

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **LARKFIELDS JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Coronation Road

Nuthall

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122575

Headteacher: Mr A H Shaw

Reporting inspector: Mr C Rhodes  
16408

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th January 2000

Inspection number: 196949

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coronation Road Nuthall Nottingham
Postcode:	NG16 1EP
Telephone number:	01159194343
Fax number:	01159190524
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carol Minkley
Date of previous inspection:	9th December 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr C Rhodes	Registered inspector	Mathematics History Religious Education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
Mr B Jones	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr M Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Science Information technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs J Morris	Team inspector	English Art Geography Music	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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Inspection Quality Division  
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33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Larkfields is a junior school of average size for boys and girls aged 7-11 years. It has 257 pupils on roll, most of whom are white. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is typical of that found nationally. Thirty two pupils, thirteen per cent, have special educational needs, which is lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free meals is also below average. No pupils have English as an additional language.

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

Larkfields is a very effective school. Pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and make considerable progress because the teaching is good and the work the children do is demanding. The headteacher, governors and staff work very well together to improve the school and maintain high standards. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of management and leadership provided by the headteacher and key staff is very high
- The quality of teaching is very good in nearly forty percent of lessons, and good in a further thirty percent
- The quality of learning is above average
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than the national average
- The level of care shown to pupils is very high
- Higher attaining pupils, especially in Year 6, are set challenging work
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very strong
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good
- Parents and school work very effectively together
- The school is very effective and provides good value for money

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

- The use of group work based on ability in classes where this is not already an established policy
- The systems through which the headteacher and subject co-ordinators evaluate the quality of teaching and learning
- Individual target setting for pupils so that they can improve their work
- The new arrangements for homework have not yet been finalised or published
- The better use of information technology skills in lessons learnt in the ICT suite

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When the school was inspected in 1996, the report said it was a good school with many strengths. It has maintained this overall position and has improved in many aspects. Standards in mathematics and science have risen, including those of the pupils of higher ability, and the percentage of very good teaching has more than doubled. The concerns about music have been addressed effectively. Arrangements for assessment are now sound but further work is needed to develop and make best use of teachers' judgements of success in individual lessons. Schemes of work have been improved and subject co-ordinators share their expertise more effectively. The school is well placed to continue to improve at a greater than average rate.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	C	A	A
mathematics	B	A	B	B
science	B	A	B	B

**Key**

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

The table shows that, for example, the results in national tests in English rose considerably in 1999 in relation to previous years, and were well above average when compared to all and similar schools. The standard of English, mathematics and science seen in pupils' books and in lessons in Year 6 during the inspection was above the national average both in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 and for those working successfully in the higher level 5. Progress over time is good, and the overall above average success seen in past years has been maintained. The improved results in science lessons are particularly noticeable. Standards in information technology and religious education are in line with national and local expectations. The school has set appropriately realistic targets for the national tests later in the year. Standards are set at a high level in all classes, especially in the many lessons where carefully chosen tasks challenge pupils of different ability.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils take a keen interest in all that they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Consistently of a high standard
Personal development and relationships	Always very good
Attendance	Slightly higher than average. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school, and are very interested and involved in all its activities. They are attentive and maintain high levels of concentration in nearly all lessons. They are very considerate of each other and of the adults with whom they work. Relationships are very good and, at times, excellent. The absence of any oppressive behaviour is particularly noticeable. Opportunities for independent learning are used effectively but are limited in a number of classes.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching was very good in thirty-eight percent of the lessons observed. It was good in a further thirty percent and sound in the remaining thirty-two percent. No teaching was unsatisfactory. The particular strengths of teaching are the effectiveness of the methods used by teachers and their management of the pupils. There are no major areas of weakness, although some younger pupils spend too much time completing easy work before moving onto more challenging tasks and information technology is not used widely enough across the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are well taught, with noticeably good use made of the skills learned in the literacy hour lessons in other areas of the curriculum. The school meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils learn very effectively and respond particularly well to the intellectual, physical and creative challenges found in many lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced. The amount of time allocated to English and mathematics limits that available for other subjects. The provision for extra-curricular activities is especially strong.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good with particular strengths in moral and social education. The provision for awareness of the diversity of cultures found in modern Britain is more limited than is commonly found in similar schools.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good, with particular strengths in child protection, in ensuring pupils' welfare, monitoring and promoting good conduct, and in eliminating oppressive behaviour

The school works very effectively with parents who have very positive views about the school. The quality of information they receive is good. The school makes good use of educational visits in all areas of the curriculum, and has strong links with the infant school and the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. Aspects of food technology are not covered in sufficient depth. Some literacy and numeracy lessons are too long, and limit the time available for other subjects. The very good range of extra-curricular activities includes sporting and in-door activities. The ways in which the school cares for its pupils are a particular strength and are much appreciated by parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Standards of leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has vision and a quiet but resolute style with which to achieve it. He is strongly supported the deputy headteacher and senior staff. Subject co-ordinators carry out their delegated responsibilities very conscientiously.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body carries out its responsibilities very effectively and plays a full part in shaping the future direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Senior staff analyse test results and other data very carefully in order to measure progress and set targets, but there is no current formalised programme for the systematic evaluation of standards of teaching and learning during lessons
The strategic use of resources	The budget is used wisely in order to achieve the school's agreed educational priorities. The school gives good value for money.

Staff qualifications, the accommodation and level of resources are better than average. Insufficient use is made of classroom based computers at the present time. The high quality of leadership ensures that the school has a clear educational direction. The school's aims and values are reflected very strongly in its work. Staff and governors have a shared commitment to improvement and a determination to succeed. The school is effective in applying the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Parents can meet with teachers or the headteacher easily</li> <li>• The school is well led</li> <li>• The range of lunchtime and after school activities</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrangements for homework</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the parents' positive views. Current arrangements for homework are inconsistent and do not fully reinforce or extend what has been learned in classrooms. The school has carried out an extensive survey of parents' views, and will shortly publish and implement a new policy.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In 1999 the percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who reached the target of level 4 was close to the national average for English and science, and above the average for mathematics. The percentage who reached the higher level 5 was well above the national average for English and science, and above for mathematics. The English and mathematics results were well above average for English, and above the average for mathematics and science, when compared with all and similar schools. The English results showed a distinct improvement over previous years, while mathematics and science results continued a pattern of above average attainment. Boys and girls achieved equally well above the average. Boys' standards in writing were particularly strong compared with the national average for pupils achieving level 5. The school reached its 1999 targets for English and exceeded the target for mathematics. New challenging targets have been set for each year group, based on a careful analysis of their current and potential ability.
2. The high standards reached in national tests were substantiated during the inspection in lessons, in an examination of the work completed by pupils since last September and in discussions with groups of children. The overall quality of learning is good. Pupils in the current Year 6 are reaching levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science that are above the national average both in terms of those reaching level 4 and of those working confidently in level 5. Standards in religious education and information technology (IT) are close to the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus and National Curriculum. Individual pupils are achieving levels that are higher.
3. Overall standards of speaking and listening are above the national expectation throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently and have a very good vocabulary relative to their age. They make very good use of specific vocabulary learned, for example, in mathematics and science lessons. Standards of reading are well above average by the end of the key stage as pupils benefit from the introduction of the literacy hour and the increased focus on literacy in all classes. Phonic skills are taught appropriately to help lower attaining and younger pupils learn to read unfamiliar words. Standards in writing are at least average with a significant proportion of older pupils reaching higher levels. Most pupils make every effort to use exciting and interesting language, although the writing of lower attaining pupils occasionally lacks imagination. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct, and higher attaining pupils have a sound understanding of the use of paragraphs and parts of speech. Very good use is made of writing skills in other subjects, as was seen when Year 3 pupils made notes watching a geography video or Year 5 used bullet points to write up a science experiment. Overall progress in English is good.
4. The standards seen in mathematics lessons and pupils' books during the inspection show that above average standards are being maintained and that progress over time is good. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy the quick fire mental mathematics that start each lesson, using their ability to work in numbers to 1000, for example, to answer questions relating to the number of degrees in the angles of triangles and quadrilaterals. They have retained a good understanding of work completed since September, showing an increasing knowledge and understanding across the full range of the mathematics curriculum. Pupils of all abilities gain in mathematical

confidence. Most are able to explain past errors and feel that they are doing well. Higher attaining pupils have completed extension work successfully, benefit from being set tasks at a more challenging level and from working with pupils of like ability. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when working with a classroom assistant or other adult. The school has set careful targets for the different year groups but pupils are not currently set individual mathematical targets. This makes it harder for them to raise their own standards of attainment. Pupils' skills in numeracy are used competently in all subjects, for example to ensure accurate measurement in science and to use negative numbers in geography to explain the depth below sea level.

