

# INSPECTION REPORT

## REEDINGS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Sawbridgeworth

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117280

Headteacher: Mrs L Lewcock

Acting Headteacher at the time of the inspection:  
Mrs A Arrandale

Reporting inspector: Mr P Dennison  
17736

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 195297

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bullfields Sawbridgeworth Hertfordshire
Postcode:	CM21 9DD
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Hutt
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17736	P. Dennison	Registered inspector	Science Art Physical Education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14404	A. Rolfe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2616	P. Cole	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Design and technology History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
29262	N. Hardy	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Music	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This two-form entry junior school is situated on the eastern side of Sawbridgeworth on an attractive site overlooking the Stort valley. Currently there are 242 pupils on roll, taught in eight classes. The number on roll has increased steadily over the last five years, and the school is now over-subscribed. The majority of pupils transfer from the neighbouring infant school. Some come from other local villages and towns. Although pupils come from a very wide range of social and economic family backgrounds, the average is more favourable than usual. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals, for example, is well below the national average. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is very wide although, overall, it is above average. The number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is being led by the acting headteacher, due to the long-term absence of the headteacher.

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

This is an effective school which provides a good quality of education. Standards of work in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and the school is now well managed. All staff have worked well together to support her. She has quickly established a very positive working partnership with the governors. As a result, the school is now well placed to make further improvements. Much of the teaching is good. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The acting headteacher provides very good leadership and manages the school well. She is well supported by governors and staff.
- The curriculum is broad and relevant. A good range of activities is provided to meet pupils' interests and abilities.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- The school cares well for its pupils, and relationships are very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good support and make good progress.

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

- The monitoring of teaching and learning in order to promote a greater consistency throughout the school and to extend the very good practice already in place.
- The role of senior managers through the establishment of a senior management team.
- The use made of the individual learning targets which teachers have set for pupils.

*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. Improvement since then has been good. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed effectively. Curriculum planning has improved. Policies and clear long-term plans are in place for all subjects. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented and national guidance in other subjects adopted. Teachers' plans clearly identify the aims of lessons and more opportunities for investigations and problem solving are provided. Good procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress have been implemented. The school's priorities are clearly identified in the development plan. Longer-term plans are in place for all subjects. The provision for pupils' with special educational needs has improved and they are no longer withdrawn from lessons. There is an effective programme of staff development to improve teachers' knowledge and skills. Systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching, although these are not yet fully effective. The school is in a strong position to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table 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	2002	2001
English	A	A	C	E
Mathematics	C	B	C	D
Science	B	A	C	E

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average    E

Pupils' attainment in the 2001 Year 6 national tests was in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment was well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. These relatively disappointing results were due to a higher proportion of lower achieving pupils than usual in the Year 6 classes. When the attainment of the pupils tested in 2001 is tracked from their starting point in Year 3, it is clear that they achieved as well as could have been expected.

The evidence of the inspection indicates that the attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is above the national average in all three subjects. This reflects the test results over the previous four years. Results have improved between 1997 and 2001 at a rate that was broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school and their achievement is satisfactory.

Attainment in information and communication technology, design and technology and art has improved since the previous inspection and is now in line with expectations for the age group. Attainment in geography and history is above national expectations. Attainment in physical education and religious education is in line with expectations.



The school agrees realistic but challenging targets for each year's tests at Year 6. It did not achieve its targets for English and mathematics in 2001 mainly because of changes of pupils in the year group after the target had been agreed.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They work hard, concentrate well and show good levels of interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond in a positive manner.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils co-operate well with each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, although examples of good teaching are seen throughout the school. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and has a positive effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The teachers have appropriately high expectations of behaviour and attainment. Where teaching is good, pupils are encouraged to work responsibly, and are given opportunities to work independently and in pairs or groups. Relationships are very positive. Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour and concentrate well. Where teaching is less successful, the work lacks challenge and does not fully engage pupils' interest. This results in a slower pace of work and more limited progress.

English teaching is good overall, with all the lessons being at least satisfactory and many, particularly in Year 6, being good. Mathematics teaching is consistently good with some very good and excellent teaching, especially of older pupils. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are implemented satisfactorily and skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Science teaching is good overall. Increasing emphasis has been given to the use of investigative science and this is having a very positive effect on standards. Teaching in information and communication technology is now good. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching music and would benefit from some additional training. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory, although some teachers lack in-depth subject knowledge, notably about world faiths, and this leads to missed opportunities.

Classroom support staff make a positive contribution to the progress made but they could be used more effectively during times when pupils are taught as a whole class.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. There is an appropriately wide range of learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils in the school at present who speak English as an additional language
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good provision is made for personal development. There are very clear expectations of behaviour and the positive values promoted in the school help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well. Staff know their pupils well as individuals and work hard to ensure their welfare.

The school encourages parents to support their children's learning and works hard to establish a good partnership with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher provides very good leadership. She is well supported by staff. The school is managed very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive. They are aware of the needs and priorities facing the school and contribute very effectively to its success. There are a few minor omissions in the legally required information in the prospectus and annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses pupils' test results to find out what it is doing well and how it can improve. There are systems in place to monitor the quality of planning and teaching but these are not yet effective in ensuring consistency throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of the school budget and additional grants for the benefit of pupils' learning. Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support the school's educational priorities.

There are sufficient, well-qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of pupils. Additional expenditure on teaching assistants is resulting in improved provision for pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is good. The school has an adequate range of learning resources to enable all the subjects of the National Curriculum to be taught.

The headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value well as they consider cost, quality, service and efficiency in their decisions on the choice of goods and services, and obtain tenders for larger expenditure.

The long-term absence of the headteacher has highlighted the lack of a clear senior management team. Whilst senior staff and, particularly, the acting deputy headteacher are currently providing good support and helping to provide clear leadership, their management role has been underdeveloped in the past.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Their children make good progress</li> <li>• The behaviour in school is good</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The staff are approachable</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The homework provided for their children</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>

Parents expressed much satisfaction with the school's provision. They have a high regard for the school and appreciate the fact that their children are happy, behave well in school and make good progress, both academically and personally. They respect the teachers and find them approachable. The inspection team agrees with their positive comments. Some parents have reservations about the provision of extra-curricular activities and homework. Evidence from the inspection indicates that there is a good range of activities after school and at lunchtimes, including sport, music and art. Homework provision meets with national guidance and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Some parents expressed their concerns about the absence of the headteacher and the lack of information which has led to some uncertainty about the future.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Pupils' attainment in the 2001 Year 6 national tests was in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, attainment was well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. These relatively disappointing results were due to a lower achieving group of pupils being in the Year 6 classes. When the attainment of the pupils tested in 2001 is tracked from their starting point in Year 3, it is clear that they achieved as well as could have been expected.

2 The evidence of the inspection indicates that attainment in all three subjects is above the national average. This reflects the results of tests during the previous four years. Results have improved between 1997 and 2001 at a rate that was broadly in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the last three years.

3 Speaking and listening skills are used effectively to enhance learning across the curriculum. Pupils throughout the school have good speaking and listening skills that are better than those usually found in pupils of their age. They listen carefully, follow instructions and are able to ask and answer questions as part of class or group discussions. Pupils' skills in this crucial aspect of English have developed well because teachers encourage debate and discussion in many lessons, provide time for pupils to develop their ideas and show that they value everybody's contributions.

4 Pupils read well. Higher attaining pupils read even difficult texts accurately and with very good expression. Almost all enjoy reading. They are keen to discuss their favourite authors and to explain why they like them. Many pupils have good understanding of what they read and can infer meaning from the text and refer to phrases and sentences to support their views. They are very skilled in providing an outline of a story and can describe the main characters well.

5 By Year 6, pupils' writing skills are above average overall. They write well in a variety of ways, including play scripts, factual reports and descriptive accounts. Many pupils are able to compose sustained, well-organised pieces, using accurate sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. Most pupils choose words carefully and spell words accurately. Teachers follow the literacy strategy well and this is enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of grammar and punctuation as they move through the school. Pupils' handwriting is weaker. Some older pupils are still printing, rather than writing in a fluent, joined style. Pupils make good use of their reading and writing skills during their work in other subjects, such as history. Standards of literacy are good.

6 Year 6 pupils use numbers confidently. They understand the value of numbers up to a million and can add, subtract, multiply and divide competently. The pupils can use fractions and decimals accurately and can use a wide range of units of measure competently. A strength of the mathematics work in the school is the attention paid to developing pupils' problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils understand the uses of mathematics and how they can be applied to everyday problems. Pupils use mathematical vocabulary accurately when describing their method of calculation. Data-handling skills are well taught and pupils use them well in geography, for example, when constructing graphs using information from a traffic survey. Standards of numeracy are good throughout the school.

