

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **JOHN RAY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Braintree

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115028

Headteacher: Douglas Forrest

Reporting inspector: David Tytler  
8990

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 June 2002

Inspection number: 194883

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
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	George Hill OBE
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8990	David Tytler	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19677	Marion Cumbers	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23658	Stephen Parker	Team inspector	English; Information and communication technology.	How good are the learning opportunities?
20457	Brian Fletcher	Team Inspector	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Music; Physical education.	
11901	Pat Lowe	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Art; Geography; History.	
20063	Gerry Slamon	Team inspector	English as an additional language; Science; Religious education.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

John Ray is a large junior school on the edge of Braintree serving a diverse community. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Only a few pupils come from ethnic minority groups and eight pupils have English as an additional language. Seven of these are fluent English speakers and one is at an early stage of learning. The percentage of pupils having special educational needs, including statements, is above the national average, whilst the percentage having a statement of special need matches the national average. Most pupils join the school from the neighbouring infants' school. The attainment on entry currently is in line with the national average. The current Year 6, however, joined the school with attainment below national expectations in literacy and numeracy skills.

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

John Ray Junior School is highly regarded by parents, who value all aspects of its work. It is a fully inclusive school, which provides a good quality education for all its pupils, who have a wide variety of individual needs. The school is very well managed and teaching overall is good. As a result pupils make at least satisfactory progress, often better, in their learning and achieve well. When account is taken of these factors, the school provides good value for money.

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

- Teaching is good, with consistently high quality teaching in Year 6. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The school is very well managed by the headteacher, governors and senior staff.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and behave well in classes, assemblies and around the school.
- The personal development of pupils is good. Their social development is very good.
- Arrangements for supporting pupils are good, and are particularly good for those having special educational needs. As a result, all pupils are able to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered to them, including high quality out-of-school activities.
- The partnership with parents is strong and they give good support to their children's learning at home and at school.
- The skilled learning support assistants work well with teachers and make an important contribution to the pupils' education.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- Standards in writing.

*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. It has addressed all the key issues. The school has improved considerably since then, although some of the changes have been relatively recent. As they move through the school, pupils build systematically on what they know and can do. Arrangements for assessment are good and the assessment data is used to inform the planning of work to meet pupils' individual needs. Co-ordinators take responsibility for teaching and learning in their subject. There has been regular monitoring of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science, which has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Monitoring is, however, less well developed in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology have improved as a result of greatly improved facilities and the training of all teachers, who are now confident in handling the subject.

## 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	E	E	C	C
Mathematics	D	E	B	B
Science	D	E	A	A

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

As the table shows, results in last year's tests for 11 year olds matched the national average in English, were above in mathematics and well above in science. In comparison with similar schools results matched the average in English, were above in mathematics and well above in science. Whilst there have been wide fluctuations, standards in all three subjects have risen over the last three years. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve the national expectations in last year's English and mathematics' tests by many points. Similarly challenging targets have been set for this year. Pupils in the current Year 6 have achieved well since they joined the school. Standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national averages and above in science. Standards in all other subjects, with the exception of art and history, which are above, match the national expectations. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond well to the good teaching and behave well in class and around the school. In some lessons, where teachers lose the interest of pupils, there is some restlessness and the pace of learning is reduced
Personal development and relationships	Good and underpinned by the good relationships that exist throughout the school.
Attendance	Good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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.*

The quality of teaching overall is good. Whilst weaknesses were found in some classes, examples of good teaching were seen in all year groups and in all subjects. The teaching in Year 6 was consistently good, with most of it very good. Of the 78 lessons seen, one was outstanding and two were unsatisfactory. Most were good or better. These lessons were characterised by good subject knowledge and understanding, good relationships, a brisk pace and work that was carefully matched to what pupils knew and could do. As a result, all pupils made good progress and achieved well. In lessons, which were otherwise judged to be satisfactory, the work did not challenge the more able and the pace slowed, limiting the progress made by pupils. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' subject knowledge was limited, which resulted in pupils not being guided closely enough to complete tasks and they made little progress. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is good. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and pupils apply these skills in other subjects. Support assistants make an important contribution to the quality of learning in all lessons

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good and relevant to the needs of pupils, many of whom have specific individual needs. The curriculum is enhanced by high-quality extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	High quality. They receive very good support in lessons and are involved in setting and achieving their individual targets. They make good progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are very few pupils with English as an additional language and nearly all are fluent speakers. Very good arrangements are made for pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The social development of pupils is of high quality. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care and support of pupils is good. Arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do are very good in English, mathematics and science and the information is used well to plan for individual needs. Assessment is less well developed in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	The school works hard to maintain a good working relationship with parents, who give good support to their children's learning at home and in school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The management of the school is very good. The headteacher's leadership is thoughtful and innovative. He is given very good support by senior staff, who are at the forefront of the drive to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All statutory duties are met. Governors, particularly those with key responsibilities, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. That knowledge is used well to plan for future developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The teaching of English, mathematics and science is monitored regularly by the headteacher and senior staff. This is less well developed in other subjects. Governors and senior staff regularly monitor the progress made towards meeting the priorities of the school development plan and make any necessary adjustments.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Particularly good use is made of learning assistants. The school applies the principles of best value.

The school is well staffed with suitably trained teachers and support assistants to meet the needs of the curriculum and all its pupils. The accommodation and resources for learning are good. Resources are particularly good in information and communication technology.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• It is easy to approach the school with a question or a problem.</li><li>• Their children like school and are making good progress.</li><li>• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.</li><li>• Behaviour is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework.</li><li>• Out-of-school activities.</li><li>• The partnership with parents.</li><li>• Information on how their children are getting on.</li></ul>

Inspectors agreed with the positive views of the vast majority of parents. They also concluded that the partnership with parents and the information supplied to them are good. Extra-curricular activities are of high quality, although more are available for older children than for the younger ones. Whilst homework is set, little was seen during the inspection and the school accepts that there is a need for consistency.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Whilst they have fluctuated considerably in recent years, standards are rising, particularly since the school adopted a root and branch approach to deciding on how to raise standards. The school is a member of the Braintree Schools' Federation's *More Able Pupil Initiative*. At the same time as raising standards, the school is anxious to maintain its stance in providing an all-round curriculum open to all pupils. Inspection evidence suggests the school is succeeding.
2. Standards in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds matched the national average in English, were above in mathematics and well above in science. In comparison with similar schools, results matched the average in English, were above average in mathematics and well above in science. This represents good achievement, as there was a relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in this group, which entered the school with attainment below what was expected nationally for children of their age in English and mathematics. This good progress is due in no small part to the consistently high quality teaching in Year 6.
3. The school exceeded its targets for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve the national expectations in last year's English and mathematics tests by many points. Similarly challenging targets have been set for this year. Inspection evidence indicates that they will be achieved.
4. In this fully inclusive school, nearly all teachers ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils, providing suitably challenging work for the higher attaining pupils but at the same time catering for the needs of the less able. As a result pupils achieve well. In a few science lessons, however, more able pupils are not challenged and they do not achieve as much as they could in these lessons.
5. In the National Curriculum assessments in English in 2001, the school did well to raise the standard of lower attaining pupils, with fewer than average recording very low scores. Pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving above average standards in listening, average in speaking and reading but below average standards in writing. Given, their low starting point, these pupils have achieved well in reading and made satisfactory progress in writing.
6. In mathematics, pupils are benefiting from the broad curriculum offered and are now more confident in applying basic number facts to problem solving. They also have greater proficiency in collecting, illustrating and interpreting information. Whilst pupils now in Year 6 are attaining at a slightly lower level than their counterparts last year, this still represents good achievement.
7. Pupils study all aspects of science and their learning is good, underpinned as it is by independent scientific investigation and enquiry, which is a strength of the teaching. Pupils achieve particularly well in art and history, reaching standards which are above those expected nationally for 11 year olds. Standards in all other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), match national expectations. Inspection evidence

suggests that the school's new strategies and the good teaching are enabling pupils to make good progress and that standards are likely to continue to rise in a number of subjects. Pupils have made particularly good progress in ICT. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus.

8. Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to the targets set for them, and good progress overall, particularly when they receive support individually or in small groups. Early identification of their needs and the setting of clear and achievable targets enable them to make progress commensurate with that of their peers in all areas of the curriculum.

9. Pupils who have specific gifts and talents are identified by the school and extension work is available for them. Additional activities extend their learning through the *More Able Pupil Initiative*. Many of these are available to them at a neighbouring high school, usually on a Saturday morning.

10. The achievement of the pupil at the early stage of learning English as an additional language is enhanced by the very good quality support she receives. This is allowing her to make progress in learning that is comparable to that of other pupils of similar ability.

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

11. Children enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to their learning. Attendance is good. They arrive on time and settle promptly to the initial task of the day, continuing to work during registration. The school expects the pupils to work hard and do their best. Many are persistent and try hard even when they find the work a challenge, before asking for help. The pupils show great enthusiasm for many of their lessons. They were, for example, fascinated by what they could see with magnifying glasses in science, sang with gusto in assembly and supported England with great fervour while watching the World Cup in the hall. To repay their teachers for the privilege, they then settled down quickly and enthusiastically to their lessons after all the tension and worked hard for the rest of the day.

12. Pupils show great interest and involvement in activities both in and out of school, as shown by the assemblies on making the most of your talents and trying hard, when pupils' achievements in a number of spheres were celebrated. They also respect the feelings of others by allowing them time to express themselves and by encouraging those who have difficulties because of shyness.