5. Pupils also achieve above average standards in science by the end of the key stage. They are particularly good at planning and carrying out the strategies for completing an experiment. They use their reasoning powers effectively to work out the links between their measurements and the scientific conclusions to be reached, absorbing a good quantity of subject knowledge in the process. They maintain a strong sense of curiosity and make good progress.
6. Standards in information technology at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with those expected for Year 6 pupils and progress is sound. Pupils use their own disks successfully to open up work files, find their previous work and begin to amend it. They use a good range of word processing editing features, and can use spreadsheets confidently to enter data taken from science experiments. Most can convert the information to graphs and understand what these represent. Pupils are not as adept in applying the level 5 element of selecting computers as their preferred way of communicating class work.
7. Standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Many pupils have a good factual knowledge of Christianity and of a number of other major world faiths. Individual pupils know why, for example, the Old Testament is an important holy text for both Jews and Christians, can recall the major events in the life of Christ, and explain the symbolism of bread and wine. They have a sound understanding of the basic beliefs of Hinduism, remembering the characteristics and names of the principal gods and can recall the story of Rama and Sita. Higher attaining pupils could explain the symbolism of the empty cross. One Year 6 class had visited the local parish church and were able to describe what they had seen and learned in some detail. Progress is good and pupils in all classes extend their learning and understanding by following a well-balanced scheme of work.
8. The quality of learning is high in history and geography, and has much improved in music, a concern at the time of the previous inspection. Learning is sound in art. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to make a fair judgement about design and technology. Learning in all aspects of physical education is also good and the school is well placed to consider pupil targets for excellence.
9. The school's records show that pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when they are supported during their work inside and outside the classroom. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets for improvement in work and behaviour. On a few occasions, when the tasks set in whole class lessons are inappropriate for their needs, they do not do as well as they could.

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

10. Pupils have maintained and improved the very positive attitudes, values and personal development reported in the previous inspection. They are proud and very enthusiastic about their school. They take a keen interest in their lessons and the many extra-curricular activities. They are attentive, work hard and sustain concentration at good or very good levels in virtually all lessons. They treat each other with respect and consideration. The higher attaining pupils make more effective use of the greater opportunities for independent learning that the school now provides. Pupils with special educational needs maintain a positive self-image and have a positive and confident approach to their work. Support staff encourage independence in the pupils to tackle challenging tasks with determination.
11. Attendance is at a satisfactory level, slightly above the national average and the rate shown in the previous report. Punctuality is good, and lessons start promptly. Pupils do their best to arrive on time even when the nearby motorway causes severe congestion around the school.
12. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning. They are very eager to answer in lessons, and to show their work to parents and other visitors. They are proud of the school's high levels of success, both academically and in many different sporting activities. Ninety-six percent of parents say their children like the school. Pupils show very good levels of sustained interest and involvement. Their response is good or better in well over eighty percent of lessons. Pupils take part regularly in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Boys and girls both join enthusiastically in soccer and athletics. Musical and performing arts activities also attract keen interest. Over fifty pupils belong to the chess club.
13. Behaviour in lessons, in the hall and the playgrounds and around the school is consistently very good. The school is an orderly community. Pupils respect the school environment and keep it tidy. At break times, pupils observe the convention that they play ball games only on the upper playground. The swift, controlled movement of the eight classes in and out of the hall for assembly each morning is methodical and efficient. The school had made one exclusion in the year before the previous inspection; it has made no exclusions in the past year. The school is excellent in its freedom from harassment and oppressive behaviour. At the parents' meeting and in interviews with pupils, no one recalled any incidence of bullying. Several pupils say they feel the school would deter bullying if anyone tried it.
14. Pupils have a very good understanding of the effect their actions and words can have on others. The school rules advise that teasing and name calling can hurt people, and the pupils avoid doing these things. They are very courteous and considerate to one another. As the pupils become more mature, their respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs develops very well. A discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils shows they acquire a good knowledge of the symbols, festivals and beliefs of other religions. The pupils welcome the opportunities they receive in religious education lessons and assemblies to reflect on deeper issues, and respect the values and beliefs held by others.

15. Pupils show good initiative in developing their personal responsibility. Older pupils confidently manage the overhead projector and the sound system in assemblies. Year 6 initiated and ran their fund-raising stalls for a Blue Peter bring and buy sale. Children from other classes took part in the detailed organisation. They succeed in a wide range of competitive sports and pupils are regularly chosen to play at county and district levels. Three girls and four boys play chess for the county. Pupils frequently win swimming and athletics events.
16. Relationships are very good. Pupils respond very positively to the school's determination to treat every child as an individual and to value everyone. Pupils build very good friendships and co-operate very well in their lessons. They appreciate the way the teachers and other adults care for them. They value the time and effort that the teachers put into the sports and other extra-curricular activities, and they relate very well to all the adults at school.

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

17. The overall quality of teaching is good. thirty-eight percent of the fifty lessons observed were judged to be very good, a further thirty percent were good and thirty-two percent were sound. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and the percentage of good or very good teaching has risen from fifty-six percent to sixty-eight percent.
18. In the best lessons teachers demonstrate a full command of the subject material, convey their own enthusiasm to the pupils, thus giving them an increased confidence, expect high standards and create a purposeful, calm and well organised environment for learning. It is of particular credit to the teachers concerned that these high standards are maintained even when the class numbers, as in Year 5, are unusually high. Teachers use open questions skilfully, as in many science lessons and in the basic skills teaching that introduces literacy and mathematics lessons. Pupils are tested on what they know but are also challenged to use their brains and think intellectually and creatively. Lessons are well planned, with timed tasks to ensure pace and rigour in the learning. Pupils in all classes are very well managed, often through the praise of good behaviour. Support staff are deployed effectively, and are carefully briefed for their role. There is a consistent use of the correct specialist language, and children are encouraged to be accurate in their own responses and work. Teachers are particularly adept in making cross-curricular connections, using texts in the literacy hour that link to the history topic for example, so that the basic skills learned in English lessons have a direct and positive impact on other areas of the curriculum. Phonics are taught effectively so that younger and lower attaining pupils learn how to tackle new vocabulary confidently. Relationships are strong and are based on mutual respect. In the best lessons, even in the larger classes, group work is set effectively at different levels of challenge so that each pupil works hard.
19. Teaching is less strong in the minority of lessons when younger higher attaining pupils are expected to complete all the work set for the rest of the class before moving onto tasks that are more suitably challenging. In some mathematics lessons these children did not reach the extension exercises. The policy for homework is being revised following extensive consultation with parents. The current arrangements are inconsistent and do not fully reinforce or extend what has been learned in classrooms. The use of short-term day-to-day assessment is not yet fully developed in some classes. Overall attainment is often assessed at the end of the week, which makes it harder for teachers to adjust their planning mid-week if the

