

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EARLS HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Westcliff-on-Sea

LEA area: Southend

Unique reference number: 114720

Headteacher: Barbara Spratt

Reporting inspector: David Tytler  
8990

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 June 2002

Inspection number: 194861

Full 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:	Carlton Avenue Westcliff-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS0 0QN
Telephone number:	01702 333360
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Rev Graham Steel
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8990	David Tytler	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9577	Elaine Parrish	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10214	Brian Milton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Geography; Music; Physical education.	
1028	David Page	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; English; Information and communication technology; Design and technology.	
22990	Chris Furniss	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science; Art; History; Religious education.	How good are the learning opportunities offered to pupils?

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Inspection Quality Division  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Earls Hall is a large junior school in a residential area of the seaside town of Westcliff-on-Sea. It shares a building with the feeder infant school, with ten of its 12 single-age classes upstairs and two, together with the computer suite, downstairs. Whilst most pupils come from the infant school there is an element of mobility as families move into and out of the area. This particularly affected Year 6 in 2001 when mobility was high. The school is popular with parents and usually has a waiting list for most year groups. A few pupils come from ethnic minorities, some of whom have English as an additional language. One pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is below the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry into the current Year 3 is above that expected nationally for children of their age. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 this year and last when they entered the school in Year 3 was broadly in line with what was expected nationally.

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

Earls Hall Junior is an effective school, which provides a good standard of education for all its pupils. It is well led and managed and valued by parents. The good teaching enables pupils to achieve well in lessons and to make steady progress as they move through the school attaining standards which meet the national expectations for children of their age in English, mathematics and science. When account is taken of all these factors the school provides good value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Teaching is good, and often very good, enabling pupils to learn well in lessons.
- Pupils are given a high level of care and support and their social and moral development is very good. They are confident speakers.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and behave well and take full advantage of the many learning opportunities available to them.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Information and communication technology is very well used throughout the curriculum.
- The high quality arrangements for pupils with special educational needs or having English as an additional language ensures that these pupils make good progress, particularly when given individual support by the specialist staff.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom, in order to spread the good practice that exists within the school.
- The consistent level of work to challenge higher-attaining pupils in science.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and has successfully addressed all the key issues. It has raised standards in music and religious education through detailed schemes of work, improved resources and staff training. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and is beginning to have an impact on standards. National schemes of work have been introduced for all subjects. Information and communication technology is used in all subjects. Arrangements for gathering information on what children know and can do are now good and the information is used well to inform planning to meet individual needs. Whilst marking has also improved, some inconsistencies remain. The school is well placed to make further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	D	D
Mathematics	C	C	D	E
Science	C	C	E	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

As the table shows, results in last year's tests for 11 year olds were below the national averages in English and well below in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools they were below the average in English and mathematics and well below in science. Account has to be taken of the fact, however, that a third of these pupils had joined the school after Year 3 and that nearly a third of the year group as a whole had special educational needs. When the 2001 results are compared with their attainment when they were seven, pupils who had been in school for all four years of their junior schooling had made sound progress. The school did not meet the demanding targets set by the local education authority for the percentage of pupils to achieve the national expectations or above in the national tests. Over the three years up to 2001 standards in English have fluctuated, coming close to the national average in 2000 but with a significant fall last year. In mathematics and science, standards have been rising in line with the national figures, but again with a fall in 2001.

Provisional results for this year indicate a considerable improvement in all three subjects. The school came close to meeting them in mathematics and exceeded them in English. There was also a significant improvement in the science results. These results confirm the inspection evidence, which shows that standards of the current Year 6 are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science, with a significant number of pupils achieving well. Standards in art and history are above those expected nationally for 11 year olds. With the exception of design and technology, which is below, standards in all other subjects match the national expectations for children of this age. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve well in lessons. Progress over time has been at least satisfactory, with some pupils making good progress. Pupils having special educational needs make good progress in line with their individual education plans. Pupils speaking English as an additional language make very good gains in their learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The positive attitudes make an important contribution to the standards pupils achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in classes, assemblies, breaks and lunchtimes and when they go to events away from school. In a few lessons, pupils became restless when the teaching did not engage their attention.
Personal development and relationships	Good and underpinned by good, and sometimes very good, relationships. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to support their peers.
Attendance	In line with the national average and improving.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	N/A	N/A	Good

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

Teaching is good overall and leads to pupils making good progress and achieving well in their lessons. A number of improvements have not been in place long enough to impact on standards over time. Most teaching was good or better. Some very good teaching was seen in all year groups with examples of good teaching in all subjects. One outstanding lesson was seen and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. As a result pupils achieve well in lessons and make good gains in learning. The good or better lessons were underpinned by good subject knowledge and were characterised by a range of interesting activities which fired the pupils' interest, a brisk pace which ensured high levels of concentration and work that built on what pupils knew and could do.

In lessons otherwise judged to be satisfactory teacher's expectations of what pupils could do were not high enough and the work did not always build on their prior attainment or demand their attention. Consequently, pupils became restless and did not make the progress of which they were capable. Whilst some examples of marking provided useful advice for pupils to improve their work, it is inconsistent. The teaching in English and mathematics is good, as is the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. As a result, pupils gain a good understanding and apply these skills well in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs or having English as an additional language are well taught and learn well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Whilst suitable attention is paid to English and mathematics, the curriculum is broad and balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. Their experience is widened through a good range of high quality out-of-school activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	High quality. Pupils make particularly good progress when given support by the skilled staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The support given to them ensures that they make at least good progress, with some making very good gains in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Their social and moral development is very good, cultural development is good and spiritual satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The high level of care and support enables all pupils to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered to them. Procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do are good in English, mathematics and science and the information is used well to plan for individual needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The partnership with parents is good and they are very supportive of the school. A small number of parents, however, do not fully support their children's learning at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led by the headteacher who is very well supported by the senior management team and staff, who share her determination to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school. Key governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are beginning to use this knowledge to plan future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Nearly all recent monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom has been carried out by the head and deputy. A regular programme of classroom monitoring is planned for the next academic year. The role of subject co-ordinators in this aspect of the school's work is in need of development. The senior management team regularly evaluates the school development plan and makes any necessary adjustments.
The strategic use of resources	All resources, including the skilled teaching assistants, are well used. The school applies the principles of best value.

The school is well staffed with suitably trained teachers and teaching assistants to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Whilst the accommodation is spread over two floors it is well managed and provides a secure and stimulating learning environment. Resources for learning are satisfactory in all subjects and good in science, information and communication technology, art and history.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• Their children like coming to school.</li><li>• Their children make good progress.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Their children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or concerns.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• The information they receive on how well their children are doing.</li><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• The way the school involves them in the education of their children.</li></ul>

Inspectors agreed with the positive views of the majority of parents. They also found that the amount of homework is suitable for the ages of the children and is used to extend learning in the classroom through independent research. Inspectors also concluded that annual reports on their children's progress were very good and that the school is very willing to provide extra information on a regular basis. The school works hard to establish and maintain an effective partnership with parents. The inspection team also found that there was a wide range of visits and visitors and high quality out-of-school activities. More, however, is available for the older children.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards are again rising after a significant fall in the results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for 11 year olds in 2001. The dramatic fall was a result of the high number of pupils who had joined the school after Year 3 or had left before Year 6. These results were also adversely affected by the large number of pupils who had special educational needs (SEN). Results were below the national averages in English and mathematics and well below in science. In comparison with similar schools they were below the average in English and well below in mathematics and science.

2. Whilst the attainment of pupils on entry into the current Year 3 is above that expected nationally for children of their age, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 this year and last was broadly in line with what was expected nationally when they entered the school. An analysis of the results of those pupils who had been in the school for all four years of their junior schooling shows that they had made satisfactory progress since they joined the school in Year 3. These results, however, led the school to review its practices and a number of important changes, mostly relating to target setting and appraisal, were introduced which are beginning to have a positive impact on achievement.

3. The school did not meet its challenging targets for the percentage of pupils to achieve the national expectations or above in the national tests in 2001 but provisional results for 2002 show that the school has moved closer to meeting or exceeding them this year as a result of the good teaching they have received.

4. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that the standards of the current Year 6 match national expectations in English, mathematics and science, with a significant number of pupils achieving well. Given their starting point, this represents satisfactory progress as a result of the quality of teaching.

5. Pupils throughout the school are assured speakers. Those in the current Year 6 are able to talk and listen confidently, adapt their speaking to suit a particular purpose and develop their ideas thoughtfully. Whilst higher-attaining pupils can discuss their ideas, lower-attaining pupils rarely question the opinions of others.

6. Most pupils in Year 6 are fluent readers. Higher-attaining pupils understand significant ideas and discuss characters in stories based on information contained in the text. They can use this knowledge to justify their views. Lower-attaining pupils use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and understand the main points of a story. They cannot, however, make deductions from the text.

7. In their writing, more able pupils in Year 6 use imaginative words although not always correctly. Their spelling and punctuation are usually accurate and their handwriting is neat, regular and fluent. Lower-attaining pupils are able to write in sentences, which are usually properly punctuated and grammatically correct. Spelling, however, is not always accurate.

8. In mathematics, pupils in the current Year 6 use more than one method for multiplication, division, addition and subtraction and can use that knowledge to solve problems. They recognise simple shapes and can calculate area and perimeter. They can compile and use a range of charts and graphs. Good opportunities exist throughout the school for pupils to explain their mathematical reasoning, which results in the good use of mathematical language in all year groups.

9. In science, 11 year olds are working in line with the national expectations for pupils of their age in all aspects of the subject, with many working above the expected level. Scientific investigation work is a particular strength in the school and much good work was observed.

10. The broad and balanced curriculum and good teaching underpin standards in other subjects. Pupils attain standards in art and history which are above those expected nationally for children of their age. With the exception of design and technology, where they are below, standards in all other subjects match the national expectations for children of this age. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

11. Pupils with SEN make good progress in line with their individual educational plans (IEPs), which have realistic, regularly reviewed targets. Pupils are involved in the review process making their own assessment of their progress. The very good provision for pupils having English as an additional language (EAL) enables these pupils to make good progress.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour continue to be good, as are relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils respect each other's feelings and beliefs and are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Attendance is satisfactory and in line with national averages. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.

13. Pupils are keen to participate in lessons and to explain how they have reached an answer. The good teaching in many lessons sparks their interest and pupils respond by being inquisitive and eager to learn. Most maintain good attitudes even when teaching is less stimulating. In the best lessons, pupils respond eagerly to imaginative and challenging activities and are motivated by their teachers' own enthusiasm. This was well illustrated in a stimulating Year 6 history lesson, where the teacher's good subject knowledge and interest in Henry VIII rubbed off on the pupils, bringing the subject to life, enabling them to make good progress.

14. Behaviour in lessons is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The good behaviour of pupils in a Year 4 religious education lesson enabled the teacher to spend more time with pupils needing extra help. The vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. When anyone misbehaves, the situation is managed well and the learning of other pupils is not affected. Whilst there have been seven fixed-term and one permanent exclusion in the last 12 months, exclusions are not given lightly and evidence suggests that they have had a salutary effect on overall standards of behaviour. Good behaviour is reinforced positively with praise and with a system of rewards and house points, which are valued by pupils.

15. Pupils are very well supervised outside the classrooms, and their behaviour as they move around the school is good. They walk in single file along corridors and on the stairs, and someone always holds the doors open for the others without waiting to be asked. The calm way in which pupils move around the school ensures that they settle down well after playtimes without wasting time. A sense of harmony exists in the playground where all pupils mix well. No signs of bullying were seen during the inspection and boys and girls from

different backgrounds and ethnic groups play happily together. Pupils are equally well behaved when outside the school when, for example, they competed in the borough sports day. Pupils from all year groups performed extremely well and were very good ambassadors for the school.

16. Relationships throughout the school are good and adults are usually friendly without their authority being undermined. Many teachers have established very good relationships with their pupils and make it clear that everyone's contributions in class are valued. This gives pupils the confidence to participate fully and was well illustrated in a Year 5 English lesson where the teacher's warmth and vibrant personality inspired pupils to voice their thoughts and make active contributions to the lesson's success.

17. Pupils are very polite to staff, visitors and to each other. Pupils of all ages get on well together in lessons, supporting one another and listening when other classmates are speaking. They are encouraged to look after each other and they do this well. Teachers help pupils think about the results of their actions and to be kind and often encourage pupils to applaud the good work of others. Good use is made of class discussion time to help pupils respect the different opinions and thoughts of their classmates and to share their findings with the class. The school council, with elected representatives from each class, has helped pupils see how they can take greater responsibilities for the wider school community. Pupils with SEN and having EAL are well integrated and treated respectfully by their peers.

18. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in the daily life of the school by helping to tidy up after lessons and by taking the registers to the office. Some pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, regularly volunteer for additional tasks and they do this sensibly and with maturity. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils have increasing scope for pupils to take initiative. They prepare the hall for assembly and listen to pupils reading in Year 3. Pupils are encouraged to work independently in lessons and in the literacy hour most pupils work well on set tasks without the teacher's direct support. Year 6 pupils show commendable maturity when working on their own.

19. Attendance is in line with national averages with very little unauthorised absence, an improvement since the last inspection. Parents have a clear understanding of acceptable reasons for absence and co-operate with the school in its drive to maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality. Pupils are keen to come to school and lessons start promptly.

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

20. The good teaching to be found in all subjects enables pupils to achieve well in their lessons and make at least satisfactory, sometimes good, gains in their learning as they move through the school. Most teaching seen during the inspection was good or better and examples of very good teaching were found in each year group. One outstanding lesson was seen and there were no unsatisfactory lessons.

21. Most teachers have a good understanding of all aspects of teaching. In nearly all cases their subject knowledge, planning, methods, management of pupils, their use of time, support staff and resources and ongoing assessment are good. In nearly all lessons teachers had high expectations of good behaviour and of what pupils could achieve. These expectations are made abundantly clear to pupils at the start of each lesson and they respond well as the teachers engage and keep the pupils' interest. Pupils try hard to do well, show good levels of concentration and are keen to succeed. Few examples of homework being set or marked were seen during the inspection but other evidence suggests that it is used regularly and appropriately to build on work in the classroom.

22. English and mathematics are well taught, as are the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Many examples were seen in most lessons of pupils using these skills to support their learning in other subjects. The use of ICT throughout the curriculum is a strength of the school.

23. Elements of the excellent lesson were to be seen in all the teaching that was good or better. In this lesson, seeking the meaning of unfamiliar words and how to use commas, pupils responded magnificently to the teacher's charismatic approach. The teacher's own love of books fired the pupils' natural enthusiasm. Virtually all were keen to learn and wanted to read in front of the class. The learning objectives were eminently practical and helped pupils to evaluate their own learning. As a result, the pupils' learning was of very high quality. The teacher expected them to do well and they did.

24. Pupils also made rapid progress in a very good ICT lesson on control technology, which built incrementally on what they had learned previously. By the end of the lesson, all pupils were able to plan how to use the programme to place their initials on the screen. In this lesson, as in all ICT lessons, the skilled specialist teaching assistant gave very good support to the pupils' learning.

25. Some of the characteristics of this high quality teaching were missing in the lessons which were otherwise judged to be satisfactory. In a science lesson, for example, the pace was slowed by the constant need to bring pupils' minds back to the job in hand, as the teacher had failed to capture their interest. In a geography lesson comparing two different areas, the work was not matched to the needs of pupils. As a result there was little to challenge the higher-attaining pupils and they did not make as much progress as they should. Pupils' progress would also have been better in a design and technology lesson had the learning objectives been more tightly focused on what they were expected to learn.

26. Teaching methods and access to resources are organised to ensure equal access for all. In a small minority of ICT lessons teachers did not manage paired work well. As a result some girls and pupils from ethnic minorities did not get equal access to the keyboard and mouse. The school needs to monitor the school's comprehensive equal opportunities policy more consistently. Teaching assistants are valued members of the staff team, they are well trained and have good systems of recording which ensure that when they provide support for targeted pupils the class teacher has a ready source of information as to the pupils' progress.

