 The standards of work across the school are generally in line with what is expected for the ages of the pupils. The sound standards have been maintained since the last inspection, but the school is working hard to raise pupils' achievement further. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing confidently, with enjoyment and a careful sense of timing. In the lessons seen, their learning was good as they listened carefully to recorded performances and then worked with the teacher to perform the song themselves. Pupils learnt well about the importance of pauses in singing and developed their understanding and control of diction. These younger pupils were also consolidating their knowledge of musical instruments and learning the names of some they were not familiar with. Pupils were also learning about the difference between pitched and unpitched percussion. The teacher was making good use of opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary as they discussed adjectives to describe the sounds the instruments made. Some pupils did not find this easy.

102 The attainment of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is also appropriate for their ages, and in one lesson it was judged to be good. The focus in these lessons also was on singing. Pupils were singing accurately and confidently, identifying the mood of the song, called 'Turn on the power'. They showed awareness of dynamics and phrasing and, with the help of the teacher, used an echo element to fill rest bars in the music to good effect. Few pupils were able to come up with their own ideas for variations and it is such skills in music the school is keen to develop. Time was also spent in the lessons on extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of instruments, and pupils were able to recognise the sound of several and match them to families of instruments. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and potentially higher attainers, are challenged and build appropriately on previous knowledge. At the moment, all music is taught in class lessons and there are no occasions when pupils all sing together, such as in assembly. This limits the opportunities to perform with, and to, others, although there are choir clubs at certain times of the year.

103 The lessons seen across the school were well taught. The teaching in those for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 were very good. Music lessons are taught by the subject co-ordinator or by the

headteacher. The good subject knowledge of these teachers helps ensure that all lessons have a very wide range of activities which interest and stimulate the pupils. The organisation of lessons is good, and recorded music, instruments and music sheets are used well to maintain interest and a good pace to the work. Some very good teaching of singing skills was seen, which led towards an effective performance by the class. The minor weaknesses in teaching in lessons that were otherwise satisfactory related to the lack of sufficient coaching for singing in some cases, while pupils were nevertheless enjoying the music-making experience, and to insufficient evaluation of their performance. Pupils were praised in some lessons, but there was a need for more opportunity for pupils to reflect on their own performances or that of others. Instrumental tuition on the violin is provided for those who wish to take it up but no instrumental teaching was observed.

104 The good attitudes of pupils contribute positively to the quality of the learning experiences. Pupils are well behaved, keen to offer ideas and are mainly enthusiastic and attentive. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator and headteacher working together. The teaching of music is now based on a recently developed sequence of skills which has a positive effect on the quality of teaching and to pupils' learning. As yet, this is not having an impact on overall standards but there is evidence of higher achievement in the lessons seen. A checklist of attainments has been drawn up to track pupils' progress and to inform the teaching of the subject; this has the potential to contribute to the higher attainments the school is seeking. Teaching is supported well by access to a good range of musical instruments.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

105 Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop positive attitudes to physical activity and build satisfactorily on previous learning. They learn the importance of physical exercise to health and complete appropriate "warm-up" and "cool-down" routines before and after exercise.

106 Dance and games lessons were observed during the week of the inspection and evidence is also based on observations of pupils at play, at clubs and from curriculum plans and discussions with pupils and staff. These show that the pupils experience a full range of activities and acquire appropriate skills in dance, gymnastics and games as they move through the school. Standards have generally been maintained since the previous inspection. Due to a lack of facilities, the school has not been able to provide regular swimming in the recent past, but plans are in place to re-introduce swimming next term now that a local facility has been found. Most pupils develop expected skills in catching and throwing during games activities and many use space well and show improving skills in quick reaction and tactics during group sessions. Year 5 and 6 pupils often work well in small-sided team games and test their skills effectively against pace and competition. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, led by a few dedicated teachers, has been well supported by good numbers of boys and girls. Over the past twelve months these have included football, athletics and dance.

107 Pupils enjoy lessons and generally behave well. Occasionally younger pupils become too excited and are slow to concentrate or follow instructions. When this happens learning is disrupted. Most pupils show good attitudes, however, and good relationships underpin the learning in most lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 co-operate well and compete fairly in small groups and learn well from each other. Extra-curricular clubs enrich the pupils' learning and physical activity generally helps to maintain the strong ethos of care evident in the school.

