

INSPECTION REPORT

BENFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Portslade, Brighton

LEA area: City of Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114412

Headteacher: Mr G. Franceschi

Reporting inspector: John William Paull
22028

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th June 2002

Inspection number: 196934

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	255 Old Shoreham Road Portslade Brighton East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Holyoake
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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22028	John William Paull	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Special educational needs	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12289	Susan Burgess	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English Design and technology History	
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Physical education	
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	Art Geography French Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Benfield Junior has 309 seven to eleven year olds on its roll. It is a community school for boys and girls in Portslade in the new city of Brighton and Hove. It is a little bigger than other schools of its type. The school is part of a national initiative known as 'On Track'. This scheme brings together under one organisation a range of different services and agencies that help to enhance teaching and learning. Nearly all pupils currently attending the school are white, although a few are from families that originated in other European countries, and another small group originated in the Asian sub-continent. Nevertheless, over two per cent speak English as an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. However, only very few are at early stages of acquiring English. The main languages represented are Bengali, Punjabi and Spanish. Currently, about 17 per cent are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Nearly 40 per cent of pupils are identified with special educational needs, which is well above average. Most of these pupils experience learning difficulties and a few of these are severe. Other significant groups include pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulty and those with speech or communication difficulties. Seven pupils have a statement of special needs, which is above average for a school of this size. The overall attainment of pupils entering the school in Year 3 is below average and while the socio-economic circumstances of most families in the area around the school are average, those of another sizeable group are below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Benfield is a good school that has passed through a difficult period of unavoidable absences of staff during the past eighteen months. Nevertheless, by the time that they leave in Year 6, its pupils achieve well in relation to their knowledge and understanding when they begin in Year 3. The headteacher is a good leader; governors are fully supportive and knowledgeable, and the staff are conscientious and plan their work carefully. Teaching is good and pupils of different prior attainments, including those with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language, learn effectively. Behaviour is usually good. Taking these and similar factors into account, value for money is good.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment in art, physical education and singing are above national expectations in Year 6.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good, so pupils learn and progress well.
- The 'On Track' scheme is used very well to enhance provision for different groups of pupils, especially those with special educational needs.
- What is taught is well planned, covering a good range of relevant activities that challenge and interest pupils, including very good activities outside lessons.
- Opportunities for personal development are good and nearly all pupils enjoy their school. As a result, attitudes to learning are usually very good. Furthermore, behaviour and relationships are good. These strengths contribute well to the pace at which pupils learn.
- A high proportion of parents identify that their children enjoy school and make good progress. As a result, parents' views of the school are generally good.

What could be improved

- At the end of Year 6, standards of attainment in English and mathematics are below average.
- Attendance is well below the national average, partly because an increasing number of parents take their children on holiday during term time, affecting their children's learning adversely.
- The use of assessment to inform planning and progress is not rigorous enough, other than in English and mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its inspection of June 1997. It has introduced or improved several important aspects that were raised as key issues at that time. Despite falling back in 2001, by the time pupils leave in Year 6, overall standards of attainment are generally higher now, especially in reading, art, physical education and singing. Although the quality of teaching was described as good in the previous report, it was included as a key issue. Many unsatisfactory lessons had been observed and a relatively low proportion of teaching was very good. In this inspection, only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed and very good teaching occurred frequently, so considerable improvement has been made. One reason is that the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully and, another is that monitoring and support of teaching have also improved, which was another key issue in the last report. Statutory requirements in geography are now met and what is taught is adapted to the needs of different groups of pupils well. High standards of extra-curricular activity have been maintained and pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are also much better. However, attendance, which has been good in the past, has dropped back. Several parents are beginning to take their children on holiday during term time and systems to monitor and promote attendance are insufficient in the context of this recent phenomenon.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	E	E	E	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	E	D	E	E*	average C below average D
Science	E	E	E	E	well below average E

The table shows that the school has struggled to reach average levels in National Curriculum tests in all three subjects, both in comparison with national figures and with the averages of similar schools. Its best performances, in English in 1999 and mathematics in 2000, have still been below average. In 2001, compared with similar schools, its results in mathematics were in the bottom five per cent nationally. However, these comparisons hide the fact that overall results were improving steadily until 2000 and were much better than at the time of the last inspection. For example, the previous report showed that, in 1996, only 46 per cent of pupils in Year 6 attained the expected level for their age in English, whereas in 2000, 69 per cent did so. Similar gains were made in mathematics and science, which was recognised when the school won an achievement award. National results have also improved since 1996, so although the school's figures are much better, they remain well below the national averages. Two main reasons have been found for the school's disappointing results in 2001. First, half the pupils in the year group that took the tests were identified with special educational needs. Although provision for these pupils was generally good, and they achieved well compared with their knowledge and attainment when they first came to Benfield, they did not reach the normally expected levels. Secondly, unavoidable staff absences interrupted pupils' preparations for the tests, adversely affecting their results. However, during this inspection, standards of work that were seen in English and mathematics were below rather than well below average and, in science, were around average, representing a return to the improving picture of 2000, which suggests that achievement in this year group is also good. All groups of pupils, including those of different ethnicity, whether or not they speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, achieve well compared with their attainment on first joining the school. Attainment in other subjects, including information and communication technology and

religious education, meets nationally expected levels. Strengths occur in art and design, physical education and singing, in which standards are above those normally expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils enjoy learning and usually try very hard in lessons. They respond with gratitude to their teachers' efforts on their behalf.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good – pupils respond well to good teaching, so behaviour in lessons is nearly always good and often it is very good. However, when not directly supervised, a few pupils find it difficult to match the school's high standards all the time.
Personal development and relationships	Usually good – pupils respect their teachers and are polite and helpful. They usually get on well with each other, but occasionally something may be said or done without appreciation of its effect on someone else. Nevertheless, pupils respect each other's cultures and are tolerant towards different customs.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory – attendance is well below the national average. Some parents take their children on holiday during term time.

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.

Overall, teaching through the school is good. It is very good in Year 3. During the inspection, the proportion of good teaching throughout the school was high. Furthermore, examples of very good teaching also occurred in all year groups, with a particularly high proportion in Year 3. Slightly more very good teaching was observed in Year 6 than in Years 4 and 5 and an excellent violin lesson also took place in Year 6. Only two examples of unsatisfactory teaching were observed; these were unsatisfactory owing to poor expectations of what pupils could achieve. These lessons were in different classes and involved science. However, other evidence suggests that it was not typical and experiments and testing are usually well taught. Teaching of this overall good quality is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. It contributes strongly to pupils' learning of basic skills and is the main reason why standards were better in 2000 than in 1997. Staff absences contributed to a dip in standards in 2001. However, the situation is better now and pupils' learning of basic skills and acquisition of knowledge is now improving again. Teachers and classroom assistants use their day-to-day knowledge of pupils skilfully, adapting work to meet their needs. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, and provision is enhanced by the availability of advice and support through the school's involvement in the 'On Track' project. Throughout the school, teachers have good knowledge of the National Curriculum and use it to plan effectively. Management of pupils is often very good, leading to good behaviour and very good effort on the part of pupils. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, so teaching of English and mathematics is good. Pupils therefore learn basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – what is taught has a good range, including French. It is enhanced further with visits, visitors and a very good range of activities outside lessons. It is also well planned, ensuring that the quality is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and effective. She liaises with outside agencies very well to the benefit of pupils. Teaching assistants are well trained and support pupils well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good – pupils with English as an additional language are supported well. Teachers ensure that they understand how to make progress. Other pupils involve them fully in work groups and playground activity.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good – the groups in which pupils work are changed for a variety of planned reasons, which helps them to support each other. Art, religious education and music contain good teaching about other cultures. Values of tolerance and care for the world are based on good provision to promote self-esteem and provision for pupils to develop their ideas of a moral code is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall, although the 'On Track' scheme provides very good opportunities to promote personal development. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and meet local requirements. Assessment of academic progress is good in English and mathematics, although its use is less rigorous in other subjects. Behaviour is monitored well. However, arrangements to improve attendance are not rigorous enough.

The school's partnership with parents is sound and the quality of information that is provided about their children's progress is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good – the headteacher leads the staff well, supported strongly by the acting deputy. Teachers share a vision for the future of the school, although management of what is taught has been hampered by staff absences.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good – governors understand and fulfil their role well. Chairs of committees are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses in the areas for which they have responsibility.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good – procedures for monitoring teaching and what is taught have led to improvements in the quality of what is provided for pupils. Information that is gathered is shared with governors and used to set priorities effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory – spending is monitored well and funds that are provided for specific reasons are spent accordingly. However, staffing costs are high, which restricts flexibility in the use of funding.

Governors and senior staff are fully aware of the need to achieve best value for public funds. Competing suppliers' prices are checked before orders are sent out and expert advice is sought before committing money to capital projects. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate to teach the National Curriculum, although play areas are rather barren. The headteacher and governors are aware of this and the school has successfully bid for funding to rectify this deficiency.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Their children like school and are expected to work hard and do their best.▪ Teaching is good and their children make good progress.▪ The school is well led and managed and the staff and headteacher are approachable.▪ The school provides their children with an interesting range of activities outside lessons.▪ The school helps their children to grow in maturity and behaviour is good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A significant minority believes that the school does not work closely with them and that information about their children's progress is insufficient.▪ Others believe that their children do not receive the correct amount of homework.

At the pre-inspection meeting and in questionnaires, parents' views of the school were generally positive. Inspectors agree with these views. The school acknowledges that it could do more to involve parents. Its planned use of the relocated parents' room indicates that this situation is likely to improve. Arrangements for homework are adequate and inspectors saw it set in most classes. However, it is likely that staff absences have caused an inconsistent pattern.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, the overall attainment of pupils is below average. During their time at Benfield nearly all pupils make good progress. This progress reflects the overall good quality of teaching and learning through the school. A high proportion of pupils are identified with special educational needs. Very good provision is available to these pupils, so they make progress at good rates too, and generally achieve well in relation to their prior attainments.
2. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment towards the end of Year 6 were reported as in line with national expectations in mathematics and science, but below what is nationally expected in English. However, these judgements varied considerably from the results of National Curriculum tests in both 1996 and 1997. In 1996, for example, test results were well below average in English and science, although in line in mathematics. In 1997, results were again well below average in English, rose to below, rather than well below average in science, but dropped to below average in mathematics. In 2001, which was the school's worst year for some time, National Curriculum test results were well below average in all three subjects. However, it should be remembered that national averages are much higher now than they were in 1996, so these results are being compared with higher figures. In fact, closer analysis shows that in 1996, in English, only 46 per cent of pupils in the school's Year 6 reached the expected level for their age, whereas in 2001, this figure had risen to 60 per cent. In science, only 55 per cent attained the expected level in 1996, whereas in 2001, 68 per cent did so. Only in mathematics did results drop back. It is likely that a prolonged absence, due to illness, of the Year 6 leader contributed to this picture, as this teacher was also the subject's co-ordinator. Another reason that accounts for disappointing results in all three subjects is that this year group had an unusually high proportion (over half) of pupils with identified special educational needs. Under these circumstances, pupils' overall achievements were good. Furthermore, since the last inspection underlying trends had been steadily advancing for several years up to the year 2000. Indeed, in 2000, the school won an achievement award from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (an agency of central government that publishes information about what should be taught in state schools and colleges), in recognition of its improved results.
3. In 2001, given the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, the school's targets for English and mathematics were set fairly high and it did not reach them. However, it was close in 2000. Its targets for 2002 are higher still and, although the standard of work that was seen in the inspection is clearly improving, these targets are again unlikely to be met.
4. During the inspection, owing to good teaching and the quality of what is taught, the standards of work that was seen towards the end of Year 6 were below average, rather than well below, in both English and mathematics and were close to average in science. These standards suggest that overall attainment has returned to the improving pattern that had been established up to 2000.
5. In English, pupils' achievements are generally good. Compared with their starting points, nearly all of them make good progress, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, whether or not they speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs. Good teaching ensures that in speaking and listening, pupils grow steadily in confidence as they move through the school. However, pupils' spoken English is often colloquial, lacking standard forms of syntax and, in the case of several pupils of lower attainment, general vocabulary is rather limited. Nearly all pupils through the school read with enjoyment. Numbers of pupils who attain well for their age increase as they move through the school. However, only a few begin in Year 3 at a level higher than expected and several other pupils struggle at first, so despite good teaching and a strong emphasis on helping pupils to learn basic skills,

standards of work remain a little below average at the end of Year 6. The pattern is similar in writing. However, pupils with special educational needs are well targeted and these pupils achieve particularly well in this aspect of the subject. A few are attaining close to the expected level for their age and others are progressing well. In Year 6, several pupils complete extended pieces of writing with confidence, using speech, question and exclamation marks accurately. Pupils are proud of their achievements and presentation is usually of a good standard.

