

INSPECTION REPORT

MURSTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Sittingbourne, Kent

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118353

Headteacher: Mrs M A Cook

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 17-20 September 2001

Inspection number: 197454

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sunny Bank Sittingbourne Kent
Postcode:	ME10 3QN
Telephone number:	01795 473891
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Maddison
Date of previous inspection:	15 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1352	John Carnaghan	Registered inspector	English History	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9499	Phiroze Daruwala	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents and carers.
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Religious Education Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20064	Christopher Keeble	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communications Technology Art Geography Music Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Murston Junior School serves an area which experiences some social deprivation; there is a mix of private and social housing and flats and a static traveller site. A small number of travellers move into the social housing in the area. There are few professional families. The proportion of adults with higher education in the area served by the school is very low. The school has 203 pupils on roll, who are all of white ethnic background. One pupil has English as an additional language. Nearly 50 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, this is well above the national average. Of these 95 pupils, 45 require the involvement of outside specialists and the majority of these pupils have moderate learning problems. Pupils who enter the school at the age of 7 have levels of attainment that are generally well below what is found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

All who work at Murston Junior School share a strong commitment to the pupils and the community which they serve. The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has a number of good features and is making considerable efforts to raise standards. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and the school works hard to encourage their development as confident and mature individuals. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a number of good elements. Lessons are well planned with teachers working effectively with classroom assistants. However, lessons sometimes lack pace and not all challenging behaviour is effectively managed. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced; the planning of English, mathematics and science is particularly effective. The provision for the large number of pupils with special educational needs is good; work is well planned to meet their specific requirements. The good leadership and management of the school promote improvements in teaching and do much to encourage positive attitudes and values shown by the pupils. Teachers and other adults who work in the school make up a close-knit team, strongly committed to improving opportunities and raising standards of achievement. Members of the governing body have a range of valuable talents and work hard to support and encourage the school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership and close teamwork ensure that there is continuing improvement.
- The governing body strongly supports the school's efforts to improve.
- The school promotes the growing maturity, positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Adults at the school provide good role models. Relationships are good throughout the whole school community.
- Pupils' work is thoroughly assessed; this information is effectively used to bring about improvements.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school cares for pupils very well.

What could be improved

- Standards in English across the school are well below national averages. In mathematics and science they are below average.
- The potential of a small number of more able pupils to reach high levels of attainment is not fully realised in mathematics.
- Too few parents participate in the work of the school.
- Pupils lack skills as independent learners; the library is not fully used for pupils to do research.
- Some pupils can be indifferent about their work and a minority of boys behave badly at times.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since that time, standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen broadly in line with national improvements. Early indications of Key Stage 2 national tests in 2001 show improvements, particularly in science. The school has fully addressed all of the key issues that were raised in the last report. The school has improved its planning and assessment procedures and has raised standards in information and communications technology (ICT). The school has improved its management by strengthening the role of co-ordinators and improving the quality of long term planning. Budgetary planning is much more effective. The history National Curriculum is effectively covered. Overall, since the last inspection, the school has made good improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E*	E	E
Mathematics	E	E*	E	E
Science	E*	E*	E*	E

Key

well above average A
above average B
average C
below average D
well below average E
very low E*

The results of National Curriculum assessments were well below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 in English and mathematics. In science they were very low. In National Curriculum tests over the last 4 years, standards have improved slightly in English and mathematics; in science they have not improved. Preliminary results for 2001 show considerable improvements in standards in science. Standards in mathematics improved, those in English fell slightly. There are no national averages for comparison of these 2001 results. In work seen during the inspection, standards were well below national averages in English across the school; in mathematics and in science, standards were below national averages. Overall, the inspection indicates that the efforts that the school is making are starting to have a positive effect on standards. In ICT, music, religious education, geography, physical education and design and technology standards are broadly in line with what is expected nationally. In art and design they are above them. In history standards are below national expectations. There are no significant variations of attainment between boys and girls. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy their life at school. With effective teaching and supervision they are orderly and sensible. Many lack abilities as independent learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils can be too talkative when it is inappropriate and there can be poor behaviour from boys in some classrooms. Pupils generally play together sensibly and behave well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Staff provide good role models in their courteous relationships with pupils. Pupils help one another and relate well to each other and their teachers.
Attendance	Parents often take holidays in term time; this adversely affects attendance, which is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is satisfactory with some good and very good elements. In English and mathematics, as well as literacy and numeracy, teaching was satisfactory. Science teaching was good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding, but some lessons lack sufficient pace to fully hold pupils' interest. Teachers know their pupils well. Planning is thorough and is usually careful to address pupils' individual learning requirements. This is helped by the effective deployment, and good contributions made by classroom assistants. However, pupils with high attainment are sometimes not sufficiently challenged. Pupils learning is satisfactory; but this is somewhat hampered because their concentration can falter in some lessons. This minority of pupils lack a strong commitment to their studies. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers; this is because teachers know pupils so well and are careful to provide appropriate tasks and support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. With minor exceptions, pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The curriculum is adapted to provide good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Individual educational plans are used well to promote pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory; the school does not co-ordinate its provision of this area. For moral development the provision is good. For cultural and social development it is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support and guidance for pupils in areas of academic and personal development are generally good. The procedures for monitoring attendance are also good.

