

INSPECTION REPORT

KING'S FORD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114716

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Harvey

Reporting inspector: Robert Greatrex
19924

Dates of inspection: 7-10 February 2000

Inspection number: 191912

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Junior |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Gloucester Avenue Colchester Essex |
| Postcode: | CO2 9AZ |
| Telephone number: | 01206 573807 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr Derek Jones |
| Date of previous inspection: | January 1997 |

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| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Robert Greatrex | Registered inspector | Religious education Geography History Music | The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management |
| Rosemary Hussain | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers |
| Martin Beale | Team inspector | Mathematics Information technology Design and technology Physical education | Teaching and learning |
| Patricia Smith | Team inspector | English Equal opportunities | |
| Ian Tatchell | Team inspector | Science Art Special educational needs | Quality and range of opportunities for learning |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a mixed area and takes about one-third of its pupils from a nearby army garrison. It has 155 pupils on roll and is smaller than the average-sized community junior school for boys and girls from 7 to 11 years of age. The pupils' attainment on entry is well below that found nationally. There are 47 pupils identified as having special educational needs, a figure that is above the national average. Three of these pupils have statements of special educational need. There are few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school during the course of the school year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

King's Ford Junior School cares for its pupils well. Standards in English, mathematics and science are very low, although they are improving at a similar rate to most schools nationally. There is much good teaching and the overall standard is satisfactory. The headteacher, governors and staff form an effective team, and recent priorities have been the right ones. The school works hard to involve parents. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is a substantial proportion of good and very good teaching throughout the school.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and moral development is good. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes, are enthusiastic learners, show initiative and work well together.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is effective.

What could be improved

- Standards in the core subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics, are too low.
- Except in literacy and numeracy lessons, there is insufficient challenge for pupils with higher attainment levels generally, and the older pupils in mixed-age classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress in dealing with the key issues and other areas for development identified when, in 1997, the school was previously inspected.

Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen at a similar rate to those in most schools. Standards have risen more quickly in art and religious education, and are satisfactory. Teaching time has been increased and the quality of teaching is better. Pupils' behaviour is managed better and the school is now a calmer and more orderly place, although a small proportion of pupils misbehave. Subject co-ordinators are generally more effective. Teachers work well in their teams, good ideas are shared and the curriculum is much more cohesive. Moral development is now good, and spiritual development satisfactory. In areas where governors are more closely involved, such as in literacy, special educational needs and art, much has been accomplished and pupils have benefited; however, governors have done less to monitor standards in other areas. The school's response to the need to improve provision for pupils of higher attainment levels has had little effect.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | E | C | E | D |
| mathematics | E | E | E | D |
| science | E | C | E | D |

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

Over the last three years, results of national tests for eleven-year-olds have been well below average, except in 1998 when they were higher largely because the year group had a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school. Mathematics results have been consistently below those for English and science. The overall trend from 1996 is broadly in line with the upward trend nationally. When the school's results are compared to similar schools, and allowance is made for the very high rate of pupil mobility, results are below rather than well below average. The school's targets for 1999 were achieved in English and exceeded in mathematics. Those for the next two years are challenging and, if achieved, will represent a significant raising of standards.

Most pupils are making satisfactory progress. Many pupils who enter the school with below average levels of achievement go on to reach average levels by the time they leave, and this is good progress; however, neither the needs of pupils of high attainment levels nor those of the older year group in each class are catered for sufficiently in much of the work planned in subjects other than English and mathematics. Consequently these pupils often do not achieve as they could. Standards in literacy and numeracy are low generally. Standards in information technology are also low, although the school has recognised this and established a new computer suite. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects except history, although it was not possible to make a judgement about design and technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes are generally positive; they show interest and enthusiasm, particularly when lessons are stimulating. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | The vast majority of pupils behave well in class, but a small minority do not. Around the school, pupils are calm and orderly. |
| Personal development and relationships | The vast majority of pupils respect the feelings of others. They work well together and readily take responsibility. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory: punctuality is good and unauthorised absence a rarity. |

The school is generally very effective in promoting positive attitudes to work, good behaviour and the pupils' personal development. Much has been done to establish a caring ethos within a system where rules, rewards and sanctions are clear and pupils know what is and is not acceptable.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Teaching of pupils: | Aged 7-11 years |
| Lessons seen overall | Satisfactory |

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 was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons seen, and good or very good in about half of these lessons. This is much better than when the school was previously inspected. The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was largely due to poor discipline. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs by both the specialist teacher and learning support assistants is good. The literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson have been introduced successfully and both are generally taught well. Features of the most effective teaching are the good use of questioning to challenge pupils of all abilities, well-planned activities carefully matched to pupils' needs, and high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Where teaching is less effective, the characteristics of good questioning and planning for all attainment levels, particularly the pupils of higher attainment levels, are missing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan well in their teams, so that expertise and experience are shared and lessons consistent. Personal, social and health education is a strength. Extra-curricular activities do much to enrich the curriculum. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Support is of good quality and pupils make good progress when given this extra help. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school does much to promote pupils' personal development and this is having a very positive effect. Moral and social development are good. Pupils are taught well about their rights and responsibilities in the school community. Spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | All school staff take great care to promote the health, safety and well-being of the pupils. |

Statutory requirements are met in all subjects, except in some aspects of information technology. Current improvements, when fully implemented, will largely resolve this. The headteacher and staff know the pupils very well and provide good care, support and guidance. Considerable improvements have been made recently to the way in which the academic progress of pupils is monitored. The school has good links with parents, despite the difficulties in forming relationships when pupils move so frequently. Parents of children with special educational needs work closely with the school, and this is beneficial. Parents run a very popular and successful after-school activity, but few parents help in class.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school, and recent priorities have been appropriate. Senior staff give effective support and the whole staff work well as a team; however, more needs to be done to raise standards. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors are well informed and active in the school. Several have made a good contribution to improving the curriculum provision in specific areas, but collectively they monitor the work of the school insufficiently. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school is becoming more active in monitoring standards and is now using the information gathered more effectively to track pupils' progress. |
| The strategic use of resources | Financial planning is based on clear systems. Expertise is used wisely, especially when setting the budget and looking for best value. Funds are allocated to meet the priorities of the development plan. |

The recent emphasis has, rightly, been in improving pupils' behaviour and creating greater consistency between teachers and in the curriculum. The same attention has not been given to raising standards in subjects. Consequently, they have not risen sufficiently. Staffing levels are satisfactory and accommodation generous in size. Learning resources are generally sufficient, although the equipment necessary to teach some elements of information technology is not yet available. The good number of learning support assistants are effectively deployed. Administration staff do much to enable the school to run smoothly and are well regarded by parents. A recent improvement has been the computer suite.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • The school expects their children to work hard. • Their children make good progress. • The school staff are approachable. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour needs to be further improved. • Work can be too easy for able children and for those in the older age group in each class. • The range and variety of activities outside lessons could be broadened. |