6. Pupils' literacy skills are employed well across the curriculum. For example, they are taught about 'the contents page', indexes and glossaries, and examples of using these pages to pinpoint relevant information were seen in history and geography, amongst others.
7. In mathematics at the end of Year 6, overall attainment in work that was seen was below average, which is better than indicated in the 2001 National Curriculum test results. This improvement has occurred partly because teaching has been more settled, and partly because fewer pupils in the year group have learning difficulties. A reasonable proportion of pupils understand basic number well, including place value, decimals, fractions and simple percentages. Nearly all pupils use a good range of standard units to measure and describe shape and space. Pupils also use data well and understand the language of probability. However, a smaller, but significant, number struggles with these concepts and attains at a lower level. This is the main reason that overall attainment is below, rather than in line with, the national average. Nevertheless, pupils' achievements are generally good when compared with their attainments on entry to Year 3. Furthermore, several higher attaining pupils are confident with the use of decimals up to two places and understand, for example, multiplication of three and four-digit numbers by numbers with two digits. These pupils are also confident with such ideas as the use of degrees to relate measurements of angles to amounts of turn and segments of circles.
8. Numeracy is used well across the curriculum. Charts, tables and graphs were found to present information in, for example, science and geography. Pupils understand the relative sizes of numbers well for their different ages through the school. Measurement is used effectively to plan and design in design and technology and art. However, information and communication technology was seen in use by only a few pupils to support work in mathematics.
9. In science, current attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Nearly all pupils acquire basic skills well across all aspects of the subject. Pupils plan and record scientific tests and experiments well. They understand scientific facts about living processes, materials and their properties and physical science, such as electrical circuits and forces at the expected levels for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and other distinct groups, such as those with English as an additional language, make progress at similar rates to all other pupils. Achievement is good compared with pupils' starting points.
10. In religious education and information and communication technology, attainment broadly matches national expectations at the end of Year 6. For example, in information and communication technology, pupils knew how to prepare multimedia presentations and were adept at controlling computers, using toolbar buttons and the mouse to operate a range of applications within programs. In religious education, understanding of main religions is sound. Pupils also know many stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and understand their significance to Christianity. Attainment in other subjects also broadly matches what is normally expected, except in art and design, physical education and singing, in which standards are above this level. Pupils' singing enhances the quality of collective worship in assemblies.
11. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs demonstrate that their requirements are understood well, so realistic targets are set for them. These targets are usually related to literacy or behaviour, and less often to numeracy. As a result, the specific needs of pupils whose prior attainments just reach, or narrowly miss the expected levels for their age are not met consistently enough. Classroom

assistants are well trained to help pupils attain their targets, supporting them well, and teachers adapt their planning, so these pupils attain well at their own levels of understanding. Pupils with English as an additional language are also supported well. As a result, they acquire English quickly and make progress across the full National Curriculum. A few pupils in the early stages of acquiring English are identified with special educational needs as well. These pupils receive good support both to acquire English and for their special needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Almost all parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children like school. Pupils are interested in their work, enjoy reading and generally sustain their concentration during lessons. Where teachers have high standards and expectations, pupils respond very positively to them. Pupils are supportive of each other when working in groups and pairs, when, for example, in a science lesson, they used magnets to find paperclips in a bucket of rice, or when they drew a sketch map of the local area in preparation for geography fieldwork. Pupils are supportive, tolerant and helpful in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, higher attaining pupils successfully supported others of lower attainment to the benefit of both. Pupils also work well independently when required. In Year 4, for example, they enjoyed devising co-ordinates to challenge each other during numeracy. Those in Year 3 confidently recorded the outcomes of their science experiments with solids added to water. These judgements apply equally to pupils of all ethnic groups and of different prior attainments.
13. Behaviour during lessons, in assemblies and around the school is good. As with attitudes to learning, this judgement represents an improvement since the last inspection. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils are polite and confident with adults and are happy to talk about their work. Relationships between pupils are generally good although, on occasions, pupils may need help to resolve difficulties within friendship groups. Exclusions have increased from none at the time of the last inspection to two fixed-term exclusions last year. Another four have occurred in the current school year. The school actively and consistently discourages bullying and instances of unacceptable behaviour between pupils happen rarely. These instances are kept to a minimum because vigilance of teachers and other staff is high and intervention is good. Times are planned when pupils sit in a circle and are encouraged to speak of matters that concern them, and opportunities such as the recent anti-bullying week are well used to reflect on behaviour and how it affects others.
14. Attendance, at 92.8 per cent in the last year, is well below the national average and shows a marked decrease since the last inspection. This situation has not improved in the current school year, although unauthorised absences remain broadly in line with the national average. This unsatisfactory rate of attendance is partly due to the poor attendance of a very few pupils. Another major factor is the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time. In the last complete year, pupils missed a total of 400 school days for this reason, which is unacceptable as it affects pupils' work to an extent that is unreasonable to expect teachers to make up. Most pupils are punctual to school and registration sessions are orderly and efficient.
15. Personal development is good and enhanced by the increasing responsibilities that pupils undertake as they progress through the school. They act well as monitors, undertaking practical tasks such as collecting and returning registers to the office. By Year 6 pupils set up the hall for assemblies, chair school council meetings with fairness, and serve as house captains. House captains accept their responsibilities well, acting as good role models to younger pupils in their house. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were particularly pleased with the success of a 'buddy' scheme. They described how older pupils befriend younger ones, helping them to sort out any 'scrapes or difficulties' that they might get into. Parents also pointed out that older pupils are very mature in this work and that sometimes they continue the relationship into secondary school. Some Year 6 pupils have produced their own magazine,

entitled 'Out Of This World', which is lively and interesting to others. Pupils' personal and social development is also enhanced by their enthusiastic support of the very many extra-curricular activities that are available. These opportunities result in the acquisition of values such as loyalty to the group that they attend voluntarily, and perseverance over time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was adjudged as good. However, the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was high. Furthermore, the incidence of very good teaching was quite low. In this inspection, teaching remains good. However, the overall quality is clearly much better than it was. Only two lessons were unsatisfactory, and other evidence suggests that neither of these was typical. During the inspection, the overall quality was very good in Year 3 and the proportion of good teaching throughout the school was high, occurring frequently in literacy and numeracy hours. Examples of very good teaching occurred in all year groups, with the highest proportion in Year 3 and slightly more in Year 6 than in Years 4 and 5. An excellent violin lesson took place in Year 6. Teachers' management of pupils, including their organisation of groups, contributes very strongly to the overall quality. Pupils are taught in a variety of different groupings for different reasons. For literacy and numeracy hours pupils are often grouped according to their prior attainments in the particular subject. In numeracy, the parallel classes in each year are sometimes rearranged in order that pupils of similar ability can be taught together as a class. On other occasions, pupils of different prior attainments are paired. Inspectors were impressed with the benefit of this arrangement to both pupils in each pair. The type of help that the more able pupils are permitted to offer is clearly defined, which prevents them from doing all the work or from wasting their own time. Furthermore, the explanations that they give the less able consolidate their own understanding, as they must verbalise their knowledge in an understandable way. These flexible groupings also promote pupils' spiritual and social development. For example, as pupils mix and work with different pupils for a variety of reasons and purposes, their self-esteem is promoted strongly through helping others, the usefulness that the helpers feel, and the new learning that is acquired by those who are helped.
17. As a result of overall good teaching, pupils through the school learn basic skills well. Nearly all of them try hard, putting in a very good effort for their teachers and often showing pride in how they present their work. This good learning extends to pupils with special educational needs and to those of minority ethnic groups, whether or not their English is at an early stage.
18. Good teaching in English is based on thorough planning, which results in good acquisition of skills in reading and writing. However, the use of sessions at the end of lessons was inconsistent in both literacy and numeracy hours. Sometimes consolidation of what had been learnt was not sufficiently thorough and, on other occasions, little time was left to offer pupils ideas about what they might learn in the next lesson. Well-planned uses of support staff help lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to be fully included in lessons at their own level. Consequently, these pupils experience success, maintain a good level of self-esteem and achieve well. Weekly direct support from a teacher from the local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service focuses on helping pupils from minority ethnic groups to develop their literacy skills in English and is successful in helping them to make progress across the full curriculum. Good liaison opportunities have been developed with class teachers. Class teachers demand high standards of attention and behaviour from all their pupils. Pupils of all ages and abilities respond very well to this approach, maintaining a good pace in their work-rate and learning. Teachers' understanding of the National Literacy Strategy is generally good, resulting in good uses of a variety of texts that encourage pupils to explore ideas of plot and character. However, opportunities to correct poorly phrased spoken English were occasionally missed in lessons – particularly so when made by native speakers, and less so when made by speakers of English as an additional language. As patterns of speech can affect the way in which pupils write, this aspect is a weakness in an otherwise good picture.