class or group are progressing faster or slower than anticipated. Although information technology skills are taught effectively in the ICT suite, teachers do not make enough use of classroom computers to use these skills in other areas of the curriculum.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Very good teaching of basic skills on carefully selected material is undertaken by the specialist teacher, engaged for one and a half days of the week. These lessons create good learning conditions of trust and encouragement, in a context of appropriately high expectations. Close teamwork between class teachers and support assistants ensures the effective transfer of instructions and feedback.
21. The overall quality of all pupils' learning is good as a direct result of the high quality of the teaching. They acquire new skills and understanding systematically, and are expected to think creatively as, for example, when devising a fair test to judge which materials conduct electricity the most efficiently. The two Year 5 classes are large, with 37 pupils each, but teachers' hard work offsets most of the possible disadvantages. However, teachers' time for individual pupils has to be more limited than in other classes. Pupils in all classes are interested in their work, know from the teachers' explanations of the lesson's learning objective what they have to do to be successful, concentrate hard and are proud of their success. All books are marked but some do not contain comments to show pupils how they can improve their work. Higher attaining pupils are not always given enough opportunities in subjects such as religious education to carry out independent research. The literacy hour is well established and benefits are being seen in terms of higher standards, and teacher and pupil confidence. Younger children are taught phonics effectively and good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy teaching objectives in teachers' planning. The numeracy strategy has also been introduced effectively, although the use of the quick fire mental session at the beginning of the lesson is not yet fully used and, in some classes, tends to form part of the overall lesson introduction.

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

22. Overall the school provides a good quality and range of learning opportunities and seeks to provide a wide breadth of experiences. It has achieved a particularly strong enrichment of the curriculum through its programme of extra-curricular activities, visits to centres of educational interest and the contribution of visitors to school to share their expertise with pupils. In the planned curriculum, however, there are weaker aspects. The school's planning for design and technology does not give full attention to the study of food technology. In its concern to ensure an emphasis on the teaching of basic skills of mathematics and English, a disproportionate amount of time is allocated on the timetables, with an organisation into unduly long lessons. This is at the expense of the breadth and balance of some other subjects, such as art, design and technology, and personal, social and health education. The school is aware, and will be addressing these issues as part of the implementation of Curriculum 2000.
23. The programme for personal and social education is satisfactory, and covers health and sex education and awareness of drugs misuse. The school is aware that the programme is taught unevenly across a range of other subjects. This is partly due to the absence of a uniform and consistent plan to support the teaching. By contrast, the school has excelled in the development of rigorous planning for the science

curriculum, significantly improved since the previous inspection. This subject is taught discretely, with due weight given to each attainment target, founded on a strong basis of assessment of pupils' attainment. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are well established. They contribute very effectively to raising of standards. In mathematics the strategy has eliminated the concern about an unsatisfactory rate of progress by higher attaining pupils noted in the previous report.

24. The school has noted the effectiveness of the scheme of work for science and has taken steps to put in place similarly strong planning formats for those subjects where they are either absent or incomplete. The previous report praised the school's use of links between subjects. This has improved even further to provide a strong connection across the curriculum. For instance, information technology becomes the vehicle for strengthening science recording and for mathematical understanding of the function of graphs. Technology design gives pupils a greater insight into the testing of circuits or the cultures studied in geography. Physical education is used to consolidate pupils' comprehension by reading instructions for planning dance sequences. The statutory requirements for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education are met.
25. Provision for special educational needs is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is more consistent and the pupils' targets are more clearly defined. In the strongest teaching, these targets are incorporated into the specific tasks set for the lower attaining pupils, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. The school aims at all times to ensure equality of access to the curriculum. This may take the form of planning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs going to their groups outside the classroom do not repeatedly miss important lesson introductions, or it may lie in the planning of work suitable for particular ability groups. Consistently better progress was noted in lessons where this kind of differentiated planning was used.
26. The school is good at enriching the curriculum by drawing in the potential of both the local and more distant communities. Links with local sporting organisations enhance pupils' training in athletics and cricket. Visitors from the local churches help to make religious education a part of "real life" The local history society supplies much fascinating detail about the local area in times gone by. Similarly the school values and contributes to good relationships with neighbouring schools. These are constructive and work to the benefit of pupils, by easing the infants' entry into junior education, and making the move to secondary schools much easier for Year 6 pupils.
27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Particular strengths lie in moral and social education. Pupils clearly know right from wrong, a message which exists in the high expectation for correct behaviour, reinforced numerous times in the excellent example set by staff and older pupils. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to work in social contexts, usually as paired or group work in lessons. Assemblies and serious discussions about current issues provide good opportunities for pupils to test their moral choices. Several residential visits introduce pupils to another side of social living.
28. The spiritual dimension is satisfactory and adequately covered in religious lessons, and opportunities are provided in some lessons, such as science with the older classes, for pupils to reflect on their learning before dashing in with rushed conclusions. There is no policy or scheme, however, to guide consistency of

planning for these four areas. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities exist incidentally in the planning for art, music, dance, literature and the study of cultures in geography and history, but there is no unifying policy to focus these as culture in the minds of the pupils. Provision for awareness of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain is more limited than commonly found in similar schools.

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

29. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and has received appropriate training. He informs staff about the requirements and correct procedures at staff meetings, attended by both the teaching and non-teaching staff. The school does not have any children on the 'at risk register', but maintains close liaison with local support services. Schools in the area co-operate to advise one another of any "stranger danger" or other cause for concern.
30. The school provides a very caring environment. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are particularly strong. Parents appreciate the way the school looks after their children as individuals. A parent at the pre-inspection meeting said that when she rang to enquire about her daughter who had been feeling unwell on the way to school, the school brought her to the phone to reassure her mother that all was now well. Several parents nodded to show the school had cared for their children with similar concern. In the week of the inspection, a pupil hurt his hand in a football game, and the school rang his mother to discuss with her and her son how he was to get home. The school has a lift, ramps and very good facilities for disabled pupils.
31. The school has good procedures for health and safety. A sub-committee of governors and staff checks the premises frequently, and the governing body takes action swiftly where they report a need. The site manager keeps the premises clean and well cared for, checking for health and safety every day. However, the stacking of dining tables and chairs in the hall is a potential health and safety hazard, and uses space needed for assemblies, games and physical education lessons.
32. The school gives its pupils satisfactory support in their educational and personal development. Class teachers and support assistants know their pupils very well indeed, and the school ethos and procedures encourage even new members of staff and new pupils to get to know one another rapidly and effectively. However, the school is still developing its procedures for setting individual academic and personal targets. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Teachers call the registers promptly and correctly. Record-keeping meets the statutory requirements. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer and the traveller support service.
33. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Pupils have developed and written their classroom code of conduct, and respect the school rules. Teachers and assistants look after the playgrounds at break times effectively. Midday supervisors monitor pupils in the hall and playgrounds carefully at lunchtimes. Parents value the way the headteacher sees pupils on to the buses at the end of each school day. The school eliminates oppressive behaviour very effectively by making clear to pupils that it values them as individuals, and expects them to value others in return.