13. Nine out of ten parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire thought that behaviour was good. The few instances of restless behaviour observed in classes were associated with teachers' low expectations, work that did not match pupils' prior attainment or weaknesses in teachers' behaviour management techniques. In classrooms, around the school, in the corridors and on the stairs there is little pushing and jostling and pupils' behaviour is good. The nearest thing to conflict observed was caused by two pupils vying with each other to help a pupil in a wheelchair. No specific pupils are delegated to do this; they simply use their initiative to help as a matter of course.

14. The headteacher is justly proud of the ethos of the school where pupils help each other as a matter of course. The pupils are also proud to help their juniors and pupils at the infant school with, for example, reading practice, as well as acting as register monitors or serving on the school council. They are courteous, naturally friendly and responsive to

questioning from visitors. Pupils in Year 6 are polite and mature, confirming that they feel confident to leave for the high school shortly. Class behaviour logs show occasional examples of unsatisfactory behaviour. A variety of tactics is used to minimise their effect and no pupils have been excluded in the last five years.

15. During the inspection, no cases of bullying, oppression, racism or sexist behaviour were observed and only one incident was noted in a log, which was dealt with satisfactorily. Pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. In a lesson on prejudice and stereotyping, racial characteristics did not immediately spring to pupils' minds as a reason for prejudice. All pupils are treated in the same way. They have a natural respect for each other and relationships around the school are generally warm and supportive.

16. Pupils with SEN are integrated well into the life of the school. Their very good attitudes, good behaviour and good relationships contribute to their integration and good achievement.

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

17. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is a particular strength of the school in Year 6, where it is consistently good and often very good. As a result pupils in these classes, who entered the school at a low starting point, make good progress and achieve well. English, mathematics and ICT are well taught as are the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils apply these skills in other subjects, although the use of ICT across the curriculum could be further developed.

18. The teaching in most of the lessons observed was good or better and, as a result, all pupils in these lessons made good progress and achieved well. The good and very good teaching enables pupils to attain standards which are at least in line with national expectations and are above in science, art and history. Examples of good teaching were seen in all year groups and in all subjects. There are, however, weaknesses in some classes and two of the 78 lessons seen were unsatisfactory. A priority of the school is to ensure that the high quality of the teaching permeates all year groups.

19. In the good and better lessons, all aspects of teaching were good, and the management of pupils and the use of time, support staff and resources were very good. Skilled learning support assistants make a particularly important contribution to the learning of all pupils.

20. In a high quality Year 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge, firm but friendly behaviour management and good use of open questions engaged the pupils' interest and as a result they tried hard to do well. They responded well to the teacher's high expectations, which were made clear to them, and they made very good gains in understanding.

21. In an outstanding Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's highly imaginative planning provided excellent challenge to higher attaining pupils whilst ensuring that all pupils were able to make very good progress, building on what they already knew and could do. Again, pupils responded very well to the teacher's high expectations, enjoying the range of interesting tasks presented for them and making rapid progress in developing their creative writing.

22. In a high quality Year 6 science and design and technology session on designing a burglar alarm for a person who was blind or deaf, the very well planned and structured lesson resulted in the pupils being highly focused on learning and achieving well. In this lesson, pupils applied their knowledge of magnetism to design the alarm: a good example of a lesson building on pupils' prior attainment. In the best lessons, teachers used good questioning techniques to challenge pupils' thinking and to check whether or not pupils had fully understood what they were being taught before moving.

23. During the inspection, teachers were seen to adjust lessons to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Marking across the subjects and year groups is inconsistent. Good marking in English responds well to pupils' ideas and identifies weaknesses. This, however, is not always the case and marking is not always used to plan future lessons. In science, errors in spelling were not always pointed out and the marking did not always challenge pupils' thinking.

24. Many good and very good examples were seen of teachers using skilled questioning to check pupils' learning throughout the lesson, ensuring that all understood what had been taught before moving on. Only a few examples of homework being set or marked were seen during the inspection. However, the school accepts that there is a need for consistency. The needs of all pupils are taken into account in most lesson planning and teachers are generally clear about what they want different groups to learn in each lesson.

25. In lessons otherwise judged to be satisfactory, teachers' expectations were not high enough; the more able did not have challenging tasks and the tasks set did not meet the needs of lower attaining pupils. In these lessons too, classroom management was uncertain, the pace was slow, pupils were not always clear about the purpose of the lesson or given enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills. As a result, whilst pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning their progress was not as rapid as it could have been.

26. The two unsatisfactory lessons - one in science and one in English - were not well enough structured to develop learning progressively, pace was slow, the level of instruction was inadequate and expectations of behaviour were too low. In the English lesson, the teacher did not make it clear that pupils were expected to complete accurate written work. In the science lesson, the teacher did not organise groups well enough to ensure that all pupils were involved. On occasions pupils were simply waiting for others to complete tasks. As a result, they made unsatisfactory progress.

27. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils mainly work alongside their peers and are given additional support by teachers and teaching assistants, who monitor their progress and use the information gained to plan for their future learning. The support for small groups of pupils is particularly valuable in literacy and numeracy lessons in all classes.

28. Groups of pupils from all year groups are withdrawn each week for reading activities. During these sessions, they make very good progress due to the high quality teaching that they receive. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in Year 6 benefit from the very good teaching that they receive in mathematics where pupils are taught in groups according to their prior attainment. Some teachers and learning support assistants have undertaken training in Makaton signing and are therefore better able to meet the needs of pupils with hearing impairment. The specific needs of one pupil are well met through a joint placement at John Ray and a nearby special school.

29. Gifted and talented pupils are taught in the highest ability group in literacy and numeracy and make good progress. The school is currently examining opportunities for them to meet together regularly for challenging work in ICT and other aspects of the curriculum.

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

30. The good curriculum, which meets statutory requirements, is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all its pupils. Since the previous inspection, a curriculum management team has been set up to take responsibility for monitoring provision and leading developments. This has led to substantial improvement and all weaknesses noted previously have been addressed. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly as a result of substantially increased resources, well-targeted staff training and a new scheme of work. The co-ordinator for ICT has worked hard to ensure that long term planning covers all aspects of National Curriculum requirements and that pupils' skills are developed sequentially. Lessons are mainly taught in the computer suite. Whilst pupils work in other subjects on classroom computers, such opportunities are under-developed.

31. The programmes of study for all subjects now cover all required elements. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been adopted and targets for English and mathematics are securely based on the official frameworks. National recommendations and guidelines have been adopted for all other subjects and lead to well focused and detailed short and medium term plans.

32. Teachers in the same year group plan together, which ensures that pupils in different classes are given equal access to the curriculum. Teachers do, however, have to ensure that when pupils do not make the expected progress, time is allowed in the following lesson for repeated coverage. It is a good feature of planning that opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are identified in all subjects.

33. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which now includes drugs awareness, has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Commercial materials are available to guide teachers in planning lessons. Sex education is taught with the assistance of a school nurse and the approval of the governing body and parents. Representatives of public services, including the police and fire service, visit to explain their roles in the context of citizenship.

34. The school takes good care to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All adults have a very good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and classroom provision is organised to meet these specific needs. When pupils are given focused support, teaching ensures that their work is relevant to what is taking place in the classroom and meets the requirements of their individual education plans. These are drawn up by the co-ordinator in consultation with class teachers, parents and, in some cases, external agencies. They contain targets relating to specific areas of learning or behaviour, suggest teaching and learning strategies and provide advice on how parents can help their child. Class teachers and teaching assistants plan suitable tasks to help pupils to achieve these targets.

35. The individual education plans (IEPs) are discussed with pupils so that they are aware of, and agree to, the targets set for them. They have their own versions of their individual education plans on which they record their progress towards their targets. A small number of pupils have been identified as having specific gifts and talents and teachers are aware of the need to plan suitably challenging work for them. This is a more recent initiative, which has yet to be fully developed. The very good support provided for the pupil at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language (EAL) ensures that she is fully included in lessons and in all aspects of school life.

36. There is a strong emphasis on learning communication skills. Extra staff are provided to support literacy in addition to learning support assistants. Provision for the expressive arts, sport and music is particularly good. Pupils have the opportunity to excel in music and several Year 5 and 6 pupils play more than one instrument. The school orchestra has won local and national awards. The school plays all major sports and enters all district competitions, winning several. The school positively promotes excellence in these two areas.

37. To boost pupils' interest in aspects of the curriculum, the school shows imagination and commitment in planning occasional events, such as the arts week, book week and special days focusing on historical events. The curriculum is extended effectively through a very good range of after-class activities. Many pupils take part and the most popular clubs have waiting lists. The activities are of high quality. In addition to the school orchestra, there is a choir and clubs for art and dance. There are clubs for several sports, including athletics, cricket, football, netball and rounders. Staff from a professional football club offer coaching throughout the year as an after-school activity and as part of the physical education programme. Pupils take part in end-of-term music and drama performances for parents and the public. The school takes part in the Braintree Schools' Federation's initiative for more able pupils.

38. The local community is used well to extend the curriculum, for instance through fieldwork in geography, history and science. This includes tracing the local connections of the scientist whose name the school has adopted. Pupils take part in local festivals and competitions. A range of visitors from local churches and other walks of life visit to talk about their experiences.

39. Relations with the adjoining infant school and high school are good. For instance, one teacher is presently teaching a Year 2 class in the infant school and will continue as their teacher when they transfer into the junior school. Year 6 pupils visit the high school to work on projects such as that on fairgrounds in design technology. Such contacts ensure that they make a smooth transfer to the next stage in their education.