7 By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed good levels of scientific knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject. They are able to find answers to scientific questions by systematic investigation. They make informed predictions about what might happen and explain their findings. By Year 6, pupils use accurate scientific vocabulary to describe what they know or observe.

8 Attainment in information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. This improvement is the result of staff training, the implementation of a good scheme of work and the development of the computer suite. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are able to locate information using the Internet, especially in subjects like history and geography. They use spreadsheets and databases to help them solve problems in mathematics, collecting and sorting data to create graphs. Word-processing skills are developed satisfactorily, although pupils do not have enough opportunities to compose their work directly on to the screen. Pupils, especially those in Year 6, are beginning to develop the necessary skills to be able to create multimedia presentations.

9 Attainment in design and technology has improved since the last inspection and, by Year 6, standards are comfortably in line with the national expectations. This improvement reflects good teaching and the implementation of a well-planned curriculum that provides pupils with good opportunities to design, make and evaluate their work.

10 Attainment in geography has improved since the previous inspection, and is now above that expected for the age group. Attainment in history is also higher than usual. Attainment in art has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with expectations for the age group. This improvement is the result of better planning which provides pupils with a balanced art curriculum. Attainment in physical education and religious education is in line with expectations.

11 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and the targets set in individual education plans.

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

12 Pupils' attitudes to learning and their relationships with other children and adults are very good. Overall, behaviour is good and pupils make good progress in their personal development. All these strengths have been maintained since the last inspection and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

13 Almost all pupils enjoy coming to school. In both formal and informal discussions, pupils indicate that they have very positive attitudes to their learning. These are reflected in lessons. The majority of pupils are interested in what they are doing and take an active part in their learning. They co-operate well with their teachers and show good levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work. They listen carefully to their teachers' instructions, maintain their concentration for appropriate periods of time and are keen and eager to contribute to classroom discussions. In many lessons pupils showed obvious disappointment if they were not chosen to respond to their teacher's questions. Pupils often demonstrated the ability to work well together; for example, in a Year 6 dance lesson they shared ideas and corrected each other amicably, and therefore made good progress in the lesson. Most pupils take a pride in their work, taking great care with its presentation. They talk willingly about their work and explain their ideas to inspectors. Pupils with special educational needs generally show good attitudes to their work.

14 The overall standard of behaviour is good. In the majority of lessons, behaviour is good and often very good. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils wanted to learn, behaved very well, entered into discussions enthusiastically, and listened well to the teacher and to each other, all of which had a positive impact on their learning. Examples of inappropriate behaviour occurred in very few lessons and almost always when teaching lacked pace or challenge, and pupils lost interest. Almost all pupils are aware of what is, and is not, acceptable behaviour. They like the school's merit system and readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to instances of poor behaviour. Generally, behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is satisfactory. However, there is a significant amount of boisterous behaviour on the playground at lunchtimes, often associated with the overzealous playing of football. Pupils treat school equipment with care and respect; there is no evidence of vandalism caused by pupils and there is little or no litter around the school.

15 Parents and pupils confirm that instances of bullying are rare and the school reacts quickly and positively to known instances of bullying. There is no evidence of sexism or racism and there have not been any exclusions in the last academic year.

16 Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, as are relationships between pupils. In lessons, pupils work well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing resources. They listen to and respect the views of other members of the group. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson they co-operated well in groups, sharing ideas and helping each other. This helped pupils to make good progress in the lesson. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils contribute eagerly to discussions because they are confident that their views will be listened to and valued. Pupils say that they would readily ask their teachers for further information if they did not understand what was required of them. Pupils are developing well their understanding of other people's faiths and cultures and are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their actions on others, mainly through their studies in religious education and personal and social education. In a religious education lesson, for example, where pupils were considering the roles and responsibilities of vicars and rabbis, they had a good knowledge of what they were learning and entered enthusiastically into group discussions.

17 Pupils in all year groups show a willingness to take additional responsibilities and are given many opportunities to do so. All pupils undertake a range of duties as classroom monitors. Each class has elected two members of the school council and Year 6 pupils are appointed as house captains. Older pupils are involved in the 'Buddy' system at breaks and lunchtime, during which designated pupils look out for vulnerable pupils. Pupils take a pride in undertaking these tasks and take their duties seriously. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and take some responsibility for their own learning; for example, extended homework gives them the opportunity to do independent research.

18 Overall attendance is satisfactory, broadly in line with national averages. This represents a slight decline since the last inspection when attendance was above the national average. Registration is taken morning and afternoon and meets statutory requirements.

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

19 The quality of teaching is good overall. Although there is a range from unsatisfactory to excellent, the great majority of teaching is satisfactory or good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teaching is better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4, although examples of good teaching are seen throughout the school. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection when 20 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. There has been a complete change of teaching staff since that inspection. The school has successfully addressed the points for improvement raised in the inspection report. Lesson planning has improved and now clearly identifies the aims and objectives of lessons. These are shared with pupils so they have a clear understanding of the purpose of the lesson. Teachers also include many opportunities for pupils to be involved in investigations and problem solving, especially in mathematics, science and design and technology. This practical work has a positive impact on their attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and are enabled to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum.

20 The teachers have appropriately high expectations of behaviour and attainment. They make good use of questioning to develop pupils' understanding and they give clear explanations. In a Year 6 science lesson for example, the teacher made very effective use of a game to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of the properties of materials. The teacher's enthusiasm was reflected in the response of the class, which was very keen to contribute ideas. The teacher's high expectations and good questioning helped pupils to develop their use of the correct scientific terminology. Where teaching is good, pupils are encouraged to work responsibly, and are given opportunities to work independently and in pairs or groups. Group work is organised skilfully to enable some groups to work independently thus enabling the teacher to give intensive support to others. Classroom assistants make a positive contribution to the progress made by pupils, especially when they work with individuals or groups. They could be used more effectively during times when the whole class is taught together, particularly in literacy lessons.

21 Relationships are very positive and pupils respond well to their teachers' expectations by behaving well and concentrating hard. Where teaching is most effective it builds on previous learning, work is introduced in a lively and stimulating way and tasks are provided to meet the differing needs of pupils. This good quality teaching has a very positive impact on maintaining and raising the standards of attainment. In a Year 5 lesson in the computer suite, for example, the teacher provided lots of challenging work which was well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. She assessed and consolidated their understanding of earlier work and used this as the basis for a very successful lesson where pupils developed their skills of writing a simple computer program to control a small vehicle. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson on percentages, well-organised and challenging work ensured that pupils made good progress. Higher attaining pupils were provided with additional challenges which they were eager to tackle. The teacher had high expectations and constantly required pupils to explain their methods of working. This reinforced their learning and also provided a good opportunity to assess their understanding.

22 Where teaching is less successful, the work lacks challenge and does not fully engage pupils' interest. In some of these lessons, planning is good but work proceeds at a modest pace with missed opportunities to extend pupils' skills. Pupils work rather slowly, a few lose concentration and most make only steady progress. This occurs more frequently in Years 3 and 4 than in the older classes.

23 Teachers know their pupils well. They provide good verbal feedback during lessons and help pupils to improve their work. The use of written marking is less consistent. Comments do not always ensure that pupils are aware of areas which need to be improved. Pupils are not set clear targets for improvement.

24 The teaching of English is good overall, with all the lessons seen being at least satisfactory and many, particularly in Year 6, being good. All the lessons were well planned. Teachers use the shared reading and whole-class sessions effectively to make clear teaching points and to check and extend pupils' learning through well-managed discussions. This is particularly the case in Year 6, where teachers ensure that as many pupils as possible contribute; pupils are challenged to support their answers with appropriate details and expected to use the correct technical terminology. However, individual teachers do not always ensure that all pupils listen closely enough to instructions and that all pupils, particularly boys, take a full part in class discussions.

25 The teaching of mathematics is consistently good with some very good and excellent teaching, especially of older pupils. Teachers generally have high expectations and lessons provide a very good level of challenge for all. Teachers' questioning skills are good and there are many opportunities for pupils to explain the methods they use. Tasks are well matched to the different needs of all pupils. Lessons usually proceed at a lively pace and pupils work hard, concentrate well and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

26 The quality of science teaching is good overall and is particularly effective in Year 6. In the majority of lessons the teaching is lively, and pupils participate well and stay motivated. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to present findings clearly. The essential skills of scientific enquiry, for example the use of scientific measuring devices such as thermometers and force meters, are carefully taught and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to take measurements and collect data. On occasions, teaching is less effective when explanations are not clear or when work is not well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils.

27 Teaching in information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Lessons are well structured and work builds systematically on skills and concepts, introduced in previous sessions. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic, eager to learn and intrigued by the capability of information and communication technology. Although the computer suite was used well, computers in classrooms were underused during the inspection. Information and communication technology is not used regularly enough as part of other lessons.