34. Procedures for pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Informal arrangements are strong as class teachers and the headteacher know the pupils well. Even in the largest classes, teachers are concerned for their pupils as individuals. The headteacher makes himself constantly available to pupils and parents. However, the absence of formal target setting reduces the school's effectiveness in helping pupils develop as individuals.
35. The school has satisfactory arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress in most subjects. Arrangements for National Curriculum testing are in order. The school is able to track progress in reading through teachers' reading records and the regular standardised reading tests. The analysis of test data has been delayed by flawed software in the system that is designed to rationalise the process. In 1999, teachers' assessments of pupils' levels in English, mathematics and science tended to underestimate pupils' performance as they erred on the side of caution at the end of a particularly disrupted year.
36. The school has shown that when it uses assessment particularly well, as in science, it is able to identify pupils' levels from an early stage in Year 3. This forward planning enables teachers to set work that is well matched to each ability level and can be confident, particularly in science, that the rate of progress through the school will achieve the higher level of targets set for the year group. Teachers use this quality of assessment to adjust their planning to take into account occasions when pupils move faster or slower. Assessment in other subjects is not as secure, and there are examples of work set at an inappropriate level for younger pupils in mathematics and English. In some classes this is linked to detailed advance planning for a whole week, and the knowledge of pupils' mistakes on one day is not fed into the planning for the next. In the best examples, assessment does not create closed groups and it is possible for pupils with special educational needs at times to be 'promoted' to the top groups for various activities. Marking is done regularly, but many books do not contain comments to show pupils how they can improve their work. Feedback is given orally when work is returned, but the absence of written comments means that pupils do not have a written record of how they can progress. Teachers are also not using their very good knowledge of their pupils to set individual targets for progress.
37. The school has very good links with the infant school, and uses the valuable transfer records as a baseline for assessing pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are well monitored for language development in all years. The school is also alert to spotting signs of delayed progress and draws on the expertise of specialist services for detailed diagnostic testing. The school has very good relationships with many specialist agencies, particularly valuing the links with the education psychology and outreach service, which have helped raise pupil welfare to a high level. The school uses its knowledge of its pupils effectively to give guidance on behaviour and academic improvement.

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

38. Parents have a very high regard for the school. They feel it helps their children learn effectively, and that it looks after them well. They see it as a caring school. In response to questions whether the school works closely with parents and whether they feel comfortable about approaching it with a concern, over ninety-five percent of parents give positive responses. They share their children's delight at the progress they are making in their schoolwork and pride in their participation in the Christmas concert.



39. The school has good links with its parents. They say it is an open school, and that they can talk to the class teacher or the headteacher whenever they need. The school is very welcoming to new families. Parents have prearranged meetings with their child's teacher each term with a choice of day and a choice of afternoon or evening. If none of these times is convenient, the school arranges another appointment. Parents of children with special educational needs say they take an active part in the development and review of the individual education plans.
40. Parents give good support to the school in its new initiatives. Following consultation in the summer term, the school introduced its home-school agreement and a high proportion of parents have signed it. The school is eager to involve parents in decision-making. It circulated its own parental questionnaire at the start of this year, seeking parents' views on matters of policy and detail. Parents welcome the way that each meeting of the parent teacher association starts with a ten minute "Question Time" at which parents can air any suggestion or concern. They also have opportunities for informal discussions at parents' events. These activities strengthen parents' feelings that the school is part of their community.
41. The school provides parents with good quality information. Parents say they like the reports and they can clearly recognise their own child. The reports are well written, detailed and focus strongly on the child's individual strengths and interests. Teachers do not, however, take the opportunity to specify targets for future learning. The format of the report includes a single box for technology, making it difficult for readers to distinguish information technology clearly from design and technology. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are attractively presented and clear. Parents appreciate the steady flow of newsletters about activities and events. The school held a parents' evening to introduce the literacy hour last year, but has not yet held a meeting on the National Numeracy Strategy.
42. The parental contribution to their children's learning at home and at school is good on balance. The school makes very good use of parents in school and extra-curricular activities. Twelve parents are regular volunteer helpers in the classes. In addition to hearing children read, parents with special skills also help with mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Many parents accompany visits to study geography or history in the local area. Parents play a key role in accompanying the three residential visits made each year by pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. More than twenty parents help with competitive sports and games. However, arrangements for homework are inconsistent. The school has not yet communicated its policy to all parents, nor implemented setting of homework consistently in all classes.

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

43. The leadership and management of the school is very good and the previous high standards of management found at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The headteacher provides very strong leadership with a commitment to achieving high standards in all aspects of school life, and has a quiet, resolute style with which to achieve them. He has a clear vision, knowledge and understanding of education. Since the appointment of the deputy headteacher, the school now has a very strong management team that shares common goals and are united with their aims and in the direction the school will take. The staff combine effectively as a team and are supportive of each other. The curriculum co-ordinators are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and have specific responsibilities for ensuring that curriculum development is continuous and progressive. However, the structured evaluation of

teaching and learning through classroom observation by the headteacher and co-ordinators is not yet formally established. All staff and pupils are highly valued and, as a result, are committed to the school's aims and reflect them in their work. The very good relationships and communication between staff and pupils ensure that the high expectations of success are shared.

44. The governing body is well established and has considerable expertise. It is led by a very experienced and supportive Chair, who visits the school regularly during the week. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very effectively, plays a full part in shaping the future direction for the school and meets all its statutory requirements. Governors participate in a variety of courses to improve their understanding of their work. However, few governors, other than the Chair, are able to visit the school during classes. This makes it more difficult for them to have a clear picture of what actually happens on a day-to-day basis or to have first hand knowledge on which to base their decisions.
45. All staff and governors are involved with priorities currently identified in the school development plan. Co-ordinators look at the progress of their subject within the school and what is determined elsewhere, such as the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies or the introduction of Curriculum 2000. This information, along with other identified areas and budgetary considerations are then discussed at length. The commitment to school improvement is ensured through the headteacher, governors and staff sharing available information in order to ensure the right priorities are set for development and that progress towards them is reviewed. In the past staff have been regularly appraised but this is currently on hold as the school is preparing for the new appraisal arrangements to be introduced later in the year.
46. Educational priorities are supported by careful financial management, including thoughtful and effective use of specific grants for designated purposes. Effective use is made of information technology to run the school's basic administration routines and budget. The assessment management program is not sufficiently reliable to allow the school to analyse its data as well as it would like. The headteacher delegates subject responsibilities effectively, and most subject co-ordinators have a positive impact on raising standards through their expertise and influence as staff trainers. With the exception of science, their role in monitoring the teaching and standards is underdeveloped.
47. The number of teaching staff is larger than usually found, with two part time specialist teachers for science and special educational needs. This is an example of good strategy in targeting staff to specific areas of need, and is well in line with best value principles. There is a good range of experience, and of gender and age balance amongst the staff. Their qualifications match their assigned leadership roles more closely than usually found. Support staff are also well deployed to maximum effect in helping teachers to raise standards. Accommodation is used flexibly to enhance the learning opportunities of pupils, but space is more limited in the two Year 5 classes that contain 37 pupils each. For instance the computer room is used not only for teaching information technology, but also for access to the reference books and as a teaching room for subjects such as science, when the computers are likely to be needed. Stacked dining tables and chairs occupy a significant part of the hall during the time it is used for assemblies and physical education [PE]. Resources

overall are well used to bring practical experience into lessons. The exceptions to this are the classroom computers, which are insufficiently used to extend the skills that pupils have learned in the computer suite. A thorough system of induction has enabled the newly qualified teacher to settle quickly and confidently. Given the level of thought put into this, the school has shown potential to become an effective provider of initial teacher training.

48. The school recognises best value principles in its tendering and purchasing arrangements, and applies them effectively to the allocation and use of resources. The school is careful to get value for money in its spending, and consults widely before any major spending decision or curricular change are undertaken. The school has started to compare itself closely to other similar schools, and to use the analysis to develop the curriculum and set higher pupil targets.