27. The learning of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or having English as an additional language (EAL) is good. In all lessons the work is suitably challenging. Tasks are planned to meet the needs of all these pupils. The specialist staff plays a major role in supporting pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics.

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

28. The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, an improvement since the last inspection when some aspects of music were found to be inadequate. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is good. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been put into place well and are raising standards. No pupils are excluded from any areas of the curriculum.

29. The school has schemes of work for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and clear and useful policies to underpin sex education and drugs awareness. All policies and schemes are reviewed regularly. Personal, social, health and citizenship education are well taught through circle time and the *You Can Do It* programme.

30. Whilst some parents feel that the school provides too few extra curricular activities, the inspection team found that the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of activities. Sporting opportunities offered to pupils include tag rugby, football, netball, rounders, badminton, swimming and athletics. During the inspection week many boys and girls were successfully involved in a rounders tournament and in the borough sports day. They had successfully competed in a swimming gala in the previous week. Other activities include the choir, an orchestra, recorders, *Sing 4 Life*, dance and drama and art and French clubs. The first issue of the school magazine, produced almost entirely by pupils, was handed to the inspection team towards the end of the inspection week. Many of these activities take place during lunch breaks and although older pupils have more opportunities than younger ones, provision for all is good.

31. The school's curriculum provides well for the pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Their needs are clearly identified and extra support given to them as required. The provision for those having English as an additional language (EAL) is very good. One pupil whose English has improved significantly is now being helped to speak with more expression. The co-ordinator keeps detailed records, which are updated regularly and frequently. The school's policy for teaching pupils in EAL contains a list of laudable aims and a comprehensive list of appropriate methods. It is a good guide for staff although it does not contain details as to how the policy is to be monitored.

32. Pupils' experience is further broadened by a comprehensive range of visits and visitors throughout the year. Pupils in Year 3, for example, recently visited the British Museum and Year 4 pupils visited Colchester Castle during the inspection week. Pupils in Year 5 have visited the Imperial War Museum and have been involved in the Southend Creative Dance Festival, subsequently performing to the school. Year 6 pupils have been to the theatre and to the National Gallery with residential trips for Years 5 and 6. Good links are being developed with the local community through visits by police, fire service, ambulance, the school nurse and local church ministers and by school involvement in festivals and book fairs.

33. Good relationships exist with the adjoining infant school. The two headteachers work well together and meet frequently. Plans to develop these links further include joint training and co-operation between subject co-ordinators to ensure more cohesive planning and smoother progress and development throughout the school. Pupils from Earls Hall move on to a large number of different secondary schools and whilst it is not possible to maintain close links with every one, satisfactory links help to ensure a smooth transition. All pupils visit their prospective schools and other links include the Year 6 science workshops held at a nearby secondary school.

## **Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

34. The school provides well for the personal development of pupils. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory. Several assemblies were observed during the inspection where opportunities were given for pupils to reflect. Religious education lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to learn about the values and beliefs of Christianity and other faiths. Good use is made of some lessons, for example in history, literacy and art, to encourage pupils to reflect on feelings and emotions.

35. Teachers provide good role models for pupils' social and moral development and stress the importance of positive attitudes and relationships. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to think about and discuss important issues. In a Year 3 *You Can Do It* lesson, for example, the teacher guided pupils well in thinking about what friendship is and ways of making friends. A range of colourful and attractive celebration displays pay tribute to both behaviour and work. Happy relationships and a consistent approach from staff lead to caring attitudes for pupils. This concern was demonstrated towards the end of an assembly when one young girl was upset on the way out and three other girls and a boy spontaneously provided comfort.

36. Good opportunities are provided to help pupils develop and expand an awareness of their own and other peoples' cultures through the wide range of trips and visitors. Pupils are exploring art forms from different artists and different periods of history and a range of texts from different cultural backgrounds is used in English to broaden cultural awareness. Plans to re-introduce the excellent multi-cultural link with a school in east London are being discussed, which will be of great benefit in preparing them for life in a multi-cultural society.

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

37. The standard of pastoral care provided by the school for all its pupils continues to be good. Procedures for child protection, for ensuring pupils' welfare and for monitoring attendance are very good and are a strength of the school. Arrangements to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress and personal development are good and the assessment information is used well to guide teachers' planning, an improvement since the last inspection.

38. All adults make a positive contribution to the school's caring ethos. They pay close attention to protecting pupils from harm and to promoting their health, safety and general well being. Teachers know their pupils well, recognise their needs and respond quickly to them. Pupils' confidence in the security and support that the school provides helps them to concentrate on their learning. Child protection procedures are very effective and well understood by the staff, who handle issues in a sensitive manner. The health and safety policy is comprehensive and is vigilantly overseen by the site manager and the governing body. No health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection and the whole school site is extremely clean and well maintained. The school has very good arrangements for first aid and fire drills are held regularly. All pupils are well supervised in school and in the playground. The quality of care provided by lunchtime supervisors is good.

39. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those having English as an additional language (EAL), and has good links with external agencies. Learning support assistants are patient and encouraging and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Clear procedures identify pupils early who need extra help and the school follows all the recommendations of the national Code of Practice. The

school's use of external agencies is good. They have formed effective links with the support services of the local education authority (LEA) and the local hospital. Good induction procedures smooth the entry of pupils into Year 3 from the infant school and pupils in Year 6 are well prepared for their transfer to secondary school.

40. The quality of assessment of pupils' achievements and the monitoring of pupils' academic progress have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good, especially in English, mathematics and science. The information gained is used well to plan for the needs of individuals and groups. All pupils are given targets for improvement based on National Curriculum Levels. Each pupil is monitored through a variety of regular tests, so that a prediction of likely achievement can be made and targets set to keep them on track and to raise their achievement. This helps staff to make sure that all, including the higher-attaining pupils and those with SEN needs, are on course to meet their targets.

41. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum, the only procedures are for ongoing assessment and monitoring by individual teachers. Whilst some are satisfactory, others are neither consistent nor rigorous enough. A recently revised marking policy has been put in place, but some inconsistencies in the standard of marking remain. Procedures for the assessment of pupils with SEN and those having EAL are very good.

42. The school generally has very good systems to identify pupils' needs. Initially, the class teacher identifies the pupil causing concern and discusses possible action with the co-ordinator. The school's identification of pupils who have English as an additional language is very good and the identification of gifted and talented pupils is good. The school has clear plans to review the identification and support systems for the gifted and talented pupils in the near future.

43. The school's co-ordinator for pupils with EAL is very well qualified and trained. Of the 24 pupils having EAL only one is at an early stage of language acquisition. This pupil received intensive support when first arriving at the school and has made rapid progress as a consequence. His informal language is now good and the school continues to work on developing his academic language. The pupil is well integrated within the school.

44. The school is using a new form of assessment based on a series of very clear stages leading to pupils becoming independent learners. The system is sufficiently sophisticated to be able to identify very particular needs.

45. Good procedures to promote behaviour ensure that the school is a calm and ordered community. The effective behaviour policy is applied consistently throughout the school. There was no evidence during the inspection of bullying or harassment and pupils are clear that they must report any such incidents to an adult. Very effective measures promote good attendance and parents know they must inform the school if their child is absent. The vast majority of parents are very co-operative and very good systems are in place to follow up any absences which have not been correctly notified.

46. Well-considered procedures promote pupils' personal development. Teachers regularly monitor personal targets for their pupils, which can focus on aspects of their efforts and behaviour as well as their attainments in lessons. A personal profile is kept on each pupil and as a result, teachers build up a good picture of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. The school shows real commitment to the care of pupils with special education needs (SEN). Meticulously kept individual folders, rigorous assessment, and evidence of work and targets met all support the progress made by these pupils. The school takes care to acknowledge pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. A good system of certificates, which are awarded by the headteacher in school assemblies, are greatly prized and encourage pupils to work well and do their best.