28 The teaching of design and technology seen during the inspection was good and evidence from pupils' completed work points to effective teaching overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory. The lessons observed were well planned and learning objectives were explained clearly to pupils, who were able to work effectively and purposefully.

29 The teaching of geography and history is good. Much of the pupils' completed work shows that teachers in most classes encourage pupils to learn through research and first-hand experience, and this ensures that they develop skills and understanding as well as factual knowledge. Fieldwork is a regular feature of the curriculum and pupils make good use of the school grounds, the local area and educational visits to increase their knowledge.

30 The school now has a clear policy for physical education which provides guidance for teachers in planning appropriate activities for all areas of the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection which has supported improvements in teaching. This is now satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teachers regularly provide new challenges and encourage pupils to achieve higher standards.

31 Some teachers lack confidence in teaching music and would benefit from some additional training. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory, although some teachers are not confident about their own subject knowledge in relation to world faiths, other than



Christianity. They overcome this by planning such lessons very carefully, but lack of knowledge impedes their ability to respond to issues that arise spontaneously.

32 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. There is close and effective co-operation between the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers to draw up good individual education plans for pupils. Teachers work hard with support staff to ensure that pupils are fully included and achieve well in lessons.

33 Homework is used effectively to support learning. The amount of homework given to pupils is increased as they progress through the school. This takes a variety of forms, including reading activities, learning multiplication tables and spellings and work which reinforces or extends learning in class.

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

34 Good progress has been made since the last inspection in tackling the weaknesses that were identified. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily and has adapted the national guidance for other subjects in the curriculum well. There is a clear long-term plan for teaching the National Curriculum that provides good balance and breadth in pupils' learning. Detailed half-termly plans clearly identify what pupils will learn and these are followed closely in teachers' weekly planning. Analysis of test information is now used to fine tune what will be taught each year, so that identified weaknesses can be tackled. Teachers look for links between subjects so that teaching and learning can be coherent. For example, work in design and technology is linked to history topics and texts used in English are chosen to reinforce learning in different subjects, as are the planned activities in information and communication technology. Visits to places of interest, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, are designed to develop information and communication technology skills and outdoor adventurous activities in physical education. These, together with opportunities to use the expertise of local and other experts, are purposefully and appropriately built into planning. They provide many valuable experiences that enrich pupils' learning.

35 All pupils, regardless of colour, ability or creed, are well integrated into the school. Additional support from teaching assistants enables lower attaining pupils to join in with all activities and teachers usually plan to meet the needs of the full ability range. Where pupils are withdrawn for individual music tuition the lessons are rotated to ensure that pupils do not miss the same lesson each time.

36 The school has a very comprehensive and carefully planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education. This covers a wide range of issues associated with pupils growing up, including dealing with peer pressure and bullying, sex education and drugs awareness as well as road safety, first aid and how to protect themselves from the sun. This programme makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and is due to be enhanced through involvement with the 'Healthy Schools' project.

37 The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including, for example, Irish dancing, drama, choir, computers and first-aid as well as a range of sporting activities. These are very well attended and give pupils valuable opportunities to develop their interests and talents.

38 The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have detailed individual and group education plans that contain clear, achievable targets. These pupils are effectively supported by the focused use of teaching assistants.

39 The school has established links with local schools that are increasingly helping to support and extend pupils' learning. For example, teachers in the local secondary school help to plan activities for the higher attaining pupils in Year 6. This year, older pupils will benefit from being able to use the facilities of the secondary school to extend their work in science and design and technology. The pupils benefit from the school's involvement with the local community. This currently includes use of a local history walk and contributions from local historians and senior citizens in history, and is soon to be extended through the school's participation in a local arts project.

40 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The overall quality is similar to that seen in the previous inspection although both moral and social development are now very good, while spiritual and cultural development remain satisfactory.

41 There is a positive ethos in the school in which pupils are encouraged to respect the views of others. Adults in the school value the pupils' opinions and this helps to increase their self-esteem and confidence. The religious education programme, together with regular opportunities to discuss pertinent issues, helps pupils to reflect on their own and others experiences. Assemblies do not yet add sufficiently to the spiritual experiences and development of pupils. The study of a wide range of other religions results in a lack of depth in pupils' understanding.

42 Provision for moral development is very good. Principles distinguishing between right and wrong are promoted consistently well by all school staff, who provide very good role models. Pupils show respect for teachers, other adults and for each other. Pupils are involved in the development of agreed classroom rules and are consulted on subjects such as racism and bullying. The school council takes a leading role in this and is a powerful voice to express pupils' views.

43 Pupils' social skills are also very well developed. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to work co-operatively in classrooms and take on responsibilities as monitors and complete tasks to help the school run smoothly. A 'Buddy' system has been organised at playtimes for pupils on the playground and older pupils are responsible for the organisation of playground equipment. A residential visit adds to pupils' independence as well as their learning as pupils cover science, history, geography, physical education and information and communication technology during the week. Extra-curricular activities add positively to pupils' social experiences. Participation in inter-school sporting and musical events add to the development of pupils' social skills.

44 Cultural aspects of the curriculum are developed satisfactorily. Pupils know their own local area well through historical and geographical studies. Both art and music from around the world contribute positively to pupils' understanding of other people's cultures and creeds. However, there has been little opportunity to visit the places of worship of those of different faiths. At present, the provision is not always formalised in planning, resulting in missed opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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

45 The school continues to provide a safe and caring environment as it did at the time of the last inspection. The standard of individual care, support and guidance provided for pupils enables them to feel happy, confident and secure. Staff and pupils interact well together both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils are confident that they can approach their teachers should they have any problems of either a personal or academic nature. They report that appropriate support and guidance are likely to be given. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good. Overall, the school provides pupils with a good level of care and support that enables pupils to concentrate on their lessons and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

46 The school's health and safety policy meets statutory requirements. Procedures for general risk assessments are in place and inspections are carried out on a regular basis. First aid provision is good; there are appropriate numbers of qualified first-aiders and good records of accidents and injuries are maintained. Overall, the school successfully provides a safe working environment for staff and pupils. The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The acting headteacher is currently undertaking the duties of the designated teacher and is due to receive child protection training in the very near future. The child protection policy is comprehensive and teaching staff have received appropriate training on child protection matters. Training for lunchtime supervisors has not been provided.

47 The assessment co-ordinator has worked hard and successfully to improve the procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress. Good systems are in place throughout the school, with appropriate focus on English, mathematics and science. Careful records of each pupil's test results are kept from entry to the school and are passed on from year to year. Teachers are now using this information to set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. This helps pupils to understand their own strengths and weaknesses and guides teachers when planning new work. There is close liaison between staff at times of transfer. Assessment information is passed on from class to class and teachers keep up-to-date records. Most teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. The most effective marking indicates what pupils need to do to improve their work and sets clear targets. However, the quality of marking varies from class to class and there is no consistent approach to using this as a guide for planning future work.

48 The acting headteacher has involved subject co-ordinators much more closely in the analysis of test results and as a result they are establishing a clearer picture of how the school compares with other schools nationally and locally. They are also identifying areas of strength and weakness within their own results. This process of tracking pupils' attainment and progress is still at a relatively early stage and consideration should be given to the use of a computerised system which could ease the analysis of data.

49 Teachers have developed easily manageable systems for assessing progress in the remaining subjects on the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and, where necessary, they are provided with individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and the progress of individual pupils is accurately assessed. Targets for improvement are regularly set, and are clearly focused, achievable and specific.

50 The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Parents are advised of the need to notify the school if their children are absent for any reason. Staff monitor attendance on a daily, monthly and termly basis and make first day contact with parents of pupils with poor attendance records. The education welfare officer inspects registers on a regular basis and agrees appropriate courses of action with the headteacher. However, there are a small number of pupils with poor attendance records and the actions taken to date have not significantly improved the attendance of these pupils.

51 The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The well-established behaviour policy clearly sets out the school's expectations of good behaviour, and seeks to reward good behaviour whilst holding pupils accountable for poor behaviour. The merit system is popular with pupils in all year groups. At the beginning of each school year, pupils are involved in developing their own class rules. The school makes good use of weekly assembly to award certificates for good work and behaviour, and pupils clearly value these awards. Records are maintained of any incidents of unacceptable behaviour and parents are notified if their children's behaviour is considered a matter of concern. The school has implemented procedures to discourage bullying and oppressive behaviour and maintain records of any such incidents. Overall, these procedures are successful in promoting good behaviour, particularly in classrooms, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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

52 The school has established a good partnership with parents that makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

53 Parents' views of the school are good. Virtually all parents are pleased with the progress their children are making in their learning, the quality of teaching, the good standard of behaviour and the expectation that their children will work hard. Parents also indicated that their children enjoyed coming to school, that the school is helping them to become more responsible and mature and they are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents at the meeting with the inspectors were very supportive of the school. Evidence from the inspection confirms these positive views of the school.