19. Many good features are also occurring in the teaching of numeracy sessions. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In this subject, classes are often rearranged on the basis of pupils' prior attainments. Teachers then match planning to build on prior learning more intensively. Control of pupils is nearly always good, so time is used effectively to promote learning well. Owing to these features, a high proportion of good lessons was observed, including a few that were very good. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, to these good features, the teacher added questioning techniques of a high quality. This questioning led pupils' thinking about uses of multiples forward, step-by-step, without in any way deterring them from thinking for themselves. As a direct result, understanding of the ideas was thoroughly explored and pupils achieved well. Furthermore, numeracy is taught and used in a variety of subjects across the curriculum. For example, teaching of graphs, charts and tables to present information was found in science and geography. In music, older pupils were taught to count the time of different notes and, in their singing lesson together, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were reminded to think of the number of beats to help them sing a tune accurately. When teaching was satisfactory, rather than good or better, it was usually because the level of challenge in the lesson was insufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. Usually this fault involved pupils of high attainment or, sometimes, those of slightly below average ability. As a result, a few of them lost interest at times and the overall rate of learning dropped accordingly. Pupils most affected in this way were usually of slightly less than average attainment.
20. In science, the overall quality of teaching is good and includes examples of very good teaching. However, two unsatisfactory lessons were also observed, owing to lack of challenge and insufficient independence for pupils to carry out their own tasks. However, other evidence suggests that this finding is not typical in these classes. Generally, teachers plan well, assessing what pupils know, and using information well to move on to the next step appropriately.
21. In all other subjects the quality of teaching is generally good through the school, except in design and technology, geography, history and religious education in which it is satisfactory. Long-term planning is often good and teachers know their pupils well. However, in these subjects, what separates the satisfactory teaching from that of higher quality is the rigour with which evidence of pupils' prior attainment is used to adapt daily planning. Teachers' use of information and communication technology in what is taught is effective. Examples are the use in Year 3 of a program with paint applications to produce artwork, and the use of word processing to record information in a range of subjects, such as history and English.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are invariably well taught. Work is adapted for them and teachers ensure that classroom assistants know what to do to help them with their work. Precise targets are set for them. These targets often feature reading, spelling and behaviour and, less often, mathematics and other aspects of pupils' development. As a result, learning of basic skills in reading and writing is good, often very good, although numeracy is a little less well served in this respect. Pupils with English as an additional language are similarly well taught and supported. A specialist teacher promotes their needs and helps to ensure that such needs are understood and met.
23. A detailed marking policy has been introduced, which is followed adequately across the school. Marking in all subjects is thorough and up to date. However, small variations were observed in the quality of teachers' comments. When at their best, these explained how pupils might improve, offering guidance about presentation and challenging pupils to do even better. In other cases, such commentary was brief, offering just a word or two of encouragement. Several situations arose in which teachers were observed setting a formal homework or encouraging pupils to find something out at home. In the questionnaires and at the meeting, a significant minority of parents indicated a view that their children do not receive the correct amount of homework. Inspectors found that overall amounts are reasonable for the age groups in the school. However, variations may well have occurred during times when permanent members of the

teaching staff were absent. The headteacher and class teachers are fully aware of this situation and are seeking ways of avoiding it, should the situation arise again.

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

24. The school offers its pupils a broad range of learning opportunities of good quality, both during the school day and in the extra-curricular activities and visits that it offers. It meets all legal requirements of the National Curriculum, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when not all aspects of geography were taught. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to study French in Years 5 and 6. All subjects have appropriate amounts of time spent on them, and the school organises its day to make the maximum use of its timetable. This innovative use of time occurs through the simple device of ensuring that pupils' play and lunch breaks occur immediately before or at the ends of literacy and/or numeracy sessions. Therefore, no short periods of time arise that cannot be used successfully for a proper lesson, so useful amounts of time are created in the morning for other subjects. Religious education is taught according to the requirements of the local authority's agreed syllabus.
25. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school's attempts to ensure that all pupils experience equal opportunities to learn are of good quality. For example, the school has good systems for assessing special educational needs. The 'On Track' scheme provides a wide range of services and advice to spread skills that help teachers to teach. Consequently, it helps pupils to learn more effectively. Groups, known as 'nurture groups', provide opportunities for pupils to talk about and explain barriers to their learning that they experience, so such difficulties can be ameliorated. Direct teaching support from the teacher provided by the local authority's service for English as an additional language enables another key group of pupils to develop their language and literacy skills. The school has recently begun to identify gifted pupils and those with particular talents, so that provision can be made for them in subjects of the curriculum. However, the criteria used to identify such pupils are narrow, so some opportunities are still likely to be missed.
26. The school implements the National Literacy Strategy well, which contributed to the recent overall upward trend in standards that was registered up to 2000. The school has adapted the strategy to meet its own needs, for instance, by providing separate sessions outside the daily lesson for guided reading. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been used effectively. Lessons are planned well and good support is available for groups within classes. In other subjects the school makes selective use of national guidelines where they are relevant to its pupils' needs. Effective systems of planning are in place to ensure that all pupils within each year group have similar experiences.
27. A very good range of extra-curricular activities has been provided, in which a large number of pupils are involved. Sporting activities exist, such as football, netball, basketball, cross-country running and cricket and, in some cases, extend to opportunities for pupils to take part in inter-school competitions. Among other clubs are musical activities, such as the choir, and also cooking, gardening and chess. A residential visit is available for pupils in each year group, from a one-night stay in Year 3 to five days in France in Year 6. Many day visits to local places of interest are also provided. These outings, of which Preston Manor in Year 3, a fishing museum in Year 4, a synagogue in Year 5 and an exhibition about Anne Frank in Year 6 are examples, strongly support what is taught and thereby pupils' learning is enhanced. Visitors to the school also enrich learning in this way. They have contributed, for example, to work on Africa in Year 4 and the Romans in Year 6.
28. The school has made good provision for the personal, social and health education of its pupils. Appropriate education about sex is provided and the governors' policy meets statutory requirements. The school nurse provides additional support, and also does so in the area of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. The school has also introduced regular occasions when classes sit in a circle and talk about

matters that concern them personally. It is a strict rule at these times that no one who wants to speak should be interrupted or contradicted while they do so.

29. The school has established good links with the local community, which enhance pupils' learning. Local banks have supported its business enterprise scheme and it took part in the Brighton Festival this year, hitting headlines in the local newspaper for its display. A number of senior citizens come into the school to hear pupils read. Portslade College provides a strong and useful link with the teaching of physical education to pupils in Year 6, and the school receives pupils annually on courses in work experience from local secondary schools. Good relations with other local primary schools are also evident, both for inter-school competition and for liaison on curriculum and training matters, but the information the school receives when pupils transfer from infant schools is more variable, as are the transfer arrangements with secondary schools. The school provides opportunities for placements to a range of institutions that train students who wish to be teachers. It is well equipped to provide such students with good role-models on its staff, support and mentoring.
30. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good and provision for spiritual development particularly has improved since the last inspection.
31. Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually are good. Pupils' development is successfully promoted through assemblies, religious education, science, and personal, social and health education, and through the daily life of the school. For example, respect for the beliefs and customs of others is promoted effectively through studies of world religions and the tolerance for others that they share in their teachings. Daily assemblies include an act of collective worship that meets statutory requirements. During the week of inspection, the theme of these assemblies was the exploration and celebration of difference. Understanding and consideration of the plight of refugee children across the world were raised as part of this teaching. Staff also used the topical issue of World Cup football to illustrate differences in allegiance and point of view. In other areas of the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the world around them. In a science lesson, for example, pupils were genuinely excited to discover the seeds inside various fruits and vegetables. The way that teachers sometimes pair pupils helps to promote successful learning of various types, which produces feelings of self-esteem and values of respect and gratitude towards each other. Nurture groups are also provided and offer a calm, structured environment in which feelings of success and self-esteem are celebrated with pupils who might benefit from this support.
32. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff alike work hard to eliminate oppressive behaviour and to provide a clear moral code. They encourage pupils to be mature and sensible, and to tell the truth. Where necessary, pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on why their behaviour and attitudes towards others are unacceptable. The staff work well as a team and provide good role models of co-operation and personal support. In general, pupils are encouraged to applaud the efforts and achievements of others and they understand and support the idea of the 'star pupil' fairly.
33. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Lessons in personal, social and health education and times when pupils sit in a circle to discuss their own thoughts and concerns aim to build up confidence in others and general sociability. The 'On Track'" project provides opportunities for weekly counselling for those pupils who might benefit from it. It promotes ideas of co-operation and working together with other people. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities is available and pupils take part in a good range of sporting fixtures. Every pupil has the opportunity to take part in school productions. Older pupils are encouraged to undertake increased responsibilities and the social development of all year groups is enhanced through residential visits. In all age groups and subjects, opportunities are planned for pupils to collaborate during lessons and to co-operate in the use of materials and resources.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. Through aspects of English, geography, art and music, children are introduced to their own and other national cultural heritages. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to explore the values and traditions of various cultures through effective links with the local community and further afield. Good use is made of heritage sites in the local area, such as Anne of Cleves's house in Lewes and registration is sometimes conducted in French. Pupils in Year 6 corresponded in French with pen pals, in preparation for their residential visit. During work on Africa, pupils tried out techniques in batik and studied traditional tribal masks. Pupils have also been introduced to the work of, for instance, L.S. Lowry, Van Gogh and Paul Klee during art and design. Older pupils were given the opportunity to take part in a costumed children's carnival parade during the Brighton Festival. It is hoped that this will become part of the school's regular provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in developing effective procedures to monitor and assess pupils' academic performance and achievements. A good range of tests is used and results are recorded. This information is used to predict pupils' levels in English and mathematics for subsequent years and their progress is tracked thoroughly. Strengths and weaknesses in learning are then used to inform future planning. Data are also checked to see whether a weakness in teaching – for example, in subject knowledge or in planning – might be contributing to lower rates of progress. Decisions about the management of performance are included in this process, for example, whether it is simply adaptations in what is taught that are required to make improvements, or whether in-service training may be needed. The data from optional National Curriculum tests that are taken when pupils are in Year 5 are used to help set the school's targets for the same pupils when they reach the end of Year 6. These data are also used to set individual targets in English and mathematics and to track individuals' achievements. Every pupil has a record of achievement that includes results of tests as well as pieces of work. New computer software has recently been purchased that will enable teachers to analyse data of a very specific nature, including, for example, the progress of pupils with English as an additional language, or those of a particular group or background. Teachers assess samples of pupils' work and the level that they award is sometimes checked in a group to ensure that everyone applies the same criteria. Such levelled work is kept for future reference. Procedures for assessing pupils' work in several other subjects have not yet been fully introduced. Although procedures have been devised, these are applied without sufficient rigour in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. Staff and governors are aware of the deficiency and further development forms part of the school's improvement plan. The school has recently compiled a register of its most able pupils, but provision for them is only just beginning and, currently, the criteria used to identify such pupils are too narrow.
36. The school has a welcoming, friendly climate that helps pupils to feel secure and confident. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day. This provision represents another improvement since the last inspection, when it was felt that not all areas of the playground were supervised adequately. When practical help is needed, such as when pupils require first aid, it is given calmly and quickly. There is, however, nowhere central and comfortable for pupils to lie down and rest if they feel unwell. Governors conduct health and safety checks of the site once a month and a formal risk assessment is to be carried out annually. Recent improvements to security have resulted in a safer environment for everyone inside the building. However, a potentially dangerous situation still exists at the end of the school day, when cars and taxis are manoeuvring in the very restricted parking area and driveway at a time when other parents and pupils are using it on foot.
37. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory. The school's policy is overdue for revision but locally-agreed guidelines are followed. The headteacher, as the designated responsible person, is due to undertake more training in the very near future and will share this with the rest of the staff to ensure that knowledge and procedures are up to date. Very good liaison is available with outside specialists, agencies and services through the government-funded 'On Track' project. These services provide targeted

support for pupils and parents with the overall aim of preventing or ameliorating difficulties that might prevent pupils from learning effectively.