The curriculum does not offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their learning in English and mathematics through studying other subjects. The school makes considerable efforts to involve parents in the life of the school but these are not always successful. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Assessment procedures for pupils are very well developed and have a significant influence on many aspects of the school's planning for the future.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides clear leadership and a sense of direction for the school; in this she is fully supported by the deputy head teacher and staff to whom she delegates effectively and with whom she works closely.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is a valuable and supportive friend to the school. It works successfully in harmony with the school to raise standards. It fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The close collaboration amongst all who work at the school ensures that there is an ongoing, effective self-evaluation process. The very good quality assessment procedures mean that the school has a suitable range of information to inform its future planning.
The strategic use of resources	Financial decisions are closely linked to the school's identified needs and expenditure is closely monitored. The school prioritises and spends its money wisely.

The headteacher and her staff are making steady improvements in the school. The governing body has an enthusiastic and committed membership, which share the headteacher's vision for the school and support her strongly. The school building and grounds are clean and spacious. Resources in

nearly all subjects are satisfactory and are helping to raise attainment. The school provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • They believe that teaching is good. • Children like school. • The school has high expectations of the children. • Children make good progress. • There is a good range of activities outside lessons. • The school sets the right amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large proportion of parents does not feel well informed about their children's progress. • A large minority of parents do not think that the school works closely with them. • Many parents do not believe that behaviour is good. • A minority do not think that leadership and management are good. • A minority do not think that their child gets the right amount of homework.

The views, above, represent the views of nineteen percent of parents who returned questionnaires and three percent who attended the pre-inspection parents' evening. Parents are not always fully supportive of the school. Inspection findings support most of the positive views of the school. The exception is that teaching and progress are satisfactory, overall. Of the areas that parents would like to see improved, the inspection finds that the school does work closely with parents and that information for them is satisfactory. Behaviour is generally good and the amount of homework set is appropriate. The school is well led and managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment which are well below average in reading, writing and below average in mathematics. Due to their increasingly positive attitudes and satisfactory, and often good, teaching, they make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2 tests in 2000, pupils performed well below the national average in English and mathematics; their results were very low in science. Improvements in pupils' attainment are progressing at the same pace as they are nationally; a key factor in these low levels of attainment is the low standard of literacy which the pupils have as they enter the school. This is an impediment to their progress across the curriculum. These standards are well below those of similar schools in all three areas: that is, they are well below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. It is possible, however, to see a trend of improvement in results over the last three years. In Key Stage 2, in national assessments in 2000, English and mathematics results improved a little in comparison with national figures; in science they remained the same. Preliminary results in the 2001 tests indicate a marked improvement in science, an improvement in mathematics and maintenance of standards in English. This is despite the larger number of pupils with special educational needs sitting the tests in 2001 than in 2000. As yet, there are no national averages for 2001, for comparison. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. The school's targets are challenging but realistic; they take into account variations resulting from the small groups who sit National Curriculum tests appropriately. The school met its target for 2000 in English but did not reach it in mathematics.
2. Pupils' reading standards at the age of eleven are well below the national average. The variable support provided by parents is a limiting factor, but the impact of the implementation of the literacy hour by teachers is raising standards. Many pupils are not comfortable reading and lack confidence when they are reading in front of others. By the age of eleven most pupils read straightforward texts with confidence. However, they tend to lack independence, and few follow their personal interests in reading. Consequently, reading tends to lack fluency. Pupils lack library skills. Standards of writing are also well below the national average. Most pupils write accurately and use punctuation appropriately. They write and present work neatly. Pupils at the age of eleven can write simple pieces accurately but they have a limited vocabulary, consequently many lack the confidence to write interesting and longer pieces. Speaking and listening skills are well below average. By the age of eleven, most pupils lack confidence in expressing themselves to adults, and listening skills are limited. English standards overall are well below expectations.
3. In mathematics, standards seen on inspection at the age of eleven were below national averages. They have improved with the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The lack of challenge for high attaining pupils is limiting the achievement of higher standards. Pupils at the age of eleven can manipulate numbers well in their heads; however, few of them are able to apply this skill effectively to problem solving. Pupils know the standard units of measurement. Pupils at eleven are able to calculate with money and write correct decimal notation.