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

47. The school is committed to building a close partnership with parents and this has a beneficial impact on the quality of life within the school, an improvement since the last inspection when parental links were considered satisfactory. Parents made their strong support for the school clear in the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting.

48. The school has put considerable thought into the way it communicates with parents and the quality of the information provided is good. The annual reports on their children's progress are now very good indeed, giving parents a very clear idea of the standards achieved in each subject of the curriculum. Newsletters keep parents informed of school activities. The prospectus gives clear information about school routines and invites parents to share any concerns they may have with teachers. Parents can discuss the progress their child has made at termly consultation evenings. Parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) are invited to reviews of their individual education plans (IEPs) and they speak highly of the efforts staff make to keep them fully informed.

49. The school recognises that their location on the floor above the infant school may hamper accessibility for parents. In order to overcome this, many teachers particularly in Year 3, escort their pupils out to the playground at the end of the day. Parents are also invited to an Open Door session on Wednesdays after school when parents can visit classrooms and see their children's work. At the beginning of the school year, parents are invited to meetings about the curriculum their children will follow.

50. The school is welcoming to parents and relationships with staff are relaxed and friendly. Parents are invited to become involved in the life of the school by helping in the classroom and are always asked to sign the home/school partnership agreement. Whilst parents demonstrate their interest in the school by attending consultation evenings and supporting school events, some parents do not support their children's learning at home by listening to them read and helping with homework. Most parents regularly come to the termly consultation meetings. A few parents, however, do not fully support their children's learning at home and attendance at the weekly open afternoons and curriculum evenings is often disappointingly low. Currently, no parents help regularly in the classroom although some grandparents do.

51. An active Parent Teachers' Association contributes generously to school funds and cements very good relationships between parents and staff. Pupils benefit from the funds raised on their behalf and by the quality of relationships forged between home and school. Parents appreciate the support given by the school to the association's events and see this as practical evidence of the school's commitment to building a strong home/school partnership.

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

52. The headteacher's friendly but demanding leadership based on good relationships with staff, all of whom are valued and share her determination to raise standards, ensures a clear educational direction for the school. All those with posts of responsibility carry them out well and, as a result, the management of the school is good. The school's aim to create a learning environment where everyone is able to fulfil his or her full potential are reflected in its work and are beginning to be met. Its aims for pupils to become mature and responsible are

very largely met.

53. The deputy head gives particularly good support to the headteacher and has a clear leadership role in the drive to improve standards. Each member of the senior management team has specific responsibilities, which they carry out effectively as they strive to improve the school's performance. Co-ordinators are knowledgeable and manage their subjects well. Few of them, however, monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

54. Due to staff absence in recent months, most of the monitoring has been carried out by the head and deputy. A regular programme of classroom monitoring is planned for the next academic year. Non-teaching staff work effectively with teachers to promote learning and give good support to individuals or small groups.

55. The governing body carries out all its statutory duties and is very supportive of the school. Key governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and are beginning to use this knowledge to plan for the future development of the school.

56. The school's aims and code of conduct address effectively the issue of equality of opportunity. Culturally sensitive posters welcome parents and pupils from ethnic minorities to the school. A clear and marked commitment on the part of senior management ensures that all have equal opportunity. The school's equal opportunities policy contains a comprehensive and well thought out list of aims, but does not explain how the policy is to be monitored. The school is aware of gender related issues and has, for example, incorporated materials which address boys' underachievement in English and provides girl-friendly contexts for work in information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides a dictionary in their home language to pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL), an improvement since the last inspection.

57. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Two temporary teachers share the teaching in one class. The good number of skilled learning-support assistants provides valuable assistance to teachers and pupils. The school has an effective strategy for performance management that includes the appraisal and professional development of all staff. Procedures for the induction of new staff are good. A key feature of the school is the close and supportive way in which all members of staff work together. This makes a very good impact on the life of the school and the way in which pupils learn.

58. The school development plan is drawn up by the headteacher in consultation with staff. It is a useful working document with clear priorities, costings, timescales, responsibilities and success criteria. The school now needs to ensure that the success criteria focus clearly on raising standards and are measurable and achievable, in order that governors can more easily judge the effectiveness of the school. The senior management team regularly monitors the progress being made towards meeting the aim of the plan and makes any necessary adjustments. The headteacher regularly reports progress to governors.

59. The school did not meet the very challenging targets for the percentage of pupils to gain the national expectations or above in last year's tests for 11 year olds but analysed all available data and adjusted teaching strategies accordingly. As a result, the school has come close to meeting this year's targets in English and has exceeded them in mathematics. All in the school are determined to seek further improvement and, given the much improved assessment procedures, the good curriculum and improved teaching, is well placed to succeed.

60. The budget is very well managed and is carefully targeted at supporting clear and desirable educational priorities. There have been relatively large balances in the past, largely due to funds being saved to finance expensive improvements to the accommodation. The school makes good use of new technology in lessons and in its administration. The school makes good use of all the monies available to it.

61. Despite the difficulties of being located on the second floor and having some rooms within the infants' school on the ground floor, the accommodation is good and provides a stimulating learning environment. It is light, bright and very well maintained, with sufficient space to enable all subjects of the curriculum to be taught effectively. It is also extremely clean. Space outside classrooms is used for staff to take small groups and listen to readers. The accommodation includes a spacious hall and a canteen but no separate library space and books are kept in the corridor. The new computer suite is making an important contribution to raising standards in ICT. A very good outdoor play area with a large playing field enhances the provision for physical education. The school is well stocked with sufficient books, materials and equipment to teach all subjects. Some areas of the curriculum, such as ICT, art and history, are particularly well resourced.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to raise standards, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Ensure that all subject co-ordinators are able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 53, 102, 111, 123, 144, 151)
- Provide work that consistently challenges the more able pupils in science.  
(Paragraph: 92)

63. The governors are also asked to ensure that:

- The good marking seen in some classes is applied consistently across the school.  
(Paragraphs: 41, 112, 122, 150, 77, 85)
- The success criteria in the school development plan are more precise, measurable and achievable, so that they are more easily able to monitor the quality of education the school provides.  
(Paragraph: 58)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	1	16	26	13	0	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	2	29	46	23	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	354
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2001	47	42	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	<b>Boys</b>	31	29	39
	<b>Girls</b>	31	25	34
	<b>Total</b>	62	54	73
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	<b>School</b>	70 (78)	71 (70)	82 (82)
	<b>National</b>	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	<b>Boys</b>	30	33	38
	<b>Girls</b>	29	26	36
	<b>Total</b>	59	59	74
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	<b>School</b>	67 (75)	67 (68)	83 (84)
	<b>National</b>	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	2
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	335
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	7	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	1

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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29.5
Average class size	29.5

#### Education support staff:

##### Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	194

#### Qualified teachers and support staff:

##### Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>
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	£
Total income	814257.00
Total expenditure	859053.00
Expenditure per pupil	2462.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	114020.00
Balance carried forward to next year	69224.00

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

354
270

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Do not know</b>
My child likes school.	36	58	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	61	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	60	9	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	47	28	8	2
The teaching is good.	32	58	6	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	48	27	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	46	9	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	52	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	51	22	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	31	60	3	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	57	7	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	47	21	4	5

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

### **ENGLISH**

64. Results In last year's English tests for 11 year olds were below the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards are rising and pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining standards that are in line with national expectations in all aspects of English. Pupils of all abilities and needs achieve well in lessons and make good progress. Given the attainment of these pupils when they entered the school in Year 3, they have made satisfactory progress.

65. In a very good Year 4 lesson on seeking the meaning of unfamiliar words, most pupils were able to talk and listen with assurance in a range of situations, communicating ideas effectively, demonstrating careful listening by their relevant responses and had an assured understanding of the main points of the discussion. Many pupils are starting to adapt their speech well to suit a variety of purposes or to explain their ideas clearly.

66. In a very good Year 6 lesson on writing reports, most pupils were able to talk and listen confidently, adapting their speaking to the purpose and thoughtfully developing ideas. Higher-attaining pupils talk with assurance, while lower-attaining pupils rarely question other's ideas.