108 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and on occasions it is good. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. Although the co-ordinator is encouraging a stronger emphasis on the teaching of skills, this is not consistently in place across

the school. A few of the teachers lack confidence in teaching the skills of throwing and catching, for example, in a step by step way and this is restricting the quality of learning and the pupils' acquisition of skills. Other teachers do this well and also promote a good pace and high expectations. A few teachers demonstrate expectations to pupils very clearly and also use other pupils to show how activities can be continued. Where this is the case the pupils have a clearer awareness of the standards to be reached and learning is more effective. All teachers are careful to prepare the pupils effectively through well-planned "warm-up" sessions. Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships which promotes good learning. Resources are used well to support teaching and learning. Occasionally the pace slows as teachers spend too long introducing activities and the time left for aerobic activity or for developing skills is reduced.

109 The curriculum is planned effectively to ensure appropriate balance and breadth and there is an increasing emphasis on the teaching of skills using particular schemes of work, in games, for example. The co-ordinator is promoting this aspect supportively and provides effective guidance. The co-ordinator and headteacher play key roles in promoting extracurricular activities and this is much appreciated by parents and pupils and significantly enriches the curriculum provided. Assessments, in athletics, for example are useful in monitoring pupils' achievements, but opportunities to assess the pupils' skills within lessons are not consistently identified within teachers' plans. Resources are good and are supplemented well by good links with "Top Sport". The accommodation is very good and teachers generally use the space well.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

110 The standards of work across the school are generally in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The appropriate standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.

111 At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were learning well about the Islamic festival of Eid, recognising it as a celebration important to Muslims, and characterised by celebrations not unlike those at the time of the Christian Christmas. Many are able to describe how and why a festival is celebrated but some appropriate opportunities for them to go a little further and explore the significance of festival, which some pupils appeared able to do, were not taken and this limited the attainment seen in the lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were learning about the Five Pillars of Islam and showed good achievements in their ability to discuss and identify reasons for rules or beliefs to live by. Many showed understanding of how the guidelines of a religion influenced the everyday life of believers. Sample of pupils' work done at other times showed a good range of experiences across the school reflecting the required work and indicating broadly appropriate levels of attainment. Pupils have learnt about aspects of the Jewish faith, visited a Christian church and reflected on things that are important to the followers of different religions. By Year 6, pupils have explored in greater depth the significance of ceremonies, such as baptism, rituals and festivals. They have considered sources of authority such as people, for example, St John the Baptist, and the holy books of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

112 The lessons seen across the school were well taught. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the material they are teaching. They share the learning intentions for individual lessons with pupils and this helps to give them a good insight into the expectations of the teacher for their learning. There are good whole-class discussions and also, especially for the older pupils, some well-focused short group discussions that help them to work purposefully and at a good pace. Questioning is often challenging and sometimes particularly well targeted to ensure that all pupils are engaged and take part. On one occasion an important feature of Muslim greetings cards, the use of patterns instead of representations of living things, was stated but not explained. This allowed a significant point of Muslim belief to go unexplored. Generally,



however, teachers show good knowledge and take care in sharing reasons for rules and beliefs in other religions – when studying the Five Pillars of Islam in Years 5 and 6, for example. The good teaching leads to successful learning in most lessons. Pupils were acquiring new knowledge and skills in the lessons seen and were working productively at a good pace. They show interest and sustain concentration. The positive attitudes that pupils bring to their work contributes well to the overall good quality of learning. Teaching has included the contributions of visitors to the school representing different faiths.

113 The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has drawn up a suitable scheme of work to match the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This guides teachers effectively. The aspects to be studied are included in units of work that also refer to other subjects, and where this is not appropriate there are specific modules focusing on religious issues. A new assessment checklist has been drawn up which reflects properly the skills to be aimed for in the scheme of work. This provides valuable information on the progress of individual pupils and whole classes, but arrangements for ensuring that the needs of individual pupils are taken into account in subsequent lessons are not so secure. The strong teaching, supported by the scheme of work and plentiful resources, and the good learning in lessons have the potential to lead towards higher overall standards in the subject. The subject is planned to be a focus for further development in the term following the inspection to build on the newly introduced scheme of work and assessment procedures.