The parents are generally pleased with the school and the education it provides. They feel that the school is a welcoming place. Inspection findings support this view. Inspectors agree with parents that the older year group in each class, and the pupils with high attainment levels, are insufficiently challenged in many subjects. They also feel that, while much has been done to improve behaviour, more remains to be done to meet the needs of a small number of pupils. It was felt that, given the size of the school, the extra-curricular activities were good. Parents have mixed feelings about the amount of homework set. Overall it was judged suitable.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards overall are well below average throughout the school. Although the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected by the age of eleven is increasing, the proportion exceeding it is still very small. Standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are low and this impacts on pupils' standards in most other subjects. Important factors in this low achievement are the generally low standards of the pupils who join the school at the age of seven, very high pupil mobility, and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
2. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, results were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science, and particularly so in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving a higher level was also very low. When comparisons are made to similar schools, standards are below rather than well below average. The targets for the next two years are very challenging and unlikely to be achieved.
3. The trend over the last three years shows improvement broadly similar to the national average. Boys and girls generally achieve similar results. Results improved until 1998 and fell again in 1999. This was due largely to the differences in the year groups taking the tests. In 1999, a far higher proportion of the pupils taking the tests had special educational needs than in the previous years. Pupil mobility was also particularly high in 1999. Consequently a number of pupils taking the tests had joined the school only recently.
4. Evidence from the national tests taken by pupils when they were seven, the school's own assessments and the evidence of the inspection, shows attainment when the pupils enter the school to be well below average generally and particularly so in mathematics. Improvements since the previous inspection in the quality of teaching and planning are partly responsible for pupils making the progress that they should. Pupils with special educational needs who receive support in lessons or who have individual or group lessons, make satisfactory progress. They reach levels of attainment which are below the levels of attainment for pupils of their age, but which still relate well to their ability level. The majority of the pupils who enter the school barely reaching the level expected at the age of seven, achieve the level expected at eleven. The concerns expressed by some parents that pupils with high attainment levels and older pupils in the mixed-age classes are not catered for as well, were found to be justified by the inspection. The majority of these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
5. Standards of literacy are below average throughout the school. Although progress in reading, spelling and handwriting is sound, in other aspects of writing it is not. All elements of the literacy hour are in place and teaching is of a good standard. Questioning, in both the introduction and plenary elements, is generally effective in moving pupils on and clarifying their understanding. At these times and during other discussions such as the weekly circle time activities, pupils speak clearly and confidently and listen carefully.
6. Standards of numeracy are well below average throughout the school. Once again, the standard of questioning is generally good and both the beginning and end of each lesson is effective in developing mental strategies and reinforcing and extending learning in particular. How to meet the needs of all ages and abilities in each class is a difficulty that the school has not yet fully resolved. Consequently tasks do not always meet pupils' individual needs, particularly during group, paired or individual

work. Number skills are, however, well used in several other subjects, such as in mapwork in geography.

7. Standards in science are below average. Younger pupils are beginning to test more thoroughly and to evaluate the outcomes of their investigations. Older pupils are just beginning to understand the need to keep all but one element of an investigation constant if the test is to be fair, but this is below the level achieved by pupils of this age nationally. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information technology are below national expectations. This is largely because pupils have had too little access to equipment to build the necessary skill and competence levels. The new computer suite should enable the school to provide the opportunities necessary for standards to rise. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in all other subjects except history. It was not possible to form a judgement about design and technology.
8. The vast majority of parents who responded feel that their children are making good progress at school. They feel that the curriculum has improved greatly in the recent past, largely as a result of the introduction of the national initiatives for literacy and numeracy, but also because of the more structured timetable and greater emphasis upon teaching. Even so, many felt that the school does not cater sufficiently for able pupils and the oldest pupils in each class. The inspection findings are that most pupils are currently making satisfactory rather than good progress, and that the higher-attaining pupils are making less progress than they could.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Since the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour is much improved. Parents generally share this view, although some expressed concerns about the impact of a small minority of disruptive pupils.
10. Most pupils want to come to school and show positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive in lessons and co-operate well with each other, particularly when tasks that they are given are stimulating and interesting, such as in practical music lessons. Concentration is generally good and pupils show respect for teachers, other adults in the school and their peers. They are enthusiastic learners both in the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, where their behaviour is very good. They approach these activities seriously and achieve high standards, such as in an after-school Morris dancing club.
11. The few pupils with very challenging behaviour have difficulty in concentrating, even for short periods of time. Despite help from learning support assistants, these pupils can disrupt lessons. This impacts on both their own learning and that of others in the class.
12. Most pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning. This is particularly so when they work with the support of a teacher or learning support assistant. At these times they show a level of confidence not always seen in the classroom. Consequently they persevere more with challenging tasks and work with greater enjoyment.
13. There has been a considerable increase in the number of exclusions since the previous inspection. This has involved very few pupils and has been carefully monitored. The reasons for exclusion have been appropriate. Generally its use has been effective, and the number of exclusions is currently falling.
14. Pupils have good relationships with staff and other pupils. They mix well: particularly noteworthy as the school population is relatively transient. The pupils play their part in creating a co-operative atmosphere in the school. For example, they chat quietly and happily when eating lunch, whilst being responsive to the lunchtime supervisors with whom they enjoy a good rapport. In circle time,

pupils show an impressive willingness to listen to the views of others, share their own and discuss amicably and openly.

15. The vast majority of pupils behave well around the school and are courteous to visitors. These pupils show respect for the school rules. In the playground they are co-operative and use the bus stop system well. Pupils sit at an allotted place when they are not involved in games with others, and are then invited, sometimes with the help of the supervisors, to join in. Although there are occasional instances of high spirits in the playground, bullying is not perceived as a problem by parents, pupils or teachers. All staff are very alert to any signs of inappropriate behaviour and act quickly when necessary.
16. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The vast majority work collaboratively with one another, sharing ideas and equipment well. They readily accept responsibility and do so maturely, carrying out their specific duties with pride. Levels of responsibility increase as pupils progress through the school and all pupils in Year 6 have at least one responsible position. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about their involvement in the school council. They bring the views of their classes, discuss ideas thoughtfully, take notes and report back to their classes.
17. Attendance is satisfactory. Partly due to the thorough school systems, the great majority of absence is for legitimate reasons only. The vast majority of pupils are punctual and thereby contribute to lessons starting on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons seen, which represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Almost half of the teaching was good or very good. In spite of this, weak skills in language and number mean that pupils learn new ideas and techniques slowly and require much consolidation and reminding from teachers. Some pupils have great difficulty in remembering what happened in the previous day's lesson, slowing the pace of some lessons considerably.
19. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Lessons are well planned, using the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers use questioning well to push pupils' thinking forward and this, coupled with some effective interactions during group activities, ensures that pupils understand new ideas. This was seen to good effect in a Year 5 and 6 lesson where the class were studying the poem 'Matilda Who Told Lies' to look at proverbs and look for meaning beyond the literal. The teacher encouraged the pupils to think hard and think again. Very good use was made of pupils' answers to get them to reflect on the meaning of words. The teacher kept firm control of the class, particularly during group activities and a small group of four pupils were supported well by a classroom assistant. Some progress was made in the development of this difficult concept.
20. The daily mathematics lesson has been successfully introduced and the teaching of number skills is satisfactory overall. The structure of the three-part lesson is seen in all classes. Some inventive activities to sharpen the pupils' mental recall of number facts are used. While these have improved the speed of recall, the level of skills remains low. In a well-taught Year 4 and 5 lesson the teacher handled the introductory session well to consolidate the pupils' understanding of the size of angles. The session moved forward at pace with all of the pupils involved in the activity. The objectives of the main teaching session were shared with the class and were regularly emphasised during the direct teaching. The teacher had a very good rapport with the class, who responded well to her. They concentrated well on the task and worked at pace. Good use was made of the plenary session to remind pupils about the lesson's main learning points.

21. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good. Sessions are well planned, resources are effectively used and lessons move at a brisk pace so that much is achieved. Tasks are challenging and are matched to the ability of the pupils. Staff build up a good relationship with these pupils and by gentle encouragement take every opportunity to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In classes, pupils with special educational needs receive support and work modified to meet their needs when appropriate.
22. Many teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, often linked to high expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour. Good discipline in some classes has helped to establish an effective atmosphere in which all can succeed. Lessons have clear plans with well-sequenced activities which enable the pupils to consolidate learning and develop new skills. Some lesson introductions refer back well to the previous lesson. These characteristics were observed in a good science lesson on forces in a Year 3 and 4 class. The teacher's plans were thorough and comprehensive, making good use of practical tasks to reinforce understanding and to challenge the pupils' scientific thinking. The teacher had a good relationship with the class who responded well by working hard, completing the activities on time and listening to her instructions. The teacher's good subject knowledge was reflected in the pupils' verbal and written explanations.
23. Teachers generally respond well to the small proportion of pupils who behave inappropriately. Some pupils are reluctant learners in spite of all that their teachers do to make lessons lively and interesting. This was seen in a Year 5 and 6 lesson where some pupils were unwilling to participate in a question and answer session, and also in a Year 4 and 5 physical education lesson where two pupils refused to join in with the group presentations that they had prepared. Some of the teaching sessions, particularly but not exclusively in the afternoon, are too long for some pupils. Their concentration wavers and their productivity decreases. A lack of control in a small number of lessons resulted in pupils not concentrating and disturbing others. In these lessons too many methods are employed to discipline the pupils and this serves to confuse them.
24. Several teachers use questioning skilfully to target particular questions at individual pupils, challenging the higher-attainers to think and to respond in detail. This also keeps all pupils on their toes, as they can never be sure who will be asked next. This generates interest amongst the pupils and some pace to the lessons. Most teachers, however, use questioning to much less effect. Questions are presented to the whole class and the first correct answer accepted without any discussions of why it might be correct. This results in many pupils not clearly understanding, a lack of challenge for some and several pupils taking the opportunity not to participate.
25. A key point for action from the previous inspection, to plan extension work for those capable of high attainment, has not been completely dealt with. A particular weakness in some lessons that otherwise have many good characteristics is that insufficient attention is paid to the needs of some of the more able and older pupils in the mixed-age classes.
26. The quality of teachers' planning is much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers share expertise when planning and experience when teaching. For example, information about activities that work well or badly is passed by one teacher to the others in the team so that their lessons may be improved.

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

27. The school provides a broad curriculum which promotes very good personal, social and health education. It is also soundly balanced, relevant and includes all National Curriculum subjects, religious education, sex education and drug awareness. All statutory requirements, except some aspects of the information technology curriculum, are met. Sufficient emphasis is being placed on

the development of English, mathematics and science. Recently introduced strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are effective and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

28. Since the previous inspection the school has increased the length of the teaching week to match the recommended time and increased the amount of religious education being taught.
29. Positive efforts are made to ensure that pupils have the curriculum which addresses their needs. Pupils who need additional literacy support are withdrawn from classes during lessons and effectively monitored to ensure that they receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum subjects. Both girls and boys are encouraged to attend the good range of extra-curricular activities provided.
30. Detailed schemes of work in all subjects give a useful framework for teachers' planning and ensure that the same work is covered in parallel classes, an improvement since the previous inspection. The introduction of the new schemes of work, including the new national literacy and numeracy frameworks, has had a positive effect on pupils' learning within the school and fully meets the criticism of the previous inspection.
31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The individual education plans have specific, achievable targets and comply with the recommendations of the Code of Practice. Pupils are successfully integrated and the timing of additional teaching support is carefully linked to class timetables. This works particularly well during the literacy hour and is a very efficient use of the special educational needs teacher and learning support assistants. Pupils' individual education plans set appropriate targets so that work is well matched to the needs of each pupil. Pupils' needs are identified early, assessed accurately and regularly reviewed.
32. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which includes provision for sport and music. Pupils with special educational needs are offered special counselling and play therapy. Class visits to places of educational interest and visitors such as a puppet theatre and Gurkha dance group enrich the curriculum further. There is satisfactory liaison with the local infant and high schools to enable pupils to move smoothly from one to another.
33. The schools' provision for pupils' personal development is generally good and strongest in moral and social development. Pupils with special educational needs benefit particularly from the provision that the school makes in this area. The school's very good arrangements for providing personal and social education are having a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Pupils are given good opportunities to take on worthwhile responsibilities, for example Year 6 pupils welcome visitors to the school and look after new pupils at playtime. This is particularly appropriate in a school with a high rate of pupil admissions. A school council made up of elected pupils from each class meets and discusses school-related issues. During class assemblies, which take the form of circle time, pupils are given good opportunities to reflect upon and explore their feelings. Teachers and all adults in the school provide good role models, encouraging values such as fairness and respect. Assemblies and well chosen stories promote pupils' understanding of right from wrong. There are opportunities for pupils to be involved in relevant and thought-provoking discussions about moral issues. The staff work in a positive way to improve and maintain good behaviour. Rules agreed by pupils in each class are prominently displayed and referred to regularly. There are suitable opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship. For example, they develop a sense of community identity and corporate responsibility in frank discussions about bullying. They understand and appreciate what creates a safe and happy school environment and are aware of the contribution they are able to make. Pupils' own cultural traditions are encouraged, for example, in the collecting and recording of playground games and in the Morris dancing lessons which take place after school. In art lessons, pupils are introduced to the lives of artists such as Monet and Lowry. Opportunities are provided