54 A significant minority of parents expressed reservations about the amount of work their children do at home and the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Evidence from the inspection indicates that homework provision meets with national guidance and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and that the school provides a wide range of activities at lunchtime or after school.

55 Some parents expressed their concerns about the way in which the school is led and managed and indicated that the school does not work closely with parents. Some of these concerns related to the absence of the headteacher and the lack of information which has led to some uncertainty about the future. Evidence from the inspection is that the school is currently very well led and managed and that the school makes every effort to encourage parents to become involved with their children's education.

56 Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. A significant number of parents help in classrooms in a variety of ways, for example by listening to pupils read, and supporting pupils in design and technology, information and communication technology, food technology and the art club. In addition, parents support drama productions and sports day and accompany pupils on school trips. The school uses the skills of parents to assist pupils' learning; for example, a paramedic and fire-fighter have visited and spoken with pupils. The Friends of Reedings School are very active in arranging social and fund-raising events; they have raised substantial funds that have been used to improve facilities and learning resources, including playground equipment, computers and books, all of which have had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

57 Overall, the quality and range of information provided for parents are good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities, though do not fully comply with statutory requirements. Parents receive a detailed newsletter each half term and letters relating to

specific events ensure that parents are well aware of current school issues. The school consults parents about major school developments; for example, parents' views were sought during a review of the school aims. At the beginning of the academic year parents are provided with an annual curriculum map giving specific details of what their children will be studying, along with the amount of homework their children will be expected to complete each week. Pupils' reports are good. They contain appropriate information on pupils' strengths and weaknesses and areas for development. Parents are able to discuss the content of these reports with teachers at the summer term consultation evening. Parents are invited to three consultation evenings, one each term. At each of these meetings, specific targets are set in English and mathematics. These targets are reviewed at the next consultation meetings and new targets set. Governors attend parents' consultation meetings. This allows for an exchange of views between governors and parents. The school has good arrangements to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in the development of their children's individual educational plans and parents attend termly review meetings.

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

58 The headteacher has been absent November 2001 and was not in school during the inspection. The deputy head has been acting headteacher since that time. She provides very good leadership, promoting and sustaining a clear sense of direction for the work of the school, which has clear aims and objectives. These have been reviewed this year after consultation with parents. The school is currently well managed. Collectively, the acting headteacher, staff and governors contribute well to the quality of education provided and to the standards achieved by the pupils. The acting headteacher has established a very positive relationship with the governors and they have provided effective support. The very positive and supportive atmosphere and the sense of commitment displayed by all who work in the school reflect the quality of the current leadership. Whilst senior staff and, particularly, the acting deputy headteacher are currently providing good support and helping to provide clear leadership, their management role has been underdeveloped in the past. There has not been sufficient delegation of management responsibilities by the headteacher.

59 The school has taken positive and effective steps to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. Curriculum planning has been improved. There are policies and clear long-term plans in place for all subjects. The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy satisfactorily and has adopted national guidance as the basis for long-term planning in other subjects. Teachers' plans clearly identify the aims of lessons and also provide more opportunities for investigations and problem solving. There are effective systems in place to assess and monitor pupils' progress. The school's priorities are clearly identified in the development plan. Longer-term plans are in place for all curriculum areas. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been improved and they are no longer withdrawn inappropriately from lessons. There is an effective programme of staff development to improve teachers' knowledge and skills. Systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching but these are not yet used effectively to provide a consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school.

60 The governors are regular visitors to the school and they are kept well informed about the issues. This enables them to make a positive contribution to supporting the work of the school. They provide effective support for the school and are actively involved in decisions about personnel, finance and the curriculum. Individual governors have links with curriculum areas and special educational needs. They have established an effective structure of committees to oversee and ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities.

61 The school development plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on an analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is a useful and effective management tool. It is linked to the school budget and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. It is supplemented with clear and effective action plans for each area of development.

62 The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been further developed by the acting headteacher. They are more closely involved in the monitoring of standards and have all produced clear action plans for future developments in their subjects. They have responded well to the leadership and expectations of the acting headteacher and they make a positive contribution to the management of their subject area.

63 The co-ordinator for special educational needs works very successfully with colleagues to ensure that the pupils on the register for special educational needs receive support which is appropriate to their needs.

64 Governors have a good strategic overview of the school's finances. They are fully involved in budget setting and regularly review spending. The governors and the headteacher make effective use of the school's budget and grants, such as that for special educational needs. They consider appropriate financial reports and apply the principles of best value to inform their decisions. For example, they considered the cost of several alternatives for accommodating the computer suite. Governors consulted parents and pupils about aspects of school life through the use of questionnaires and the schools' council. They have devised criteria for judging the effectiveness of initiatives they have taken, such as funding extra classroom assistants. They currently have a large carry forward, but have maintained this in order to fund substantial developments that will benefit the pupils currently in the school. Planned improvements include refurbishment of the demountable classrooms, so they can be used for relocating the computer suite and improving their use by the community, refurbishment of other classrooms, increasing the car parking space and improving the pedestrian and vehicle separation.

65 Efficient day-to-day management and administration by the school secretary and clerical assistant, particularly of financial matters and the ordering and control of equipment, ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning and make a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school. Their office provides a welcoming and friendly introduction to the school for parents and visitors, typifying the very good relationships that exist in the school.

66 There are sufficient, well-qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of pupils. Additional expenditure on teaching assistants is resulting in improved provision for pupils with special educational needs. Training is provided for the additional classroom support that is increasing their skills but training for other non-teaching staff on, for example, behaviour management would benefit both the school and pupils. Performance management procedures are firmly established and there are good arrangements for supporting the induction of newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to the school.

67 The school has an adequate range of learning resources to enable all the subjects of the National Curriculum to be taught. Spending on these is above the national average. The accommodation is, in several respects, more than adequate with large classrooms, a hall and separate dining area that are all well cared for and respected by pupils and adults alike. Standards of cleaning and caretaking are high, and the quality of the internal environment is enhanced by good quality displays in many classrooms and shared areas which help to maintain the positive ethos and atmosphere in the school. The computer area is cramped

and puts some restrictions on the practical experiences of the pupils. This is recognised and advanced plans are in place to improve the situation.

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

68 To improve the school further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Make more effective use of the systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to promote a greater consistency throughout the school and to extend the very good practice already in place. Ensure that senior managers have sufficient time to carry this out.  
(paragraphs 60, 76, 106)
- (2) Further develop the role of senior managers and establish a clear senior management team.  
(paragraph 59)
- (3) Make more effective use of the individual targets which teachers have set for pupils, by:  
  
Ensuring that targets are sufficiently detailed and clear to enable teachers to measure progress accurately.  
  
Further improving the marking of pupils' work to help them achieve their individual learning targets  
  
Making greater use of the targets in lessons to ensure that all pupils consistently work towards them.  
(paragraphs 47, 75, 82, 87)

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Ensure that the information in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report meets statutory requirements.
- Improve teachers' subject knowledge in music and religious education.
- Make more effective use of assemblies to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.  
(paragraphs 31, 41, 58, 118, 128)

#### **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**



## Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	4	23	19	1	0	0
Percentage	2	8	48	40	2	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 two percentage points.

## Information about the school's pupils

### Pupils on the school's roll

Y3– Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	242
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

### Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	31

### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	33	27	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	24	27
	Girls	24	22	26
	Total	47	46	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (89)	77 (79)	88 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	26	27
	Girls	24	22	23
	Total	47	48	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (89)	80 (85)	83 (89)
	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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	234
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
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.*

### **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.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	418896
Total expenditure	392776
Expenditure per pupil	1664
Balance brought forward from previous year	19181
Balance carried forward to next year	45301

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	67

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	37	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	46	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	61	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	54	15	0	3
The teaching is good.	46	51	0	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	48	7	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	37	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	42	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	57	15	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	22	54	15	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	51	6	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	49	22	4	7

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

### **ENGLISH**

69 Taken over the last four years results in the national tests have been above the national average despite the very disappointing results in 2001. Boys have achieved nearly as well as the girls and except for 2001 noticeably better than boys in schools across the country. In 2001, results were in line with the national average but well below those achieved in similar schools, a comparison based on entitlement to free schools meals. Equally disappointing results were also found in mathematics and science. However, when the attainment of the Year 6 pupils tested in 2001 is compared to their attainment when they entered the school, it is clear that they achieved as well as could have been expected. The standards currently being achieved by the pupils in Year 6 are comfortably above national expectations and appropriately high for these pupils. This is a similar position to that reported at the last inspection.