38. Behaviour is closely monitored in a variety of ways, including a log, teachers' weekly diary sheets and records kept by lunchtime supervisors. Incidents and trends are discussed at staff and senior management team meetings. The headteacher takes personal responsibility for monitoring all the records kept and, if problems persist, invites parents into school to discuss a resolution. Good work and behaviour are successfully promoted with a system of rewards that pupils understand and value. Discussions during a recent anti-bullying week effectively raised pupils' awareness of the issues involved.
39. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are unsatisfactory. Routines have been established and, when necessary, specific support is available from the education welfare officer. However, unexplained absences are not always followed up on the first day (which is the latest guidance) and checks on lateness are not carried out rigorously. Despite the fact that attendance levels continue to fall and are now well below the national average, the school's only promotion of good attendance is an award of individual certificates to good attenders. Under the circumstances, attendance figures are not presented prominently enough in either the prospectus or the governors' annual report to parents. Nor are they displayed regularly where parents can see them. A recently installed computerised system is now available to staff in the office to help with the monitoring of attendance and punctuality. The school has had some success in discouraging parents from taking their children on holiday during school terms. However, this practice remains a major factor in the school's unsatisfactory rate of attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents are, in general, supportive of the school. Of those who expressed an opinion, almost all were confident that their child is making good progress, that teaching is good and that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Almost as many felt that the school is well led and managed and provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. A significant minority, however, had reservations about the quality of information that they receive and about the amount of homework their children are given. Some would like the school to work more closely with parents. However, as only 19 parents came to the pre-inspection meeting, the views of many parents remain unknown. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views but also consider that not enough is currently being done to involve more of them in the life of the school. However, the planned use of the new parents' room indicates that this situation will improve as parents begin to know and use it as a base.
41. A few parents regularly help in classrooms and with reading. Others support the school in practical ways such as helping with the art club and working in the grounds. The very active Benfield Association organises popular social and fund-raising events, and nearly £4,000 was donated to the school last year. This money contributed towards the cost of library shelving, sports, gardening equipment, Golden Jubilee coins for all pupils and the refurbishment of the parents' room.
42. Most parents attend consultation evenings to discuss their children's progress with teachers. Parents provide good support for their children and to the school, attending events such as sports day, the sponsored walk, class assemblies and school productions in very good numbers. The school welcomes such links strongly as it has a good impact on pupils' attitudes and, consequently, on their learning to know that their parents support them in these ways. More formal occasions, however, such as the governors' annual meeting, are very poorly attended.
43. Both the quality and quantity of information for parents are good. At the start of each term an attractive magazine that a parent governor produces goes home to all parents. This useful booklet includes diary dates, sports news and outlines of each year group's topic for the term ahead. The same governor

oversees the production of the prospectus and governors' report to parents and ensures that they contain relevant and statutory information. Additional information is sent out in regular school newsletters throughout the year. Opportunities are provided for parents to meet with teachers each term, with open afternoons in the autumn and summer. Annual reports clearly describe pupils' attainment and progress and include targets for future improvement. Parents are kept fully informed of their child's detention record and, if necessary, are invited to meet the headteacher to discuss behavioural problems. They are also contacted when there has been an improvement and staff consider their child has become more mature, responsible and considerate towards others. Statutory requirements to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in reviews and statements of provision are met fully.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were good. The headteacher, supported by her deputy, directed the school effectively. Governors were active in their involvement. Since the last inspection, a new deputy and headteacher have been appointed. The deputy head is now headteacher and, although another deputy has been appointed, the post had not yet been taken up at the time of writing, so an acting deputy was in place during the inspection. The school's development has continued well under the new headteacher. He is a good leader and teachers and governors alike expressed their confidence in him. His vision for the school's future is strong. It is based on greater involvement of parents in the education of their children, returning attainment to the pattern of rising standards that were a feature until 2000 and maintaining high levels of care. In the inspection of June 1997, subject co-ordinators and other managers were knowledgeable in what was delegated to them, but they had too few opportunities to have an impact on the quality of those features for which they were responsible. As a result, the quality of teaching, aspects of pupils' attainment and monitoring and support of subjects became key issues for improvement. These issues have been tackled well. Teaching is now strong and contains many very good features. The element of unsatisfactory teaching that was previously evident has almost disappeared.
45. What is taught has been improved to the point that it is now of good breadth and quality and where statutory elements were missing, in geography, for example, they are now in place. Monitoring of the curriculum is thorough. Nevertheless, several co-ordinators acknowledge that more needs to be done to introduce rigorous procedures for assessing pupils' work. However, what has been introduced in literacy and numeracy is particularly good and is a good model for spreading to other subjects. Furthermore, a few individual teachers have particularly good ideas in this respect, so examples of good practice are available to emulate. Subject co-ordinators are clearly influencing provision to a greater extent than previously. In nearly all subjects, relevant, well-constructed policies and schemes of work have been introduced. These documents support planning through the school well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively. For example, co-ordination of these subjects is based on good understanding of the uses of data from National Curriculum tests and non-statutory tests to track pupils' progress and to set targets. Where weaknesses have occurred, one of the main causes has been an unfortunate, but unavoidable, series of absences to key members of staff. For example, timetabling of the use of the computer suite has been found in need of review. During the inspection, it emerged that present arrangements led to times when this valuable resource was underused. Although the headteacher was aware of the situation, the co-ordinator had been absent. As a result, suggested changes to ameliorate the situation had been delayed until the full implications could be discussed and fully explored on his return. Another of these absences affected preparations for the 2001 National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 6, coinciding with a year in which a high proportion of pupils were identified with special educational needs. Results were clearly affected, especially in mathematics. Evidence of work seen in this inspection indicates that the school is in the process of recovering well from these setbacks.

46. The contribution of the governing body to support and strategic management is good. Chairs of committees are knowledgeable in their areas of responsibility and carry out their roles effectively. The chair of the curriculum committee, for example, was fully aware of the weaknesses that were previously found in geography. A system to receive strategic reports from co-ordinators was introduced after the last inspection to ensure that adequate development took place. This reporting remains in place and has clearly been effective. Other committees have similar arrangements, which ensure that their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is good. The school has sound policies for race equality and procedures to see that individuals and distinct groups can progress equally. As a result, pupils of different ethnic groups and prior attainments make progress at similar rates. Procedures for admission of pupils to the school's clubs and after-school activities are also applied equally to all. However, the school's written policy of equal opportunities is a brief document, which does not do justice to the school's practice, since in all aspects of what is provided, pupils are enabled to play a full part.
47. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its performance well. With the support of the local authority, an emphasis was placed on monitoring, supporting and improving the quality of teaching. This approach has been successful in raising overall standards, despite the setback in test results in 2001. However, not all co-ordinators have the opportunity to monitor teaching directly in their own subject. As a result, the whereabouts and extent of good practice in other classes is not fully known, so opportunities to spread and share it are sometimes missed. Nevertheless, procedures to manage improvements in teaching are good. Observations that take place are used to involve teachers in setting targets to develop their skills. These developments are linked to the school's improvement planning and data from tests and other sources are analysed to establish priorities for the school as a whole. The commitment of the whole staff to make improvements and work towards such targets and priorities is strong. Consequently, the capacity to succeed is good. Currently, the school has no newly qualified teachers. However, its staff handbook is a useful document, which contains plenty of relevant information. Effective links are maintained with colleges and university departments of teacher-training
48. Resources, including funding, are used satisfactorily. However, staffing costs are comparatively high, which restricts flexibility for other uses and sums set aside for contingency purposes are relatively low. Nevertheless, in practice, workable budgets have been set and priorities are successfully targeted with adequate funding. Sound use is made of new technology to support both the curriculum and administration. For example, a program to help with the monitoring of attendance has recently been purchased and is to be introduced soon. It has a potential to improve the rigour with which attendance is checked. Elements of curricular planning are held on computer and the budget is administered through an accounting package. Printouts are regularly provided for the headteacher and chair of the governors' finance committee to keep a check on patterns of spending. The chair of finance has a good knowledge of his role and is up to date in his understanding of the school's position. Funds that are provided for specific purposes are recorded under separate budget headings and are spent legitimately. Clerical staff are efficient and effective in their roles and are an asset in helping the school to run smoothly. Best value is sought satisfactorily by comparing prices in different catalogues, seeking quotations for repairs or maintenance works, and taking relevant professional advice about the quality of proposed purchases.
49. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are generally adequate for teaching the basic curriculum. The school has a stable complement of teaching staff. The headteacher and governors continue to target professional development and in-service training as priorities. Teaching assistants are both conscientious and well trained. They are also willing to train further for the roles that they undertake. Accommodation is satisfactory with good level access for people with physical disability. Space outside is, however, restricted, with little shade for pupils when they play. It is also limited in scope for physical education, especially for older pupils, so it is of considerable credit that standards in the subject are as high as they are. Learning resources are adequate, and storage and accessibility of equipment are also satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. The school's own identification of its strengths and weaknesses is good. The headteacher and governors have already identified nearly all features that inspectors have found in need of improvement. However, absences of key staff have slowed the introduction of some changes that were due to be made.

The governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Raise standards of attainment at the end of Year 6, by:
 - a) Increasing pupils' use and understanding of spoken forms of Standard English whenever appropriate (see paragraphs 5, 18 and 52).
 - b) Consistently using the plenary sessions of literacy and numeracy hours, first to consolidate what has been learnt, and then to explain to pupils what they will learn next (see paragraph 18).
 - c) Ensuring that more able pupils are working at a higher level than other pupils and not simply the same level expressed in more sophisticated terms (see paragraphs 19 and 61).
 - d) Ensuring that pupils whose prior attainment just reaches, or narrowly misses, the expected levels for their age are always challenged by work that is set for them (see paragraphs 11, 19, 22, 55, 56, 63 and 69).
 - e) Increasing the use of information and communication technology to support learning in mathematics (see paragraphs 8, 59 and 93).
2. Return levels of attendance to those of the previous inspection, by:
 - a) Ensuring that all parents understand the consequences of poor attendance on their children's learning (see paragraphs 14 and 64).
 - b) Following up absences more quickly and rigorously (see paragraph 39 and 48).
 - c) Bringing to parents' notice that authorised absences for any reason, including holidays, are entirely at the school's discretion, not the parents' (see paragraphs 14 and 39).
3. Review assessment to ensure that it is as rigorous in all other subjects as it is in English and mathematics, by:
 - a) Ensuring that the good procedures for assessment in literacy and numeracy are spread to other subjects across the curriculum in an appropriate and manageable form (see paragraphs 35, 45, 69, 75, 79, 83, 88 and 110).
 - b) Where co-ordinators identify members of staff with good assessment practice in their subjects, ensuring that it is always shared with, and modelled for, others (see paragraphs 47, 69 and 94).

Other features that governors may wish to include in an action plan.