4. In the year 2000 standards in science were below national averages at the age of eleven. National assessments for 2001 show a marked improvement in standards. Pupils are aware of the principles of fair testing and can successfully carry out experiments. They collect data with accuracy and explain what they have found out but frequently are unable to use the correct scientific terms. Difficulties with literacy sometimes prevent them from answering questions properly. But they have good knowledge of elements of human biology and can name the various parts of flowers. They show satisfactory knowledge of materials and their properties, but many cannot fully explain changes that can happen to materials.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, in relation to the targets set for them, and satisfactory progress overall. They are provided with good levels of support from their teachers and the learning support assistants. Their targets are regularly evaluated and reviewed, and new targets are appropriately set to aid progress, when necessary.
6. In art and design, pupils' standards are above national expectations at the age of eleven. Pupils have many opportunities to express themselves artistically in both two and three dimensions. Pupils use information and communications technology (ICT) to draw patterns and scan pictures, which they then manipulate. They work confidently, in a range of media. Standards in design and technology are in line with expectations at the age of eleven. Pupils successfully clarify their ideas for making a product. They draw plans well, successfully measure, cut and shape materials and are able to evaluate their finished products.
7. Standards in ICT are broadly in line with what is expected nationally at the age of eleven. Pupils are able to use the Internet with proficiency, undertaking research on chosen topics. They use databases and word processing programmes well. They have insufficient experience with the elements of modelling and control to be proficient in these areas.
8. In geography, standards are broadly in line with national expectations at the age of eleven. Pupils can use atlases, in undertaking geographical research. They know that the lives of the people living in the settlements along the River Nile have changed as the area has developed, and that environment and climate affect the way people live. In history, standards at the age of eleven are below national expectations. Many pupils are hampered in their progress by their low literacy skills. Pupils know about how people in the past – such as Victorian children – lived. Pupils lack understanding of historical bias, however.
9. In physical education lessons standards seen were in line with national expectations. Pupils develop ball skills and understand some basic principles of team games. They know about warming up for and recovering from exercise. Standards in religious education at the age of eleven are in line with what is expected. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of world religions and can identify figures of religious significance, such as Mohammed and Guru Nanak. They have a good understanding of religious ceremonies and holy books, like the Bible.
10. The way in which pupils achieve in the school is satisfactory. This is because teaching is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is less stimulating and effective pupils achieve less well. They lack a strong commitment to learning, and many find it difficult to take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Thus, most pupils lack independence as learners; they rely heavily on teachers to move them forwards.