for pupils to enrich their knowledge by visits to places of interest; however, teaching and learning about the richness and diversity of other cultures in the United Kingdom and in other countries beyond Europe is insufficient. The school recognises this. A co-ordinator for multi-cultural education has been appointed and current plans, including “Africa Week”, are appropriate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. All staff care about the welfare of their pupils, following the clear lead set by the headteacher. They take the time to get to know their pupils well and are committed to their well-being both in and out of the classroom.
35. The provision and procedures for pupils’ welfare if they become ill at school are very good and a tribute to the thoroughness of the administration staff who are trained in first aid and deal sensitively and effectively with pupils’ needs.
36. Monitoring of behaviour is satisfactorily carried out by the class teachers and the headteacher through the report card system and house points, which promote good behaviour. Both systems have been introduced successfully since the previous inspection. Further work is to be done under a local scheme. The recently introduced behaviour schemes require more training on how to apply them consistently and effectively in the classroom. The school has an anti-bullying policy which is effectively reinforced as part of the personal, social and health education curriculum. These lessons are used well to increase pupils’ knowledge and awareness of social and health topics and to engender an atmosphere of tolerance and co-operation.
37. Attendance is monitored well and the school has a close relationship with the education welfare service. The school contacts parents of pupils who are absent on the first day and this promotes good attendance. Close monitoring of any pupils who are late means that problems are dealt with very quickly and lateness does not become a habit. Child protection and health and safety procedures are followed satisfactorily.
38. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support within the school from teachers, support staff and other pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations. Their progress is monitored well. Specialist support from a variety of external agencies is sought when needed and used effectively.
39. The school meets statutory requirements for assessment and is developing systems to monitor progress throughout pupils’ time at the school. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Additional tests and end of unit of work assessments have begun to enable staff to monitor pupils’ progress much more closely. The school is beginning to make better use of this information and data about specific strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects of English and mathematics, both to plan future work and to identify pupils who have special educational needs. Individual performance targets are now set in these subjects. Information from assessment is used effectively to group pupils for literacy and numeracy to ensure that they are working at an appropriate level in these areas. The use of assessment has also improved since the time of the previous inspection. Portfolios of work are being developed to provide a range of samples of work at different levels to aid teachers’ judgements.
40. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils’ progress is carefully monitored, regular reviews take place and information from ongoing assessments is used well to form targets for future improvement. Recording systems provide a useful picture of pupils’ progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school's links with parents are good. The information available to parents through newsletters, the prospectus, reports and meetings for parents is useful and thorough. Views expressed in the inspection meeting for parents and the questionnaires were mostly supportive. Parents stressed how the school has become much more welcoming over the last few years, and that they find staff very approachable.
43. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a number of imaginative initiatives to involve parents in day-to-day activities. Despite this, the level of parental involvement remains poor. Where parents do help, for instance in organising and running an extra-curricular activity, their efforts are hugely appreciated by the pupils and staff. In the session visited during the inspection pupils were using high-quality materials, obtained free from a local recycling centre, to make a variety of Valentine's Day gifts and cards. They worked in a happy and purposeful atmosphere and the positive benefits to pupils were clearly evident. Only one parent helps regularly in class, although the school encourages parents to do so. Parents do attend in much greater numbers when their children are performing in concerts or shows, and support at parents' consultation evenings is good.
44. Parental support for homework is variable, and the response to the home-school agreement has been low.
45. There is good partnership between school and parents to support pupils with special educational needs. Parents are fully involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have regular access to class teachers who have good communications with the co-ordinator. This helps to maintain good links and a steady flow of information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The school is well led at all levels. The headteacher, staff, parents and governors share a common commitment to offering the pupils a caring environment in which they can achieve their potential; however, whilst the level of care is high and much has been done since the previous inspection, less attention has been given to how pupils can achieve their academic potential. All key issues from the previous inspection have been tackled at least satisfactorily, except that the needs of higher-attaining pupils are still not adequately met. The quality of teaching has improved; however, although standards are rising broadly in line with the national picture, not enough has been done and consequently standards remain well below the national average.
47. A considerable turnover of staff since the previous inspection has strengthened teamwork and improved teaching. Team leaders promote high standards and effective teaching and learning within their teams. The co-ordinators' roles have been extended much further, to the benefit of the school. They are now closely involved in planning developments in their subject, seeing them through to a conclusion and monitoring their success. They see all teachers' plans, but rarely have any real opportunity to influence those of the team in which they do not work directly. Furthermore, few monitor teaching and learning directly and they have an incomplete picture of the effectiveness of the provision for their subject. It remains the case that their influence is greatest in the team of teachers in which they teach. This is detrimental to the overall provision and the pupils' progress.
48. The Governing Body has become far more effective in fulfilling its role since the previous inspection. Recent improvements in the effectiveness of their monitoring, such as the work undertaken by the literacy governor, are being extended. Standards in art, for example, are much improved since the

previous inspection. This is largely due to the good working relationship between governor and subject co-ordinator, so that expertise and knowledge are shared and fully utilised. Current plans to extend this are appropriate. Financial planning is methodical, and good use is made of the expertise available to the school and governors through the finance manager, particularly when setting a budget or looking for best value. Spending decisions are generally matched to the priorities of the school development plan, which is drawn up by the school and fully incorporates the needs of each subject. The carry forward remains high but is reducing and is appropriate given the transient nature of the pupil population.

49. There is now more monitoring of the work of the school and a sense of evaluating the impact of developments and changes. Weaknesses in writing and mathematics have been identified through the school's analysis of test data, and targets set. These are regularly reviewed and, where appropriate, more challenging targets set. Even so, this is not yet an effective tool in raising standards.
50. Provision for special educational needs is well managed. All assessments and reviews are carried out accurately and regularly. Co-ordination is good overall, but there is too little monitoring of how effectively activities in the classroom meet the targets set for these pupils. The Governing Body supports and monitors the provision for these pupils very well. Funds allocated for special educational needs are used for that purpose.
51. There is a suitable number of qualified teaching staff and a good level of support staff, who make an important contribution particularly to the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The arrangements for the professional development of all staff are satisfactory. Recent training has focused on the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and has resulted in the successful implementation of both.
52. Classroom space is satisfactory and the school benefits from a recently resourced room for information technology teaching, as well as a further room for withdrawal groups for pupils with special educational needs. Outside playground and playing fields are extensive. Plans are in place to improve the playground and make time spent there more enjoyable. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall. The new information technology suite is well resourced generally, although there is no equipment for control and modelling. The school plans to upgrade the computers in the suite so that they are compatible. This will aid teaching and learning. There is a good level of book resources for the teaching of the literacy hour, but the stock in the non-fiction library is limited and rarely used as a resource for pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The school should build on the satisfactory progress made in recent years to:
 1. raise standards of attainment in all subjects, but particularly in English and mathematics with greater emphasis on the basic skills (Paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 45, 54, 57, 58, 60, 67, 68, 73 and 99);
 2. match curricular activities more closely to the needs of all pupils so that those of higher attainment levels and the older age group in mixed-age classes are appropriately challenged by:
 - ♦ identifying in planning the methods and activities to be adopted for these pupils;
 - ♦ making better use of questioning to challenge these pupils more appropriately (Paragraphs 4, 5, 8, 25, 45, 55, 60, 62 and 72).

54. **Other issues which should be considered by the school**

- The school should also:
 1. include all strands of information technology in the curriculum (Paragraphs 52 and 102);
 2. improve the provision made in the non-fiction library and give greater access to pupils, thereby improving their study and research skills (Paragraphs 51, 58 and 66);
 3. ensure that the length of individual lessons are appropriate to the activity planned and pupils' levels of concentration and ability to sustain interest (Paragraphs 23 and 76);
 4. build upon the present good practice to involve governors more in monitoring standards (Paragraphs 47 and 48);
 5. seek to find new ways to involve parents more in the day-to-day life of the school (Paragraph 43).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 40 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 26 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 7 | 13 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 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 | Y3 – Y6 |
|--|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 155 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 26 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 3 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 47 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 30 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 31 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.8 |
| National comparative data | 5.9 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | 19 | 18 | 37 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|--|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 8 | 9 | 12 |
| | Girls | 13 | 6 | 8 |
| | Total | 21 | 15 | 20 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 57 (64) | 41 (42) | 59 (68) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above | Boys | 8 | 9 | 11 |
| | Girls | 12 | 6 | 9 |
| | Total | 20 | 15 | 20 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | School | 54 (67) | 41 (54) | 59 (77) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 75 (72) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 1 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 153 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 39 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 21.2 |
| Average class size | 26.8 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 105 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1998-1999 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 299 938 |
| Total expenditure | 309 820 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1 998 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 23 735 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 13 854 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 155 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 27 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 59 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 56 | 37 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 26 | 44 | 22 | 4 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 30 | 44 | 15 | 7 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 30 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 15 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 37 | 44 | 11 | 4 | 4 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 48 | 41 | 0 | 7 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 48 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 22 | 59 | 7 | 4 | 7 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 26 | 26 | 15 | 7 | 26 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 41 | 37 | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 33 | 37 | 11 | 11 | 7 |