67. Most pupils have books at home and can talk about them in detail, generally with enthusiasm. They have fiction and non-fiction books, the latter often bought to help them with their homework. Pupils regularly borrow books from the school library, choosing suitably challenging texts in line with guidance from the school.

68. By the end of Year 6, higher-attaining pupils show they have a confident understanding of the significant ideas or characters in a text and are able to infer and deduce, finding and referring to the text when justifying their views. These pupils are working at a level just above that expected nationally. Lower-attaining pupils read accurately and fluently and can use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. They understand the main points of a story and readily express their preferences, although they are not able to make deductions from the text. Most pupils can talk confidently about the main themes and ideas in stories but they are still developing their powers of inference and deduction.

69. By the end of Year 3 most pupils are able to write consistently shaped letters and punctuate their sentences. Single syllable words are generally spelt correctly. Lower-attaining pupils form letters, which are clear and reasonably well positioned. Their ideas are usually developed into a series of sentences, although their punctuation is erratic. Higher-attaining pupils choose their words adventurously and write more successfully in a variety of forms, such as a critique of a story or a factual report on a trip to a local supermarket.

70. By the end of Year 6, lower-attaining pupils are able to write in sentences, usually correctly punctuated but not always correctly spelled. Their handwriting is legibly formed and usually joined up. Most pupils are able to write in grammatically correct sentences with accurate spelling. Handwriting is consistently joined and full stops and capital letters are regularly used. Higher-attaining pupils are able to use punctuation well and their handwriting is neat, regular and fluent. Spelling is usually correct and words are chosen imaginatively, although not always used with precision.

71. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, when there was not enough independent writing. The quality of the silent reading time remains an issue which

the school needs to address and they have clear plans to do so. The positioning of the library remains a difficult issue for the school due to the current accommodation.

72. The work in literacy ensures that very good links are made with other subjects. The note making, for example, was based on recent work in history about Henry VIII and included work that had been completed using the Internet. As a consequence the teaching of literacy across the school and within other subjects is very good.

73. Teaching in English is generally good and some is very good. Of the ten lessons seen, one was excellent, four were very good, two were good and three were satisfactory. Planning is very detailed and takes full account of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS). Questioning is generally very well sequenced and challenges pupils to think. Pupils are encouraged to use specialist language in whole-class discussions. The teaching ensures that pupils' learning is generally good. They are very attentive to the teacher and are very keen to take part in class discussion. Pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations and behave well.

74. In an excellent Year 5 lesson on how to work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases, the introduction was brisk and allowed pupils to review their prior learning. As a consequence, the pupils were very well engaged. The pace increased and the teacher successfully relaxed the children by leading a lively discussion on the use of the school's rewards system. Pupils wanted to participate and did so enthusiastically.

75. The NLS is securely in place and in addition the school has given due emphasis to creative writing with every pupil having a writing book. In the best lessons, creative writing is very well structured and includes such tasks as writing diaries, letters, biographies and poems. The English curriculum is enriched by visits to the theatre.

76. In a Year 5 reading session the teacher had little time to hear pupils reading. Her questioning skillfully determined the pupils' level of comprehension. This potentially useful session was less effective than it might have been due to the shortness of time. The quality of these sessions would be greater if teachers followed an agreed set of guidelines.

77. In the best cases, teachers' marking identifies how pupils can improve their work. Comments are also encouraging and ensure that pupils maintain their enthusiasm. However, marking is inconsistent across the school, with some marking not identifying how pupils can improve their work.

78. The English co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She has provided teachers with very good guidance, which has underpinned improvements in the subject in, for example, assessment, planning for year groups. She has also ensured that information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning through research and word processing. She has monitored teaching and learning in the classroom but more often works alongside colleagues as they plan in their year groups. She monitors pupils' work, matching this to teaching plans. The literacy governor works closely with the English co-ordinator to ensure that governors are kept well informed. The school library has a good range of fiction and non-fiction books divided between a number of bookshelves in the corridor and individual stocks held by teachers.

## MATHEMATICS

79. The current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is in line with that expected for their age in all areas of mathematics, an improvement on last year's National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds, when the results were below the national average. More able pupils are attaining above national expectations.

80. By the age of 11, pupils can use more than one method for multiplication, division, addition and subtraction and apply their knowledge to solving problems in real life situations. They know and can use formulae for calculating the area and perimeter of simple shapes. They can construct and explain simple line graphs and use a range of charts and graphs. More able pupils can investigate and predict pattern growth, expressing the projection in algebraic terms. Throughout the school pupils are afforded good opportunities to explain their mathematical reasoning. The result of this is the good use of mathematical language in all year groups.

81. The quality of teaching across the school is good overall. Of the 14 lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory in two, good in eight and very good in four. In all year groups, pupils are grouped for mathematics according to their prior attainment, with three sets in each year. Pupils make good progress in mental calculations when they are well challenged, as in Year 6 where pupils in the middle set can mentally multiply two digit numbers by 10, 20, 15 and 12. Teachers make good use of resources. Whiteboards are used in all groups to help teachers assess pupils' understanding by involving everyone in mental calculations.

82. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils in the lower sets. In a Year 4 lesson three pupils with special educational needs made good progress and understood that multiplication is the inverse of division, as a result of good support from adults. Teaching is at its best when pupils use mathematics to solve real problems or test out ideas in a practical way. In the middle set in Year 6, pupils were designing a bathroom, making calculations regarding area and perimeter. The Year 5 top set used bicycle wheels to discover that the circumference of a circle was 3.14 times greater than the diameter. They then used this information to calculate the area of the circle. In these lessons, pupils made very good progress because they were interested in what they were doing and the teaching was of a high quality.

83. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning mathematics. In the Year 3 top set, pupils are able to explain different ways of undertaking division calculations. They work hard at the activity with good levels of concentration. The Year 5 lower set develops understanding of Venn diagrams, something they found difficult in their end of year test paper. Their behaviour in lessons, often with someone other than their class teacher, is very good. They change into sets very quickly and little time is lost.

84. The National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has been successfully implemented in the school and the work of each year group is clearly linked to it. Some teachers go beyond the requirements of the strategy to provide additional challenge. Learning objectives are clearly defined in the planning. They are shared with the pupils and are often written on the board. Most teachers use the plenary session well to assess pupil progress and consolidate learning.

85. Marking in mathematics is satisfactory. Some teachers use positive comments to support pupil progress but marking is not consistent across the school. Teachers' planning includes the evaluation of the progress pupils make and teaching is adjusted accordingly. The scheme provides regular opportunities for assessment and for teachers to analyse the areas of the curriculum which need developing further. Optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 are used to track progress from year to year.

86. Pupils have opportunities to develop their oral skills in mathematics. In the good and very good lessons, teachers provided opportunities for pupils to explain how they had arrived at their answers. Teachers' supplementary questions often demanded that pupils express themselves in greater detail. There were examples of mathematics being integrated well with other subjects, such as art, science, geography and information and communication technology (ICT).

87. The co-ordinator provides very effective leadership in developing the subject and has a clear view of its strengths and the areas that need developing. She has worked hard to raise the profile of mathematics. A good example is The Maths Trail, a focused day of mathematical activities for the whole school. The new co-ordinator has had the opportunity to shadow the current subject leader and will take over in September. Good use is made of ICT in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

88. In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 2001, the percentage of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and above in science was well below the national average. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was particularly low when compared to both the national average and the average achieved by similar schools. These results run counter to the trend of the last few years when standards have been rising more or less in line with the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that results this year will be significantly better. Pupils are working at the expected level with examples of good work above national expectations throughout the school, especially among the older pupils. Investigative work is a particular strength in the school and several examples of good work in this area were observed.

89. The termly focus days are a positive feature of the school when year groups spend the day concentrating on particular aspects of the curriculum. During the inspection week a Year 3 focus day included science. Pupils were seen preparing for the day and looking at mini-beasts, showing a satisfactory understanding of how to recognise, identify and classify different types. During the day pupils worked in the school grounds showing a sound knowledge of the different types of habitats where they might find different creatures. In answer to the question, "What is a mini-beast?" One boy answers knowledgeably: "They are small invertebrates". The rest of the group understood that this means they have no backbone. Year 4 pupils were seen looking at the properties of magnets and which materials are and are not attracted by them. Several pupils are already quite knowledgeable about magnetism.