Teachers strive to help, usually successfully. The level of demand for pupils is, at times, not sufficiently adapted to the wide range of needs found in all classes. Some pupils with previous very high attainment are insufficiently challenged at times and so their achievement is inconsistent. This is particularly true of mathematics lessons. Thanks to more demanding work in other lessons, their achievement is generally satisfactory. Owing to the good support that they receive traveller children achieve satisfactorily. There are no significant variations in the achievement of girls and boys. Behaviour and relationships are generally good and these contribute to the satisfactory level of pupils' achievement in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The school is a generally harmonious and orderly community. Pupils generally behave responsibly and show respect for displays, learning resources and the environment. Most pupils show positive attitudes to school. They are equally courteous to visitors, being friendly and greeting them in a pleasant manner. Most pupils are interested in learning and are well motivated in lessons. They take interest in their work, concentrate on given tasks and are keen to answer questions raised by their class teachers.
12. Usually pupils show consistent commitment to work, behave well and display sympathetic attitudes towards their peers. They readily talk about what they are doing. However, on occasions, when the tasks are not suited to their needs or lessons are not challenging enough, a minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties can lose concentration. They are then less motivated to complete given tasks or accomplish the learning objectives. The school operates a weekly reward scheme for pupils. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take initiative or to learn independently. Pupils with special educational needs pay close attention to adults, and they persevere with their tasks. They are well behaved, and get on well with other pupils.
13. The implementation of a policy to promote positive behaviour has resulted in the good behaviour of most pupils throughout the school being maintained. Although there are constructive relationships throughout the school, and pupils and teachers relate well to each other, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils remains unsatisfactory. No incidents of bullying were observed during the period of inspection. There were no permanent exclusions during the last academic year. The school makes determined efforts to involve outside agencies to help, support and provide guidance for disaffected pupils.
14. Pupils are aware of the needs of others outside the school community and are involved in charity work. For example, pupils raised funds for the British Leprosy Relief Association. They enjoy the opportunity to be helpful and to take responsibility appropriate to their age and capabilities. Pupils sometimes help in and around the school. For example, older pupils help in the dining hall and help to carry 'game boxes' outside to the playgrounds and bring them back in towards the end of lunch break. Younger pupils help in taking registers to the school secretary. Others take initiative in helping to tidy up their classrooms and distribute learning resources to their peers. Disabled pupils from local special schools visit the school, thus providing a good opportunity for the pupils to recognise the needs of those who are less fortunate than themselves.
15. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the friendly relationships that exist. The school takes pride in having thirteen pupils from the

travellers' community. Pupils, too, take pride in their school. This is demonstrated by the care pupils take of their environment and that both playgrounds are largely litter free.

16. Attendance rate is unsatisfactory. The rate of attendance for the last reporting year was well below the national average. The attendance figure was depressed by the number of parents who took holidays during school terms, despite the school doing all that it could to discourage this practice. During the same period, the rate of unauthorised absence was below the national norm. The school takes active measures to pursue unauthorised absence and has effective procedures in place. Pupils are generally punctual in arriving at the school in the morning and returning to their classes after the morning break and lunchtime.
17. Attendance registers are meticulously maintained, scrutinised by the school secretary each week and by the education welfare officer during her regular visits. The school has established good liaison with the education welfare officer, whose advice and guidance are sought as and when the need arises.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall: it has some good and very good elements. Fifty per cent of the lessons were good or better; of these ten per cent were very good. Forty-three per cent of lessons were satisfactory; seven per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory lessons were particularly characterised by weaknesses in the management of pupils - particularly boys - and a lack of consistent pace. Unsatisfactory teaching left pupils too often not knowing what to do next and therefore wasting time; this was because there was insufficient challenge for pupils, especially the more able. The best teaching seen was characterised by very good management of pupils and clear co-operation between teachers and classroom assistants to improve learning opportunities. Overall this maintains the standards of teaching at the time of the last inspection.
19. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Literacy and numeracy are well taught in English and mathematics lessons, although opportunities to develop these areas across all the subjects of the curriculum are too rarely taken. In a good science lesson to Year 6 pupils on keeping healthy, the teacher was able to offer clear explanations about the role of the heart and the significance of the pulse. Focused questioning and demonstration enabled all pupils to be involved in the subsequent activities. This was partly because of the high expectations of performance and behaviour, which the children met. Across the school, work is well planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and to develop knowledge of the subject progressively.
20. Teaching of phonics and other basic skills is generally satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants have an appropriate knowledge of phonics and the school takes opportunities to stress its development. The teaching objectives for the National Literacy Strategy have been adopted; lessons have a good balance between the various elements. Reading and writing in literacy lessons build satisfactorily on skills developed in speaking and listening.
21. Lessons are usually well planned. Because the planning is so thorough most lessons proceed with little wasted time. Planning usually displays clear learning objectives, which are carefully explained. On some occasions lessons have insufficient variety of

activity; pupils quickly show their boredom in these circumstances and their rate of learning diminishes. At its best, however, the quality of planning means strong pace, focused teaching and a corresponding response from pupils, who are then able to work with good productivity throughout sessions. Support staff are well prepared for lessons: they are fully briefed about lesson plans and participate seamlessly in all aspects of lessons, providing effective support for pupils' learning.

22. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and are sensitive, hence the behavioural expectations set for individuals are appropriate. Teachers usually praise pupils warmly, engendering positive attitudes. As a result, relationships throughout the school are good. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, the academic expectations set for pupils are sometimes not high enough, and there can be insufficient challenge or pace. However, this is unusual. The expectations of Year 5 and 6 pupils in a very good mathematics lesson were consistently high; in the opening mental maths session the pace and demands made by the teacher's incisive questioning were strong. Because of the subtlety with which the teacher adjusted her questions for different groups of pupils, all were able to respond. Pupils clearly felt a sense of achievement, as their work from earlier lessons was effectively consolidated before they moved on to learn the correct use of brackets.
23. Lessons usually start with lively expositions and discussions; pupils generally enjoy this and work hard, joining in discussions. Good and better teaching usually involve a variety of brief stimulating activities, which maintain interest. A very good music lesson to Year 5 pupils involved them all in singing in varied ways and keeping rhythm by clapping; this variety and the pace of the lesson kept the whole class focused, so pupils learnt a great deal in a short time. In contrast, an unsatisfactory geography lesson to Year 4 was lacking in variety and interest and the teacher's questions did not stimulate the pupils. As a result, there was inappropriate behaviour and learning for the majority of pupils was unsatisfactory. The support that groups of pupils receive from support assistants is well adapted to their needs. As a result, when support is available, all pupils are able to participate fully.
24. Teachers' management of pupils is generally satisfactory, overall. Teachers are calm; they rarely raise their voices and exercise their authority courteously at all times. This develops warm and constructive relationships. In some lessons, pupils are more challenging and they are corrected so often in lessons that the continuity and pace of their learning can suffer. However, pupils usually behave well and respond to firm handling. Teachers are usually successful in engaging pupils of all ages and abilities in lessons by questioning and challenging them. All pupils' contributions are greatly valued by teachers.
25. The pace of lessons is usually good. A good design and technology lesson to Years 5 and 6 was typical. The large range of resources was very well deployed because planning and preparation had been so efficient. This enabled pupils to 'attack' their tasks with the minimum of delay, thus meeting the teacher's expectations. The way in which the school uses support staff is very good. Teachers and support staff work as close-knit teams. There is effective briefing, so that, in the course of lessons, support staff know what is expected of them. The contributions they make to pupils' learning are a strong contributory element in the quality of teaching in the school. The use of ICT in lessons is satisfactory; there is evidence of ICT being used in a number of subjects. For example, it is used in literacy to draft and redraft newspaper stories and in history, where pupils used the Internet to gain information about Aztec culture.

26. Teachers undertake informal assessment in lessons through perceptive, focused questioning, particularly in the introduction to lessons. The closing sessions of lessons are not so well used. Marking of books is generally satisfactory, but is not always consistent. It provides some comments about pupils' work but it sometimes does too little to develop clear dialogue with pupils. In science, for example, marking does not set pupils targets to indicate how they could improve their work. A clear policy for marking and target setting is now in place.
27. Appropriate homework is set regularly and supports pupils' class work. Homework is usefully set to reinforce learning, such as spellings for a test or to lead in to the next area of study.
28. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers and learning support assistants have a clear understanding of their needs. They work closely together and arrange a suitable range of activities and work. Positive relationships are established, and help and support are constantly provided.
29. Pupils' learning is satisfactory, overall. Although they relate very well to one another and their teachers, pupils do not show a very strong work ethic or concentrate well. They rely on their teachers to energise them and teachers work hard with pupils to ensure that they make strong efforts in all phases of lessons. Pupils enjoy working in small groups and in pairs; they often like the social opportunities that such sessions afford. This can be detrimental to their concentration as they tend to talk too much.