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

49. The headteacher, governing body and staff should continue to work together, and build on the school's current and continuing strengths, to

**A. raise the standard of teaching and learning to the level of the best by**

- increasing the use of differentiated learning groups to ensure that pupils do not waste time completing work that is too easy [paragraphs 19, 59, 60]
- extending the role of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to include the systematic, agreed and formalised evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning through regular classroom observation [paragraphs 43, 46, 56, 61, 79, 97]
- setting more medium term learning targets for individual pupils, and sharing them with the children and their parents [paragraphs 4, 32, 34, 36, 59, 67, 82]
- publishing and implementing an agreed policy for homework, based on the recent survey, in order to reinforce and extend what is learned in classrooms [paragraphs 19, 42, 54, 60]

**B. extend the application of the information technology [IT] skills learned in the Information and Communication Technology [ICT] suite to all areas of the curriculum through**

- continued professional development and support [paragraph 81]
- the purchase of additional software [paragraph 85]
- the inclusion of IT in subject planning [paragraph 47, 60, 80]
- the development of the scheme of work [paragraph 85]

The governing body should also consider the following

- The current timetable, despite the school's revisions, still contains several literacy and numeracy sessions that exceed the recommended times, there are insufficient opportunities for a full design and technology curriculum and no separate programme for pupils' personal, social and health education. [paragraphs 22, 23, 73]
- Stacked dining tables and chairs occupy a significant part of the hall during the time it is used for assemblies and physical education [PE]. [paragraphs 47, 93]
- Two classes now contain 37 pupils. This limits the opportunities for larger practical work and adds to work load carried by staff. [Paragraphs 21, 47, 60,89]

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	38	30	32	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		257
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		34

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	30	41	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	28
	Girls	32	35	32
	Total	55	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (64)	82 (72)	85 (84)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (65)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	26
	Girls	32	34	32
	Total	56	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (68)	80 (77)	82 (89)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	259
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	31.8

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	114

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	425975
Total expenditure	416073
Expenditure per pupil	1601
Balance brought forward from previous year	5485
Balance carried forward to next year	15387

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	257
Number of questionnaires returned	134

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	43	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	38	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	43	13	1	1
The teaching is good.	67	31	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	41	6	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	19	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	23	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	40	3	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	81	17	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	33	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	25	3	1	1



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

**ENGLISH**

50. Attainment in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 199 was well above the national average in comparison with all and similar schools. seventy-seven percent of pupils achieved level 4 and above, which is about average, and thirty-nine percent at level 5, which is well above the national average. Boys' standards in writing were particularly strong compared with the national average for pupils achieving level 5. Results were close to the national average in 1997 and 1998 but improved in 1999. This is due to the school's determination to raise standards in literacy, the contribution of the Literacy Strategy, good teaching and pre-test work in the booster classes. The predicted figures for 2000 suggest that seventy-seven percent will attain level 4 or above. The target is higher for 2001 when eighty percent of pupils are predicted to achieve the national average. The standards seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection are above the national average for near the end of Key Stage 2, both in terms of the number of pupils already achieving level 4 and those working successfully at higher levels. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Progress throughout the school is good as attainment on entry is in line with the national average but above the nationally expected level by the time the pupils are eleven. Progress of pupils with special education needs is good.
51. Overall standards of attainment in speaking and listening are above the national expectation throughout the school. Skills are well developed with pupils sustaining concentration for lengthy periods. They are confident and have a very good vocabulary relative to their age. The contribution made to the quality of discussion is high. Pupils in Year 6 commented on current issues maturely, as when they discussed pollution in the environment. They are also very much aware of the importance of the correct subject specific vocabulary in other areas of the curriculum and, for example, use a combination of mathematical and everyday language to explain high-level mathematical concepts. Very good speaking and listening were seen in a science lesson when pupils planned an experiment, and discussed and analysed their progress and results amongst themselves, and later with their teacher. Pupils listen very carefully and attentively to their teachers and to each other, particularly in writing sessions.
52. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are reaching standards in reading that are well above the national average, and are similar to those noted in the previous inspection. Pupils of lesser ability read at appropriate levels and make effective use of phonics to help them break down words they find more difficult. Pupils are benefiting from the introduction of the literacy hour and the increased focus on literacy throughout the school. Their skills in finding information from books are well developed. They use indexes, glossaries, thesauruses, and tables of contents with confidence. Links with other curriculum areas through literacy are very good, as when a Year 3 class used a variety of reference books about Vikings to develop skills relating to skimming and scanning text and organising information. The class text, used in Year 6, related to their work in geography. In a religious education lesson in Year 6 pupils made good use of their literacy skills to take notes and to use appropriate vocabulary. Pupils read texts with increasing fluency and show in discussion that they understand them. All pupils are taught library skills and know the library index to access both fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils are becoming competent at accessing information from CD-ROM and read regularly at home.

53. Standards in writing have been maintained since the previous inspection and, by the age of eleven, attainment in writing is at least average with a significant percentage of pupils attaining higher levels. Progress in writing is mostly good and sometimes very good throughout the school, particularly in Year 6. A good range of work is provided through the structure of the Literacy Strategy. Pupils write instructions, letters, book reviews, labels, stories and poems, using a suitable language and format. Most pupils have an understanding of the basic skills at least appropriate to their age, make every effort to use exciting and interesting language, and use a thesaurus and dictionary when required. Pupils have opportunities to improve their work by drafting, editing and then presenting the final form. Lessons to improve extended writing have been in place for some time and are helping to develop story writing skills effectively. Progress has been accelerated as a result. Pupils in Year 6 identify their own targets for improvement to good effect. Good examples of writing across the curriculum were found in history when pupils in Year 4 write about 'A Spanish Sailor's Log' and in Year 6 about 'A Day in the life of Duchess Helena of York.' There are some very good examples of poems when pupils write imaginatively about 'Days in the Workhouse' to a standard well above that expected for their age. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct and higher attaining pupils have a sound understanding of the use of paragraphs and parts of speech. Pupils are given opportunities to improve their handwriting and most handwriting is neat, legible and consistent in size, particularly in Year 6. However, some pupils throughout the key stage still print at times, and the school's policy is not applied consistently in all classes.
54. The quality of teaching is good overall, with half the lessons very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge of English and have worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy. Planning is good and is based on the Literacy Strategy teaching objectives. Higher attaining pupils are recognised and sufficiently challenged. The shared text work and plenary sessions are usually very good, but in the less effective lessons teachers do not always manage to promote independence in the group writing sessions. This limits the quality of the learning. Progress is at least good and sometimes better in most classes as teachers set high standards and make it clear to pupils that they must do their best. The pupils respond positively, learning is accelerated and they work hard. The management of pupils by both teaching and support staff is very good and pupils are well behaved in all lessons. Teachers establish good relationships with the children, use question and answer sessions effectively and praise and encouragement well. Homework is insufficiently used to extend and consolidate what has been learned in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and make good progress, especially in special groups or when the teachers set work for each ability group that is carefully matched to their ability.
55. Reading records provide a useful link with parents but the quality of interaction and practice varies widely. Where links are positive, as in the classes for younger pupils, progress is shared and recorded carefully but at other times there is little comment either from the teacher or parents. A particularly good example was seen in Year 4 where the teacher wrote helpful and developmental comments on a regular basis, books were reviewed on completion and success over reading difficulties was recorded. Marking is variable but in the best examples, is very good and supportive, and gives the pupils a clear idea on how to improve their work.

56. The fiction library was well used during the inspection but the non-fiction library is less accessible when the ITC suite is in full use by a class. The school has plans to rectify this and to re-locate these books in the near future. The subject is led by a very experienced co-ordinator who is committed to raising achievement in literacy in the school. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has ensured the progression of skills teaching. However, some of the lessons are longer than the recommended time and this reduces the pace and impact of the teaching and learning. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning formally. The school has yet to set individual targets for improvement for every child but this is being developed.