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

40. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. A particular strength is the very good provision made for pupils' social development. The school is successful in creating a climate within which pupils can grow and flourish. This is achieved through the importance placed on respect for self and for others. This is seen in lessons and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to value each other's contributions and to applaud achievement.

41. Many opportunities are offered in religious education and PSHE lessons for pupils to explore values and beliefs and the way they impact on people's lives. They are taught to appreciate difference and to respect the integrity of the individual. As a result, as seen in a

Year 5 lesson on the sufferings of the Jewish people through the centuries, pupils challenged all forms of discrimination such as racism, greed and aggression. Subjects such as art, music and science, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and help them consider their responses and feelings on observing works of art, listening to the works of famous composers, and considering the wonders of nature.

42. The school provides its pupils with a strong moral code as a basis for behaviour. The behaviour policy is generally promoted consistently in classes and all aspects of the school. The school has a high commitment to educational and social inclusion and successfully promotes racial and religious tolerance. The importance of truth, self-respect, justice and equality of opportunity are communicated through the school's evident concern for these values. Breaches, such as the September 11<sup>th</sup> bombing in New York, are discussed. The good example set by all adults who work in the school and the good relationships between all members of the school community support pupils' moral development. Pupils are appropriately rewarded for their good behaviour and are made aware of the school's sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. They are made to feel that they are important members of the school community and, as a result, they respect and care for school property.

43. Pupils' social development is fostered within a community which shares common, inclusive values. A common feature in all lessons is the way boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds work together harmoniously and enjoy each other's company. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to respond to the needs of their peers in a thoughtful and emphatic way. School council members, for example, search for ways to make the school a better place. As they grow older, pupils are provided with an increasing range of responsibilities within the school community which develop leadership qualities. Year 6 pupils are constantly made aware that their principle duty is to set good examples to younger pupils and they fulfil their responsibilities such as paired reading with Year 3 pupils, play leaders for pupils in the infant school and care of computer equipment with care, courtesy and consideration.

44. Pupils are given many opportunities to engage in positive corporate experiences, through assemblies, extra-curricular activities, musical performances and dramatic performances as well as residential school trips. These occasions enrich pupils' experiences and allow them to develop as members of the school community. Year 6 pupils agree that they have grown as responsible and mature members of society because of the school's emphasis on this area of their development. Pupils are made aware of the need to contribute to the wider community through collecting for charities such as Children In Need and Cancer Research.

45. The school recognises and nurtures pupils' particular gifts and talents through a very wide range of high quality extra-curricular sport, art, dance and music. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in cultural events together in school and with pupils from other schools. Events such as music festivals, arts weeks, Tudor and Ancient Egypt Days, and visits to places of cultural interest, as well as working with a visiting artist, do much to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. The religious education programme gives pupils a good insight into the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures, and successfully promotes their understanding of the need for race equality. Art and music from other cultures are well represented to help pupils explore the cultural traditions of a range of people across the world.

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

46. The school continues to provide a good level of care and a safe and stable environment for its pupils. Efficient arrangements for child protection work well when necessary. The school is very sensitive to any personal problems experienced by parents and children. A regular agenda item at the weekly meeting reminds staff to raise any concerns that they have about their pupils. Appointment slots with the school counsellor can then be allocated on the spot where appropriate. The counsellor comes to the school one day a week, providing timetabled support sessions for pupils and parents and also runs a lunchtime drop-in session. Parents, staff and pupils all agree that her services are very useful and would like more time to be available. The school has also arranged for a member of the behaviour support team to provide advice sessions for parents on how to deal with their child's behaviour at home. This contributes to consistency in behaviour management between home and school.

47. The school has created the post of assessment co-ordinator since the previous inspection and the current post-holder has brought about significant improvements in a short time. Assessment procedures are now good overall and very good in English, mathematics and science. Pupils take official optional tests in these subjects each year in addition to the compulsory National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Test results are analysed and the school is beginning to track the progress of individual pupils through the school.

48. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored during the year against detailed specific criteria and this provides very good quality information against which teaching and curriculum can be adjusted. In other subjects, teachers assess pupils' standards in relation to the level descriptions of the National Curriculum and officially recommended schemes of work. The school is beginning to set termly targets for individual pupils, although further monitoring is needed to ensure that these targets are well focused and achievable within the time set.

49. The use of assessment information is satisfactory. Pupils in each class are grouped according to their prior attainment so that tasks and support can be adjusted to their different needs. This close relationship between needs and provision is best developed for pupils with special needs, whose progress is monitored regularly so that their targets can be reviewed. Assessment information is also used well in mathematics in Year 6 to place pupils in sets according to their level of attainment, and then in ability groups within each set. The narrower range of needs in sets and groups allows teachers and assistants to fine-tune the focus of their work. Pupils achieve well in science because the difficulty of tasks is carefully adjusted, so that pupils at different levels of attainment in each class are suitably challenged.

50. Good use is also made of assessment information to identify pupils with low attainment in English so that they can be given extra help in class and in withdrawal groups. This ensures that these pupils achieve well and the number who left the school in 2001 with very low literacy skills was below the national average. In some English lessons, however, teaching is not sensitive enough to the different needs and rates of progress of all pupils in developing writing skills. Not enough use is made of information from the marking of written work to design tasks for following lessons. More rigorous use needs to be made of assessment information in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons. In this subject, pupils' progress is not monitored often enough to ensure that all are keeping up with the rapid rate at which the curriculum is being covered at present.

51. Records of pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. They are very good in English, mathematics and science, where the recently adopted format sets out detailed and specific criteria for each subject against which progress can be accurately measured. Records are less detailed in other subjects, but the information provides a sound basis for planning and annual reports to parents.

52. Very good procedures identify and assess pupils with special educational needs (SEN) to ensure that they are provided with specific support. The school uses all available information to set and review appropriate targets and track their progress. As a result, support is directed effectively to those who need it. The very good support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), teachers and teaching assistants is instrumental in the progress that pupils make towards their targets. Teaching assistants monitor pupils' progress in each lesson in which they have a supporting role and provide a written report. The information gained is used to plan for individual pupil learning.

53. The school works closely with external specialist agencies as the need arises. Pupils are actively involved in monitoring their own progress and noting it on their individual education plans (IEPs). As a result pupils are co-operative and motivated to work hard to achieve their targets. The school also pays good attention to the care and guidance given to the pupil at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. Progress is regularly recorded and effective support is provided in lessons.

54. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Various rewards are detailed in a comprehensive policy document. The headteacher deals with any serious lapses of behaviour and deals with them at his discretion. The school allows frequent opportunities for pupils to talk through any concerns they may have in a non-threatening and even-handed way, with everyone feeling entitled to contribute. The learning support assistants feel that being there for pupils to talk to is a particularly important part of their role. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that pupils are well known to all the staff and feel secure and happy at school. Lunchtimes and playtimes are sociable occasions, well organised and supervised in a systematic fashion. Parents and pupils confirm that bullying, when it does occur, is usually sorted out swiftly.

55. The premises committee takes issues involving health and safety very seriously. The school emphasises this both in its own practices and in the education of the pupils. The syllabus for personal, social and health education, covers information about the dangers of drugs. Sex education is covered in science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). Parents are kept well informed and none have removed their children from sex education lessons. A few parents opt their children out of the regular acts of collective worship. They are supervised by learning support assistants and continue with other work.

56. Evacuation practices are held regularly and pupils are taught about the dangers of fire in a day organised by the emergency services. Procedures for registration and the monitoring of attendance are very good. They are thorough and work well and speedily. If a message has not been left on the absence hot line, parents are contacted on the first morning of absence.

57. When pupils join the school they are well prepared by advance visits. This year, Year 3 teachers will teach the Year 2 classes in the infant school as part of this preparation. The school also prepares the pupils well for transition to the high school. Some design and technology lessons are taught by staff from the high school. Pupils are given the opportunity to go on a weeklong residential trip together at the start of Year 6. This gives them opportunities for team building, problem solving, physical challenges and a taste of independence from their parents.

58. Planning starts in Year 5, giving plenty of notice to allow parents to plan for the expenditure. All pupils are able to take part, and particular care was taken to enable a child in a wheelchair to manage activities such as abseiling, much to the delight of his peers. Some financial aid is available from a local charity, but those who do not want or cannot afford to go are provided with a week of school-based activities so that they are not deprived of a different experience. By the time pupils leave the school they are confident, mature and ready to move on.

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

59. The school continues to enjoy the support of parents and has an effective partnership with them. Parents know that they are welcome at the school and that they can talk to teachers by appointment or at the end of the day when they accompany the classes to the school gate. Nearly nine out of ten parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire said they were confident that any concerns could be raised directly with a teacher or the headteacher.

60. Welcome meetings are arranged at the start of each year for the parents of children in each year group. They are encouraged to come and meet their child's new teacher to find out about the school's curriculum and homework expectations for the next year. A secondary transfer meeting is held for Year 6 parents to address any concerns. Year 5 parents are invited to one to explain about the residential trip, which takes place at the beginning of Year 6 to allow plenty of time for the sorting out of funding. In Years 3 and 4, daily communication is encouraged through home/school books, although this system is less well used in Years 5 and 6. Parents are encouraged to write a note or telephone if they have an urgent message to convey.