70 Pupils across the school have good speaking and listening skills that are better than those usually found in pupils of their age. They pay close attention to what is being said by both adults and other pupils. They identify the key points being discussed and their responses usually contain appropriate detail and relevant facts. As they get older, pupils become increasingly able to extend their answers. They support their ideas with information that they have acquired earlier and refer to the views of other pupils during discussions. This was clearly demonstrated in a history lesson when Year 6 pupils were discussing what it must have been like for evacuee children during World War II, and during a Year 6 literacy lesson on descriptive writing. They express different opinions to their peers and do so confidently, sensibly and reasonably. They use technical words accurately and adjust their forms of speech appropriately to the demands of different situations, such as when they share ideas with 'talking partners' or when they are involved in whole-class discussions. Pupils' skills in this crucial aspect of English have developed well because teachers encourage debate and discussion in many lessons in different subjects, provide time for pupils to develop their ideas and show that they value everybody's contributions. Occasionally, as in one or two lessons in Years 3 and 4, teachers could do more to ensure that as many pupils as possible contribute to class discussions and challenge those who are not volunteering answers to share their ideas.

71 Pupils read well. They have developed good skills in working out unknown words and higher attaining pupils read difficult texts with very good expression and accuracy. Almost all pupils enjoy reading and take time each day to read to themselves, both at home and at school. They are eager to discuss their favourite authors and to explain why they like them. Their pleasure in reading is evident in lessons. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking on parts and reading aloud the poems by Roald Dahl that they were evaluating in different voices. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 read with fluency and good understanding and tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Average and below average attaining pupils mostly use their knowledge of sounds and other cues successfully to help them tackle new words, and they use the contents and index pages to locate information in reference books. A number of them do not yet read with expression and do not always use punctuation effectively to guide their reading. By Years 4 and 5, most pupils read with good expression and understanding of texts and can use contents, index and glossaries when using information books. A high proportion of pupils in Year 6 read at least in line with their chronological age and the higher attainers, who form a relatively large proportion of the year group, are reading above the expected levels. Many pupils have good understanding of what they read and make inferences from the text and refer to phrases and sentences to support

their views. They are very skilled in providing an outline of a story and can describe the main characters well. An area of weakness is the pupils' ability to use the classification system in a library to locate books that they may find useful. This is partly because the reference section of the school's library is not yet properly classified and catalogued, although there are plans to do this in the near future.

72 By Year 6, pupils' writing skills are above average overall. They are able to write effectively for different purposes and in different forms, including play scripts, biographies, character studies, newspaper reports and persuasive writing, as well as narrative and descriptive accounts. Pupils are able to plan their writing and most draft and correct what they have done in order to improve it. They use punctuation effectively, for example when separating clauses with commas and when writing complex sentences. All but the lowest attaining pupils organise their writing into paragraphs and most punctuate direct speech accurately. Most pupils choose words carefully and spell words accurately. Teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy carefully and this is enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of grammar and the nature of language as they move through the school. As a result, Year 6 pupils understand the conventions for using tenses and the correct 'person' and apply these when, for example, writing biographies and explanatory texts themselves. Weaknesses are found in pupils' handwriting. Even some of the older, average attaining pupils sometimes print and do not use a fluent joined style. Pupils across the school present their work with care and set it out well. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to write purposefully in other subjects, for example the impressive empathic writing about the Last Supper in Year 4 and letters from evacuee children to their parents in Year 6. Teachers provide fewer opportunities, however, for pupils to extend and develop their ideas in longer pieces of writing. This limits pupils' abilities to plan and sustain complex ideas and arguments and to practise and consolidate their skills in organising and presenting their writing.

73 Pupils often enjoy English lessons. They work hard and their behaviour is often very good. They listen well during class discussions and express their ideas and views confidently. When given the opportunity to work together in groups, for example with talking partners, they do so sensibly and responsibly and they quickly settle to the tasks they are given. Their very positive attitudes, good behaviour and responsible approach to work positively support effective learning.

74 Overall teaching is good with all the lessons seen being at least satisfactory and many, particularly in Year 6, being good. All the lessons seen were well planned. They had clear learning objectives that were explained to pupils and successfully focused the pupils' efforts in lessons. Teachers use the shared reading and whole-class sessions effectively to make clear teaching points and to check and extend pupils' learning through well-managed discussions. In these sessions teachers often demonstrate good questioning skills that are used effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to make thoughtful responses. This is particularly the case in Year 6 where teachers ensure that as many pupils as possible contribute to discussions. They challenge pupils to support their answers with appropriate details and expect them to use the correct technical terminology. Teachers nearly always manage pupils well. However, occasionally individual teachers do not ensure that all pupils are listening closely enough when they are giving instructions. They do not always ensure that all pupils, particularly boys, take a full part in class discussions. This can lead to a small number of pupils not learning as effectively as they could do, although in all the lessons pupils achieved the planned objectives. Tasks given to pupils are almost always appropriately matched to their different learning needs. Care is taken to provide the pupils with special educational needs with well-planned and targeted support during group work. This enables them to make good progress against their learning goals. This use of teaching assistants is good but they could be used more effectively during whole-class sessions when they usually sit and listen to the teacher and are rarely expected or directed to help particular

pupils. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and thoroughly and they often provide helpful comments. Although the quality of marking has shown clear improvement over the last year it has yet to become effective in helping pupils to achieve their individual learning targets which are identified in the front of their books. Homework is set regularly and provides useful activities for pupils that complement what they are learning in class.

75 The school has implemented the literacy strategy and this ensures that pupils' learning builds systematically on earlier work. This good planning, coupled with the opportunities that teachers provide for speaking and listening, ensures effective coverage of the English National Curriculum programmes of study. Teachers identify many links between subjects that enable pupils to apply their skills in purposeful contexts, and which, in turn, enrich pupils' learning in other subjects. A good example is the use of a class reader in Year 6 that fits in perfectly with the history topic. Test information is analysed to identify which aspects of pupils' learning need to be concentrated on in future lessons. Teachers' ongoing assessments are now being used to identify targets for individual pupils to work towards. These have only recently been introduced and are beginning to help pupils to understand what they need to do to make improvements. However, teachers do not refer to them sufficiently in lessons to ensure that all pupils consistently work towards them. Pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels is carefully monitored but teachers keep few records of how well pupils are achieving the planned learning goals set for each half-term. Reading records provide very little information on what pupils can and cannot do in reading, as they only include the books that pupils have read. The identification of special educational needs in English is effective. Achievable goals are set for these pupils in their individual and group education plans. Teaching assistants support these pupils well and help them to make good progress in their learning.

76 The management of the subject is broadly satisfactory despite the co-ordinator being part-time. She monitors planning and looks at pupils' work and this helps her to gain a reasonable understanding of strengths and weaknesses. She has not been allocated the time to observe her colleagues teach, however, and this reduces the effectiveness with which she can support them. Lack of time also limits her ability to attend courses that would be helpful to her in her role. Bearing these limitations in mind, senior managers have not done enough to monitor the effectiveness of the subject co-ordination. Since the last inspection, sound progress has been made and the good standards found then have been maintained.

## **MATHEMATICS**

77 Current standards of mathematics in Year 6 are above average. This judgement is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection. Results of national tests for Year 6 pupils fell in 2001 to average levels when compared to other schools nationally, due to a lower achieving group of pupils being in the Year 6 classes. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in the tests. Over the previous five years results in mathematics have been above average except in 1999 and 2001 when the results were similar to the national average. Good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is helping to improve results. Pupils in these year groups make rapid gains. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported in most lessons although in a small minority of lessons support staff do not make a sufficient contribution. Pupils of well above average ability receive challenging work to extend their skills.

78 The skills of mental calculation are taught satisfactorily across the school, although these sessions are often used to teach pupils new ideas and concepts rather than to ensure that their recall of number facts is rapid and accurate. Many teachers do not use these sessions sufficiently well to check on pupils' progress in acquiring mental and oral skills. In

some classes, especially those with older pupils, mental and oral skills are well developed, with pupils responding positively to the level of challenge provided. A very effective lesson in a Year 6 class used a games format to challenge pupils' rapid recall of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts. Year 6 pupils use numbers confidently. They understand the value of numbers up to a million and, when completing calculations, use the inverse process to check their answers. They have a secure understanding of fractions and are able to convert these into decimals and percentages quickly and accurately. Throughout the school good attention is paid to developing pupils' skills and applying their knowledge to practical problems and this is a strength of the mathematics work in the school. This helps pupils understand the uses of mathematics and how it can be applied to everyday problems. Mathematical vocabulary is well developed and pupils use it accurately when describing their method of calculation. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' skills in data handling and pupils use these well in geography, for example when constructing graphs using information from a traffic survey, and in science.