## **MATHEMATICS**

57. Pupils achieved standards in the 1999 national tests for the end of Key Stage 2 that were above the national average, both in relation to the percentage who reached the national target of level 4 and for those who reached the higher level 5. Results have been consistently above the national average since 1997. The 1999 results were above average in comparison with all and similar schools. Pupils enter school with standards that are broadly average, and thus make good progress over time. Teachers had slightly under-estimated how many children would reach level 5 as they were uncertain how the staffing changes which had occurred mid-year might affect attainment.
58. The standards seen in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection show that the above average standards are being maintained. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy the quick fire mental mathematics that start each lesson, using their ability to work in numbers to 1000, for example, to answer questions relating to the number of degrees in the angles of triangles and quadrilaterals. They have retained a good understanding of work completed since September, showing an increasing knowledge and understanding across the full range of the curriculum. Pupils of all abilities gain in mathematical confidence and learn effectively. Most are able to explain past errors and feel that they are doing well. Higher attaining pupils have completed extension work successfully, benefit from being set tasks at a more challenging level and from working with pupils of like ability. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when working with a classroom assistant or other adult. The school has set careful targets for the different year groups but pupils are not currently set individual mathematical targets. This makes it harder for them to raise their own standards of attainment. Pupils' skills in numeracy are used well in science and other lessons. Particularly good use is made of timelines in history lessons to ensure that pupils have a firm understanding of chronology.
59. Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection when they were close to the national average. Considerable work has been done by the co-ordinator and staff to ensure that pupils of different abilities, particularly those capable of high achievement, are set work at an appropriately challenging level. An excellent example was seen in Year 5 following a well-taught whole class introduction on the construction of line graphs. The tasks that followed were an extension of the first part of the lesson but set different mathematical and intellectual challenges to the various groups. The quality of learning was high. However, there are still a minority of occasions when younger higher attaining pupils spend too long practising work at a lower level and do not reach the extension work. The school has identified a small group of older pupils capable of very high attainment and ensures that their particular

needs are met sensitively and effectively. However, pupils are not generally set individual medium term targets for improvement. This makes it harder for them to judge their own progress and be responsible for their own learning. Pupils' knowledge of mathematical tables has improved and their positive attitudes to mathematics have been retained.

60. The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection. It is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. Very good use is made of the chalk or white board at the beginning of lessons. In the best lessons, the lesson objective is visible and explained, and the board serves as a focus for the skills teaching that follows. The best teachers make it clear that work must be neat and accurate through personal example, using a board protractor to measure angles for example. A mathematical vocabulary is used consistently and is visible on wall displays, and pupils are encouraged to use it correctly. Pupils are encouraged to think creatively, as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 invented strategies to add and subtract two and three digit numbers. Resources are well prepared. A brisk pace is maintained, and pupils are challenged to think intellectually about the lesson material. A good example was seen when pupils in Year 5 learned how to calculate mode, mean and range, and higher attaining pupils could explain the basis for the calculations correctly rather than just knowing how to follow the process. Pupils in all classes respond very positively to good teaching. They concentrate hard, behave well and are keen to answer questions. They ask questions themselves to extend their understanding. Teaching is less strong when higher attaining pupils are not set work that challenges them and they waste time or chatter, or the teacher spends too much time moving round the room checking individual progress and misses the opportunity to give a smaller group a period of focussed instruction or support. Although information technology is used effectively in some lessons, for constructing graphs for example, not enough use is made of classroom computers to develop and use the skills learned in the ICT suite. The current arrangements for homework are inconsistent. Year 5 teachers meet the challenge of their large classes very well but, nevertheless, the size limits the time available for work with individual pupils.
61. The co-ordinator is skilled and knowledgeable in her subject, and determined to continue to raise standards even further. She has introduced the new National Numeracy Strategy successfully, but recognises that more work needs to be done in some classes to make best use of the mental sessions and to extend the application of IT skills within the mathematics curriculum. She monitors planning and completed work conscientiously, supports her colleagues effectively, but does not currently observe lessons herself in order to spread good practice, become aware of standards of teaching and learning, or to identify how colleagues can be supported further.

## **SCIENCE**

62. Pupils' performance in the 1999 national tests represents a strong result in science. While the number of pupils reaching level 4 was in line with the national average, the number at level 5 was well above average. A smaller than average number of pupils gained level 3 and no pupils fell below this level. Boys performed slightly better than girls in 1999, but over the last four years girls have performed slightly than boys on average. The results at level 4 and higher were above the average for schools of a similar background, and represent a rising trend, rapidly during 1996 and continuing up to 1999. This progress over time is at a higher rate than nationally and comes as a result of the particular attention the school has given to science teaching.

63. The standards achieved by the pupils in Year 6 during the inspection are above average. These older pupils are in line to improve on the 1999 performance and to achieve the higher targets for overall improvement set by the school. Pupils are particularly good at planning and carrying out the strategies for completing an experiment. They use their reasoning powers well to work out the links between their measurements and the scientific conclusions to be reached. They absorb a good quantity of subject knowledge in the process. Most pupils explain clearly not only why their experiment of different kinds of exercise proves that the heart beats faster, but also the function of the blood circulation system to carry energy to the very fingertips. They retain a strong sense of curiosity, and wonder why the pulse rate goes up but does not match with the findings recorded in their data.
64. Pupils are being taught to use various ways to record their results and find more information. They are learning how to use a spreadsheet to record results, and to use CD-ROM and the Internet to retrieve information. Overall numeracy skills of estimating, counting and measuring various quantities are well used to feed into effective investigations. Literacy, too, supports pupils' developing ideas, as they read text purposefully and write their conclusions in a clear style suited to scientific recording.
65. Science has improved significantly since the last inspection. Very effective, systematic and determined co-ordination has achieved the key issue of that report, the raising of standards. Good planning and teamwork have improved the consistency of teaching, which has improved from sound to very good. The present scheme guides teachers' planning in building skills step by step, to build in progression over time. Teachers plan around a method that creates very good learning conditions. They put the pupils in charge of doing the thinking and solving the problems, with backup help ready when needed. Pupils have real ownership of their work, and respond well with enthusiasm and sensible sharing of ideas and equipment with their partners or groups.
66. The school has adopted a particularly successful strategy of using a specialist support teacher, mostly for Years 5 and 6, but shared by younger classes. Using this support means that classes can be divided into two groups, enabling closer one-to-one attention and setting more challenging work to match the abilities of higher attaining pupils. Teachers also set tasks suited to the pace of the smaller middle group, but this pace is not fast and pupils keep up a good rate of productivity. The quality of learning is enhanced. Where teaching is only satisfactory, no time targets are set for pupils, and the match of work may be over simplified, such as drawing pictures rather than demanding writing. In some lessons, as in Year 5, teachers organise mixed ability groups. These work well since the pupils' good, and often excellent, behaviour and willingness to help each other means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are drawn into the discussions and play a full part. However, the level of challenge in such lessons is not as demanding as those lessons where differentiated tasks are planned.
67. Much of the science work is based upon a strong assessment system. The co-ordinator has a clear view of pupils' achievement and potential from Year 3 upwards. Good practice is the flexibility of selecting groups, for instance it is possible for pupils with special educational needs to be placed in a top set where their knowledge justifies this, in particular activities. Teachers explain the learning objectives clearly to pupils at the start of lessons but subsequent assessment does not yet include pupils' own evaluation of their work or act as the basis for setting of individual targets.

## **ART**

68. As only one art lesson could be observed during the inspection, due to the arrangement of the timetable, judgements have been made on the basis of a scrutiny of planning and displayed pupil's work. These indicate that pupils learn effectively and progress is sound overall. Pupils use a satisfactory but limited range of materials, media and techniques to express their ideas, usually linked to other subject areas. In Year 3, there are good examples of pupils' line drawings using charcoal and chalk to illustrate everyday objects such as a kettle and candlestick. These, together with pencil drawings and the use of collage, both associated with The Iron Man topic, indicate work of a good standard for the age of the pupils. Neatly drawn figures have been used in Year 4 to illustrate written work in religious education, and also using paint to good effect to create Tudor portraits. Pupils in Year 5 use appropriate drawings to illustrate their work on Egyptians and Fables, Myths & Legends. The detailed observations based on a study of hieroglyphics are very effective. Well-painted pictures of Victorian portraits are displayed in the Year 6 area and demonstrate good use of colour and colour mixing. Pencil drawings of everyday objects from Victorian times demonstrate that at the end of the key stage pupils are able to exercise good hand control and are meticulous in the work they produce. Progress in art has been maintained since the last inspection.
69. The lesson seen in Year 3 was linked with design technology and ensured good development of careful hand control, knowledge of a new material and its use to best effect. The teaching was very good. The positive reinforcement of pupils' ideas and designs for their Viking jewellery gave them encouragement and engendered confidence. Appropriate vocabulary was emphasised and pupils were made aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the material being used. This was a lesson with lots of "buzz" and pace. Good relationships with the pupils ensured enjoyment and success for those of all abilities. Pupils were well behaved and worked co-operatively together, sharing tools and equipment.
70. The co-ordinator has been absent from school during the past year on a teacher exchange. There are no formal opportunities for him to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom and pupils' work is not assessed. There are insufficient links to art from other cultures and the use of information technology is very limited.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