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

30. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided by the school are satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met.
31. The curriculum at Key Stage 2 is appropriately broad and balanced, and suitable provision is made for all subjects. It meets statutory requirements. The overall provision for history and ICT is satisfactory, with clear improvements since the previous inspection. The allocations of time for individual subjects is now generally adequate, with the exception of music, where the reliance on the fortnightly visits of a part-time teacher has led to some loss of overall teaching time. The length of the school day is below the national average. There is, on occasions, a further loss of teaching time at the end of break times, and when pupils change classrooms for lessons, especially for literacy and numeracy sessions, where they are in different teaching groups.
32. Appropriate and relevant policies are in place for all subjects, and the school has adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines as the subject schemes of work. The school has provided further long term planning documents, which provide enough detail to ensure a steady and progressive development of each subject. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and their effectiveness has been satisfactory. In numeracy, lessons have been effectively implemented with, for example, an appropriate use of mental activities to start each session. There has, however, been an over-emphasis on work in number, with less time being allocated to other aspects of the subject. Further, the use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum, with the exception of design and technology and science, has been limited. At present, in literacy, although lessons in English are carried out quite adequately, limited opportunities are provided for pupils to develop

their reading skills or their writing skills across the range of curriculum subjects, and this has limited pupils' progress in these areas.

33. Teachers produce an extensive range of curricular planning that helps to ensure the steady development of pupils' knowledge and skills as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The school makes satisfactory provision for the equality of pupils' access to the whole curriculum, with the staff making sure that all pupils are involved in a range of activities. In making suitable efforts to include its pupils in all appropriate activities, the school allows them to achieve as much as they can. Sound provision is also made for pupils' personal, social and health education, with aspects of sex and drugs education being fully covered within lessons when appropriate.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures are in place, and they closely follow the code of practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. Individual education plans are provided for pupils who are at Level 2, and beyond, on the school's special needs register; these are of good quality and are reviewed each term. Pupils at Level 4 on the special needs register, are provided with suitable support, in line with the requirements of their statements. Their statements are reviewed annually.
35. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including recorders, chess, cookery, roller-blading, football and netball, which are ably supported both by teaching and non-teaching staff, and, in the case of football and netball, by parents. The school welcomes many visitors, including the police, fire-officers, nurses, writers and local clergy, as well as drama and music groups. A range of educational visits is arranged to places such as museums, historical sites and Canterbury Cathedral. These activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.
36. The school has sound links with the local community. The school is very much part of that community and particularly in the regular use of the area around the school, in subjects such as geography. Links have been forged with local businesses and churches, and local residents are regularly invited to events in the school. Satisfactory links have been established with partner institutions. The school has close ties with the local infant school, as well as cordial relationships with a nearby school for pupils with special needs. Close links have also been established with neighbouring junior schools, involving sport in particular. Close working relationships also exist with the local comprehensive school, and these particularly help pupils when they move from the one school to the other.
37. The school makes satisfactory provision, overall, for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. It is particularly successful in promoting their moral development.

38. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The understanding of spirituality is developed in class through talk, listening and learning from their own and others' experiences. Pupils' work and contributions are acknowledged, praised, valued and displayed in the school. Insights and excitement in learning are derived from visits arranged locally, as well as by outside visitors. For example, a local vicar took the whole school assembly during the inspection week. Religious education is taught for an appropriate amount of time, where pupils learn about Christianity and other major world faiths. Pupils participate in the daily act of collective worship, enabling them to examine beliefs, values and attitudes from a variety of viewpoints. Pupils are also asked to contemplate and are given a time for reflection.
39. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's expectation of pupils' knowledge of right and wrong is high and consistent with the school's ethos and aims. Frequent consideration of what is right and what is wrong result from class discussion based on cross-curricular themes: for example, in considering the spread of poverty and riches in different parts of the world or talking about incidents that happen in the school. There is an emphasis about the right of every one to be able to express a point of view, and to be valued and safe. Most pupils have a high degree of moral awareness and a clear understanding of truth, respect and positive attitudes towards others.
40. The social development of pupils is satisfactory. It is developed by opportunities to work in pairs or groups and from discussions arising from visits. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate and collaborate with peers and friends and help one another when working in a group. Pupils are keen to grasp opportunities to carry out tasks in the dining hall helping dinner ladies and in classrooms in keeping them clean and tidy by picking up litter. The school promotes the development of social skills through a number of extra-curricular activities.
41. The school makes satisfactory provision for cultural development. Pupils study Egyptians and were made aware of Zulu culture through a visiting Zulu dance troupe. Cultural development is further enhanced by visits to museums and galleries. Recently, pupils visited the Science Museum in London. Openness towards other cultures from around the world is cultivated by the display of posters and musical instruments.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides a safe, secure and purposeful learning environment for all its pupils. It cares for its pupils by nurturing their varied needs and by providing suitable guidance and support. The school seeks to encourage purposeful teaching and learning by being open and valuing what parents, teachers, pupils and others have to say about the school community. The head teacher is responsible for implementing the child protection procedures, which are good. The school follows the child protection and safety requirements, established by the local social services.
43. The school governors regard the school as a 'family' school. During the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of families with domestic problems within the catchment area of the school. Pupils, who are in difficult domestic situations, are well supported during weekly meetings in the school. In appropriate cases, the school seeks help from the local social services department and other outside agencies.