61. Information meetings on topics such as the new special needs Code of Practice, assessment, sex education and the reading project are arranged to keep parents up to date with what is happening at school. They also have access to behaviour-support training, which is arranged, by the school to help families deal in a consistent fashion with children having behavioural problems. Parents can also take advantage of the services of the counsellor when the school thinks it appropriate. Eighty-two per cent of questionnaires reported that the school works closely with parents.

62. Parents are invited to class assemblies and productions. Few parents help with classes but they give help as and when they can, escorting school trips and swimming lessons. One grandfather volunteered his services as artist in residence during the school's arts week and a Hindu mother has visited to explain her culture and festivals. Both visits were greatly appreciated by the school. Regular parental involvement has been vital to the success of the reading project that successfully boosted the reading of the pupils involved and was highly valued by parents.

63. Good quality information is provided for parents. The attractively presented prospectus contains all that a parent needs to know about the school and how it functions. The annual governors' report to parents conveys all the necessary information in an easily accessible fashion. Half-termly newsletters keep parents up to date. Information about pupils' academic progress is copious. Three parents meetings are provided each year when pupils' progress can be discussed with their teacher, and a written report is provided

annually. These are partly computer generated and some parents do not find them as personal to each child as they could be. Nearly nine out of ten parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire said they thought they were kept well informed about their child's progress.

64. The school involves parents in attempting to maintain and, if possible, improve attendance. They are asked not to take holidays in term time, and the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence is explained to them.

65. The hard-working Parent Teacher Association raised a considerable amount for school funds last year. They organise discos and quiz evenings for the pupils and social events for parents, as well as the annual summer fair. Their efforts are much appreciated.

66. The school works closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and keeps them well informed of their progress. The school has produced a parents' guide on SEN. Most parents are involved in identifying their children's needs. A number of strategies are in place to support this partnership between home and school. Parents are encouraged to meet the co-ordinator at least once a year. This may take the form of an open discussion about individual education plans (IEPs), reviews and other procedures or a session to provide ideas of ways in which parents can support their child. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns with the school and to seek guidance at any time. Parents of pupils with SEN are invited to attend the annual review of their child's progress. The school works very closely with receiving high schools to ensure the smooth transition of pupils with SEN.

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

67. The school is very well managed by the headteacher, whose thoughtful and innovative leadership ensures a clear educational direction for the school. He is well supported by the governing body and works closely with his senior staff, who are at the forefront of the drive to raise standards. This represents an overall improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the role of subject co-ordinators.

68. The school has a set of specific aims to support the all-round education of its pupils. It is meeting its aims for their personal development and is beginning to meet those for their academic progress. The headteacher and staff have been particularly successful in creating a welcoming, stimulating and secure environment in which children are encouraged to learn.

69. There is no deputy head, but the headteacher is supported by a senior management team of three, each of whom has clear responsibilities, which they carry out very effectively. A separate curriculum team ensures a clear focus on what is being taught and learnt. The two groups work closely together with good communication between them and the staff on major developments and initiatives. Communication on a day-to-day basis, however, is not always secure and this occasionally leads to confusion amongst the staff.

70. The governing body meets all its statutory duties and plays an important role in planning the future of the school. Most of the governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which they use to inform their decisions.

71. The co-ordinators in English and mathematics have monitored teaching and learning on a regular basis in their subjects. Some monitoring has been undertaken by the science co-ordinator and this is to be resumed shortly. The headteacher formally monitors the

members of the senior management team and reads the monitoring reports on other staff. Informally he monitors the school's performance by regularly visiting each class, usually once a day. School and professional development issues are identified through the monitoring.

72. The role of the co-ordinators in other subjects is to be developed. At present they monitor samples of pupils' work and lesson planning, but time is to be found for them to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

73. John Ray is a fully inclusive school. All pupils are given full access to the curriculum. Arrangements for supporting pupils, who have a wide range of individual needs, are good, enabling them to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered to them, including high-quality out-of school activities. The school's values are based upon the philosophy of inclusion and they are reflected in its curriculum, resources and conduct. Teachers accept that all pupils are of equal merit and have equal entitlement to all that the school offers.

74. The headteacher and governors have set strong policies on inclusion. Inclusion is a major part of the value system for the school to which all teachers new to the school are expected to subscribe. In 1999, under the headteacher's leadership, the school joined the Inclusive Schools' Project. Funds have been made available to provide ramps, a chair lift, a toilet for the disabled and a lift.

75. The school development plan is a useful and detailed working document with precise and achievable success criteria, timings, costings and responsibilities. The plan sets the right priorities and challenging targets for all groups of pupils in order to improve standards. The school has introduced a number of strategies aimed at meeting the targets for the percentage of pupils to attain the national expectations in the National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in English and mathematics. These targets were exceeded in the 2001 tests and the school expects to achieve similar targets this year. The entire school community is committed to improvement and, with recent strategies likely to have greater impact on standards, is likely to succeed.

76. The budget is well managed by the headteacher and monitored carefully by governors to ensure that all the resources available to the school are used to finance and achieve educational priorities. There have in recent years been relatively high balances, largely due to the headteacher's skill in achieving extra funds from a variety of sources for the benefit of the school. The school has also been careful to plan for a possible, if temporary, fall in school rolls. The school makes very good use of all the monies and human resources available to it. Good use is made of information technology in the computer suite and in the school's administration.

77. The leadership and management of special educational needs (SEN) are very good. It is a significant factor in the good progress made by pupils with SEN. The co-ordinator is very ably supported by a special educational needs teacher, 14 teaching support assistants and outside specialists. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for SEN. The requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The specific grant for SEN is used very effectively for its designated purpose. The governor with oversight for this area is well informed and works within the school. Reports regarding special educational needs' provision are given to the governing body each term.

78. Provision for English as an additional language (EAL) is well managed within the school. Although no external support is provided, there is close liaison between the school's own support staff and class teachers. As a result, support staff and teachers are aware of the particular needs of pupils at the early stage of speaking English as an additional language (EAL).

79. The school is well staffed, including three teachers who have been recognised as advanced skills teachers (ASTs). They share their skills with their colleagues in John Ray and other schools. One has been seconded to help the neighbouring infant school, an arrangement which has been found to have benefits for both schools.

80. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned about the high staff turnover in the last two years. Inspection evidence shows that many teachers leave the school to go onto promotion. The school is popular and has little difficulty in appointing high quality staff. The school has its own successful graduate teacher training scheme. Arrangements for the induction, mentoring and continuing support of newly qualified teachers are good but have occasionally been adversely affected by changes in staff responsibilities.

81. The performance management system is efficiently planned, carefully documented and works well. It is proving successful in identifying and addressing training needs, although monetary constraints sometimes limit attendance at outside courses. Staff are becoming accustomed to being monitored and having their teaching observed. Year teams work well together and aim at consistency of delivery for the benefit of the pupils.

82. Arrangements for in-service training are good and staff are supported whenever possible in their quest to acquire new teaching techniques. The learning support assistants are deployed creatively to help whole classes and individual pupils according to need. They work as full members of the teaching team and are included in school-based staff training as well as having their own specialist training. Their work is monitored regularly by the special needs co-ordinator. The administrative staff are effective and efficient, making a very positive contribution to the life of the school.

83. Accommodation is good with sufficient hard play areas, some of which have games layouts for playtime use, a garden with benches to provide a quiet area, equipped with table-based games and some wooden climbing equipment the pupils are allowed to use when supervised at lunchtimes. The generously sized sports field is a particular asset in physical education.

84. The building provides a pleasant environment conducive to learning. It is well maintained, clean, tidy, in good decorative order and carpeted throughout with no sign of vandalism or graffiti. The pupils appreciate the quality of their surroundings and co-operate in keeping it in good condition. Accommodation for physical education is hampered as the hall is also used for dining, assemblies and performances and gives access to other rooms. Some classrooms are rather cramped for practical lessons. Every possible area throughout the school is made bright and attractive by pupils' work and stimulating displays. There is access to the whole of the ground floor for wheel chairs, toilet facilities for the disabled and a lift to one of the upper floors. Resources for teaching the National Curriculum and religious education are good, and particularly good in information and communication technology (ICT). The school also has equipment for pupils to use during breaks and lunch times. A good range of sports equipment and musical equipment supports extra-curricular activities.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. In order to raise standards in writing\*\*, the school should:

- give pupils more opportunities to write creatively through poetry and stories;
  - teach pupils to take more responsibility for the quality and accuracy of their work before it is collected for marking;
  - ensure that marking identifies the most significant weakness in the work of each pupil and that pupils are then given adequate time and guidance to work on their specific needs;
  - monitor the impact of the new handwriting policy to ensure that teachers across the school have consistent expectations for standards of handwriting and presentation.
- 
- The governors are also asked to consider ways of:
    - \* extending the high quality teaching that exists within the school to all year groups\*\*;
    - \* providing time for all subject co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects\*\*;
    - \* ensuring that there are clear lines of communication between all staff\*\*;
    - \* ensuring that homework is set consistently in all classes and in all year groups\*\*.