1. Rationalise the use of the computer suite, so pupils have greater opportunities to practise the skills that they acquire in information and communication technology more frequently across the curriculum (see paragraphs 45 and 98).
2. Review long-term planning of religious education to ensure a deepening understanding of all world faiths as pupils move through the school (see paragraph 113).
3. Review arrangements for the identification of, and provision for, gifted and talented pupils (see paragraphs 25 and 35).
4. Rewrite the school's equal opportunities policy in such a way that it reflects and does justice to the good practice that exists (see paragraphs 25 and 46).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	31	12	2	0	0
Percentage	2	22	53	20	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	309
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	116

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	35	28	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	16	27
	Girls	20	11	19
	Total	38	27	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (68)	43 (74)	73 (78)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	24
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	35	39	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (70)	62 (76)	68 (70)
	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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	1
White	298
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	309
Average class size	28.1

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	216

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	699,368
Total expenditure	694,691
Expenditure per pupil	2,249
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	4,677

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	311
Number of questionnaires returned	114

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	53	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	61	4	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	50	12	8	3
The teaching is good.	37	57	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	49	17	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	42	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	14	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	42	50	3	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	44	4	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	43	6	0	1

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

ENGLISH

51. The school has improved well since the last inspection. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, improved management of the subject, regular monitoring of lesson plans, teachers' improved knowledge and setting of individual targets for pupils have all made a significant contribution towards the good quality of teaching and learning. Pupils understand their targets and know what they have to do to progress and achieve them. Teachers use assessment effectively to chart progress. For example, standardised tests are used regularly to check on the progress being made in reading, spelling and writing. Pupils with special educational needs have appropriate learning targets set for them in their individual education plans. Overall, these pupils make good progress as a result of the good quality support they receive in lessons and in small groups. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with high attainment also make good progress.
52. By the end of Year 6, attainment in speaking and listening is a little below average. Although pupils are confident and fluent in what they say, their speech is sometimes too colloquial and, in some cases, lacks elements of standard grammar and syntax. Examples of incorrect usage, such as lack of agreement between subject and verb, and uses of slang, were occasionally left uncorrected during lessons. Nevertheless, pupils are given many opportunities to speak in class in a range of situations across the curriculum. In a religious education lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils were involved in a dramatisation of the parable of the prodigal son. All pupils were involved, from the more able to those with special educational needs. Opportunities are also provided for pupils to debate and offer opinions. This feature is good practice and is the main reason for pupils' confidence and willingness to express ideas verbally. Pupils of all different groups of prior attainment achieve well in this aspect of speaking and listening. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, pupils were preparing strong arguments both for and against the redevelopment of a local park, which was to be used for housing. Their ideas were to the point and convincing. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils to answer their questions and to justify the opinions that they give. Pupils generally listen well and understand the points that others make. A good extra-curricular feature of the school's provision for speaking and listening is two major drama productions that are held each year, providing opportunities to add further to pupils' personal confidence and self-esteem.
53. When pupils enter the school, only a few are reading at levels higher than normally expected for their age, whereas a significant group is below. However, teaching is good and encourages pupils to enjoy books and to acquire basic skills. As a result, nearly all pupils take an interest in reading and wish to improve. By Year 6, nearly all pupils read fluently and with interest. They discuss their likes and dislikes about what they read with considerable enjoyment. Many pupils use both the school library and the local library on a regular basis to borrow books that interest them. However, several lower attaining pupils still struggle with the basics of reading. Most of these have identified learning difficulties and receive good support for their special educational needs. As a result, they make good progress, albeit at a lower level of attainment, which is the reason that overall standards remain below average. Teachers hear pupils read regularly and keep thorough records of the progress that is made. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to read with other members of their family. Members of the local community and a few parents come into school to help pupils with their reading, although this feature does not occur as often as it might. Knowledge of authors is good because pupils are introduced to a wide range of genres and they are encouraged to notice writers and their different styles.
54. Uses of literacy across the curriculum are good. For example, teachers use an interesting variety of activities to encourage interest in non-fiction and to develop skills. As a result, nearly all pupils learn how to locate information and then use it as the basis of other work. They know how to use contents

and index pages and understand the uses of a glossary. Many examples of research of good quality, particularly in subjects such as history and geography, demonstrate these skills in practice. In Year 3, for instance, pupils used reference books confidently to find out more about the Victorians and Ancient Egyptians, using an index to pinpoint exactly what they needed to find.

55. On entry to the school in Year 3, a significant number of pupils have only limited writing skills, whereas only a few exceed the expected level for their age. Again, however, good progress occurs through the school. Skills are developed through good teaching in literacy lessons. Writing is also used and taught effectively in other subjects across the curriculum. Throughout the school, pupils receive encouragement and support to express their ideas in writing. In Year 3, they are taught properly formed letters, and receive plenty of ideas about how to improve the spelling of basic words. As they move through the school, pupils are given many opportunities to use and develop their writing skills. Consequently, pupils make progress and generally achieve well. However, owing to the low starting points of a significant proportion, overall attainment by the end of Year 6 remains below average. Nevertheless, several pupils in Year 6 complete extended pieces of writing with confidence. These pupils use quotation marks, question marks, exclamation marks and semi-colons, and understand metaphors and similes. However, understandably, in the case of several pupils with special educational needs work is at lower levels. During the inspection, other lower attainers, not formally identified with special needs, were observed working at similar levels to these pupils and were therefore not sufficiently challenged. From Year 3, pupils are taught to use dictionaries to clarify spellings and to find the meanings of words. Older pupils understand the use of a thesaurus to extend the range of descriptive words at their disposal for extended writing and poetry. The range of writing tasks undertaken develops well, so pupils write stories, factual accounts, advertisements, dialogue and poems, with similar emphasis. The standard of presentation throughout the school is generally satisfactory. In all classes, time is allocated for the practice of handwriting skills. Work on display is presented carefully. From Year 3, pupils are encouraged to write neatly and most respond well, putting in a good effort to do so in their formal work. However, in situations such as note-taking, it is often scruffy and difficult to read.
56. Overall the teaching of English is good. In three-quarters of the lessons observed teaching was good or very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and many very good features were evident. For example, planning is of high quality, which results in good teaching and learning of basic skills. The thoughtful use of support staff in literacy lessons enables those with special educational needs to be fully involved in lessons at an appropriate level. These pupils are encouraged to have a sense of success and achievement. Although teachers were sympathetic to the needs of all their pupils, they demanded and expected high standards of attention and behaviour. Nearly all pupils responded well to this approach and worked hard. Relationships between teachers and pupils were good. In two otherwise satisfactory lessons, behaviour fell below the usual high standards that were found and, for this reason, the pace of learning was adversely affected, so progress slowed down. Teachers are aware of the range of attainment in all lessons and make good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers set different work for different groups of pupils, although occasionally, pupils at a level slightly below average were less well catered for. The school's strategy for teaching literacy is good. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge. Lessons are carefully planned, using the recommended structure. The use of information and communication technology is currently being developed well. For example, Year 6 pupils are currently working on stories within the genre of 'quests'. These stories entail sound use of information and communication technology programs to plan and present ideas.
57. Assessment and record keeping are thorough. The range of assessment procedures used by teachers and the depth of analysis are good. For example, in Year 3, on entry to the school, teachers assess the attainment of all pupils in reading, spelling and writing, using standardised tests. Results are used to set targets for each pupil. These targets are reviewed regularly. Test results also enable teachers to note

those pupils who are not making expected progress, and to involve the special educational needs co-ordinator, who also co-ordinates the 'On Track' scheme, in seeking advice or support from the range of services at her disposal.

58. The co-ordinator manages the subject very effectively and much of the improvement in literacy standards is partly attributable to her leadership. The school has a very accurate perception of its strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and a clear focus for future development has been established in the school's improvement plan. Overall resources for teaching English are good, including the library. English makes a sound contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, giving them the opportunity to reflect on and appreciate the beauty of language in poetry and prose and to consider what feelings authors might have had in producing their work. Another example, supporting pupils' social development, occurred when Year 6 used *PowerPoint* in the computer suite to write and illustrate stories to share with Year 3. Opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively are frequently planned and opportunities to point out cultural origins of different texts are taken.

MATHEMATICS

59. At the time of the last inspection, standards, when pupils left the school in Year 6, were adjudged in line with the national average. However, this judgement was not reflected in the results of National Curriculum tests in 1997, which indicated that attainment was well below average. Currently, standards of work that were seen during the inspection were below, rather than well below average, suggesting that attainment has in fact improved since then. Such a judgement reflects the improved quality of teaching that was found in this inspection and careful uses of assessment to set targets and plan future work. However, although examples of information and communication technology were available to pupils to support their learning of number facts and to record data, these were not seen in use extensively in lessons.
60. On entering the school in Year 3, a relatively high proportion of pupils are identified with special educational needs and nearly all of these and several others are at a lower level than those normally expected. Conversely, only a few pupils are at a level above that normally expected. Pupils' achievements are generally good in relation to these starting points by the time they reach the end of Year 6. The school's numeracy strategy is well planned and lessons follow the recommended national guidelines closely. In all year groups, pupils are taught to think mathematically with the use of well-organised mental sessions at the beginning of lessons. Opportunities to use mathematical skills and approaches are provided in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, charts, tables and simple graphs were seen in geography and science. Pupils through the school also understand the relative sizes of different numbers, using place value and the value of digits to make decisions.
61. In Year 3, in work on number, thorough planning and good teaching ensure that pupils revise and build well on what they knew when they entered the school. Most pupils understand tens and units, including simple addition and subtraction, and count in twos, fives and tens. By the end of the year, further knowledge and skills have been added. Pupils begin to understand ideas such as 'multiples' and some of their uses. They explore 'odds and evens' and use their knowledge to decide which two and three-digit numbers are multiples of two and which are not. They know the names of many regular two and three-dimensional shapes and begin to explore some of their properties. Careful planning and good teaching continue in Years 4 and 5, ensuring that pupils acquire good understanding as they move on. In Year 4, for example, in good and very good lessons, pupils learnt to relate compass points to amounts of turn and began to use measurement with degrees. A few higher attaining pupils went further, showing that they could start from points other than north and still work out the amount of turn, although this work was not necessarily at a higher level than that of other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and other lower attaining pupils required extra support from a teaching assistant to make progress. This support was of good quality and enabled them to complete adapted tasks. In Year 5, good teaching was related closely to real situations. For example, in one class, a reasonable

proportion of pupils demonstrated good understanding of work on percentages. Learning was related to real situations, such as money off a price and value added tax. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated that they could first calculate the amount of discount and then the new price by subtracting it correctly. Again, although this work was more complex than that of other groups, as it required two distinct calculations, it was unclear that it was actually at a higher level. By the end of Year 6, good understanding of place value up to thousands and beyond is apparent in the work of many pupils and they multiply and divide, using a variety of different methods. Most pupils understand these methods well and choose to use the one that they like best. In work on shape and space, pupils of average ability and above understand and work out perimeters and areas, and higher attainers extend this work to the calculation of volumes. In data handling, pupils use terminology such as 'median', 'mean' and 'mode' accurately and read charts, tables and simple graphs. However, the balance between attainment at above and below average in these classes suggests that overall standards remain below average, although progress from their starting points in Year 3 has been good.