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

ENGLISH

55. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for eleven-year-olds in the 1999 national tests was below the national average. The proportion reaching a higher level was well below the national average. In tests since 1996, the proportion of pupils exceeding the national average has increased but it remains well below the national average. The attainment of boys is similar to that of girls.
56. Standards of attainment overall seen on the inspection are well below those expected in reading and writing. Even so, inspection evidence and the school's assessment suggests that standards are rising due to improved behaviour management and the re-organisation of the school into smaller class sizes. Only in the daily literacy lesson are the needs of the older pupils in each class and those of high attainment levels met sufficiently.
57. Attainment in speaking and listening is satisfactory throughout the school, representing an improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils listen carefully and respond appropriately to the teachers' questions, but a small minority in some classes fail to pay sufficient attention and hinder both their own progress and that of others.
58. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress in speaking and listening skills as they move through the year groups. In all classes, pupils are given good opportunities for oral work, and this is particularly so during circle time. Their responses are usually enthusiastic and they express their thoughts clearly and confidently. They listen attentively to statements made by their peers and often ask for further information, although many pupils in Year 6 are not yet developing the ability to ask questions that are responsive to others' ideas. In discussions throughout the school pupils use standard English when expressing ideas. Their sentences have sound grammatical structure but older pupils lack the ability to use more complex sentences. In good lessons, questioning develops pupils' thinking and improves their vocabulary. When studying the poem "Matilda Who Told Lies", pupils in a Year 4 and 5 class were able to make thoughtful suggestions, for example, "If Matilda had told the truth she may have gone to the theatre".
59. Overall standards in reading are well below average for all age groups, although individual levels vary. By Year 6, pupils with higher attainment levels read fluently and with expression. Pupils with lower attainment levels read more slowly but are developing good expression. The range and quantity of fiction pupils choose from is adequate but older pupils need more guidance to enable them to broaden their range and extend their interests. In their reading many pupils rely heavily on attempts to build unknown words by letter sound, while the context of the story is too seldom used. This often results in the mis-reading of key words and too often pupils fail to check their reading for understanding. Comprehension of their reading matter is well below average and impinges significantly on their reading attainment levels. Most pupils answer questions accurately about main themes in their reading books, but by Year 6 some pupils who appear fluent do not for example, know where their story is set, or whether the setting is contemporary. All pupils have learned to use contents and index pages with confidence to gather information; however, very few are aware of the classification system for books. The non-fiction section of the library is unsatisfactory. There are too few books. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use the resource and neither the organisation, the quality of the stock nor the displays encourage investigation. These constrain progress in literacy and show little improvement since the previous inspection.

60. Pupils are given worthwhile opportunities to read in school. Older pupils read alone each morning and afternoon and keep a useful diary in which they make notes about the plots, settings and characters of their stories. Used consistently, this will improve comprehension. A small but significant number of pupils profess a lack of interest in reading at home and their reading diaries are used inconsistently. In the literacy hour pupils share a good variety of fiction and non-fiction books with their teacher and the class. Humorous poetry is enjoyed and pupils' interest and enthusiasm strengthened or rekindled. The meaning of many new words is discussed, for example in Year 4, 'glossary' and 'synthetic'. In all classes, pupils are learning strategies to help improve their spelling and to recognise parts of speech, for example verbs, nouns and adjectives. In the best lessons, where the pace is appropriate and pupils' behaviour is well managed, pupils are making good progress. In some lessons, time is wasted while staff deal with a small but significant number of pupils who fail to pay attention.
61. Standards of writing in relation to content, length, grammar and punctuation are well below average in all classes, and higher-attaining pupils are being insufficiently challenged. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are given a wide range of writing activities and are learning appropriate forms of writing for different purposes. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. They write letters, short chronological reports, summaries and instructions. They are also beginning to make notes and first drafts in preparation for writing; however, in all these tasks the level of attainment is well below average. These pupils have been taught and are beginning to use correct punctuation, including apostrophes for possession and omission. Higher-attaining pupils in all year groups are given insufficient opportunities to use and extend their literacy through research or extended writing. This is unsatisfactory and little improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write simple sentences in which the basic grammatical structure is correct. They are able to formulate their ideas in a sequence of sentences, but chosen vocabulary is generally immature. Neither sentences nor words are chosen for variety and interest, and ideas are not sufficiently developed. Exceptions were seen when younger pupils wrote lively and imaginative shape poems; for example, a poem about leaves was written within a leaf shape. Very few pupils in the younger classes make correct use of capital letters and full stops.
62. Spelling is systematically taught. Pupils' handwriting in workbooks and displays is usually neat, and work is satisfactorily presented. Joined handwriting is taught in formal lessons but the majority of pupils fail to use a joined script in other work until Years 5 and 6.
63. Staff have implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and this has given a basic structure to the planning and teaching missing at the time of the previous inspection. All aspects of the literacy hour are incorporated. The oral lesson introductions are well focused; however, when pupils are required to work independently, work is not always planned to match the varying needs of pupils, time is not well used and progress is insufficient. Staff teams meet each week to plan work, and this addresses a criticism of the previous inspection.
64. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory with some good and some very good lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen. Where teaching is most effective it is often due to the high quality of the teacher's questioning skills, drawing out what pupils know or leading them to greater understanding. In these lessons, pupils are enthused. Very little use of information technology was in evidence during the inspection; however, plans suggest that the newly installed computer suite should provide opportunities for pupils to draft, revise and edit their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when they work with the specialist teacher or learning support staff. Teachers' management of disruptive behaviour is generally appropriate.

65. Co-ordination is good, enabling the literacy hour to be implemented effectively. All staff have been trained sufficiently. Monitoring of the work of each class has taken place, enabling strengths and weaknesses to be identified and appropriate steps to be taken.
66. Inconsistent use of the school marking policy was highlighted as an issue in the previous inspection and much has been done to improve this weakness. In marking, teachers are assessing work, and targets for improvement are recorded in work books. Plans are in hand to ensure that pupils read, understand and follow the advice more methodically, and to monitor the effect on attainment. The school keeps extensive records of assessment which it is beginning to use more effectively to plan for all ability groups.
67. While resources have been well chosen for work in the literacy hour, books in classrooms and those in the fiction and non-fiction sections of the library are not displayed in a way to attract and encourage reading.