\*\*The school has already identified these as priorities for development.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

78

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	29	24	22	2	0	0
Percentage	1	37	31	28	3	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	N/A
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	52

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	102

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	45	35	80

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	35	37	44
	Girls	30	29	34
	Total	65	66	78
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	81 (64)	83 (57)	98 (80)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	35	37	44
	Girls	30	28	34
	Total	65	65	78
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	81 (65)	82 (69)	98 (66)
	National	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	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	30.3

**Education support staff:****Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	363

**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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	<b>£</b>
Total income	701778.00
Total expenditure	696374.00
Expenditure per pupil	1929.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	52915.00
Balance carried forward to next year	58319.00

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

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

396
112

### 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>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	40	55	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	53	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	66	2	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	49	22	4	3
The teaching is good.	36	61	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	54	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	46	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	58	15	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	34	55	6	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	62	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	47	18	5	9

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

### **ENGLISH**

86. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were in line with the national average and the average of similar schools. This was a significant improvement on the results of the two previous years, which were well below average. The results indicate that the school did well to lift the standard of lower attaining pupils, with fewer than average achieving very low scores. Compared with similar schools, more pupils reached the expected level or above. Overall, pupils' results in English in 2001 were lower than those in mathematics and science.

87. In the broader range of work outside the tests, standards reached by pupils presently in Year 6 are above average in listening, average in speaking and reading but below average in writing. The school's data indicates that the attainment on entry of these pupils was below average in reading and writing. They have made good progress through the school in reading and satisfactory progress in writing.

88. The routines of the literacy hour are well established, so that pupils generally know what is expected of them. They show strong interest in the subject and listen carefully to instructions. In answer to questions, many younger pupils speak briefly, but they explain their meaning clearly in Standard English. By Year 6, pupils are confident in speaking to the class and in school assemblies. They listen politely to the views of others in discussions and collaborate well when working in pairs. They use more formal language appropriately in class discussions, with correct use of technical terms. This helps their learning in other subjects when ideas are explored and developed through talk.

89. Teachers, for the most part, adjust their questions carefully so that all pupils are able to join in discussions. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, the teacher gave pupils opportunities to work out their ideas informally with a partner at intervals through a class discussion. This highly effective technique led to much more detailed and confident answers in the formal class discussion than is generally seen. Later in the same lesson, two higher attaining pupils succeeded in the difficult challenge of playing the role of authors persuading the class, in the role of publisher, to accept their book proposal. Some pupils in all classes rise well to the challenge of speaking to a larger audience, such as school assemblies, though there is no formal scheme of work for speech and drama.

90. The school has worked hard since the previous inspection to improve the quality of its reading stock, and interest in reading is high as a result. Pupils' progress is guided by close study of good quality texts in the literacy hour, guided reading groups in class led by the teacher, and regular homework reading. Parents give good support at home and many take their children to visit the local library, which supplements the provision of the small school library. A number of pupils identified as having low attainment are given close instruction using graded materials, and they make very good progress. By Year 6, most pupils read longer texts silently with good concentration. Their level of understanding is sound, and some read aloud with dramatic expression. They are able to talk about their reading interests, making comparisons and explaining preferences. Interest in non-fiction books is high, and pupils have a sound understanding of how to find information to help their learning in other subjects.

91. Through the school, pupils learn to write for different purposes and audiences. Their skills in factual writing develop soundly so that, by Year 6, they write clear reports and explanations in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Some pieces are word-processed, which has a good effect on standards of presentation and proof reading. They tend to use simple sentences, although they are adequate to express meaning.

92. Older pupils learn to set out their ideas in paragraphs, and much of the work on display has been corrected to a satisfactory standard. By contrast, there is very little evidence of creative writing. This means that pupils do not have enough practice in developing their ideas at length in stories, using techniques such as descriptive detail to catch the reader's attention. Similarly, poetry is not taught frequently enough to develop skills of compressing meaning through well chosen words and imagery. Nevertheless, teachers in Year 4 have noted that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and low attainment in English respond well to poetry writing because they can say a lot in a few words. Overall, there is a tendency for the focus of teaching to move from one form of writing to another too quickly.

93. Better results are apparent in pupils' exercise books when a particular kind of writing, such as the formal letter, is studied over several sessions, giving pupils more attempts to practice and improve. Pupils with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) are given extra help so that they make good progress in making themselves clearly understood and in understanding what is being said to them in real-life situations.

94. Pupils with higher attainment spell and punctuate accurately, but standards of other pupils are less secure. Spellings are set regularly for homework, and it is a good feature of lessons that teachers list key vocabulary on the board. Nevertheless, in the lessons seen pupils did not make enough use of dictionaries or thesauruses to check the accuracy and extend the vocabulary range of their independent writing. Spelling accuracy was weak in science reports, for instance, and errors were not pointed out in marking, which lessens the impact of the spelling programme. In some cases, poor handwriting conceals errors in spelling and punctuation.

95. Many pupils have weak handwriting skills on entry to the school and a handwriting scheme has been introduced. Most achieve a joined style by the end of Year 3, but handwriting is untidy in much of the daily work throughout the school. Some older pupils write poorly and slowly because they sit in a very twisted position. The work of older pupils reaches satisfactory standards in work that is prepared for display through a closely guided sequence of planning, drafting and correction.

96. Teaching is good overall. Of the 14 lessons seen, one was excellent, four were very good, four good and four satisfactory. One was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers in each year group plan together, sharing their expertise so that pupils benefit equally. Teachers explain the targets of the lesson clearly at the outset, and this is a significant strength that gives teaching a clear sense of purpose and direction. In the best lessons, this leads to a good pace, with pupils showing a strong commitment to do well, a particularly marked feature of the excellent lesson in Year 6. Each part of the lesson built on what had gone before and the teacher monitored pupils' learning very closely, responding energetically to needs as they emerged, so that their progress met her high expectations.

97. Texts for close study are well chosen for the quality of their language and values. Teachers generally read aloud well to bring out the meaning and hold pupils' interest. Questioning is usually brisk and well focused so as to develop pupils' understanding of the meaning.

98. In several lessons seen, the instruction that followed the reading focused on aspects of grammar out of context rather than on specific language features found in the text. This was a significant weakness of the unsatisfactory lesson because pupils were then unprepared for the challenging creative writing task that followed, of writing in the style of the author they were currently studying. Many pupils in this lesson worked slowly without having planned their ideas first. The level of concentration was generally low, and only those with higher attainment produced work of satisfactory quality.

99. In most lessons, pupils settle quickly to work on their own because the routines of the literacy hour are well established. Teaching assistants give very good support to pupils as they work, particularly to those with special needs. Their attention is well focused by the high-quality individual education plans of these pupils. In some classes, teachers put up useful wall charts listing grammar facts, key vocabulary and classroom procedures, so that pupils are helped to work on their own. In some lessons pupils did not make enough use of dictionaries and related resources. This limited progress in Year 3 where lack of word banks left pupils at a loss for words in writing alliterative sentences. Nevertheless, the teachers adapted their plans well when it became clear that pupils were having difficulty. They gave additional instructions and moved quickly around the class to give individual help so that most could succeed.

100. Pupils are not always expected to check the accuracy of their work before they hand it in. Teachers are conscientious in their marking, responding sensitively to pupils' ideas. The best marking also identifies the main weaknesses of each pupil and points out where improvements are needed. However, such practice is not consistent and needs to be applied more thoroughly. It is a general weakness that pupils are not routinely required to do corrections or follow-up work after marking, which would assist teachers in setting work that matches the needs of each individual.

101. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory under a temporary arrangement, awaiting the arrival of a new post-holder. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with some good features. The National Literacy Strategy is in place and lessons follow the recommended structure of the literacy hour. Targets of the official framework are used to guide planning, and good use is made of opportunities to develop reading and writing in other subjects. The quality of teaching has improved, though it is not consistent. Monitoring is needed to identify best practice and share it more widely. The school has good resources for reading, including class collections and graded readers for lower attaining pupils. Good features of management are that a teacher is in charge of promoting reading development, and an assistant acts as librarian, helping pupils to choose books for borrowing on several afternoons each week.

102. The school has identified writing as a priority for development, although it has no clear strategy to bring this about and there is considerable uncertainty about how to teach extended writing. Spelling and aspects of grammar tend to be taught in isolation rather than in relation to specific kinds of writing, and the volume of exercises reduces the time available for skills to be practised. A recently introduced handwriting policy is not being followed consistently in all classes. The school has begun to set individual targets for all

pupils in aspects of language. This is good practice, though instances were noted of targets that are too broad and long term to be meaningful. By contrast, however, the practice of setting specific short-term and achievable targets for pupils with special needs in language is very well established and has a strong impact on their progress.

103. Throughout the school, print of all kinds is well displayed, including pupils' best work to encourage their interest and pride in achievement. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors, so that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

104. Since the previous inspection, attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated and, until 2001, was below the national average. In the past two years, standards have risen significantly and issues raised in the previous report have been addressed. Pupils have benefited from the broad curriculum offered and are now more confident in applying basic number facts to problem solving. They also have greater proficiency in collecting, illustrating and interpreting information.

105. The results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2001 were very much better than those of the previous year. Slightly more than 80 per cent attained the national standard - a rise of 26 per cent - and of these almost a quarter attained the higher Level 5. The results overall are above the national average and above the average for schools with a similar intake. In the tests, girls performed better than boys, which is contrary to the national pattern. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls during the inspection.

106. The inspection confirms last year's test results, although pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining slightly below the levels of the previous year but in line with the national average. This is because of the larger proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) in the current Year 6. Attainment on entry to the school for this year group was below the national average. All pupils are achieving well and are making good progress. They are building securely upon previous learning.

107. Pupils have good access to all aspects of the mathematics curriculum, but even greater emphasis needs to be placed upon independent and investigative learning, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In Year 6, teaching groups are arranged on the basis of prior attainment and three classes are divided into four teaching groups. This arrangement makes a very significant impact upon the quality of learning and allows pupils to progress at their own rate. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good support in all years. Learning support assistants are an invaluable resource and work closely with the teachers to ensure good quality learning.