62. Pupils respond well to the quality of teaching that they receive. They work hard for their teachers and nearly all of them behave well, listening to and answering questions that are put to them. These good attitudes help to maximise the time that is spent on teaching and learning, which contributes well to their progress. They are tolerant towards each other's different needs, accepting that when someone else needs their teacher's time, they should try to get on by helping each other. They understand that, in this sense, being treated fairly does not always mean that they should be treated exactly the same. In this, and similar ways, opportunities to develop personally are good. Plenty of opportunities arise to work collaboratively with others and to share tasks and resources.
63. The overall quality of teaching is good. A high proportion of good lessons were observed and several others were very good. All remaining teaching was satisfactory. Teachers question well. In nearly all lessons, teachers used this skill in a variety of appropriate ways. Sometimes questions were directed to individuals to ensure that they were following the required learning. At other times, questioning was quick-fire and competitive, encouraging pupils to provide a correct answer quickly. Open-ended questions, with different ways of approaching an answer, were also used to broaden and deepen thinking. As a result of this, essential learning was nearly always consolidated and extended at a good pace. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were asked to imagine a situation in which only 3p and 5p coins were minted. They were challenged to find how it would be possible for a shopkeeper to charge every sum of money from 1p onwards. They were also asked to prepare a succinct and convincing verbal explanation of their findings. The teacher's questioning led pupils' initial thinking well, reminding them of previous work on multiples of three and five. As a result, all pupils had a clear point from which to begin their investigations. Planning and management of pupils were other good features of most teaching. As a result, time was usually spent effectively on work that matched pupils' needs and requirements, enabling them to acquire basic skills thoroughly. What separated the satisfactory teaching from that of a higher quality was usually seen most in the sessions at the end of lessons. In the good teaching, these plenaries took pupils' learning further. During summaries of what had been taught, teachers also whetted pupils' appetites with glimpses of where their learning might lead them next. In the satisfactory lessons, this aspect was less apparent and, as a result, pupils were less inspired and levels of attention dropped from the high interest seen elsewhere, so learning was not as complete. Pupils with special educational needs are, in practice, supported well, although the sample of individual education plans that was seen contained fewer numeracy targets than for literacy. Pupils with English as an additional language are included well in discussions and oral sessions and know what to do to make progress.
64. Co-ordination is very good. Analysis of assessment data is used well to set targets and to track progress. For example, the co-ordinator identified that, in 2001, poor attendance was a feature amongst groups that had been brought together to boost performance in the National Curriculum tests. As a result, several pupils in these groups did not achieve as well as hoped. Information about pupils' rates of progress is passed on to class teachers, so planning can be adapted accordingly. The co-ordinator

leads meetings on provision for the subject successfully and has overseen the introduction and development of the school's numeracy strategy effectively.

SCIENCE

65. By the time Year 6 pupils leave the school, they attain broadly average standards overall. This judgement represents an improvement on the 2001 National Curriculum test results and returns the subject to the improving trend that had been a feature up to 2000. The school's own assessments of pupils' work also suggest that results will be much better this year. This improvement is a reflection of the overall good quality of teaching, and the good quality and range of what is taught. Compared with pupils' attainment on entry to the school, it means that their achievement by the time that they leave is generally good. The co-ordinator has led the subject well, identifying appropriate targets for improvement year on year. Plenty of emphasis is placed on teaching scientific terms and vocabulary, as well as ensuring that pupils have plenty of practical opportunities for experiments, tests and enquiry-based learning. Appropriate extension work is available for pupils of higher ability to extend their knowledge, and pupils with special educational needs are given good support.
66. Through the school, teachers plan a good balance between different aspects of the subject. The scheme of work shows that scientific knowledge builds well on what pupils have been taught previously. Younger pupils in Year 3 are provided with clear instructions about how to go about scientific investigations. As a result, they acquire good basic skills that underpin their knowledge of scientific methods well. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher thoroughly prepared her class for their experiment to find out about what happens when solids are mixed with water. Pupils showed that they were familiar with simple ideas of 'fair testing'. Nearly all of them made sensible predictions about how sand would make the water "...go all murky". Good teaching of scientific language is also evident. In the same lesson, pupils understood key terms, and gave good working definitions, such as "...dissolve means it disappears, but you can still taste it". Pupils worked very well together in their groups, giving each other roles and taking turns. The teacher organised the resources and equipment well, so pupils were enabled to work independently. They handled equipment carefully and checked the accuracy of what they did. They recorded their findings using good scientific language and all participated successfully, including pupils with special educational needs. The teaching assistant encouraged pupils well, helping to keep them on task and ensuring that they understood what to do. In a later lesson that was observed in a parallel class in Year 3, the teacher stimulated pupils to think through the best way to separate two solids. Learning was good and it clearly followed on from the earlier lesson.
67. A strong feature of teaching is that pupils receive plenty of opportunities to carry out tests practically for themselves, with the responsibility to handle resources and set experiments up. Teaching in a Year 4 class built on the good learning that had occurred in a previous lesson. Resources were used well to illustrate different habitats for mini-beasts. The next lesson followed up what was learnt in the classroom during observations in the school grounds. As a result, pupils had learnt well by the end of the lesson and their grasp of the main learning points was good. Year 5 pupils develop their understanding of the structure of plants through examining different weeds through a magnifying glass. The prepared variety of different seeds excited and intrigued pupils. The teacher was sufficiently confident to allow their exclamations of surprise, which is good for their personal development. The teacher used the situation well, challenging pupils to guess what each example might be and then to compare differences and similarities. Visits to museums and environmental sites also contribute well to personal development. These outings often provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate human achievement and culture in areas such as scientific heritage, space exploration and technical advances. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils used their knowledge of electrical circuits to design a burglar alarm operated by a pressure pad. This lesson provided another example of good teaching that permitted pupils free rein to use their scientific knowledge imaginatively. At the same time, good questioning

guided pupils towards achievable designs that would nevertheless work. Pupils demonstrated good understanding of how electricity works. Their attention was fully captured and, as a result, they worked hard and acquired skills well.

68. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and includes examples of very good teaching. However, two unsatisfactory lessons were also observed. A scrutiny of pupils' work and planning shows that these unsatisfactory lessons are not typical. Generally, teachers plan well, assessing what pupils know, using information well to move on to the next step appropriately. Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are high, and include good opportunities for them to develop literacy and numeracy skills for recording results. However, information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to analyse and present data. The unsatisfactory lessons were caused by lack of challenge and insufficient independence for pupils to carry out tasks for themselves, elements that are generally good in teaching through the school. In one of these lessons, the teacher did not sufficiently involve all the class in the introductory discussion, so pupils of lower ability and special educational needs did not join in enough.
69. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has identified relevant areas for its development and ensured that these features are incorporated in the teaching and planning. The transition to a scheme of work based on national guidance has been managed well, and now needs to be fine-tuned to ensure it meets the needs of all the pupils in the school. Evidence exists to show that pupils of higher ability and those who are gifted are provided with opportunities that extend their thinking. However, pupils of lower ability are not so successfully served with work that is tailored for them. As a result, a few struggle considerably in recording their findings. Conversely, pupils who are actually identified with special educational needs, especially those with statements of need, are supported well by teaching assistants. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory, although not as rigorous as in English and mathematics. Teachers test pupils at the end of the year to check what they recall and how firmly they grasped ideas. In Year 3, however, a more rigorous system is in use, in which teachers apply a test to check how well pupils have grasped each unit of work that they study. This procedure results in more frequent information that can be used to analyse progress and to identify any learning that needs further consolidation before moving on. Resources are audited on a regular basis to check appropriate availability and accessibility. A programme of visits and visitors enhances the subject. Pupils in Year 6 clearly recall their science day very well, explaining their tests of helium and dry ice. Year 5 pupils use the science laboratories of a local secondary school. Other visits include days out at the Science Museum, the Brighton Engineerium, Skylab, local parks and nature centres.

ART AND DESIGN

70. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 are above those expected for their age. This attainment is an improvement on the last inspection, when standards were described as 'in line with and often above expectations'.
71. Pupils work with a wide range of media. In Year 3, observational drawings from a range of plants, while careful and detailed, do not yet demonstrate the above expected level of skills found further up the school. This factor provides evidence that teaching and learning are good, and contribute to pupils' good achievements by the end of Year 6. Work in Year 4 adds support to this judgement. Skills have been developed well; for example, sketches of cones, leaves and Regency buildings are clearly a progression from what was attained before. In Year 6, pupils sketch from paintings, using the work of L. S. Lowry, for example, or from still life, in which an element of humour is evident in, for example, *A Pair of Trainers*. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject, supported by good planning through the school, is clear from the way in which pupils' use of colour is developed. In Year 3, experiments with mixing colours are emphasised. This skill is extended in Year 4 in studies of fruit that use pastel shades and then further, in Year 5, when pupils make a colourful design for a T-shirt. Pupils in Year 6 produce

borders and patterns in the Ancient Greek style, as well as fabrics for new robes for Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. In this way teachers use art and design well to support pupils' learning in history.

72. Pupils produce a good range of three-dimensional collage. Again skills develop well, owing to good teaching as pupils move on through the school. For example, in Year 3, this work focuses on the use of different papers. By Year 5, textiles are evident in good quality illustration of the biblical story of the sacrifice of Isaac. Other good three-dimensional work includes African masks in Year 4 and clay pots in Year 5. Pupils have studied and painted in the style of artists of both western and non-western cultures. Pupils in Year 3 have produced water-colours, entitled *Iris*. These works are recognisably in the style of Van Gogh, capturing the artists' swirls of deep colour. The techniques of Gustav Klimt are also studied. Year 4 have compiled an effective portfolio of paintings after David Hockney's *The Pool*, and Year 6 pupils' work on Lowry is of a particularly high standard.
73. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, and are able to share their appreciation of works of art with their pupils, so pupils learn from the techniques used in the original. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher shared his own visual experiences in a Muslim country when pupils compared paintings of Tunisian scenes by Paul Klee and August Macke. Teachers make good links with other subjects. For instance, in Year 5, they encourage pupils to use sketches as an element in the recording of geographical work during their visit to the Isle of Wight. Teachers use resources well to enable pupils to develop a wide range of skills.
74. For the first time, the school took part in the Brighton Festival this year. Pupils and parents worked together to produce impressive designs for flowers and peacocks. Pupils in Year 6 also receive opportunities to develop skills in a lunchtime club run by a parent, with a teacher's support. Pupils also have the experience of visiting local galleries, and all year groups take part in workshops with artists in the spring term. Through visits of this kind, appreciation of art from a range of cultures as well as from famous artists, and working together on the carnival project, the subject has contributed well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
75. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and communicates her ideas and enthusiasm well. She has provided training for other teachers, through, for example, the use of 'ideas books' to develop pupils' understanding and skills. She ensures that necessary resources are always available and accessible. She is aware that, at the moment, procedures for assessment are not sufficiently rigorous. However, work is underway on revising methods of recording pupils' progress, linking it closer to those skills actually being developed. A portfolio is also being prepared to demonstrate achievement more clearly.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

76. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The introduction of national guidelines as a scheme of work has improved planning in the subject. A good feature is that all year groups now use a design sheet and pupils are taught how to evaluate their finished work. Very little teaching of design and technology was seen but discussions with teachers and pupils, and work in pupils' design books and displays of models and products indicate that pupils are achieving satisfactorily.
77. Younger pupils successfully design and make picture frames, exploring ways to make the structure stable and ways to strengthen paper by folding and layering. They look at different ways of joining and experiment with glue, sticky tape and paper clips. They learn about health and safety when preparing food, designing their own healthy sandwiches. Older pupils continue to make sound progress when they design and make more advanced products. Often, work is linked to other subjects. Pupils used their skills in art, for example, to finish carnival exhibits for the Brighton Festival to a high standard. Technological language is introduced and used adequately, extending pupils' literacy skills and vocabulary. Numeracy is used to measure components in the construction aspects of the subject. By the end of Year 6, pupils' construction skills match what is expected in the National Curriculum and many of them design creatively. They use appropriate tools and materials and they take good account of these when they design products and evaluate their finished articles against their original intentions. Most pupils evaluate their work sensibly, giving good reasons for why and how they could improve their work. Pupils enjoy opportunities to work creatively and have a sense of achievement when they make products that are unique to them. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate some flair and imagination in their designs and have good construction skills. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress because they are well supported by their teachers.
78. On the evidence of planning in the subject, two lessons that were observed and the quality of displayed work, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons, it was good in one and satisfactory in the other. Teachers clearly encourage pupils to work creatively and have high expectations of how work should be finished. Skills and methods of joining components are taught well. Pupils learn to make independent decisions about the materials they use and how their products will look when completed. Teachers plan imaginative projects, which enthuse pupils. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 were fascinated by the construction of linkages that produced moving parts on cards. In Year 5 good teaching resulted in good behaviour and attention. As a result, pupils acquired knowledge and skills of bread-making, deciding what ingredients and special flavourings might be used in their own recipes, by tasting and evaluating. The co-ordinator's portfolio of work through the different year groups shows that attainment progresses steadily with pupils' ages against what is normally expected. Imaginatively finished musical instruments from Year 5 pupils and moving cars from Year 6 pupils show the good interest and effort that is put into the subject. Teachers have a good knowledge of the design process, which they communicate effectively to pupils. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to their work, which influence positively the progress that they make, and an increased confidence and pride in their achievements.
79. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is new since the last inspection and she has successfully introduced a new scheme of work based on the national guidelines. She monitors the subject by looking at the planning and examples of pupils' work. This enables her to give good support when it is needed and to ensure consistent quality of teaching and learning. New assessment procedures have very recently been introduced and as yet are not being used consistently. The co-ordinator keeps examples of finished work for monitoring purposes and a portfolio of work that shows the design process and, where appropriate, examples of pupils' work.
80. An important feature of the work in design and technology this year was that it became the school's focus of development for the autumn term and all the work was displayed in a very successful

exhibition at the end of the term. During this time useful links were made with Brighton University when a number of students worked with pupils voluntarily. This focus on the subject also enabled the co-ordinator to check whether appropriate learning and progress was taking place. Another feature of work in design and technology was the school's involvement with the Brighton Festival. With the help of parents, structures were designed and made from wire. These frames were then decorated artistically with flowers and birds that were crafted in tissue paper. Pupils wore and carried these in the style of carnival costumes. The school has a satisfactory range of tools and other resources for pupils to explore and these are used satisfactorily.

GEOGRAPHY

81. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age. The school now teaches the full curriculum, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. Furthermore, teaching, which was unsatisfactory then, is now good. As a result, pupils' achievements have also improved and are now good in comparison with starting points in Year 3. Pupils in Year 6 are able to use geographical questions to gather data about businesses and their effect on the local area. They ask, for instance, why different businesses are found near to each other. This activity is in preparation for fieldwork, where they will carry out a survey of changes of land use. They have also studied India as a country of contrasts with the United Kingdom. They understand that very different temperatures and rainfall in Bangalore and London affect the way in which people live. Knowledge, skills and understanding develop well as pupils move through the school. Previously, in Year 5, they have studied different European countries. In Year 3 pupils begin by looking at their immediate surroundings in the school and locality. However, links with other subjects are used well. For example, project work on Ancient Egypt introduces them to the geography of the River Nile. At the time of the inspection, they were beginning to study the course of rivers, and were able to link this to what they had already learnt about the Nile. In Year 4, they focus on forests and woodlands, supporting this with work in science and art. During this work, they develop map-reading skills with Ordnance Survey maps. These skills are used further in Year 5, in comparisons of Portslade with the village of Glynde. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school.
82. The overall quality of teaching is good, and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. The teaching that was very good was based on very good relationships with pupils. Teachers also made good use of their knowledge of the area as, for instance, in the study of local businesses. As a result, pupils are very interested and are keen to answer questions. In a lesson in Year 3, the teacher made very effective use of a video recording to introduce pupils to the different parts of a river system. This method allowed pupils to relate the different points that were made to a real river basin, so learning was made much easier for them. Pupils had already been given the opportunity to formulate their own questions. Many achieved well, thinking of ideas such as "Why do rivers have bends?" and so their learning was more effective. Teaching did not reach this high quality in all lessons, although it was still satisfactory. When this was the case, it was because the teacher had not explained tasks and vocabulary sufficiently clearly for pupils to work independently and time was lost going through the points again.
83. Teachers use visits to the surrounding area and residential trips, such as those to the New Forest in Year 4, the Isle of Wight in Year 5 and France in Year 6, to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their geographical understanding and skills. The co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of the subject. She has started to check the effectiveness of teaching and learning by monitoring pupils' work and teachers' planning. Further opportunities are anticipated, such as talking to pupils about their work directly. She has devised a scheme for checking on individual pupils' progress, which is currently being evaluated. These are further examples of good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

HISTORY

84. The previous inspection reported that standards in history were as expected nationally. This attainment has been maintained and several pupils now exceed this level. More emphasis is placed on teaching historical skills than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are aware of the varying attainments of their pupils and most make good provision to meet the needs of lower attaining pupils but expectations are not consistently high enough for higher attainers.
85. Pupils achieve satisfactorily due to the high expectations of their teachers who provide good support and guidance as well as encouraging pupils to use initiative in researching topics that they are studying. Pupils successfully build on the knowledge and skills they have developed in previous years. They learn about social, cultural and religious differences through studying topics such as Ancient Egyptians and Ancient Greeks. Through learning about historical eras they reflect on the diversity of beliefs and customs and make sensible comparisons with modern times. Higher attaining pupils use more complex historical language when discussing the past, speaking about 'ancient periods', 'modern times', 'BC', 'AD', 'century' and 'decade' with clear understanding. By Year 6, nearly all pupils have a reasonable knowledge of different historical periods and famous individuals within them, who have helped to shape the world as we know it today. Teachers understand the nature of historical research well. First hand evidence of the past, such as sites and artefacts, is used to bring the past to life. Other resources such as textbooks and the Internet are also used successfully. The school has collected a good range of artefacts to support its historical topics. A strong feature of what is taught is the use of visits to places of historical interest, which form the focus of the topics that are studied. The school is fortunate in that there is a wealth of such opportunities in the vicinity. For example, Year 3 pupils study Victorian childhood with work centred round a visit to Preston Manor. This visit is well planned, so pupils learn through role-play what it was like to work in the kitchens or to be a servant. Pupils in Year 4 visit Brighton Pavilion and consider how things have changed since 1779. Year 5 pupils learn about life on board ship during Tudor times through visiting 'The Golden Hind' and Year 6 pupils experience something of the threat of invasion by visiting Newhaven Fort. These experiences are further enhanced by theme days. These occasions involve visits from a schools' theatre group. Teachers and pupils dress in contemporary costumes and portray scenes of the times. Pupils become actively involved in these events. Learning has clearly benefited from a lasting impression of these events, as pupils talk freely and enthusiastically about them.
86. History makes a strong contribution to pupils' literacy skills. In all history topics they are required to carry out research tasks and to present at least part of their findings in written form. Teachers devise many interesting opportunities to record what they have learnt. For example, pupils in Year 3 imagine that they are Victorian children and write letters of application for positions at Preston Manor and pupils in Year 5 make topic books about aspects of Tudor life.
87. It was possible to observe teaching directly only once. However, on the basis of pupils' sound overall learning, the good way in which the subject is planned and what was seen in this lesson, the overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. Very good teaching took place in the lesson that was observed. Planning was thorough, with clear learning outcomes for pupils and detailed activities that held their interest well, so a good effort resulted. The teacher gave clear explanations and instructions and made very good use of resources, enabling her class to deepen their understanding of the passage of time and the development of historical change.
88. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and very competent, with an enthusiastic attitude towards developing the subject. Assessment is planned for the end of each topic, but it is recognised that present arrangements are cumbersome and planning is afoot to refine the process.

Teachers' planning and pupils' work are collected and monitored, although opportunities to work alongside other teachers in their classrooms and to monitor their work directly are very limited.

89. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, through opportunities to work together, to visit heritage sites and to explore the consequences of historical acts and events on what follows, as well as the values of famous figures of the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

90. At the end of Year 6, standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected. The provision of a computer suite, combined with staff training and good leadership by the co-ordinator, has raised the profile of the subject, so standards have been maintained and have risen along with technological development in this fast changing area. Lessons in the computer suite ensure that pupils throughout the school learn well, although links with other subjects through the use of computers in classrooms is not consistent. Furthermore, the way that the computer suite was timetabled in the inspection left it empty on several occasions during the week. Pupils have good attitudes to information and communication technology and are enthusiastic and keen to learn. For example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to demonstrate their multimedia presentations and could explain well how they had put them together. Pupils who had prepared stories for younger pupils explained how they had first made a storyboard, and then searched for both visual and sound effects appropriate to the age of the audience. Other pupils showed how they had used historical research to locate accurate images to illustrate their presentation on the Vikings. They were well skilled in locating their work.
91. Pupils make good progress in their information and communication technology skills through the school, such that achievement is good. It is based on a scheme that builds gradually on what has been acquired previously. Pupils in Year 3 use a program with paint applications to produce artistic impressions of what they observed during a woodland visit. Good teaching includes clear instructions on how to add explanatory text to these illustrations. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the subject when pupils through the school are introduced to the use of the Internet and given experiences of sending and receiving e-mails. For example, pupils in Year 5 use information and communication technology to support topic work and use both the Internet and CD-ROMs to seek information. A residential visit provides opportunities for the same year group to use computers to control devices. Equal opportunities are ensured when similar tasks are duplicated in school for those who are unable to go.
92. Teaching is generally good. In a very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher had prepared pupils well, so they could begin to produce, follow and sequence instructions to control a screen-cursor. They used their skills to form geometric shapes. In an earlier lesson a programmable robot had been used, so pupils learnt to instruct this machine before using the computers. This preparatory exercise ensured that pupils were confident to embark on the new task. Despite some pupils finding the task challenging, the very good support of the teacher and a voluntary helper encouraged them to persevere. Explanations were clear and the teacher anticipated difficulties, so all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved the set task well. Careful planning ensures that each year group acquires the expected skills for their age. The computer suite provides good resources with nine networked computers, which are used well during lessons, although this number is only sufficient for half a class. In both lessons seen in Year 4, teachers provided the rest of their class with good opportunities to carry out research in the adjacent library. As a result, good learning occurred in both settings. However, because classes have timetabled access for three-week periods, the suite is underused when they are not in it. During the inspection, few other teachers chose to use it when it was not in use by the timetabled classes.