MATHEMATICS

68. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for eleven-year-olds in the national tests has been well below the national average for the last three years. In 1999, results were also below the average of similar schools and below those reported at the previous inspection. In both 1998 and 1999, results were below those achieved by the pupils in English and science. In 1999, less than half of the pupils reached the level expected by pupils of their age, and the proportion reaching a higher level was well below average. Pupils are, on average, almost three terms behind the standards achieved by pupils nationally. Boys achieved better results than girls in 1999, the difference being greater than nationally. This has been the trend since 1996, with the exception of 1998 when girls achieved much better results than normal.
69. The need to raise standards in mathematics was a key issue at the previous inspection. In spite of some signs of improvement in the younger classes, attainment in the current Year 6 is judged to be similar to that in the most recent national test results. Standards of numeracy are weak throughout the school and are consolidated only slowly. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is well below average and the development of number skills takes place only slowly. The structure of the daily mathematics lesson and its emphasis on improving mental arithmetic skills is starting to have an impact on some pupils; however, mental recall is weak for many pupils, and where the speed of recall is improving it is at a fairly low level of attainment. The low standards of numeracy have an impact on the development of other aspects of mathematics. Many pupils lack confidence when asked questions involving the use of number and it is only the highest-attaining pupils in each class who achieve satisfactory standards. Most pupils can use whole numbers for addition and subtraction with some being able to multiply and divide accurately. There is little evidence, however, of fractions, decimals or percentages being used with any great confidence or accuracy.
70. Pupils achieve much when the national strategy is used effectively. For example, the mental arithmetic section of a Year 3 and 4 lesson supported the main learning objectives for the week to develop recall of various times tables. The pupils counted forward and back in threes as a warm-up and then the whole class looked at how a problem could be written as a multiplication calculation. The activities undertaken by the pupils consolidated this learning. A good attempt was made by the teacher to get the pupils to visualise the types of calculation needed. The higher-attaining in the class were able to write the problems as either a multiplication or a division sum, using their understanding that division is the inverse of multiplication. The remainder of the class could deal with problems that needed a multiplication calculation but few understood the need to divide in some questions.

71. The characteristics and properties of both two and three-dimensional shapes are understood by most Year 6 pupils; however, many have a limited understanding of area or the angle properties of shapes. The pupils in Year 6 were observed drawing and measuring angles, only the higher-attaining being able to do this with sufficient accuracy. The progress of pupils in one Year 5 and 6 class was hampered by the lack of suitable 360-degree protractors. Pupils in a similar-aged class were observed attempting to use their estimations of the size of acute and obtuse angles to put several angles in order. One of the worksheets used had insufficient guidance on it for the lower-attaining pupils. The group of higher-attaining pupils could estimate and measure angles accurately, although only three could recognise and identify a reflex angle when asked.
72. Lessons are generally well planned with a good sequence to the activities undertaken. Good use is made of some introductory mental arithmetic sessions, and plenary sessions are used effectively in some classrooms to establish what pupils have learnt. A particular difficulty that the school has not fully come to terms with is how to cope with the wide range of needs in the mixed-age classes, in particular how the oldest pupils are to be moved forward quickly. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, many otherwise well-taught lessons suffer because insufficient account is taken of the needs of the older, higher-attaining pupils who are not sufficiently challenged. This has not been addressed successfully since the previous inspection. Some use is made of simple investigations and problem-solving activities, but there is limited evidence that these skills are developed systematically.
73. There is a well-planned strategy for the implementation of the daily mathematics lessons. The school is receiving intensive support in this from the local education authority, and the training undertaken is starting to have an impact. Monitoring of the subject has enabled weaknesses to be identified and acted upon.

SCIENCE

74. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for eleven-year-olds in the 1999 national tests was well below the national average. The proportion reaching a higher level was also well below the national average. When attainment is compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, it is below average. The results achieved by the pupils in the school over the last three years show an increase of at least one-fifth in the proportion of pupils achieving or exceeding the expected level by age eleven. This is, however, no better than the rate of improvement in schools nationally. The improvement reflects a more structured scheme of work which has led to improved teaching covering all the elements of the National Curriculum fully.
75. Attainment in the current Year 6 is judged to be similar to that in the most recent national test results. Two significant factors are the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the high numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school.
76. Good improvements have been made in the management of the subject since the previous inspection. Co-ordination is better and the science policy and scheme of work have been revised in line with national guidelines. New systems have been developed for assessing pupil progress and this information is used better to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The standard of teaching has improved and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The pace of lessons was at least satisfactory and sometimes good; however, some sessions are long and pupils find it difficult to maintain their full concentration. Standards remain low, although the number of pupils reaching the expected level by the end of the key stage has increased since the previous inspection.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and often good in the younger classes. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills. For example,

pupils throughout the school study forces. In the younger classes, pupils learnt about air resistance and felt its force as they ran with a piece of card held in front of them. They drew conclusions and produced different paper aeroplanes to test their ideas. This work is systematically built upon in the older classes. Here, clear explanations and instructions given by the teacher assist pupils to construct a fair test to discover how much force is needed to stretch different elastic bands. They are beginning to understand the need to keep each factor a constant and decide what must be the variable in the experiment. Pupils are encouraged to participate in lessons, whether to suggest ways of measuring a stretched elastic band or to offer ideas on recording their results. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective additional support. Pupils are taught well to value one another's contributions and to collaborate well in group investigations. An inconsistency in teaching remains the use of marking, particularly to suggest ways of developing and improving work.

78. The subject is well managed. The scheme of work is particularly helpful when planning. There is close teamwork and good sharing of ideas within teacher teams, although planned activities are not always successfully organised to meet the needs of all pupils. Assessment procedures for recording pupils' progress in science are good but their implementation is too recent for their effectiveness to be judged. There is little direct monitoring of teaching and learning, and the co-ordinator has much less influence in the age phase that she does not teach in.

ART

79. Standards are satisfactory, and this represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.
80. By the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills have been developed well in all aspects of the National Curriculum. While only one art lesson was observed during the inspection, additional evidence was gained from looking at pupils' previous work, their sketchbooks, displays around the school, and teachers' planning and records. Discussions with pupils and staff also contributed.
81. In the younger classes, pupils develop their painting skills well, for example in their lively and detailed portraits of Queen Boadicea. They have a good understanding of colour mixing. Year 5 and 6 pupils use the style of Clarice Cliff to produce carefully designed and decorated plates. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate good skills in a wide range of work. They complete accurate and detailed sketches of figures, for example using the style of Lowry, from which they construct human figures using newspaper and wire. They continue to build on their knowledge of famous artists and craftspeople, for example by studying the work of William Morris. Teachers make good use of cross-curricular links to enhance pupils' learning in this area, for example Year 4 pupils made good use of their colour mixing skills to produce a collection of paintings illustrating animal camouflage.
82. Planning shows effective links with work in other subjects, for example with history or geography topics. The subject makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning and cultural development. Teachers give useful feedback to extend understanding and give helpful advice on techniques. Resources are used well to ensure practical work involves a good range of materials and skills.
83. Since the previous inspection, much has been achieved. Co-ordination is effective. A useful scheme of work now outlines the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. It is a useful basis for planning. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work and uses this information effectively, for example to modify planning or suggest extension activities. There is, however, no monitoring of learning directly and this restricts the effectiveness of what is done. The recently developed end of topic assessment provides valuable information about pupils' skills and understanding. Appropriate priorities for further development have been identified,

including visiting artists and better use of sketchbooks. The subject benefits from a good range of resources.