71. No lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. Pupils' work is displayed in an attractive form in several classrooms. The displays indicate that teachers give considerable thought to planning topics where the design and making of finished products have relevance to other areas of the curriculum. For instance, the lively collection of puppets in Year 3 was useful in showing the cultures of countries studied in geography, and also as a vehicle for writing play scripts for a shadow puppet performance. Similarly, in Year 5, some intricate model shadufs link to the classes' geography and history work on Egypt.
72. The quality of finish of both these models demonstrates the care that pupils take. They rightly show off their work with pride. They explain how the items were planned and constructed, by referring to their design drawings. They are not sure how they set about modifying their work if they encounter difficulties. There are no samples of writing evaluating the completed articles.

73. Planning indicates that teachers try to include most of the curriculum requirements with work on structures, mechanisms and textiles. The planned work gets progressively more difficult. For instance, the sewing done in Year 4 is required to be more demanding in Year 6. Older pupils stated they felt that their samplers, linked to the Victorian period in history, were more difficult, being based on quite detailed designs that they had drawn beforehand. Teachers do not have the guidance of an ordered scheme of work to bring consistency to planning. The time allocated on the timetable is quite small, and some elements of the subject, such as the study of food technology, are squeezed out. There are no formal opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. Essentially the subject has not developed since the last inspection. However, the management of the subject is being re-established, and plans are being drawn up in line with the new curriculum orders.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

74. During the inspection it was not possible to observe geography lessons in every class. However, it is clear from work seen and from teachers' planning, that pupils are demonstrating an increasingly sound depth of factual knowledge and understanding about their local environment and places further afield. Progress is at least sound throughout the school, particularly in Year 6. Pupils build on and extend the skills needed to help them with work of a geographical nature. Pupils in Year 3 make thoughtful and factually based comparisons between the main physical and human features of land and how it is used in Jamaica and the United Kingdom. Through their topic on rainforests Year 4 pupils can identify the equator and the tropics on a world map and begin to understand the relationship between climate and areas of the world. Year 5 pupils build on this knowledge and have a broader knowledge and understanding of coastal, tropical and equatorial regions and the climate to be found there.
75. The overall quality of learning in Year 6 is good. Pupils know and understand the use of scale and the concept of contours, and identify steep and gently inclines and other physical features on a map. They understand how man is bringing about environmental change by varying activities such as destruction of the rainforests and the effect of pollution on the environment. Good links with literacy are demonstrated with pupils using a correct geographical vocabulary and the ability to gather, record and use information gained from a variety of sources. Their knowledge and understanding indicates good links with science as pupils at the end of the key stage are able to explain why we have night and day and that the tilt of the earth causes seasonal changes in many parts of the world. They can explain the source of a river and the part played by gravity in the flow of water into a lake or sea.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall. The best lessons demonstrate very good planning, good subject knowledge and a variety of activities appropriate to all levels of pupils' abilities. The standards seen at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Teachers emphasise subject vocabulary, have high expectations of pupils and show good discipline. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are well behaved and listen attentively to explanations by teachers. This ensures good progress and development of geographical knowledge. Geography makes a significant contribution to pupil's cultural development, particularly through the study

of Jamaica and Egypt. The co-ordinator is recently appointed, and has compared and amended the school's scheme of work effectively in order to meet the new curriculum 2000 requirements from September. Good use is made of the immediate locality and residential visits such as to Bude that enable pupils to see the contrasting areas in the United Kingdom at first hand.

## **HISTORY**

77. History was not taught during the period of the inspection but, from the evidence available in pupils' folders, on wall displays and through discussion with groups of children, it is clear that the level of work achieved is similar to that noted during the previous inspection and that the quality of learning is good. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of social conditions in Victorian times and the impact of the use of new technology. Higher attaining pupils are able to explain the effect of the development of steam power on mining and factories as well as on transportation. The visit to Newstead Abbey, and the use of role-play, has been especially important in raising levels of understanding about the past. Pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs, are able to recall vividly and enthusiastically what life had been like and know exactly why they are glad to be living in the present century. They have, for example, tried copper plate handwriting for themselves and have a genuine admiration for the skills of their predecessors. Pupils have a good sense of chronology and are able to put the different key historical era in the correct order.
78. Pupils' folders in all classes show that teachers have approached their work thoroughly and imaginatively. A good example was the letters written on 'parchment' by Year 4 as if they were Spanish sailors at the time of Armada. Photographic evidence shows that very good use is made of educational visits to the Black Country Museum, Wollaton Hall and Southwell Minster. A visit from a group of passing 'Vikings' had served as a considerable inspiration for pupils in Year 3. They had learned that Vikings had a peaceful side and were farmers as well as fighters. A particular strength of the teaching is the very well planned links between history topics and other subjects. Year 5, for example, have produced striking examples of well-observed Egyptian art and made working models of shaduf in their design and technology lessons. Excellent links are made with literacy. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learned and practiced skimming and note taking skills in an English lesson, using reference books about the Vikings, thus using their new skills to extend their historical knowledge. Appropriate use is made of CD-ROM access information. Work is marked consistently, but tends to focus on the language rather than helping pupils to extend their historical skills or knowledge. Some worksheets lack challenge for higher attaining pupils. However, the combined evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is good and that standards seen during the previous inspection have been maintained.
79. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator works hard to support her colleagues with advice and support. She is not currently required to monitor or evaluate the quality of the actual teaching and learning in lessons. This makes it harder for her to know what the standards are and how best to work with colleagues in order to raise them further.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

80. Standards in Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected for near the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are good at using their own disks to open up work files, find their previous work and begin to amend it. They use a good range of word processing



editing features, and can use spreadsheets confidently to enter data taken from science experiments. When they are doing this most can convert the information to graphs and understand what these represent. Pupils are not as adept in applying the level 5 element of selecting computers as their preferred way of communicating class work. The use of classroom computers for extending the skills learned in the ICT suite, or for developing a range of applications in other subjects, is too limited.

81. Provision for information technology has improved since the previous inspection by the establishment of the Information and Communication Technology [ICT] suite. Pupils develop basic IT skills more consistently as a whole class can usually be accommodated at the same time. Teachers' expertise has improved significantly, partly through the impact of good school based training, and partly through pupils' increasing interest. Teachers in each year group trial the software they are going to use in the lesson, and this often involves good teamwork.
82. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, in just under half the lessons, the quality is good. The difference lies in the pace of the good lessons, where teachers set time targets, or use other strategies to ensure urgency and increase the pupils' productivity and quality of learning. All teachers plan well, and have a clear idea of what they want to achieve in the lesson. They know where pupils are up to and build well on previous learning. Most teachers share their lesson objectives with their pupils. This gives pupils a good framework in which to operate, and is a valuable starting point for extending pupils' awareness of their own learning. It is not quite the same thing as individual target setting, which is underdeveloped as a teaching strategy. What teachers are particularly good at is allowing time for pupils to investigate and explore the facilities of a given software, useful in extending their awareness of its potential, while developing personal interests.
83. These good learning conditions are then brought back into a coherent structure, giving a relevance to the task as pupils use the computer for a defined purpose. Teachers give good emphasis to employing the skills of numeracy and literacy. Good examples were seen of pupils using mathematics to work out directions and distances in a simulation exercise, and using reading skills for carefully searching for answers to questions about Vikings. By building in valuable links with other subjects in the IT suite, teachers add further relevance to the curriculum. At the same time they extend pupils' intellectual effort, making them do most of the thinking and problem solving.
84. Teachers plan and make good resources to guide pupils' work at the computer. These are often designed to meet the needs of different ability groups. In this way pupils with special educational needs make similar progress as the rest of the class. At other times mixed ability groups are organised instead. This pattern is also successful because the capacity of the pupils to share skills and ideas is very good. The more experienced pupils allow the less experienced to take a full part, with generous guidance for their partners when necessary. Pupils have a strong positive attitude to information technology, and show lengthy concentration spans in lessons. Behaviour is uniformly very good.
85. In keeping with principles of best value, where schools challenge themselves to update their provision, the co-ordinators encourage the latest elements of the technology to be taught. Older pupils learn the basic skills of logging on to the internet, in readiness for the time when they can use it as a tool for extending communication not only across Britain, but even farther afield. The co-ordinator in training has an action plan to increase the provision of equipment in the computer