108. Many pupils in Year 6 are confident in their use of number to solve problems. They understand place value and add and subtract decimals to two places. Most pupils have secure knowledge about fractions and percentages and are able to convert one to the other accurately. They find fractions and percentages of various quantities. Pupils explore and describe patterns in number and understand factors and multiples. In one Year 6 group, pupils patiently unlocked the secrets of the Fibonacci series and explored Pascal's triangle. This is ambitious work and good preparation for secondary school.

109. Pupils know the names of two and three dimensional shapes and understand their properties. One group investigated symmetry using the computer, finding out how to reflect and rotate shapes. Pupils collect data such as favourite football teams or routes to school and illustrate it on pie charts, pictograms and block graphs. Higher attaining pupils know how to plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants and gain a good understanding of negative numbers. Lower attaining pupils work hard to decide which numbers are divisible by four and ten and illustrate their answer in a Venn diagram. In all years, multiplication tables are not known as well as they should be and this sometimes impedes progress. Pupils use calculators satisfactorily but sometimes accept a calculator answer without checking its accuracy.

110. Most pupils use number skills competently in other subjects. In design and technology, pupils successfully use metric measure in the design process. In history, pupils use a time line to chart events and in geography, pupils' knowledge of co-ordinates enables them to read maps and pinpoint locations. In science, pupils use number skills in preparing and conducting experiments. In physical education, pupils confidently use metre tapes to measure long jumps and accurately time sprints on the stopwatch.

111. The quality of teaching across the mathematics curriculum is good. Of the 13 lessons seen, teaching was very good in six, good in three and satisfactory in four. Teaching is much better than at the time of the previous inspection, where some of it was unsatisfactory.

112. The best lessons begin with crisp and demanding mental work that is followed by precise, sequential and careful teaching where nothing is left to chance. Questions are used well and pupils are asked to explain their answers. Full account is taken of what pupils already know and they are set work that matches their needs. Classes are firmly but sensitively managed and this provides a safe and secure learning environment in which pupils' confidence in their own abilities grows steadily.

113. In all lessons the learning objectives are discussed with the class and at the end of every lesson pupils are asked to say what they have learned. This confirms new knowledge and enables the teacher to plan the next lesson. Good use is made of mathematical language and this enhances pupils' understanding. Key words are written on the board and pupils are expected to use them. Teachers consistently have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, so that they know what is required of them. They rarely disappoint and settle quickly to work. They enjoy finding out and respond well to the mild competitive element in mental arithmetic.

114. Teachers know well the levels at which pupils are working and set clear targets that pupils do their best to achieve. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work and award themselves a 'smiley face' if they think they deserve it. Teachers set a positive climate for learning that encourages pupils to do their best, regardless of the level of attainment. Occasionally, explanations are too hurried and pupils become confused, or pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher and become restless. The use of the recently purchased interactive whiteboard usually enhances learning and progress but not all teachers are yet fully confident in using it. Information technology is not used often enough by the pupils in the classroom to reinforce and extend learning.

115. The very good management of mathematics is contributing strongly to a rise in standards throughout the school. Very good use is made of test data to identify weaknesses in learning and to develop strategies to remedy them. The monitoring of

teaching and learning is good and this provides opportunities for teachers to share good practice. Resources are plentiful and are well used to enhance learning. The development plan for mathematics has well ordered priorities that will help the school to reach its realistic targets.

## **SCIENCE**

116. Pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards that are above those expected for pupils of their age. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum teacher assessments show that pupils in that year group attained standards that were well above the national average. Inspection evidence supports the school's judgement that pupils in the current Year 6 are not as able as the previous Year 6. The current standards represent good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment and are an improvement since the last inspection, when they were reported to be in line with expected levels of attainment. Class teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and that boys and girls work together at all levels of attainment. As a result, there is little significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

117. Standards are better than they were at the time of the last inspection because the quality of teaching has improved and the good scheme of work is based securely on national guidance for the subject. These initiatives, including knowledge gained from annual tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 devised by the co-ordinator, are helping to guide teachers' planning. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons during the inspection was good overall. Of the 11 lessons seen, teaching was very good in three, good in three, satisfactory in four and unsatisfactory in one. The unsatisfactory lesson was the direct result of group tasks not being sufficiently well organised to ensure that all pupils were engaged in active learning at all times.

118. Teaching is particularly strong in Year 6 where all the teaching observed was very good. Throughout the school, teachers plan well in year groups. This is particularly effective where class teachers adapt the common plan to meet the needs of their particular group of pupils and to suit their own style of teaching. Year 6 teachers do this very effectively and, as a result, their lessons are taught with flair and pupils are inspired to learn. In all classes, lesson plans are based on clear learning objectives, which are explained to pupils so that they know what they are to learn.

119. Class teachers and learning support assistants are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational and physical needs and ensure that they are fully included in lessons. As a result, these pupils make progress, which is comparable to that of their peers. However, in some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the teaching as they work on the same tasks as others. This is particularly true where activities are too closely directed by teachers who lack the confidence to allow pupils to explore independently. Teachers expect work to be well presented but the marking does not always challenge pupils' thinking.

120. Teachers expect pupils to record their work in an organised way using the correct scientific vocabulary, making a valuable contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Teachers do, however, miss opportunities to develop pupils' competence in spelling by not pointing out mistakes in recorded work. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is well supported as pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically.

121. The positive relationships forged by teachers in the great majority of lessons result in pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the tasks and work well together. Where teachers use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies such as brainstorming in groups, pupils respond very well and discuss their ideas sensibly. Their good behaviour and strong relationships contribute well to their learning.

122. Analysis of pupils' work shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention and that learning across all aspects of the subject through scientific enquiry is good. The school's own environment is well used, as was seen when Year 3 pupils were observing conditions in different habitats in the school grounds. By the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, describing them in suitable scientific terms such as *food chains, predator and prey*. Higher attaining pupils appreciate the great variety of living things and are taught the importance of classification. As a result of the emphasis placed on scientific enquiry, most pupils by the end of Year 6 make sensible predictions and decide on a suitable method, such as a fair test, to answer scientific questions. Higher attaining pupils draw conclusions consistent with evidence, making connections to their scientific knowledge and understanding.

123. In work on materials and their properties, pupils in all year groups test the suitability of materials for certain purposes, and are expected to test their predictions carefully and to record their results graphically. By the end of Year 6, pupils have been guided to discover the differences between the properties of various materials, and the resulting classification into solids, liquids and gases. Through their investigations, most describe methods such as filtration for separating simple mixtures. Higher attaining pupils go on to apply their knowledge about the separation of salt and water to suggest how other mixtures can be separated.

124. Throughout the school, pupils learn to build electrical circuits and to apply this knowledge to support their work in design and technology. Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge of circuits to design, modify and make burglar alarm systems for people who are either blind or deaf. Teachers made components readily available so that pupils could make independent decisions. Through very good intervention skills, teachers challenged pupils to consider the need for evaluation and modification. In this area of physical processes, Year 3 pupils compare the speed and direction of moving objects while Year 4 pupils link cause and effect in simple explanations of physical phenomena, for example, a bulb failing to light in a circuit.

125. In Year 5 lessons, pupils were investigating the effect of air resistance on falling objects. Their work showed that they had been taught the need for fair testing to assess their predictions. Although tasks were suitable, the teacher was not rigorous enough in ensuring that pupils of different abilities made good progress. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of motion being affected by gravitational and magnetic attraction.

126. Teachers ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the need for healthy living, diet and exercise. The science co-ordinator has developed a good sex education programme for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, which is linked to the science scheme of work. The community police officer is used well to make pupils aware of the dangers of drug abuse and how to stay safe when out on their own. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development as they are taught to appreciate the wonders of nature and care of the environment.

127. The subject co-ordinator looks at teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, but she has not recently been involved in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. She, together with her colleagues, is committed to improvement and has a clear plan of action to achieve this. The good range of resources is used well to support teaching and learning. The experience of pupils is widened by a good range of visits and visitors, such as a visiting theatre group. Very good assessment procedures, linked to the scheme of work, are in place but the information gathered needs to be used more rigorously in planning to ensure a greater rate of progress, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

128. The attainment of pupils in art and design at the age of 11 is above the standards expected for pupils of this age, which represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards met national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) make good progress in line with their peers. Gifted and talented pupils also make good progress. The achievement of all pupils is good. The good standard of work is reflected in the high quality displays around the school.

129. Pupils experience a wide range of techniques and they are familiar with the work of many celebrated artists. Year 6 pupils, for example, have combined and organised line, tone, shape and colour to represent figures and forms in movement. During the inspection, they explored charcoal techniques as a resource to enlarge sections of landscape paintings by Constable, Gainsborough, Hockney, Turner, Heron and Sutherland.

130. Teaching and learning are good overall. Of the six lessons seen, teaching was very good in five, and satisfactory in one. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good. Their planning is effective and focuses on the development of skills and close observation. As a result, the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills by all pupils is good. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond with a high level of interest, concentration and creative effort. Originality and creativity are encouraged, pupils' work is valued and they are motivated to achieve well. The skilful management of pupils, together with their very good attitudes, good behaviour and relationships, leads to good learning. Time and resources are used well and pupils' productivity and pace of working are good. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is good. Pupils are encouraged to analyse and improve their work, thus developing a good knowledge of their own learning.

131. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the annual arts week, with workshops run by visiting artists and sculptors, the art club for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and the emphasis on skills and techniques. All pupils have equal access and opportunity and provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in some classes, but its use is not consistent. Effective links are made with other subjects, particularly English, history and design and technology.

132. The subject is well led by a talented artist who is committed to raising standards. She monitors planning and the pupils' work but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. She has a clear sense of educational direction, and the school's aims and values are reflected in the work of the subject. The school has clear priorities for development, including the monitoring of teaching and learning, the formalisation of assessment procedures and the increased use of information and ICT. Resources are good and are used well.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of the same age nationally. These standards have been well maintained since the last inspection and all evidence indicates that standards are rising. The reasons for rising standards are the implementation of national guidance for the subject and the close links with the design and technology department at the local secondary school. These initiatives are helping teachers to identify accurately the skills to be taught and are increasing their confidence in teaching the subject. As a result of this focus on developing skills, most pupils by the end of Year 6 consider their designs as they develop in light of the end use of the product. They choose and work with a wide variety of tools and work accurately with a range of materials and components, paying attention to function and quality of finish.

134. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was very good where it was guided by the secondary school teacher. Work on display, discussions and photographic evidence, together with two lessons seen being taught by class teachers, one of which was good, the other satisfactory, indicate that teaching is good overall and that pupils make good progress in their learning. National guidance for the subject helps teachers plan tasks that offer interest and challenge at the right level. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' designing, making and evaluating skills, as, for example, when Year 5 pupils design and make toys with moving parts, having considered whether to use either cam or crank mechanisms. There is, however, limited use of information and communication technology (ICT). In the good lesson taught by the class teacher, effective intervention skills were well used to challenge pupils' thinking as they considered their designs. As a result, pupils thought about how their designs could be improved and made changes accordingly.

135. When Year 6 pupils are taught in the adjoining secondary school, they benefit greatly from the wide range of resources and the expertise of the design and technology department. They are taught to adhere to safety procedures as they use a range of tools and joining equipment, such as knives, saws, hammers and soldering irons. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils were solving problems with designs using available equipment and resources and were effectively taught to construct and test drive systems for their fairground models. Knowledge gained in their science lessons was well used as pupils were challenged to consider the usefulness of friction as well as why it needs to be controlled. Effective use was also made of pupils' understanding of electrical circuits when, for example, Year 4 pupils designed and made torches and Year 6 pupils designed and made alarms to be used by people who are either blind or deaf.

136. Pupils throughout the school respond very well to high expectations and work carefully in lessons. They enjoy the practical nature of the work and appreciate each other's efforts. When they visit the secondary school, Year 6 pupils are good ambassadors for their school. Their good behaviour and ability to work constructively together make a strong contribution to their learning. Completed work on display, such as moving monsters using pneumatic systems by Year 3 pupils, and slippers by Year 6, is imaginative and takes good account of aesthetic considerations. Lessons and completed work show that boys and girls, including those with special educational and physical needs, are fully included in lessons and have full and equal access to the curriculum. Learning support assistants (LSA) provide very good support for pupils who need it.

137. An increasing range of high quality, well-managed and readily available resources support teaching and learning. The co-ordinator understands the importance of developing rigorous assessment procedures to help ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are progressively developed year-on-year. There is, however, little monitoring of teaching and learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy and

numeracy skills as teachers ensure that they teach the correct vocabulary and expect pupils to measure and assemble precisely. Food technology is appropriately represented in teachers' planning, and the expertise of learning support assistants is well used in teaching this aspect of the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

138. The attainment of pupils in geography at the age of 11 matches the standards attained nationally by pupils of this age, as at the last inspection. An improvement in teaching from satisfactory to good means that pupils are making good progress, beginning to achieve well with standards beginning to rise above those expected for pupils of this age.

139. Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of weather patterns and conditions in different parts of the world. They begin to develop their ability to understand weather reports and weather charts in Year 3, as was demonstrated during the inspection.

140. Pupils develop their mapping skills in history when in Year 4 they map the routes taken by the Tudor explorers and in Year 5 identify the countries involved in the Second World War. In their studies of the local area and a contrasting locality in Britain, pupils demonstrate good progress in mapping skills, such as the use of four figure co-ordinates. They recognise and describe physical and human processes and begin to understand how these can change features of places and affect people's lives. Most pupils hold strong views on our responsibility to sustain the environment, but are learning to accept that not all people hold the same views.

141. The quality of teaching is good. Of the six lessons seen, four were very good, one was good and one was satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they teach mapping skills well. As a result, pupils make good gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers plan effectively and set challenging tasks that meet the needs of all pupils. Learning objectives are made known to pupils so that they understand what is expected and approach their work confidently. Opportunities are provided for them to assess what they have learned, thus helping them to gain a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers have high expectations of effort, accuracy and presentation and most pupils apply considerable effort to their work. The management of pupils is very good and leads to good learning. Ongoing assessment is used to improve learning in lessons. Time and resources are used very well and teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils show a developing sense of responsibility for their own learning. They show respect for the contribution of others in discussion.

142. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The policy and scheme of work have been revised in line with national guidance. Procedures for assessment are largely informal but are used to inform future planning. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss moral issues in relation to environmental factors. There are strong links with history. Pupils' social development is enhanced through discussion with adults and each other and through their local studies. They gain some understanding of other cultures as they study weather around the world and how it affects the way that people live.

143. Leadership and management are good and ensure clear educational direction. The subject leader is knowledgeable and gives good support to colleagues. She has a good overview of the subject through the monitoring of teachers' planning. Her priorities for development are appropriate. She recognises the need to decide on a new contrasting locality to study in Britain now that the residential visit is concerned with outdoor pursuits rather than a study of the locality. Other priorities are the greater use of information

technology, the formalisation of assessment procedures and the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Resources are good and used well to promote learning.

## **HISTORY**

144. The attainment of pupils in history at the age of 11 is above the standard expected for pupils of this age nationally. Standards, progress and achievement have all improved since the last inspection. Pupils' enthusiasm for history is evident in the good quality of the displays throughout the school, such as letters home from by 'evacuees', accounts of workshops and written accounts from pupils' grandparents of their wartime experiences. Pupils are encouraged to pose historical questions and research the answers, thus developing their historical enquiry skills. Pupils in Year 3 develop their understanding of ancient Greece and its gods as they research the similarities and differences between Athens and Sparta. They discover what made the ancient Greek fighters so powerful and are able to assess whether or not the Battle of Marathon was a great victory for the Greeks.

145. Pupils are proficient at selecting and combining information from different sources. Pupils in Year 6 developed their research skills during the inspection as they selected and recorded information about the Roman way of life and the legacy left by the Romans. They are able to place the Romans in a chronological framework.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the five lessons seen, teaching was very good in three, good in one and satisfactory in one. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they teach historical enquiry skills well. As a result, pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good. Lessons are planned well and appropriate use is made of drama and imaginative writing. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils and opportunities provided for them to assess whether they have met the objectives, thus helping them to gain a good knowledge of their learning.

147. Teachers have high expectations and pupils apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. The methods used help all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs (SEN), those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and talented and gifted pupils, to make good gains in their learning. The very skilled management of pupils results in very good attitudes, good behaviour and good relationships, all of which promote learning. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is good. Time and resources are used very well and learning is maintained for the full time available. Teaching assistants give valuable support to small groups of pupils. Homework is sometimes used to consolidate and extend work in the classroom.

148. The rich curriculum provides a good range of quality learning opportunities. Strengths of the curriculum are the depth and breadth of study and the annual history workshops for all year groups when visiting specialists bring to life the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Tudor periods. Very good displays and pupils' enthusiastic references to the workshops demonstrate the value of these occasions to pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 4, for example, enjoyed learning the skills of book making, writing with a quill pen, leather work, 'archaeological digging', blackwork embroidery, candle, soap and locket making, all of which was followed by a banquet. Pupils in Year 6 thoroughly enjoyed dressing up in Roman costumes, marching to instructions in Latin, using bows and arrows and learning about the 'tortoise shield' used by Roman legions when marching into cities.

149. Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is good. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to consider moral issues in relation to historical events such as the treatment of Jewish people in the Second World War. Their social development is enhanced through discussions with adults about the recent past and through their work in groups and pairs. They gain an understanding of other cultures as they learn about the invaders and settlers of Britain and the ancient cultures of Egypt and Greece. Good links are made with geography and English.

150. Leadership and management of history are good and ensure clear educational direction. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, giving good support to colleagues. The school's priorities for development are appropriate. They include consideration of whether pupils' sense of chronology would be further developed if topics were taught in chronological order, and the extended use of information and communication technology (ICT). In addition, the need to formalise assessment practices and to monitor teaching and learning are recognised. Resources are of good quality. They are easily accessible and are used well.

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

151. Standards meet national expectations by the end of Year 6, an improvement since the previous inspection when they were below expectations. The school has worked hard to bring about this improvement through increased resources, substantial staff training and a rigorous review of the scheme of work. Some of the improvements are recent and older pupils have not made consistent progress in all required elements as they have moved through the school. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 6 are making rapid progress, while progress in other year groups is good.

152. Throughout the school, pupils have a sound understanding of how to load and open programs, use menus to select functions, save and print files and search the Internet and CD-Roms for information. By the end of Year 3, pupils understand the basic operations of word processing. Their typing is slow but they understand how to control the screen using the keyboard and mouse. They download images into a document and change their size, then add text and attach the document to an e-mail message. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 use the Internet and CD-Roms to find information, such as facts about Islam for their studies in religious education. They use an art program to draw attractive pictures and abstracts, using a range of tools to create patterns and images in different styles.