84. Pupils' work is attractively displayed throughout the school. This celebrates achievement, demonstrates what can be done and provides a stimulating and attractive working environment. It is appreciated by pupils, parents and visitors.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. It was possible to observe only one lesson of design and technology during the inspection because of timetable arrangements for the teaching of the subject. Design and technology is taught in a half-termly rotation with art. Consequently during the inspection no design and technology was being taught in Years 5 and 6. A small amount of work was available for scrutiny from projects completed in the previous term. Overall judgements are not possible on the standards of pupils' work or the quality of teaching from this small sample.
86. Teachers are placing an appropriate emphasis on the processes of design. In all of the projects seen the pupils were expected to take an initial design specification, draw their proposed solution, investigate methods for construction by making a prototype before making their item. In several cases a careful evaluation of their work was completed. Generally this was limited to how difficult they found the task, although some went further and included consideration of how their finished product might be improved. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 had made a cushion and part of their task had been to produce estimated costings and the likely profit to be made.
87. In each of the projects the design process is much stronger than the construction of the products. Although the cushions in Years 5 and 6 showed some skill in the stitching and the final product was enhanced by thoughtful finishing, in other work measuring is inaccurate and fastening is rarely more than the use of tape and glue. Pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class were observed making a page for a pop-up book. Although they had looked at possible linkages, none was able to manufacture their page to the project's specification.
88. The weaknesses from the last inspection report have been tackled satisfactorily. The subject is not a major area for development at present and is, therefore, not a focus for monitoring. The school has adopted the nationally recognised scheme of work to support teachers' planning. More attention now needs to be given to using this to improve the making skills of the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

89. Standards are satisfactory overall, largely because of the good emphasis on practical study. Older pupils can compare and contrast different climatic conditions. They understand the relevance of climate to people's habitat and lifestyles. In local study, they demonstrate an awareness of the natural and human features of the locality. Younger pupils convert oblique drawings into plans, and draw accurate maps of the local area, using keys. Some use the eight-point compass successfully. They think carefully about what they have done and make sensible suggestions for how it might be improved.
90. Number skills are used well. Most Year 6 pupils can successfully use a table of statistics to plot rainfall on a bar graph and temperature on a line graph. Pupils' abilities to describe and explain are, however, more limited. Information technology is rarely used to support pupils' learning.
91. Curriculum planning has been improved recently and this is beneficial to pupils' progress and standards achieved. For example, vocabulary is taught more carefully and used well by younger

pupils; however, because this is a recent improvement, older pupils are often less precise when referring to direction.

92. It was possible to observe only one geography lesson during the inspection because of timetable arrangements for the teaching of the subject. This is too small a sample to make overall judgements of the quality of teaching. From the scrutiny of work and teachers' planning, and discussion with both pupils and teachers, it is clear that work is well planned, appropriately resourced, relevant and challenging. The latter, however, is a recent improvement brought about largely by the use of the nationally recognised scheme of work.
93. The recent appointment of a new co-ordinator has led to better management and an improved curriculum. This was partly based on useful discussions with pupils about their work. Future plans, including an "Africa Week", are appropriate further enrichment. The limited opportunity to monitor teaching and learning has nevertheless been useful. The subject is well placed to develop further.

HISTORY

94. Standards are unsatisfactory, although there has been much recent improvement. The scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils shows weaknesses in their understanding of what they have learnt and a lower than expected level of historical enquiry skills. Many pupils are unable to respond adequately to questions asking them to use, apply, compare or explain what they know or can do. This is largely to do with the poor curriculum previously offered, which consisted almost entirely of superficial activities and unchallenging worksheets.
95. Co-ordination and management of history are much improved recently. For example, good and relevant emphasis on time lines has led to good progress in pupils' knowledge of chronology, but older pupils in particular started from a low level of understanding and are consequently working at a level below that expected of pupils of their age. Other curriculum changes, using the nationally recognised scheme of work as a basis, mean pupils are beginning to look more systematically at, for example the different ways history can be depicted. Monitoring by teachers, too, is improving and the assessments at the end of units of work, particularly about how pupils' achievements will affect the planning of subsequent work, are potentially helpful; however, this too is a recent improvement which has not been in place long enough for its effectiveness to be judged.
96. Pupils show positive attitudes to history. They are inquisitive and respond particularly well to challenging tasks. They thought very carefully, for example, about the vocabulary they would choose to describe Boadicea in a "wanted" poster, were they Roman. Because the teacher presented this learning activity in a stimulating task, pupils were engrossed and worked hard to complete it successfully.
97. It was possible to observe only one history lesson during the inspection because of timetable arrangements for the teaching of the subject. This is too small a sample to make overall judgements of the quality of teaching. It is clear that the use of each teacher's expertise in the planning for the team is advantageous. When a teacher undertakes a lesson first, an evaluation afterwards very often leads to changes in the lessons of the other two classes in the team. This is very effective in improving the curriculum.
98. Whilst the curriculum is much improved overall, the co-ordinator's positive influence is much greater in the team in which she teaches, than in the other. This is detrimental to the good developments planned. Although good use is made of loan collections, the range and quantity of artefacts are insufficient to support the improved curriculum adequately.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

99. The provision for information technology has been greatly improved by the resourcing of a computer suite and the adoption of the nationally recognised scheme of work. It was only a matter of a few weeks before the inspection that the suite was fully operational and pupils had regular access. Each class has a lesson in the suite each week where previously they were taught using a computer in each classroom. This proved to be inadequate and consequently pupils' progress has suffered. Standards in information technology are now below the national expectation by the age of eleven.
100. Teachers plan their information technology lesson to support work that is being undertaken in other subjects, while developing the necessary information technology skills. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Most of the pupils are able to load programs, use the mouse and cursor keys and print and retrieve their work independently, although some are not confident users and require adult help. Pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class were able to search an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM to find information to support their topic on the Romans. Many of them understood how to use the search functions correctly but only a few could extract the necessary information from the text generated. Others in the class could import a picture into the text that they had written about the Romans. Pupils in a Year 4 and 5 class were able to draw a simple picture and then cut and paste it to produce a repeating pattern for a carpet design. Some were able to rotate and reflect their picture. A well-planned session in a Year 5 and 6 class enabled the pupils to use the same graphics package to draw a picture in the style of Seurat.
101. The teaching in each of the three lessons observed was satisfactory. Brief introductions to establish each task with a good reference to previous work enabled all pupils to understand the purpose of the lesson. While the pupils worked in pairs, collaborating effectively by discussing the task and sharing activities, the staff moved from group to group providing help and guidance. This kept the pupils focused on the task in hand while assessing any difficulties that they were experiencing. New skills were learnt and applied at a satisfactory rate in each lesson.
102. Record keeping and the assessment of pupils' progress, an area for action from the previous inspection, has been tackled successfully. Each unit of work is assessed and records kept of the standard of work achieved. This process is now related to the new scheme of work but has not been in place for long enough to be used to inform planning. The co-ordinator has been in post since the start of the year and has plans to ensure that maximum use is made of the new facility so that the valuable resource is used for more than just 6 lessons each week. At present the aspect of monitoring and control is not taught as required by the National Curriculum because the necessary resources have not been purchased. No monitoring of the lessons or standards of work produced has been undertaken; however, much support is provided for teachers to ensure that they have the expertise and confidence to teach all aspects of the subject.