90. Year 5 groups are looking at food types and are well able to explain that foods contain carbohydrates, fats, proteins, minerals and vitamins and that these have an effect upon the human body. They understand the need for a balanced diet and that too many hamburgers are not a good idea – though this does not put them off wanting them! Very good use is made of the computer suite to help pupils to classify food types and think about healthy diets. A very good investigation into the best ways of measuring accurately was carried out by Year 6.

91. Good cross-curricular links are another strong feature of the school. In Year 6, for example, pupils were writing chronological accounts of their scientific investigation as part of their literacy work. Working in groups, pupils were challenged to create a measuring instrument for distance, liquids, and weight using various non-measuring items, such as a stick, a bicycle wheel and a bucket. All pupils showed good understanding of the principles involved. Working together they could successfully plan and make a variety of instruments and then find ways of testing them for accuracy. They showed a clear understanding of how to conduct a fair test.

92. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make good progress. Progress in individual lessons is good, helped by teaching that is lively, well planned and has a sharp clear focus. Pupils know a suitable range of scientific facts and ideas and use technical vocabulary with increasing precision as a result of good teaching. Year 6 pupils, for example, talk with understanding of calibration, numerical value and rank order. More able pupils make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress, but not all teachers consistently provide work that is sufficiently challenging to interest and extend them. This is recognised by the subject co-ordinator who is keen to build on improvements already made and make sure that the higher-achieving pupils are further extended.

93. The attitude of pupils to their learning is good throughout the school because most teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the work they can do. Pupils are very keen to take part in lessons and answer questions. They readily take opportunities to demonstrate their well developed speaking and listening skills. Behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes very good and even excellent, with high levels of concentration shown. Pupils work well both independently and in co-operation with others.

94. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory. Of the six lessons seen it was very good in two, good in three and satisfactory in one. Pupils enjoy science and are keen to do well, consistently working well both independently and in groups. The best teaching clearly demonstrates the ability to develop lessons in an interesting way and is underpinned by an imaginative use of well-prepared resources. Clear explanations are given and the questions asked are well thought out and designed to gain as much information about the pupils' knowledge of the topic as possible. Clear learning objectives are usually explained to pupils. Success criteria help teachers to focus well on the needs of the pupils and to assess how well they are achieving.

95. Science contributes to the development of pupils' oral skills through the insistence on the use of scientific vocabulary in discussion, which enhances the learning of the pupils. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and know them well. Assessment procedures are good and are well used to develop planning in the school.

96. The subject is well led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator who monitors the subject well and has a clear vision of the subject within the school and of what needs to be done to continue to raise standards. The staff has the knowledge, capacity and shared commitment to continue to improve. Accommodation is satisfactory and the range of high quality displays of pupils' work enhances the learning environment. Resources are good and are well used.

## ART AND DESIGN

97. By the age of 11 pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age and many examples of good artwork were seen throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities are making good progress, an improvement on the previous inspection in 1997 when standards and progress were satisfactory. Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-planned artistic experiences, which develop knowledge, skills and understanding. Art is well used across the whole curriculum to enhance and enrich pupils' learning. Regular and effective use is made of a wide range of media and of information and communication technology (ICT).

98. Timetabling arrangements meant that it was only possible to observe two art lessons. Year 4 pupils were seen developing their ability to paint still life pictures in the style of Van Gogh to a high standard. They learnt good techniques as they were encouraged to note the way the artist used brush strokes to develop a picture and two pupils spoke eloquently about how brush strokes can create an impression of life. They showed a good understanding of how paints can be mixed to create the right line and of light and shade. Year 6 pupils were observed learning about Australian aboriginal art and producing their own designs in a similar styles using pencil drawings and pastels. Pupils are knowledgeable about different styles of painting, such as abstract, impressionist and observational.

99. Pupils are observant and with the guidance of the teacher notice the use of forms, shape and colour. One girl explained that she chose her spiral effects because she had noticed that many of the aboriginal pictures had circles and had chosen to make a variation on the same effect. Another pupil talked about wanting to have a central symmetrical focus through the use of four dolphins.

100. The many displays throughout the school include effective use of computer-generated art. Year 3 pupils, for example, linked work with the history topic on the ancient Egyptians together with effective pencil and crayon pieces based on the style of Picasso. Year 4 work includes a range of collages linking history and religious education, computer generated repeating patterns, some well executed chalk drawings based on fruit segments and weaving. Year 5 took part in a focus day and produced a range of effective and varied printing work using different media. A well-produced display of Year 5 batik work based on leaf prints and incorporating quilting was produced with parental help. A deceptively simple display of the effective use of shape, light and shade is seen in the Year 6 mixed media studies of blue glass. Wall hangings also incorporate different media and some attractive wax crayon designs are effectively styled on Tiffany patterns.

101. Teaching in the lessons observed was good in one and very good in the other and the standard of the work being produced indicates that teaching is good overall. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of art and plan their lessons well with a clear focus on what the pupils are going to learn. Pupils clearly enjoy their art and behave well with attitudes and behaviour that are good overall and sometimes very good or even excellent. In the Year 6 lesson observed, for example, pupils' behaviour and concentration were exemplary.

102. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and a clear view of the strength of art and design in the school. He has clear plans to continue to improve and expand art in the school. Given the shared commitment of the staff coupled and the co-ordinator's drive, it is likely that art will become even stronger in the future. The co-ordinator monitors planning and samples of work but does not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The assessment of pupils' work is left to individual teachers but practice is not consistent across the school. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Resources are good and are well used. The high quality displays help to create an attractive and stimulating working environment for the pupils.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Timetabling arrangements during the inspection meant that it was possible to see only two lessons in design and technology. The evidence from these lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work, a review of planning and discussions with the co-ordinator indicates that by the end of Year 6 pupils' standards in design and technology are below national expectations. In lessons pupils generally achieve well. In a Year 3 lesson in which pupils were using pneumatics to make a moving model of a mini-beast, pupils were generally able, with some assistance, to use simple tools and materials and were able to talk about their work in simple terms. Higher-attaining pupils were able to use the materials to explore different ways of arrangement. Whilst the standards of these higher-attaining pupils were just above national expectations, most pupils' standards were below.

104. Pupils in Year 4 can design and make Christmas cards containing moving parts and to design and make torches using commercial construction kits. Pupils were able to make extensive evaluations of their products commenting both on the successful elements and making realistic suggestions of improvements.

105. From a scrutiny of the work of pupils in Year 6, higher attaining pupils are able to produce ideas showing that they understand designs should meet a variety of different criteria. Although they collect information, they do not use a wide range of sources. Many pupils describe competently what they are doing but need further encouragement to evaluate their designs more fully. They make realistic plans but need more opportunities to develop and improve them before making an artifact. Too often the pupils are given instructions which are so detailed that there is little challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. Many pupils do not yet show an understanding of design constraints. They can use pictures and words to explain simply their own designs, although these are not always realistic.

106. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to distinguish between what works well and what does not and are sometimes encouraged to evaluate their own work. This was seen in a piece of work on shelters when pupils carried out an extensive evaluation well related to the original design criteria. The emphasis on evaluation varies from teacher to teacher.

107. In a very good Year 6 lesson about designing fairground rides, many pupils were able to distinguish between what works and what does not. Higher-attaining pupils were able to make some suggestions but were not yet demonstrating a clear awareness of the constraints imposed by the materials they were using. When the teacher helped and guided the pupils they were able to evaluate their work in detail. Whilst higher attaining pupils were working close to national expectations, most pupils were working below this.

108. Teachers manage design and technology activities well. One of the two lessons seen was very good, the other satisfactory. The scrutiny of work suggests that teaching is satisfactory. Learning objectives are explained to pupils, although these are sometimes more about what the pupils would be doing rather than what they would be learning. As a consequence, pupils are clear as to what they have to do but are less clear about what they are going to learn. High expectations of behaviour are effectively enforced and, as a consequence, the lessons move with a good pace.