79 The standard of teaching is consistently good, with some very good and excellent teaching seen, especially of older pupils. In the very good and excellent lessons, teachers plan well and have a very clear idea of what they want the pupils to learn during the lesson. Pupils are very aware of what teachers' expectations of their behaviour and work rate are, and they respond positively. These very well taught lessons provide a very good level of challenge for all pupils. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson when pupils improved their mental abilities to calculate percentages. In all lessons, teachers share what they are going to learn during the lesson with pupils. Teachers' questioning skills are good and there are many opportunities for pupils to explain the methods they use. Tasks to consolidate pupils' learning are well matched to the differing needs of the pupils. Most pupils are interested and enthusiastic about the subject.

80 The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily. Teachers use the planning structure provided appropriately but, in a small number of lessons, time is not used well enough. This sometimes results in limited time being available for pupils to complete the tasks set. Mathematical vocabulary is extended well in most lessons and pupils use technical language correctly to describe their methods.

81 Mathematical skills are well used in a good range of other subjects, such as design and technology, science and geography. Examples of this include accurate measurement in model making, the use of negative numbers when measuring temperatures and the use of co-ordinates in map work. Although there is some use of information and communication technology in mathematics, the subject co-ordinator recognises the need to expand its use and has developed plans to do so.

82 Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed and findings are analysed. This analysis provides useful information on where the curriculum needs strengthening. The quality of teaching is not monitored sufficiently, although planning is examined to ensure that the full curriculum is covered. Systems are in place to track pupils' progress from one year to the next but these are not yet recorded electronically. Targets are set for the improvement of the work of each pupil across the school but in some classes these are not sufficiently detailed or clear enough to enable teachers to measure progress accurately. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has worked hard to provide the structure and guidance to enable teachers to raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**



83 Attainment in science has improved since the last inspection. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, results were in line with the national average. However, in the years from 1997 to 2001, standards have risen in line with the national trend. Inspection findings confirm that standards are now above the national average. Improvements in planning, more efficient use of assessment data and better teaching have brought about this improvement. The greatest improvement has been in the development of pupils' attainment in investigative and experimental science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, although girls had better results than the boys in the national tests.

84 By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed good levels of knowledge and understanding across the full range of the subject. They are able to find answers to scientific questions by systematic investigation. They can make informed predictions about what might happen and explain their findings in terms of what they originally thought. They know that all animals and plants eat, breathe, grow and reproduce and understand clearly how a food chain works. They use accurate scientific vocabulary to describe what they know or observe. The majority of pupils describe the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They know that mixtures can be separated through filtering, dissolving and evaporation and have a clear appreciation that physical and chemical change can be permanent or temporary. They carry out investigations planned by the teacher and also demonstrate ideas of their own. They are able to use keys accurately to classify living things such as leaves and mini beasts. They can illustrate food chains using the correct vocabulary and can represent these in conventional form using arrows. In Year 6, the pupils showed good levels of understanding about materials and their properties. Pupils in Year 5 showed good levels of understanding about electrical circuits and switches. Year 4 pupils investigate forces and the effects of friction. They understand the resistance created by air and water. They explore the effects of magnetism. In Year 3, the pupils demonstrated understanding of light and shadows and have carried out investigations into the absorbency of different materials. They develop an understanding of the conditions essential for the growth of plants.

85 Higher attaining pupils provide extended written and verbal explanations of scientific processes using clear language and precise vocabulary. They produce well-organised and clear records of their findings, which demonstrate some independent thinking. Lower attainers are making good progress in the presentation of results and in acquiring scientific knowledge, although their ability to reach accurate conclusions independently is less well developed.

86 The quality and organisation of the pupils' work in their science books reflect good overall attitudes to the subject throughout the school and a clear interest and involvement in lessons. The presentation of work in Years 5 and 6 is of a consistently good standard. Behaviour is good or very good in most lessons. Most pupils are clearly motivated, particularly when they are given opportunities to handle materials and to take part in practical activities. They co-operate very well when asked to work together in groups. There are occasions, however, when some pupils find it difficult to concentrate on their work and the pace of the lesson slows.

87 The quality of science teaching is good overall. Teaching is particularly effective in Year 6. In the majority of lessons, the teaching is lively and this encourages pupils to participate and to stay motivated. The teachers share the aims for the lesson with the class and this provides a clear focus. A strength of the teaching is the emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to present findings clearly. Teachers throughout the school consistently remind pupils to use scientific language when talking about their work and this makes a positive contribution to their achievement. Most teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of the quality of their work and the majority of pupils

respond accordingly. Most teachers use questioning very effectively to check on pupils' previous learning and to promote their thinking. They provide good verbal feedback during lessons and help pupils to improve their work. The use of written marking is less consistent. Comments do not always ensure that pupils are aware of areas that need to be improved or set clear targets for improvement. The essential skills of scientific enquiry, for example the use of scientific measuring devices such as thermometers and force meters, are taught thoroughly and pupils are given sufficient opportunities to take measurements and collect data. On occasions, teaching is less effective when explanations are not clear or when work is not well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils.

88 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Classroom assistants are deployed well and give advice and encouragement on a one-to-one or small group basis. They make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school ensures that all groups of pupils have an equal access to the curriculum and there are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls.

89 The use of science to contribute to the skills of literacy and numeracy is good. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas and what they see and do. In all lessons there is a good emphasis on the use of correct scientific vocabulary and current topic words are displayed in classrooms. Mathematical skills are reinforced when, for example, pupils measure and record temperatures and distances. Data handling is used well to record results and older pupils draw and plot their own line graphs. There is limited evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support work in science, although some pupils have used the computer for researching information.

90 The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. The school has placed increasing emphasis on the use of investigative science and this is having a very positive effect on standards. There is also effective monitoring of teachers' planning to ensure that all elements of the curriculum are covered. Test results in the national tests are very carefully analysed and clear targets for improvement are set for individuals and groups of pupils. These strategies are increasingly effective and account for the significant improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91 During the inspection only two lessons were observed. However, additional evidence was gained from scrutiny of pupils' previous work and teachers' planning. Standards in art and design have improved since the last inspection and are now similar to those found in most schools.

92 Teachers' planning indicates that opportunities to use a range of media, including drawing materials, paint, printing, textiles and collage work, are provided during the year. Pupils use a wide range of materials imaginatively and can observe objects closely, drawing what they see carefully and producing sketches with good line, shape and form. Pupils develop an understanding of colour mixing, and the selection of appropriate materials. They express themselves through drawing and painting and modelling and use simple techniques with developing control. They also have opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in an imaginative way. Pupils have the opportunity to look at the work of artists such as Cezanne, Monet, Picasso and Moore and to compare their styles of working. Year 6 pupils, for example, demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the work of impressionist painters.

93 In a Year 3 topic on pattern, pupils used paint very effectively to create large abstract patterns. They also used printing, stencils and a computer program to create a variety of patterns. African and aboriginal patterns and designs were also used as the basis for some of their work. Year 4 pupils have looked very carefully at a range of chairs to produce a good selection of observational drawings from different angles. They have developed these into three-dimensional work to create models of the chairs. Year 5 pupils have designed and made containers using clay. As part of the same theme, they also created bags and boxes using paper and card. Year 6 pupils have studied faces and created carnival masks using a range of materials. They have also produced observational drawings on the theme 'People in Action'.

94 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have used computer programs to produce repeat patterns and designs but the use of computers to support work in art and design is limited. However, Year 4 pupils have made good use of the digital camera to record their ideas on the theme of 'Dreams'.

95 In addition to art lessons, pupils also use their art skills to illustrate work in other subjects; examples include the accurate observational drawings of flowers and plants in science and collage to illustrate work in history such as portraits of Tudor monarchs. The school also runs a lunchtime art club for pupils in Year 6. This provides pupils with additional opportunities to develop skills and techniques in drawing, painting and modelling.

96 There was a limited opportunity to observe teaching but the lessons seen indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory. Lessons are enjoyable and praise is used well to enable pupils to participate confidently. Some good learning opportunities are planned by teachers, which help pupils to develop their skills. All pupils have sketch and design books to record sketches and ideas. Some of these are later developed into larger scale work. Year 6 pupils, for example, have created pencil sketches of the local area which they are developing into paintings using water colours. Pupils take a pride in their work and have positive attitudes towards art. They appreciate their work being displayed throughout the school.

97 The subject co-ordinator provides clear leadership. The school has adopted the national guidance on planning the art curriculum. As a result, teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. Lessons have clear aims and provide for the development of skills. This has helped to raise standards of attainment.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98 Evidence from the two lessons observed and analysis of pupils' work around the school shows that standards by Year 6 are comfortably in line with the national expectations. Standards are clearly better than at the time of the last inspection when pupils were attaining below expectations. This improvement reflects the development and implementation of a well-planned curriculum that provides pupils with good balance in their learning and teaching that is now good and ensures that pupils experience all aspects of the process of designing, making and evaluating what they have done.