suite. The school is aware of the need for a simple but effective progress tracking procedure, to feed into the creation of pupils' targets, including self-evaluation. After a suitable period of monitoring provision, strategic decisions on the future of the classroom computers will be taken.

## **MUSIC**

86. It was not possible to observe the teaching of music in all classes due to the arrangement of the timetable. However there is sufficient evidence from assemblies, lunchtime and after school clubs, video clips of the Christmas Production, study of documentation and interviews to indicate that the range of musical activities within the school provides a satisfactory, and sometimes good, musical experience and that pupils' levels of achievement have been raised since the previous inspection..
87. There are now many more opportunities for pupils to play a range of tuned and untuned instruments during lunchtimes, and after-school clubs. Nearly all the pupils in the school learn to play the recorder, and many also play a range of percussion and brass instruments and guitars. The large number of pupils that play in the school band has resulted in a rota system so that all have an opportunity to receive individual attention in small groups. The number of pupils undertaking private guitar lessons has increased. Opportunities for more hands-on experience within a lesson remain limited and as was noted at the last inspection.
88. The opportunities to perform to an audience have increased since the last inspection. During last year's Christmas production, Years 3 and 5 took part in the choir while pupils in other years played instruments. Each day, pupils play short pieces during assemblies and the time for this is extended for one day each week. Pupils sing tunefully in assembly with due regard to other performers. However, although the words are audible, the performance of older pupils in particular lacks lustre. During a joint year group lesson pupils were able to sing in tune, controlling diction and breathing appropriately at the end of a phase. Pupils in Year 4 develop an appropriate understanding of musical notation.
89. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. The amount of teacher expertise in the subject varies and while some teachers have good subject knowledge, others lack confidence. In order to provide the best musical experience for pupils, teachers exchange classes to make the most of musical expertise. Pupils do not always have adequate space, in Year 5 for example, in which to work or enough opportunities for enjoyment by playing a variety of instruments.
90. The music co-ordinator shows good leadership in the subject and has raised the musical profile of the school. Resources have been considerably improved and it is through her hard work that so many pupils attend the continuous lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils now have more opportunities to perform in school productions, concerts both in school and in the community. Their work is much appreciated and valued by parents and friends of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

91. The school has maintained the high standards observed in the previous inspection. This is truly a sporting school. The staff and parents give time generously to ensure very good provision of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. The skills generated by these activities feed into, and strengthen the physical education curriculum. Pupils are agile. They are good at planning: in dance where they draw on

a wide repertoire of movement to create fluid sequences, in gymnastics, where they call on a range of known skills to link, extend and transfer units of performance, and in games where they use strategies as well as skills. They are less adept in evaluating their own and peers' performance in terms of standards and quality.

92. Since the previous inspection staff expertise has increased to a uniformly high level, across the full range of the curriculum. The local community contributes to expertise in cricket and athletics. The school's success in a wide range of competitions is due as much to good sportsmanship as skill. Pupils are determined to win, but not at all costs. They show concern over any injury to a competitor, put the ball out of play, and check to see if everything is all right. The school values equal opportunities for boys and girls, young and old. Places in training and in teams are open to both boys and girls. Events are planned to include the younger pupils, and those with lesser skills.
93. Teaching is good. Teachers plan good learning opportunities, where pupils are challenged at three levels, to extend their intellectual, physical and creative effort. The ample resources of the school site and equipment are well used for pupils to move and practise skills. Though good attention is given to health and safety in physical education, the space in the school hall is reduced by storage of dining chairs, a potential hazard. A teaching strength is the balance created between the pupils' thinking and the well defined objectives and parameters set by the teachers. In dance, pupils use literacy skills to refer to task sheets to ensure that their plans keep within the limits set. In gymnastics, teachers give verbal instructions and pupils supply the interpretation. In games teachers explain the techniques, and pupils supply the effort to master them. Where teachers also set time targets, expectations of quality and allow pupils the opportunity to join in the evaluation of performance, the teaching is very good.
94. Teachers are enthusiastic about their teaching, and pupils respond well with very good behaviour and uniformly positive attitudes. Teachers lack an overall school scheme of work to ensure a consistent approach to planning and delivery. Teachers assess pupils' performance well, from moment to moment, and adjust their input accordingly, but do not have a uniform basis on which to make longer-term judgements of progress. Pupils do not have all the necessary vocabulary to enable them to express their evaluations of their own performance confidently. The new co-ordinator is aware of this, and has ordered the resources to address these issues. Given the high standards the school is well placed to consider pupil targets of excellence.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

95. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Discussions with pupils in Year 6, and the observation of a lesson, indicate that many pupils have a good factual knowledge of Christianity and of a number of other major world faiths. Individual pupils know why the Old Testament is an important holy text for Jews and Christians, can recall the major events in the life of Christ, explain the symbolism of bread and wine, and make an appropriate link to the Feast of the Passover and flight from Egypt. They have a sound understanding of the basic beliefs of Hinduism. They remember the characteristics and names of the principal gods and recall the story of Rama and Sitar. Higher attaining pupils could explain the symbolism of the empty cross. One class had visited the local parish church and were able to describe what they had seen and learned in some

detail. Progress is good and pupils in all classes extend their learning and understanding by following a well-balanced scheme of work. They learn about aspects of Christianity in each year group and Year 4 are completing a detailed study of Sikhism. Other classes study other faiths at different times and demonstrate a respect for alternative beliefs. The concern expressed in the previous report about a lack of detailed knowledge of Christianity and other religions have been addressed successfully.

96. It was only possible to observe one lesson, but a scrutiny of pupils' work in all classes, indicate that the quality of teaching is at least sound. Standards noted in the previous report have been maintained. The teaching was very good in the lesson observed, and pupils became very involved in thinking about perilous journeys in preparation for a study of religious pilgrimages. The particular strength of the lesson was that the learning moved naturally from thinking about the everyday preparations one made for a journey to the importance of prayer for many people as part of that preparation. Pupils were challenged intellectually and showed sensitivity in the prayers and poems they wrote in the final session. Teachers' planning indicates an emphasis in many lessons on oral work and discussion. Pupils welcome the time this gives them for reflection on moral and social issues as well as gaining religious knowledge. The work folders suggest that some teachers rely too much on basic work sheets to record lesson outcomes, and that pupils in most classes are not given enough opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding through individual research. All work is marked but there are very few indications about how it could be improved.
97. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator works hard to support her colleagues and to ensure that the planning and lesson content reflect the requirements of the revised Agreed Syllabus. The range of resources and artefacts has been developed appropriately, and concerns expressed in the previous report have been addressed. She is not required to monitor or evaluate the quality of the actual teaching and learning in lessons. This makes it harder for her to know what the standards are and how best to work with colleagues to help them to raise standards further.