93. The installation of the suite, linked to staff training, has enabled teachers to teach computer skills well, which contributes to pupils' good learning. Computers are used effectively in a variety of ways to support literacy. Examples occurred in Year 5, when pupils joined two halves of sentences with connectives, in Year 6 when pupils drafted stories in the genre of a quest, and when a pupil with special educational needs used the computer for an appropriate task to support learning at his own level. In numeracy hours, although pupils were observed using computers for mathematical games, the range and depth of this work were restricted, compared to those which were seen in literacy. During the inspection, computers in classrooms were not often seen in use for work in other subjects, although it is clear that relevant software is available and used.
94. The co-ordinator has led the school well in providing a planned curriculum that builds on skills and previous knowledge. An appropriate action plan has been drawn up to move the subject forward. However, owing to long-term absence, review and development of a few aspects of the subject have been delayed, such as the introduction of an updated policy to reflect the school's current practice. Pupils use diaries to record what they have learnt, which gives them good knowledge of their own learning, and individual record sheets are available for teachers to record what pupils know. However, not all teachers keep to these procedures consistently, whereas others have devised very efficient routines for doing so.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

95. French is usually taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, owing to staffing difficulties, it was not taught for a large part of the present year. At the time of the inspection, it was being taught only to pupils in Year 6. In the light of this, standards attained are as high as might be expected for pupils who have been learning the language for this length of time. This level of attainment is an improvement on the last inspection, when pupils were judged not to be attaining acceptable standards, given the time that was allocated to the subject.
96. Pupils in Year 6 are able to respond fluently to questions about themselves, such as their name and age but, except for the most able, they have difficulty with more complex questions, owing to lack of regular practice. Although pupils have learnt, for example, numbers in French and names of days of the week and months, they find it difficult to recall them quickly, for the same reason. However, nearly all pupils speak with a reasonable accent. In the observed lesson, they quickly mastered new vocabulary for fruit, and higher attaining pupils were able to distinguish between masculine and feminine nouns. Written work is limited, which is as expected for this stage of learning a foreign language. Nevertheless, pupils receive opportunities to write brief dialogues, although spelling is often approximate.
97. Teaching was good in the lesson seen. The teacher has a sound knowledge of the language herself and used a good range of techniques and questioning to introduce and reinforce new vocabulary, including, for example, techniques that are specific to good teaching of foreign languages. For example, pupils were often asked to repeat phrases together, after the teacher had said them. Guessing games to acquire vocabulary were also used well. The teacher used actual fruit as well as posters and flashcards to make activities realistic. It engaged pupils' interest and they were keen to take part in the activities, particularly the guessing games. Other evidence suggests that the overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, and this is an improvement on the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Furthermore, there was no evidence of the poor attitudes and behaviour that were reported in the last inspection.
98. In discussion, pupils showed a good interest in the language. They particularly enjoyed their correspondence with pupils in France and their visit to a French school during the residential school

journey. However, not all pupils take part in this trip. Although the alternative activity provided for them covers the geographical learning, it cannot of course provide the same opportunities for practising the language, such as when pupils go shopping or buy ice creams. Pupils do not at present use information and communication technology to support their learning, for instance by using e-mail to correspond with their French pen-friends.

99. One of the class teachers regularly reinforces what pupils have learned outside the weekly lesson, for instance in registration times, and this practice should be extended to give pupils more frequent opportunities to consolidate what they have learned. The subject co-ordinator has devised a detailed scheme, to ensure that learning is progressive, which was lacking at the time of the last inspection.

MUSIC

100. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment met the levels that are nationally expected. However, singing lacked dynamic quality and expression. It was often subdued, except during one or two favourite songs. In the present inspection, overall standards by the time pupils leave in Year 6 remain at expected levels. However, singing is now strong and the overall standard of this important element of the subject is generally above what is normally expected, which represents a clear improvement. As a result, singing contributes well to the quality of the school's assemblies. The improvement is based on good teaching, which helps pupils to learn a range of songs and to enjoy singing them. In lessons in Years 5 and 6, enthusiastic, lively teaching resulted in pupils' similarly lively performances of songs of different styles, genres and cultures. For example, show songs, such as *Flash! Bang! Wallop! What a Picture!*, were performed with enjoyment and plenty of gusto, whereas songs in the genre of spirituals or enslaved peoples, such as *Let My People Go* were sung with feeling for the words and rhythms entailing changes of tempo and dynamics, while Lennon and McCartney's *With a Little Help from my Friends* demonstrated very good phrasing and pitch. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated that they were beginning to understand and enjoy how to sing dramatically to gain the attention and appreciation of an audience. These qualities are built on well as pupils move through the school. Pupils' achievements are therefore good.
101. Lessons in Years 5 and 6 contained elements of listening to and appraising music, which suggest that attainment in these aspects is at around expected levels. In Year 6, for example, pupils understood that the rhythms of tunes such as *Roll Jordan, Roll* are linked to the rhythms of plantation workers moving and swaying in cotton fields. In this way, they recognised the connection between different styles of music and the intentions and needs of their originators. In Year 5, pupils showed that they could repeat patterns, and could improvise tuneful responses to musical phrases suggested by the teacher. Pupils know the names of many common instruments and record music using simple signs and symbols.
102. Instrumental teaching of brass, violin and piano is available to pupils who show an aptitude, talent or particular interest. Piano and violin lessons were observed. These were of overall good quality, including a violin lesson for two girls in Year 6 that was excellent. The teacher's relationship with her pupils was a particular feature. As a result, they asked questions about how to improve their performances in a very mature and responsible manner, discussing what was easy and what was difficult. Their teacher responded in like manner, often with reassuring praise and sometimes with an easy humour. As a result, progress was very good. The piano teaching that was observed ensured that pupils made effective progress. In terms of the National Curriculum, all these instrumentalists perform at a very high level for their respective ages.
103. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is based closely on the National Curriculum. A specialist, whose subject knowledge is very good, teaches all classes. Her expectations and management of pupils are good. As a result, time is spent effectively on the basic skills, which pupils acquire well. They enjoy the opportunities that are provided to compose and perform. For example, during the inspection, rehearsals took place for a performance to parents. Pupils were keen to attend and to take part.

104. The specialist teacher co-ordinates and plans her own lessons and keeps track of pupils' progress. All of these aspects work well and she draws on a number of resources and schemes in order to plan a programme that meets pupils' needs well. Pupils of different prior attainments and special educational needs all take part and progress well at their own levels.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

105. Standards in physical education are better than those described in the National Curriculum for pupils at the end of Year 6 and better than found in the previous inspection. Pupils' achievements are nearly always good. The subject has shown good improvement and pupils make good progress. This improvement has come about because the quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching, and teachers are confident to teach the subject. Knowledge, skills and understanding are carefully built on. All the required elements of the National Curriculum are planned for. During the summer term, the focus is on games and athletics, with dance and gymnastics being taught in the autumn and spring terms. Pupils in Years 3 and 5 have swimming lessons. Most pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. All lessons are inclusive of pupils with special educational needs who often achieve as well as all other pupils.
106. Pupils in Year 3 were observed at their swimming lessons at a pool that is attached to another local primary school. This lesson was only the second session for the class. The teacher and teaching assistant, both qualified instructors, gave very good support to pupils. The teacher gave clear instructions on how to improve the crawl to pupils who could already swim. These pupils put in a good physical effort, practising what their teacher told them to good effect. The teaching assistant very carefully encouraged the non-swimmers, so they built up confidence in the water. Sensitive support was given two pupils who were particularly nervous of the water and both gained confidence quickly. All pupils worked hard and behaved well, and enjoyed the games that were introduced at the end of the session.
107. In other lessons, good teaching encouraged pupils to work hard to improve their skills in athletics and games. Pupils arrive at the start of lessons appropriately dressed and ready to learn. Teachers ensure appropriate warm-ups at the beginning of sessions and it is clear that pupils understand why this is necessary. Pupils in Year 3 learnt well how to vary their technique for long-distance running, because the teacher effectively demonstrated the skills required. Pupils were helped to improve by practising in pairs and evaluating each other's performance. Teachers coach pupils well, such as in a Year 5 lesson, in which they learnt successfully how to throw a javelin. By the end of the lesson, they sequenced the required movements to balance the javelin and propel it into a target area.
108. Very good coaching was seen in a Year 6 lesson, which was led by a teacher of physical education from a local secondary school. This arrangement extends to one day per week. Teaching was skilful and knowledgeable. It resulted in pupils' very good acquisition of techniques of passing a baton in relay races. Pupils worked well together in teams, showing good control of their movements, and improving the timing of the manoeuvre. Good co-operative teaching with the class teacher provided evidence of good prior liaison over planning. In all lessons, teachers end with a session that provides opportunities to assess pupils' progress.
109. Despite limitations in exterior accommodation for the subject, most pupils achieve well. Although the school has no field of its own, it more than compensates with excellent opportunities after school. Activities provided for pupils include football, netball, short tennis, badminton and cross-country running. These clubs are well attended and therefore make a significant contribution to overall attainment. Furthermore, professional coaches teach basketball, cricket, athletics and karate, although a small charge is made for these sessions. Outdoor and adventurous activities are taught during day and residential trips to activity centres. To ensure equality of opportunity, those pupils who cannot attend

are given similar experiences back at the school. Pupils are entered for tournaments and achieve well. Their individual successes are supported and celebrated.

110. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and use demonstration and coaching well to help pupils improve. There is a good policy, which has recently been reviewed. It provides good guidance, includes health and safety issues and provides advice on how pupils' attitudes and personal development can be enhanced through physical education. Assessment procedures are not currently rigorous, but are undergoing development and this change forms part of the co-ordinator's action plan.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 matches what is expected in the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education. Standards have therefore been maintained since the last inspection and their achievements are sound. In Year 6 pupils have developed a satisfactory understanding of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and of their significance to a follower of that faith. They know about the five pillars of Islam and some of the details of the life of Muhammad, and they understand the importance of the Qur'an to a Muslim. They also know about the significance of the Bible to Christians. Previously in Year 5 they have learned about Jewish practices, such as the observance of Shabbat and the celebration of Hanukkah. They have been able to relate the teachings of religions, for instance about heaven, to their own ideas. In Year 4 they learn about features of Hindu worship, as well as looking at places of worship in the local area. They also know stories from both the Old and New Testaments. For instance, in Year 3, they dramatised Jesus' parable about the prodigal son, although they did not fully understand the significance of this parable in its New Testament context as an image for the forgiveness of God.
112. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, unlike the situation at the time of the last inspection. Teachers use video and religious objects, such as a prayer mat, well to engage pupils' interest, for instance in the role of the mosque in Muslim worship. They also make good use of visitors, such as a Muslim parent, to give pupils a greater insight into what it means to be a follower of a faith. Pupils are able to visit a church and a synagogue, but there are not so many regular opportunities for them to visit places of worship of other faiths. Teachers generally use resources well, including computers to help locate places of worship in the area, although sometimes pupils need more guidance in using these resources. Mostly teachers manage pupils well and value their contribution to lessons. They encourage them particularly to talk about their own faith and beliefs, but occasionally teachers miss opportunities to develop pupils' spoken English, extending their comments to link more effectively with previous learning. Examples are when features of furniture in a mosque, and their relevance to the worship that takes place, were not compared with those of a church or a synagogue. Occasionally, too, the pace of a lesson is not sufficient to interest all pupils, which results in loss of attention.
113. The school's planning results in the study of Christianity and one other religion in each school year. This arrangement means that they develop an increasing understanding of Christianity but not of the other world faiths, which they do not have an opportunity to study again at greater depth.
114. Pupils work well together when they are given the opportunity, for instance when they prepare in groups to act out separate parts of the story of the prodigal son in Year 3. They are also, in Year 4, given good opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and what places and people are significant to them, relating these also to Christian teaching about being a good neighbour. As they move through the school, they learn to value the range of religious belief represented in their own society. In this way religious education makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

115. The subject has a clear and appropriate action plan. Progress on this plan has been held back by the co-ordinator's unavoidable absence, but work has started on a system to assess the level of pupils' understanding as they complete a topic. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and samples pupils' work to ascertain whether or not pupils make sufficient progress. She has not had other opportunities to check on teaching and learning in religious education, but the subject had just become a focus for development at the time of the inspection.