99 By Year 6, pupils are able to investigate objects to understand how they work and use this information to inform their own effective designs, taking account of fitness for purpose. They use a range of tools and materials effectively to produce their own objects and undertake a detailed evaluation of what they have made in order to understand how it could improve. Their completed work on slippers, for example, shows that they are able to produce high quality work that is very carefully constructed and thoughtfully presented and decorated. As they move through school, pupils develop a secure understanding of different ways of

joining materials, for example using glue, fastenings, threads and tapes. They learn how cams, cogs and pneumatics can be used to transfer movement and energy. They understand how artefacts need to be fit for their purpose, for example in Year 5 pupils' work on packaging and on the nature and properties of different materials, including a range of resistant materials, such as plastic and wood. They develop appropriate skills in using different materials, equipment and tools, and a good understanding of the need to work safely.

100 Pupils enjoy design and technology lessons and work hard in them. They are sensible in their use of tools and behave responsibly and sensibly.

101 The teaching seen during the inspection was good and evidence from pupils' completed work points to effective teaching overall. Both lessons were well planned and learning objectives were explained clearly to pupils who were able to work effectively and purposefully. Both lessons built effectively on what pupils had already learnt in order to take them onto the next step and focused closely on developing their understanding. In the lesson in Year 5, the teacher made good use of a model she had made to develop further their understanding of how cams and axles worked. In the Year 6 lesson, the teacher extended what pupils had done for homework on the features and purpose of a bus shelter to deepen their understanding of materials that would be suitable for use in an air raid shelter. In both lessons the teachers skilfully questioned pupils, checking their knowledge and understanding and pushing them on in their learning. Both lessons were well resourced and organised which enabled pupils to get on quickly with the practical tasks they were asked to do.

102 The school has adapted the national schemes of work and supplemented them with very helpful guidance produced by a professional association. The scheme of work is carefully planned for the four year groups and ensures that pupils experience all aspects of the programmes of study. Good, relevant links are established between different subjects; for example, Year 6 are studying World War II and have looked at the Blitz and air raid shelters and this has provided the focus for their unit of work on shelters. This year, pupils' learning has been enhanced through the design and technology week where they were set challenges and prizes were awarded for the most successful work. Later in the summer term, the older pupils will be able to use the specialist teaching rooms in the linked secondary school and this will give them greater opportunities to use resistant materials. Recently an appropriate system for recording pupils' progress has been introduced and this is starting to be used across the school. The subject is well led by a very keen co-ordinator who has taken initiatives that are improving the quality of pupils' learning, such as improving the links with the local secondary and infants' schools. She is also undertaking some monitoring, for example of pupils' work, which is helping her to identify what needs to be done to take the subject forward.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103 Standards in geography have improved since the previous inspection. They are above those expected for the age group throughout the school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

104 Pupils are taught geography consistently well throughout their time in the school. Fieldwork is a regular feature of the curriculum and pupils make good use of the school grounds, the local area and educational visits, to increase their knowledge. The annual residential visit provides valuable opportunities to increase pupils' investigational skills when studying, for example, coastal erosion and geology. By Year 6, pupils have developed a good general knowledge of the continents, oceans, mountains and rivers of the world. They

understand how the water cycle works and use a mature vocabulary when describing this. Words such as *evaporation* and *condensation* are used correctly. Closely linked to this is their study of rivers and pupils show a good understanding of words such as *erosion*, *meander*, *estuary* and *deposition*. In a good link with history the local town is studied in detail, land use maps are drawn and problems such as pollution are discussed regularly. In a good lesson seen in Year 4, pupils examined why settlements were developed and showed a good understanding of nuclear, linear and dispersed villages. Life in their hometown is contrasted with that in developing areas like St Lucia in the West Indies. This learning is enhanced effectively through stories provided by members of a visiting steel band which bring alive what it is like to live on the islands. Older pupils develop fact files on a wide variety of European countries using information and communication skills to access the Internet and this extends their knowledge well.

105 Thorough planning provides a well-structured framework to cover the National Curriculum programme of study. Teachers plan together and this ensures that pupils in classes in the same year group receive the same opportunities for learning. The work provided is interesting and ensures that pupils experience fieldwork and develop their ability to learn independently through projects, often completed as part of their homework. Older pupils learn about environmental issues and understand the importance, for example, of preserving the rainforests. In an interesting lesson seen in Year 6, pupils discussed these issues and developed convincing arguments from the standpoint of different interest groups, for example the forest population, the farmers and the government. This extended their speaking and listening skills well. Lessons are well organised and prepared. Teachers' questioning skills are good and most pupils listen carefully to what they are asked to do. Writing skills are developed well in most classes, with pupils expected to use their own language to record their ideas and thoughts. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. Most remain attentive and listen and learn well, often making confident contributions to the lesson.

106 The school has developed a good quality programme of study in geography that makes use of an effective range of educational visits to develop pupils' first-hand experience. Coverage of the curriculum is checked but the quality of teaching is not sufficiently monitored to check its effectiveness. Some use is made of information and communication technology but the co-ordinator has identified the need to extend this to other areas of the geography curriculum. There is also some assessment of the quality of pupils' work but this too has been recognised as an area in need of further development.

## HISTORY

107 Across the school, pupils are achieving at least in line with the national expectations for their age. By Year 6 they are achieving just above expectations. This reflects the high proportion of effective teaching across the required elements for the subject. A good balance is maintained between developing pupils' skills in using sources and finding things out for themselves, and ensuring that they acquire knowledge of the periods being studied and insights into why important events happened.

108 By Year 6, pupils have developed a good understanding of chronology and they make effective use of the correct terminology, such as *decade*, *century* and *generation* when describing the passage of historical time. They are able to place the different periods they have studied on a time line accurately and they use dates when doing this. They understand the range of sources, both primary and secondary, that historians use when finding out about the past. They are aware that caution needs to be taken when using some of them because of possible bias, for example in newspaper accounts of events or of the likeness of portraits that have been commissioned by famous people. In their work on Victorians, the Year 6

pupils show a good understanding and knowledge of the differences in the lives of rich and poor and their empathetic accounts demonstrate good knowledge of what life must have been like for child labourers. Through their research, they have been able to write detailed biographies that clearly explain the contribution Lord Shaftsbury and Dr Barnardo made to improving the lives of many people. During their work on this period they made effective use of census materials, pictures and artefacts to gain insights into everyday life. The work of Year 5 pupils on Tudors shows a similar range of achievement at an appropriate level for this age group and, as in Year 6, the quality of the pupils' own work is high with detail and careful presentation. There is less evidence of effective learning taking place in Year 4, where much of the children's work is identical and opportunities to find things out for themselves and record their ideas independently have been missed. As a result their skills have not improved at the same rate as pupils in other year groups.

109 In the two lessons observed, pupils were eager to share their ideas and the pupils in Year 6 asked questions confidently about things they were not sure about. In both lessons pupils were well behaved, settled quickly to their tasks and worked hard.

110 The teaching is good; this judgement is based on the quality of the work in pupils' files and books, and the two lessons observed, one of which was satisfactory and one good. In the good lesson the teacher shared the objectives of the lesson with pupils which effectively focused their efforts. A series of letters from the time was used well to develop pupils' understanding of what it must have been like to be a child evacuee in World War II. These stimulated a very worthwhile discussion that challenged the pupils to empathise with the evacuees and laid a firm foundation for their own writing. In the satisfactory lesson pupils were provided with information sheets and books to use to find out about the Vikings. This worked effectively and enabled pupils to gain some useful facts. However, in the discussion, opportunities to extend pupils' understanding by challenging them to consider reasons for events were not developed as the teacher concentrated on the facts. Much of the pupils' completed work shows that teachers in most classes encourage pupils to learn by finding things out for themselves, and this ensures that they develop skills and understanding as well as factual knowledge. Too little independent work is undertaken in Year 4, however, and opportunities to develop pupils' skills are often missed. Little ongoing assessment is undertaken although teachers do monitor pupils' progress annually against the levels in the National Curriculum.