153. By the end of Year 6, pupils use spreadsheets to record data and present it in charts and graphs. They plot the complex sequence necessary to operate a pair of traffic lights safely. Their word-processing skills have developed to include desktop publishing effects. They use different colours, sizes and styles of print and background to present information, such as key science facts, in eye-catching ways. They have a sound understanding of the roles that information technology applications play in the everyday world.

154. The standard of teaching is good. It was satisfactory in one lesson seen, very good in another and good in three. The new scheme of work sets out specific targets in a well-ordered sequence and gives teachers clear guidance in planning lesson activities that meet National Curriculum expectations. Whole-class teaching is carried out in the computer suite, where there is one computer for each pupil in even the largest classes. Teachers give confident, clear and precise explanations and demonstrations. This was a very good feature of all lessons seen.

155. The drive to raise standards means that teachers have high expectations and that instruction moves at a brisk pace. This is very successful with higher attaining pupils, who need little individual attention in independent tasks and work purposefully with great enthusiasm. Pupils generally show strong interest in the subject, behave well and make good progress. Most pay careful attention to instructions, but some find it difficult to concentrate. The suite is very warm in summer weather, even with air-conditioning, and small pupils at computers in the side wing cannot easily see the projection screen without standing. The inattention of some pupils had a significant effect on learning at the start of the satisfactory lesson when control was not firm enough. As a result, a few pupils, mainly boys with lower attainment, did not know what to do during independent work. This meant that the teacher and assistant had to give them individual help so they could catch up, but with limited success. In lessons where pupils' attention is well controlled, teachers and assistants can give in-depth support to pupils across the ability range because they are under less pressure to give remedial help. Learning is also interrupted less when pupils working side by side or in pairs help each other, and when they are given written instructions on what to do once they have finished the main task. Generally, lessons are well managed, purposeful and productive.

156. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has been very effective in developing the new scheme of work to identify what pupils should learn year on year. Assessment procedures, guided by official benchmarks, are satisfactory. More use, however, needs to be made of the information to set work for pupils at different levels, particularly those who are not keeping up with the very brisk pace currently set in most lessons and so need additional support lest they fall further behind. Resources are very good and staff training has ensured that they are very well used. There was little evidence in the inspection that pupils are given opportunities to use classroom computers on a rota basis through the week so that they can apply the range of applications learned in the computer suite to tasks in other subjects.

## **MUSIC**

157. It was said at the previous inspection that music plays an important part in the life of the school. A recording by the school orchestra of *Colours*, a musical suite written by pupils, which they performed at the Festival Hall in 2001, confirms that music retains a high profile and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.

158. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations. Attainment in performance music, particularly for pupils who play in the orchestra or sing in the choir, is above expectations for their age. In the classroom, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but good progress in performance. Pupils who play instruments, often more than one, make very good progress and set a high standard for others to follow.

159. Performance is the strongest element of the curriculum in all year groups. Pupils sing well, in tune and with expression. They enjoy singing and have a good understanding of phrasing and pitch. Pupils respond vigorously to action songs and at choir practice sing confidently in two-part harmony. At the achievement assembly, one pupil demonstrates a very good grasp of the rhythms of boogie piano and a group of pupils give a confident performance of samba music.

160. Other elements of the music curriculum, particularly appraising and composing, are less well developed in lessons. Pupils listen to a carefully chosen programme of music as they enter assembly. Pupils' attention is drawn to it and they are sometimes invited to make observations. Pupils have too little opportunity to compose music and do not keep a written record of any work that they do. This detracts from learning over time and pupils are not as aware as they might be of the more formal aspects of music.

161. Pupils match sounds to the movement of animals, using voice and percussion instruments. Pupils in Year 3 were seen working in small groups to search for words that described the movement of a snake through the jungle. They decided that *slimy*, *slithery* and *slippery* were the most apt and created sounds to match them. This provided a useful link with an English lesson earlier in the day when they had studied alliteration. Pupils performed the finished piece to the class and received their critical comments. Pupils use their knowledge of the pentatonic scale to compose a simple four bar melody for percussion instruments. They are not well practised in writing down a musical score and this impedes progress. Pupils' compositions, however, show a developing understanding of rhythm and tempo.

162. The quality of teaching in the classroom is good. Of the three lessons seen, two were good and one was satisfactory. Pupils in the orchestra and choir are very well taught. Teachers and pupils share an enthusiasm for music and consequently lessons are enjoyable and productive. Pupils are well managed and relationships are good. The balance between creativity and control is good and creates a climate where pupils are confident enough to make music. Instruments are plentiful and are well used to promote learning. Teachers are aware of what pupils know, understand and can do although they do not keep a formal record of skills' development. Musical activities culminate in an end-of year public production, well supported by parents, when pupils display their many talents. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator and music is well organised throughout the school, although she has yet to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. Physical education has a firm place in the school's curriculum and is strongly supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities and representative games in football and netball. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment matches the national expectation. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the development of physical skills and achieve well for their age. Progress is more consistent than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Provision for swimming is made in Year 3 and, although it was not possible to observe lessons during the inspection, records indicate satisfactory levels of attainment and good progress. A professional football club provides additional support for the coaching of football skills.

164. During this term, all pupils concentrate on acquiring the ball skills needed for cricket and athletics. Most pupils throw and catch accurately. Pupils know how to bat and bowl. They field the ball well. Hand to eye co-ordination is good. Pupils use their skills well in a game of cricket. Games play is vigorous but the rules are closely observed. Pupils also practice for the inter-school athletic championships and fine-tune their skills in sprinting, jumping and throwing quoits. Pupils are eager learners and keen to improve their skills.

165. The quality of teaching overall is good. Of the four lessons seen three were good and one was satisfactory. Pupils are managed carefully and safely and are encouraged to accept the challenges of sport. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and impress upon the pupils the need for good sportsmanship. Lessons are well planned,

although assessment of pupils work is inconsistent. Pupils are encouraged to assess the quality of their own work and the effect that physical exercise has on them. Pupils record each other's times in the sprint and this acts as a spur to further improvement.

166. Relationships are good and based upon mutual respect. Teachers set a good example by joining in with the activity. This adds to the sense of enjoyment and to the belief that physical exercise is worthwhile. Good use is made of all resources to stimulate and sustain interest in physical education.

167. The subject is well organised by the recently appointed co-ordinator, although there is too little opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and sometimes, good classroom practice is not shared. Facilities are good and include a well-equipped hall and a large playing field. Their use makes a significant impact upon the standards reached. All aspects of the physical education curriculum are covered, including an adventure holiday for pupils in Year 6, where they learn the benefits of good teamwork. The school football team recently won the district six-a-side competition.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

168. Standards in religious education are above those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils at the end of Year 6. This represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. Teachers feel well supported by the school's scheme of work, which is closely linked to the Agreed Syllabus and provides good coverage of Christianity and other major world religions. Lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils show that the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are well aware that pupils should learn not only about religion but also learn from religion.

169. The quality of teaching and learning was predominantly good in the lessons seen during the inspection. In one of the five lessons observed, teaching was very good. It was good in two lessons and satisfactory in two. In the best lessons, teachers plan their lessons well to include an interesting range of strategies to motivate pupils' interest by involving them in active learning. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson in which the class teacher made very effective use of role play to consolidate pupils' learning of beliefs and practices in the Buddhist way of life. By the end of the lesson pupils had a good understanding of the importance of meditation and of 'the middle way of life' to Buddhists.

170. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, pupils spend too long listening to the teachers and they are not challenged to apply intellectual effort. As a result, a significant number lose interest and play a passive role. Teachers throughout the school research the subject well so that they feel secure in their explanations and in leading class discussions. Most teachers form positive relationships with their pupils and these result in pupils confidently answering questions and engaging in discussions.

171. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those who have English as an additional language (EAL) are well included in lessons and make similar progress to that of all other pupils. Pupils receive effective support of high quality. Although higher attaining pupils are generally well challenged through effective teaching, the school needs to identify these pupils from the time they enter the school and to develop systematically their independent research skills year on year. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used increasingly to support pupils' learning with examples seen in Year 6 and Year 4 where pupils used a CD-Rom to research information about the Qu'ran and the festival of Wesak.

172. Guided by the mainly good teaching, pupils can, by the end of Year 6, recognise similar beliefs and values found in faiths such as Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. Their understanding of the importance of festivals to members of religious communities is well reinforced by the school's programme of assemblies, which pupils recall with interest. They know that many religions share common features and that each has a holy text such as the Bible, the Qu'ran and the Torah, and that each gives rules and examples for living. The importance of places of worship such as the church, mosque, temple, synagogue and gurdwara are understood.

173. Year 3 pupils are taken to the local church to stimulate their interest in the subject and to help them understand the significance of different features of the building. Teachers ensure that pupils' understand the teachings of key figures such as Jesus, Mohammad, Guru Nanak and Buddha. In consequence, pupils know that a feature of different religions is that of love and caring for each other. The respect with which pupils treat each other and the concern and compassion they have for those with special needs, reflect their understanding of this feature. Pupils' generally behave very well in lessons, particularly when they are inspired by high quality teaching, and this contributes strongly to their learning.

174. The subject co-ordinator effectively promotes religious education throughout the school and has a clear vision for its continued development. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need for respect and tolerance are emphasised in lessons. Teaching is supported and learning enhanced through visits from Christian groups and a Hindu mother, as well as a well-organised range of interesting artefacts.