109. In a very good Year 6 lesson, high and consistent expectations of behaviour were made clear and tasks were very carefully and thoroughly introduced. These were well related to the longer-term targets for the topic on fairground rides. As a result, pupils' learning was set in a meaningful context. Pupils were asked to offer their own learning

objectives and success criteria on the basis of the class discussion. This excellent feature involved pupils in their own learning and ensured that they were very clear as to the purpose of the tasks. In the otherwise satisfactory lesson the learning objectives were not precise enough to ensure that all pupils made good progress.

110. The experienced co-ordinator has a clear perception of her responsibilities and provides good subject leadership. She is well trained and has kept her training up to date; she has drawn up a clear action plan with suitable priorities. The scheme of work and policy for the subject are due to be revised next term. The new scheme of work will be based substantially on the national scheme of work. Some of this has already been introduced by some teachers. This development should lead to a broader range of activities for pupils and clearer links with other areas of the curriculum.

111. The co-ordinator has identified two particular areas of the curriculum, textiles and control technology, to develop further when introducing the new scheme of work. Whilst there has been no recent audit of resources, the co-ordinator knows what is needed through informal discussions with staff. She monitors planning but does not currently monitor pupils' work or teaching. The design and technology curriculum is enriched by organised visits out of school and by arranging for visitors to talk to the children. A representative from a petroleum company, for example, gave a useful talk on solar panels and a trip to a local supermarket provided the stimulus for designing and creating fruit kebabs for some Year 3 pupils. Their enjoyment was obvious. Where marking is good it encourages pupils to make good progress by identifying the next steps they need to take.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

112. Timetabling arrangements meant that it was possible to see only three geography lessons but an examination of work and teachers' planning showed that standards achieved by 11 year olds are in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

113. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other two. Teachers plan well for pupils to learn about places, near and far and how human activities affect the landscape. Good use is made of the local area. Throughout the school, geographical skills, particularly in mapping, are taught using local facilities and maps. Year 3 pupils were seen working on the environment during a focus day, closely examining a local street, describing the buildings and their use and locating them on a map. Assessment of pupils' work is left to individual teachers but is not always done consistently. Whilst there are good examples of marking, which help pupils progress the quality varies from class to class.

114. Pupils in Year 5 undertake a study of the Brazilian rainforest and this is linked to environmental change in the local area. Pupils in Year 6 are gaining a sound understanding of geographical processes. In their work on rivers, for instance, they write about the course of a river, use a good range of geographical vocabulary and relate their knowledge to the locality. They are also confident when handling a range of maps, including historical maps.

115. Pupils have a good attitude towards geography. They are keen and enthusiastic in lessons when the teaching is stimulating and well planned. They find it difficult, however, to relate to topics outside their own knowledge and understanding when the range of available resources does not allow them to undertake independent study. This was seen in lessons where the local area was compared to a locality in Pakistan. Whilst pupils in Year 5 were very confident talking about their own area, few resources were available to help them understand the contrasting environment.

116. Year 4 pupils showed a good understanding of the differences and similarities between Southend and a village in Wiltshire.

117. The management of the subject is satisfactory. A scheme of work for geography has been introduced since the last inspection and the subject has been developed throughout the school. This needs further enrichment to include additional fieldwork beyond the school locality. Resources have been improved and are now satisfactory. The school is beginning to make use of information and communication technology (ICT) in geography and this should be further developed.

## **HISTORY**

118. Lesson observations during the inspection week, together with a review of work done by pupils during the year, indicates that pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards higher than expected and that work is at least satisfactory throughout the school. Progress is good and is consistent throughout the school, an improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory and progress was uneven.

119. The three lessons observed were all in Year 6 where pupils are studying the Tudor period and have a good knowledge of life at that time. They know about the life of Henry VIII and can answer questions about him. They have research skills and can use them to good effect when, for example, answering questions about how brave, romantic, extravagant, ambitious and clever Henry was. They use their speaking skills well to explain clearly the reasons for their answers. Another group was observed looking at the closure of the monasteries. They were able to make sensible inferences about some of Henry's reasons for getting rid of the monasteries, such as power and money, giving clear explanations about the difference between primary and secondary evidence.

120. Links between different subjects of the curriculum are strong in the school and make for more effective and cohesive learning. In a lesson in the computer suite pupils made good use of the Internet to continue their research into the Tudor period. In a literacy lesson, pupils wrote a report based on computer research.

121. Pupils enjoy history and have positive attitudes to learning. They listen well and work well in groups and when working on their own. Pupils have a pride in their work and effective use is made of displays of pupils' work across the school. Year 3 pupils have visited the British museum as part of their study on the ancient Egyptians and the display shows some good use of extended writing as well as artwork. Year 6 pupils link art in their study of Greece, for example the pictures of Grecian vases they have produced. Year 5 pupils have used information and communication technology (ICT) to help them design World War Two posters and the various Tudor displays around the school. These attractive displays enhance the learning environment and encourage pupils in their work.

122. Teaching was very good in one of the three lessons seen and good in two. The standard of the work being produced indicates good teaching overall. Planning is good and teachers are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn. This helps give a focus to lessons and makes it easier for teachers to assess progress. Marking, however, is inconsistent. Relationships are good and teachers manage pupils well, making sure that they stay on task so that effective learning takes place. Effective use is made of a good range of resources, including visits and visitors.

123. The recently appointed co-ordinator is developing a clear picture of history through the school. She monitors standards by regularly checking work and planning to make sure that the scheme of work is being effectively covered. There is currently too little monitoring of the teaching of subjects such as history but this is something the co-ordinator and the management team are aware of and have plans to rectify. Progress since the last inspection has been good and staff have a real commitment to improve further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

124. By the end of Year 6 standards in ICT are in line with national expectation. Pupils in Year 3 used ICT to record the results of a science experiment on reversible and irreversible changes. They entered symbols from a clip art programme, changed their size, and added text. In one Year 3 lesson, pupils used software to help them compose a piece of music. All pupils shared ideas and higher-attaining pupils were able to generate ideas and, with help, were able to save their work.

125. In a very good Year 4 lesson on control technology, pupils revised and developed their use of a simple directional control program. All pupils were able to plan and command things to happen on the screen, drawing the shape they wanted. Many pupils were able to link a series of commands effectively to achieve the desired result.

126. The scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 6 shows that most can use a spreadsheet to draw a frequency graph using colour and three dimensional presentation. They can use a program to create a picture and then import it into another program, amending the picture in order to make a Christmas card.

127. In a good Year 6 lesson following up work on Henry VIII most pupils were able to save data and use direct lines of enquiry to exploit this data appropriately. Many can confidently produce, organise and amend their ideas using word-processing and image-manipulation software. Higher-attaining pupils were able to realise the importance of the careful framing of questions, which led to them using the Internet in a well-focused way. These pupils were able to combine information from a range of sources and many could use ICT to present data in a variety of forms.

128. The ICT curriculum has changed significantly since the last inspection. The school has made good progress and has introduced control technology since then. Some work, however, remains to be done to bring it to the standard of the other aspects of the ICT curriculum by broadening the range of opportunities in line with the school's plans.

129. In the four lessons seen, teaching was very good in one, good in two and satisfactory in one. A significant strength is that teachers try very hard to encourage pupils to use ICT for a particular task rather than just practising skills in isolation. As a result pupils are helped to understand the relevance of ICT to their lives. Year 5 pupils, for example, used a drawing programme to record the work they had done on food pyramids in science. The good pace to the questioning and focused work by the teacher and support assistant enabled all pupils to participate fully and make good progress.

130. Pupils' concentration improves when the teacher reviews their learning throughout the lesson. In the otherwise satisfactory lesson, the work set did not always engage the pupils' interest. Pupils generally make good progress in lessons and achieve well. Pupils have opportunities to use the computer suite at lunch times. Two Year 6 pupils, for example, work together enthusiastically editing the school magazine.