111 The subject is effectively led and managed and since the last inspection significant improvements have been made to the quality and range of resources available for the subject. These are very well organised in topic boxes that provide valuable support for teachers as well as resources for pupils to use in the classrooms. The work of teachers is regularly monitored through analysis of planning, sampling of pupils' work and occasional observations of lessons. Weaknesses in the use of information and communication technology as a resource have been identified for development, although one or two teachers are making effective use of computers when it is appropriate. For example, in Year 6, pupils have used the BBC history web site to find out about the Blitz.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112 Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. The curriculum is now well organised, a computer suite has been developed and teaching staff have received training to improve both their skills and confidence in teaching the subject. The acting headteacher, as the subject co-ordinator, has been instrumental in bringing about these changes and has been a driving force behind the improvements. Action plans are now in place to develop the subject further

and the school is well placed to develop the subject in other areas of the curriculum. A small number of information and communication technology lessons were seen during the inspection, but an examination of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and evidence from pupils' work suggest that their skills and knowledge have risen to average levels. It is, however, uncertain how much of this knowledge has been gained in school and how much at home.

113 By Year 6, many pupils are able to locate information using the Internet, especially in subjects like history and geography. They are beginning to develop the necessary skills to be able to create multimedia presentations and in a very good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils were working on title and introductory pages. Pupils in Year 5 are beginning to write their own programs to be able to control a small vehicle. Many pupils demonstrate a good recall of the symbols used in these programs and can explain the sequence of events to control speed and direction. Interviews with pupils indicate that their use of computer technology during a week is limited although this has been extended since the establishment of the computer suite. Use of computers for independent study is limited. Currently pupils do not have their own e-mail addresses. Pupils, especially those in Year 6, use spreadsheets and databases to help them solve problems in mathematics, collecting and sorting data to create graphs. Many possess the skills to create posters, changing colours, font and print size as well as importing pictures using cut and paste techniques. Pupils' word-processing skills are developed appropriately, although opportunities to compose their work directly on to the screen are limited. Younger pupils experience the use of simulations, for example when they re-design a duck to ensure that it is able to fly in a straight line. This helps them to understand how to vary one factor while others remain constant.

114 Pupils enjoy information and communication technology, most make satisfactory progress in acquiring the necessary skills and all look forward to lessons. The computer suite is cramped with three pupils often expected to work at one computer, but plans are already in place to improve this. Computers in classrooms were underused during the inspection and the benefits of information and communication technology are not yet a part of enough lessons. Teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, is good and sometimes very good and teachers have good levels of skill and understanding of the subject. Lessons are well planned, move with a good pace and many pupils learn well. Due to the limited facilities in the computer suite, some pupils do not have enough 'hands on' experience and this slows the rate of learning for some.

115 A detailed programme of work is used well by teachers to plan lessons. Systems to assess pupils' progress are being implemented but these are in need of further development. Computer resources are at satisfactory levels but some areas of the curriculum are not sufficiently well covered by appropriate software. This is recognised by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator in her action plan for the improvement of the subject.

## **MUSIC**

116 As so little music teaching and learning was seen during the period of the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on standards of work or on the quality of the teaching. Teachers' planning, school policies and schemes of work were examined and interviews with pupils were conducted, which all indicate that music is a regular part of the school curriculum.

117 Pupils have the opportunity to listen to different types of music by various composers and, in a good link with the development of writing skills, write about the moods these pieces convey. Older pupils know the names of a variety of different composers, including Mozart

and Benjamin Britten, and also experience music from other traditions and cultures, such as India, China and Africa, often in assemblies. Throughout the school, pupils have the opportunity to compose their own music, usually using percussion instruments. There is less evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to compose their own pieces. In discussion, pupils know and use accurate musical vocabulary and are comfortable using words such as *tempo*, *pitch* and *duration*. Older pupils and the school choir take part in music festivals and time is spent in learning and perfecting the singing. The quality of singing in assemblies is largely satisfactory but could be improved if more of the older pupils joined in. Many pupils have some knowledge of musical notation but not all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder or other musical instrument. The school uses the local peripatetic music service to provide tuition for pupils wishing to learn to play instruments such as the piano, flute, drums or clarinet and this helps to raise the overall standard of music in the school.

118 Music does not have a high priority in the current school improvement plan. Discussions with the co-ordinator indicate that some teachers lack confidence in teaching music and would benefit from some additional training. Visiting musicians from, for example, a steel band and from brass and string groups all enhance the pupils' music curriculum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119 Standards of attainment in physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. They are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides a well-balanced programme of physical activities throughout the year which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils learn to play games, participate in gymnastic activities and respond to music through dance. Older pupils take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential visit to an outdoor education centre. Pupils in Year 5 have swimming lessons at a local pool. By the time they leave school, most are competent swimmers.

120 Pupils throughout the school develop control, co-ordination and balance and have an awareness of space and the need to use it well as part of their physical activities. They develop skills in the use of small apparatus, including a variety of ways of sending, receiving and travelling with a ball. They develop an understanding of, and play a variety of, team games. Pupils develop skills in athletics and have a clear understanding of the benefits of vigorous exercise and the effects of exercise on the body. The opportunities provided for teamwork and a sense of fair play support the development of pupils' social skills.

121 The school now has a clear policy which provides guidance for teachers in planning appropriate activities for all areas of the curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection which has supported improvements in teaching. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. None of the teaching observed was less than satisfactory and at times it was good. In the most effective lessons, teachers offer plenty of praise and immediate feedback to the pupils. Teachers set appropriate challenges, provide clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to develop skills. Questioning is used effectively and use is made of pupils as exemplars of good practice. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and contain appropriate warm-up activities. In the best lessons, teachers regularly provide new challenges and encourage pupils to achieve higher standards. Relationships and class management are good. This results in safe, controlled lessons where pupils listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. Teaching is enthusiastic and this is reflected in pupils' response. They clearly enjoy lessons. They are very co-operative when working in groups and are reliable and sensible when putting out or storing equipment. When teaching is less effective, the pace of the lesson is slow and activities lack sufficient challenge.



122 A good range of extra-curricular, physical and sporting activities is planned throughout the year and supports the physical education curriculum. Teachers and parents provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills in football, netball, badminton and dance. The local tennis and cricket clubs also provide some coaching. The school provides opportunities for competition within school through inter-house matches in a range of sports and also takes part in competition with other schools.

123 The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. The policy and scheme of work provide useful guidance for teachers. Planning is monitored satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. There is a good selection of apparatus and equipment to meet National Curriculum requirements. The school has a spacious hall that enables gymnastics, dance and indoor games to take place. Outdoor facilities consist of playground areas and a playing field. The school grounds are used effectively to develop skills of orienteering. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

124 Standards are in line with expectations based on the evidence from four lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils in Year 6. This is a similar judgement to the one made in the last inspection.

125 By Year 6, pupils have a secure framework that they can use to study and understand major world faiths. They know the names of the major faiths and understand that followers believe in God and/or a number of gods. They know that the faiths have many common threads that run through them, including: worship and prayer; special places for worship; celebrations and festivals; the use of symbols; holy books that contain the teachings and guidance for followers; and spiritual leaders who lead worship. Although they know that in each faith these characteristics take different forms, they are not very confident about the detail and their knowledge is weaker than their general understanding. This reflects the rather fragmented approach that is used in planning the curriculum. Pupils do not spend significant amounts of time studying any particular religion before they move on to a new area of study. This gives them little opportunity to develop and consolidate their knowledge. Teachers do not reinforce pupils' knowledge consistently, for example of the holy books they learnt about previously when introducing a new one, or look for similarities and differences between religions, for example the giving of presents during Eid and Christmas.

126 Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and behave well. They show respect for the values and beliefs of others and treat artefacts with respect and care.

127 Teaching is satisfactory, although some teachers are not confident about their own subject knowledge and this leads to missed opportunities as described above. They overcome this in individual lessons by having detailed notes to support their teaching. As in other subjects, the teachers explained the learning objectives to the pupils in the more effective lessons, and this helped them to work towards the goals with the teacher. In most lessons, discussions are well managed and are used effectively to question pupils in order to check their understanding. In the best lessons, questions are used to challenge pupils to reflect on what they already know in order to deepen their understanding. This happened, for example, in a well-taught lesson in Year 5, when pupils were challenged to make links between the life styles, attitudes and beliefs of vicars and rabbis. When appropriate, teachers make good use of artefacts and other resources, such as videos to make learning more meaningful and accessible to pupils. This was the case in a Year 3 lesson, when a video was

used well to help pupils understand what it was like for Muslims to fast, and in Year 6, when pupils explored and speculated on the purpose of the objects on a Hindu Puja tray.

128 The school follows the new locally agreed syllabus and makes use of the detailed guidance that this provides. As in other subjects, the long-term plan ensures coverage of the syllabus and half-termly planning identifies clearly what pupils will learn, and informs weekly lessons. Currently, pupils' learning is not assessed although the syllabus does provide guidance on levels of attainment. The enthusiastic part-time teacher, who leads the subject, manages it effectively despite the limited time she can give to it. She has identified the need to improve her colleagues' confidence in teaching the subject and has organised training to improve this.