MUSIC

103. Standards are satisfactory overall. Older pupils can follow a written score using symbols, becoming louder or softer as directed. Many also follow "rests" successfully, but a smaller proportion maintain the rhythm and beat. They recognise that some instruments can be played in different ways to create different sounds and use this to create the mood. They make sensible comparisons between instruments and sounds. When composing musical pieces, they use symbols to record and play their work. Younger pupils, who have had this more appropriate curriculum for as long as the older ones, have similar abilities to follow notation using symbols, and to compose and play their own pieces. Many design their own symbols, for example drawing a triangle each time it is played, and showing by its size how loudly it is to be played. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, largely because they are well supported by either teachers or learning assistants.

104. Good curriculum developments have supported an improvement in standards. There is far more class music than previously. Class teachers are far more involved in planning the lessons they teach, and this is beneficial to their understanding and the pupils' learning.
105. Pupils work well together, particularly when composing or performing. They listen to one another's ideas, and generally try to incorporate them in what they do. They persevere to achieve a good level of performance, and concentrate fully to maintain the group's beat. About one-third of the pupils in each Year 5 and 6 class had completed their homework task to make a musical instrument out of waste material. The standard of care taken in the construction and the aesthetic finish was impressively high. Boys show similarly positive attitudes to the subject as girls, and are equally involved in extra-curricular activities such as the choir, regular productions and Morris dancing.
106. Music appreciation is fostered in assemblies. Music from a wide range of cultures and times is played, and pupils given an explanation of it, the composer and time. School events such as the planned "Africa Week" extend this further.
107. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, often good and occasionally very good. Lessons are very well structured and planned, enabling pupils to succeed in the learning objective. The most successful lessons include opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. At these times, what pupils are expected to achieve and by when, is clearly explained and regular reminders are given. This encourages pupils to stay on task and ensures that tasks are completed in the given time. Subject specific vocabulary is taught and there are high expectations that pupils will use it subsequently. Pupils with behavioural needs are generally well supported and enabled to succeed in the task.
108. The curriculum emphasises the practical whilst incorporating all elements successfully. Sufficient resources, based in classes, are provided to enable this to take place effectively. There is a strong musical element in concerts and the school generally takes part in local music festivals and carol concerts. The range of extra-curricular activities has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection; however, whilst individual recorder and piano tuition are provided, parents now have to pay for this facility.
109. The co-ordinator has successfully increased class-based music lessons, but has had no time to monitor their effectiveness. The subject development is appropriate and is being implemented fully; however, whilst the co-ordinator's influence on the work of the team in which she teaches is high, she has little influence on the other team and this is detrimental to the quality of education offered.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Over the course of a year, all pupils are taught a broad and balanced physical education programme. During the inspection, only indoor physical education lessons took place and no lessons were timetabled in the Year 5 and 6 classes. The overall standards were satisfactory in the two gymnastics and one dance lesson that were observed. A few pupils in each class achieved good standards, particularly in gymnastics; however, a few pupils in each class did not participate with any great effort in spite of all that their teachers did to encourage them, and consequently made little progress.
111. The poor behaviour of several pupils in a Year 3 and 4 gymnastics lesson, which was not dealt with effectively by the teacher, disrupted the learning of others. In spite of this, several pupils worked hard on their balance and roll routines, many showing a good level of skills. Forward rolls were

performed with some style and the best performances included some imaginative balances. Unfortunately, the pupils who were asked to demonstrate were not treated with respect by others in the class who laughed at well-executed routines. In another gymnastics lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class using apparatus, much better control was exercised over the behaviour of the class. Instructions were given clearly and good opportunities were provided for the pupils to practise jumps, rolls and balances. The good opportunities provided for the pupils to demonstrate their routines, coupled with the concentration by the teacher on improving individual technique, resulted in improvements in the style and accuracy of movement throughout the class.

112. In a well-taught dance lesson, the participation of the teacher and the quality of the demonstrations given kept all of the pupils involved in the warm-up sessions and the initial practice of the dance movements. Most pupils tried hard to assemble a routine in response to the music, although many had difficulty maintaining the rhythm and tempo. One group of pupils worked particularly well together to produce an imaginative and well-prepared routine. A particular feature of the lesson was the constructive evaluations by pupils of each other's performance; the pupils always tried to say something positive about what they had seen.
113. In the three lessons observed, teaching was good in one, satisfactory in another but unsatisfactory in the third. A strength of the better teaching is the carefully planned sequence to the activities, which builds confidence yet provides a challenge so that the pupils can improve their technique and style. Most pupils respond well to this and put considerable effort into their work. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the techniques they teach is at least sound, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, this is largely due to poor class management.
114. Extra-curricular activities are regularly provided. During the inspection almost 30 pupils turned out in inclement weather for football and netball practice. Swimming lessons are provided for Year 6 pupils at the garrison swimming pool. The majority of pupils reach the requirements of the National Curriculum by the age of eleven, with several exceeding these standards. This represents a small improvement since the previous inspection.
115. The areas reported as needing development at the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. The planning of the curriculum is much improved so that pupils' skill levels develop much better as they move through the school. As physical education has not been an area for major development recently no monitoring of teaching or the standards achieved has taken place. Although the hall is a suitable indoor area, some of the equipment is in need of replacement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Standards have improved and are now broadly in line with the locally agreed syllabus, and higher in knowledge and understanding of world faiths. Older pupils have a good knowledge of Sikhism. They know, for example, the importance of traditional clothes in Sikh life and can describe a Sikh wedding. They know the different items found in a church, such as a pulpit and altar, and can explain their uses in simple terms. Younger pupils have some factual knowledge of Roman gods and goddesses, for example that most Roman Britons worshipped with family or friends in their own homes.
117. Pupils are generally keen and inquisitive. They respond positively to the teacher's enthusiasm and interest. In discussion, they show empathy and trust in one another. A very small minority of pupils in one or two classes belittle other pupils.

118. The good use of cross-curricular links is helpful to pupils' understanding, as they reinforce one subject in another. For example, work on Roman gods supports pupils' understanding of their importance in everyday life. Discussions, particularly about moral issues relevant to their lives, enable pupils to develop good speaking and listening skills. They listen to one another, respond to one another's views thoughtfully and construct rational arguments to support their point of view. Their use of language at these times is often of a higher quality than elsewhere in the curriculum. Pupils research appropriately from different extracts of information given to them, but none researches for themselves in the normal course of events.
119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in some lessons. Work is thoroughly planned and teachers share both ideas for activities and subsequent modifications. Each team of teachers regularly discusses tasks, and the experiences of one teacher will be applied in the lesson of another. In the most effective lessons, discussion is handled well by teachers who encourage pupils with thought-provoking questions. Lessons that are otherwise good are less effective when they finish without any sense of the lesson coming to a conclusion, or the lesson objective being reinforced or extended, or pupils' understanding being checked.
120. The curriculum is much improved since the previous inspection. It closely follows the locally agreed syllabus. Resources too, including artefacts to support the teaching of world faiths and information books for teachers, are much better. Units of work increasingly end with an evaluation of each pupil's progress and the effectiveness of the work.