131. The teaching assistant, who works in the suite full time, makes a significant impact on pupils' learning by providing high quality specialised support during class discussion and subsequently providing individual support to children. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils were arranged at the computers so that each member of the pair was able to participate fully. The teacher actively managed the working of these pairs and encouraged them not only to share but also to collaborate. This ensured that pair work was very effective and the lesson contributed to the development of the pupils' social skills. In those lessons where teachers manage the working of groups less well, some girls do not readily get access to the equipment. To prevent this happening, the school needs to monitor more consistently its comprehensive equal opportunities policy.

132. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has collated a comprehensive portfolio of pupils' work as they move through the school. This folder is passed on to the next teacher thereby ensuring that teachers know exactly what the pupils know and can do. She has also developed an extensive and comprehensive folder of guidance documents for teachers and assistants, which provides excellent support for staff.

133. The co-ordinator has a very clear view on the priorities for further development; she has made the use of ICT in other subjects her highest priority and has been very successful in achieving this. She monitors planning and pupils' work and has identified the need for teachers to help pupils use subject specific language more frequently. A comprehensive list of software is cross-referenced to the National Curriculum. The Internet policy is thorough and includes a requirement for parents and pupils to sign an agreement. The scheme of work for ICT is based on the national scheme and therefore covers the programme of study effectively.

134. The school has made a substantial financial commitment to ICT and has worked hard in attracting additional funding. As a consequence, the school has a planned programme of up-grading its computers. The staff have been through the national training course, which has resulted in increased confidence and has enabled them to assess pupils' work accurately. In addition, the co-ordinator has provided a substantial programme of in-service training, which has been very useful to her colleagues.

## **MUSIC**

135. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by the time they leave school, an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below that expected nationally for their age. Since the last inspection the school has invested in a commercial scheme of work. The school employs a music specialist one day a week who is used to develop the skills of higher-attaining pupils in singing and instrumental work. Other visiting musicians provide support for pupils learning a range of instruments.

136. By the age of 11, pupils are able to sing with growing confidence. This is particularly true of the pupils in the choir who sing with enthusiasm and a strong regard for pitch and rhythm. Singing is part of the scheme of work but none was heard in lessons during the inspection and it is insufficiently used in assemblies. By the age of 11 pupils are able to distinguish between different musical styles as well as having an understanding of the historical development of music and musical instruments. Pupils also listen to music at the beginning and end of assemblies.

137. In the four lessons observed teaching was satisfactory in one, good in one and very good in two. In the good and very good lessons teachers were confident in their knowledge of the subject and involved pupils in practical activities using a range of pitched and un-

pitched percussion instruments. They develop listening skills by using music to stimulate ideas. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils listened to fanfare music before devising their own fanfares. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop composition skills. In Year 4 pupils develop musical pieces using the pentatonic scale and also have to include a pattern of repeated rhythms *ostinato*. These pieces are recorded using non-standard notation. In the otherwise satisfactory lesson, the work was not always closely matched to pupils' prior attainment.

138. In the lessons observed, the enthusiasm of the teacher played a big part in the learning. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher had planned the lesson well, using the ideas in the commercial scheme but going beyond the requirements of the unit. The range of available instruments was stimulating and sufficient in quantity to allow all groups to experiment freely. Some pupils used their own skills in playing keyboards and flutes to raise the quality of the performance. As a result pupils made very good progress in composition. Pupils in Year 3, for example, were seen using ICT to improve their composing skills.

139. Pupils have a good attitude to their work in music. They co-operate well when developing compositions. They are keen and enthusiastic, taking pride in the quality of their performance. Pupils who have the opportunity to learn an instrument make very good progress. They show very good levels of concentration especially when they come together to perform as a school orchestra.

140. A new music co-ordinator was appointed after the last inspection and the school has made good progress since then. Currently, however, the school is without a co-ordinator and this adversely affects progress throughout the school. The school has satisfactory resources for music including visiting musicians. Pupils from the school take part in music festivals and perform concerts at school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

141. During the inspection it was only possible to observe games and swimming, so judgements are based on these activities, teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinator and other staff. By the age of 11 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Nearly all Year 6 pupils are capable of swimming 25 metres, are confident in the water and have personal survival skills. Pupils use their skills in hitting, throwing and catching to play the games of rounders and cricket. An extra-curricular dance club provides opportunities for girls and boys to perform dances employing a range of movement. Teachers' plans show that all aspects of the curriculum are covered during the year.

142. Of the four lessons seen, three were satisfactory and one was good. All lessons start with a warm up session and teachers' reinforce the value of exercise for a healthy lifestyle. The swimming lesson, taken by a qualified instructor, dealt extensively with water hazards in a lesson on survival techniques. A specialist instructor supports teachers in games lessons. Both make a valuable contribution to the physical education curriculum. Resources are adequate to allow three classes to be taught at the same time, on the school playing field. The observed lessons were the last in a series on games. In some, there was an over-emphasis on the game rather than the development of skills. As a result too many pupils were not fully engaged.

143. Pupils enjoy swimming and games. In games lessons, they are nearly all suitably dressed in the school's games kit. They listen carefully to instructions and work hard in pairs and small groups. When asked to play games of rounders and cricket, they concentrate hard and are very well behaved, even when inactive. Assessment of pupils' progress is left

to individual teachers and is not consistent.

144. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and school teams compete against other local schools in football, netball, rounders, athletics and swimming. The management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator is in the process of developing a new scheme of work. She monitors planning but does not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. Lessons observed and pupils' work seen during the inspection show that standards in religious education throughout the school are in line with those expected nationally and pupils make steady progress, an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below expectations and progress was unsatisfactory.

146. Year 3 pupils were seen studying prayer as a part of Christian worship building on previous work on Hinduism, and they understand the basic concept of prayer being a message to God. Many of them, however, found it difficult to read and understand a traditional version of the Lord's Prayer with words such as hallowed and temptation. Only a few pupils recognised the prayer and none of them could name it. They did, however, make a good attempt at writing their own prayer of thanks.

147. Pupils in Year 4 are studying Judaism, looking at the Jewish affirmation of faith in one God and pupils are learning the meanings of mezuzah and shema. They made a mezuzah to contain their own shema, a note of words that are important to them. They discussed symbols with some sensitivity and can make comparisons between Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism. Pupils are able to explain why certain people are important to them, such as family and friends.

148. Year 5 pupils were seen following up work on solitude, looking at meditation and exploring why and how people of all faiths find it useful to help them think and reflect. Most pupils show an awareness of why some people value meditation in their lives and, with sensitive guidance from the teacher, made a sensible attempt to meditate, using a pebble and sound to help them focus. Several pupils were able to name groups of people who might benefit from meditation. Higher-attaining pupils were able to make a serious attempt at putting their ideas on meditation into writing, using words and phrases such as: 'bringing calm', 'relaxation', 'more energy' and 'time to think'.

149. Pupils in Year 6 are involved in a five-week programme designed to teach them how events in the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, fit together. Through the lively use of storytelling, drama, pictures and simple props, pupils learned about a whole range of biblical events and characters. They showed a good understanding of the events being described. The use of hand signs and certain keywords helped them to remember these well.

150. Pupils have positive attitudes to religious education. They behave well and were fully engaged in all lessons seen. Even in the lesson on meditation, where a small number of boys began by being somewhat embarrassed, they all made a real attempt to become involved. Teaching was good in all four of the lessons seen. A review of samples of work done throughout the year indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory, although marking is inconsistent. Individual teachers are responsible for assessing pupils' work but this is of variable quality.

151. The school now follows a locally agreed scheme of work, which has improved teachers' confidence. Some staff, however, are still uncertain about how to monitor the standards of the work and the co-ordinator is planning to use a local authority adviser to provide help and guidance on this. The headteacher is currently holding a watching brief as

subject co-ordinator but is making arrangements to appoint a permanent co-ordinator. The headteacher monitors standards by checking planning and reviewing pupils' work but, as with several other subjects, the school recognises the need for closer monitoring of teaching in classrooms. Religious education makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.