44. There are clear procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. The school has a policy for assessment, record keeping and reporting. The school is meticulous in recording accidents and injuries suffered by pupils. Parents are informed of all incidents resulting in anything except minor injuries to their children.
45. Teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to meet the needs of pupils from the travellers' community and pupils with special educational needs. The provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils are well integrated in the school community. In the case of all these pupils the school rigorously implements the established code of practice. The governing body regularly monitors the progress of pupils on the special educational needs register. Certain special educational needs pupils with low self-esteem attend a circle time in the afternoon.
46. The school is very successful in promoting the well-being of pupils. It has established a comprehensive health education policy, which incorporates sex and drug education enabling pupils to acquire a sound knowledge of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils in each year group have a weekly lesson with their form teacher on personal, social and health education and citizenship. Topics such as health education, identity, responsibility and opinions are frankly discussed by the pupils in their classrooms. The school is participating in the Kent 'Healthy Schools' initiative. The school uses circle time to raise pupils' awareness of moral and ethical value through personal and social education. The school has established homework policy in order to raise standards and improve attitudes to learning.
47. The school has given much thought in developing a coherent and positive behaviour policy through the encouragement of sharing, mutual respect and raising self-esteem. The policy complements the code of conduct adopted by the pupils in each class. The policy of recognising and rewarding pupils for their achievements in curricular and extra-curricular activities and for showing exemplary conduct and inspiration to other pupils is effective. The school adopts a positive stance in providing equality of opportunity in both the academic and sporting activities. Extra-curricular activities promote team spirit and inter-personal skills amongst the participants. Sportsmanship is encouraged through team games and both boys and girls are encouraged to participate.
48. All staff are trained in first aid and are capable of dealing with minor accidents. First aid boxes are located at strategic points throughout the school building. A detailed policy on health and safety is securely in place. The school has good liaison with the education welfare officer, county council social services, visiting medical staff and other local agencies. The school is conscious of the safety of the whole school community. The school has recently secured the necessary funds for Kent 'Children's University' courses. This will enable pupils to participate in courses of a practical nature, to be organised in the school during the half term holiday and the first four Saturdays after half term.
49. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good overall. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science assessment procedures are very good. Assessments are taken each half-term, or at the end of appropriate topics of work, and teachers keep extensive records of pupils' current attainment. This information is used effectively in these subjects, to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their individual needs. In other curricular areas good assessment procedures have also been introduced. Relevant information is recorded,

to show both pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made, as well as being used in the planning of future work.

50. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school in English, mathematics and science are good. All pupils are provided with targets at the beginning of the year, and later in the year these targets are reviewed, using the information that has been gained. New targets are then provided. The school keeps extensive records of pupils' attainment and of the progress they make as they move through the school. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are also good and these, together with those for monitoring academic performance, combine successfully in guiding both teachers and pupils towards the overall raising of standards.
51. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed, and a wide variety of information is recorded to help identify pupils' current attainment. The information gained is also used effectively to provide suitable future work for the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school's partnership with parents is generally satisfactory, although there are some shortcomings. The school makes purposeful efforts to involve parents in many school activities and considers parental involvement in the life of the school community as vitally important.
53. The prospectus is lively and informative in giving a pen-picture of the school's ethos, curricular and extra-curricular provision for its pupils and, the way the parents can support their children's learning. However, the lack of parental involvement in the work of the school is unsatisfactory and is a cause for concern. In the recent past, the school has made a number of attempts to form a parent/teachers association and has also written to parents to ask them to help in the school, but has had very little success.
54. Newsletters are sent to parents at regular intervals, keeping them informed of events in the school. The main entrance to the school building has a small notice board for parents, providing general information. Parents are well aware that the school encourages their help in the classrooms and around the school. However, very few parents come forward to give such support and assist the school in various ways. The school has issued a detailed questionnaire to parents and a different questionnaire to pupils in order to identify what parents and pupils perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Parents' and teachers' views are sought on issues like homework, behaviour, bullying and the curriculum.
55. There is regular and effective communication with parents. For example, each pupil has a homework diary, encouraging a regular discourse between parents and the class teacher. Parents are encouraged to support homework tasks. Parents' participation in the home school reading arrangements is inconsistent. In a number of homes parents do not hear their children read regularly. This slows their progress in becoming fully literate. Homework expectations are communicated to parents. Reports to parents about their children's progress include aspects of their personal qualities as well as the teachers' assessment of their academic achievements and progress. However, these reports do not identify sufficiently the pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They give advice, by way of target setting, on what the child needs to do to improve next year. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept

well informed of the reviews of their children's individual education plans, so that they are fully aware of the provision being made for them. Parents of pupils with statements are invited to the annual review meeting.

56. The governors' annual report to parents is presented in the same academic year, towards the end of the summer term. The report meets statutory requirements in all respects. The school and the governing body work hard to maintain a positive role within the local community. Any issue raised by parents or any member of the public is promptly resolved with care and sensitivity. There are effective pastoral and curricular links with the local infant school and the community college. Induction days for Years 2 and 6 pupils are held during the term preceding their change of school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The head teacher provides good leadership. She has a good grasp of the school and has, together with key members of staff - in particular the deputy head teacher - taken action, which is starting to have a positive effect on raising standards. The head teacher has concentrated particularly on improving the attitude of pupils and standards of teaching. In this she has had success. The head teacher brings a positive vision to the school and works very hard to ensure that staff are able to translate that into an improved quality of teaching and learning. The school is clearly moving forward, has a powerfully shared commitment; its capacity to succeed is good.
58. The head teacher has done much to move the school forwards. In particular, she has delegated management responsibilities very well to other teachers. This is especially true of the co-ordination of the subjects, where staff have flourished on the responsibility that they have been given. For example, teachers who are responsible for subjects manage their own budgets, setting their own priorities. In this they are ably supported by the school administrative officer – this empowers them and gives a real sense of ownership of their responsibilities. As a result the management of each subject area is good or better. The deputy head teacher has been given significant areas of responsibility, such as teaching and learning. In the relatively short time since she took up her post she is beginning to have a strong impact. For example, there are now good strategies in place to improve marking of pupils' work across the school.
59. The governing body of the school is committed to the head teacher's vision and supportive of school improvements. It works hard to ensure progress. It has a clear view of the school's strengths and what areas need to be developed. It has sensibly agreed with the head teacher that the number of teachers in the school should not be allowed to fall over the next two years, despite some reduction in pupil numbers. The governing body has been guided by the head teacher to give top priority to improving pupils' attitudes and raising the standard of teaching. A comprehensive committee structure ensures that governors consider all aspects of the school. Governors have their own development plan, which ensures continuing improvement in the quality of support which they give the school. There are monitoring processes of the school undertaken by governors; these monitoring visits result in reports to the whole governing body. The management of the school is questioned about its deployment of resources to ensure that they are best used to meet the school's priorities. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities fully.

60. Monitoring procedures are good. Subject co-ordinators monitor pupils' books and see teaching. In such a small school, informal contacts play a significant part in developing co-ordinators' understanding of how subject areas are developing. There has been some good analysis of test results across the age range or across the different aspects of subjects, to enable provision to be improved. Priorities for subjects are set, and revised, as a result of the monitoring and analysis undertaken. Targets set are appropriately challenging and realistic; the school met those for 2000 in English, but did not reach them in mathematics. This was, in part, due to the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
61. The school is well advanced with the procedures for performance management. The policy is in place; it has been agreed by the governing body and the staff. Targets for staff have been set and reviewed by the head teacher, and the first round of interviews have been completed. The deputy head teacher has recently taken over performance management for some members of staff. The school has identified and set clear, achievable targets and priorities in the school development plan. These plans are effective in enabling the school to move forward. They are comprehensive, costed with clear time scales and responsibilities. Raising standards is their key focus. They provide a good planning framework to move the school forwards.
62. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified through a variety of procedures and placed on the special needs register. Pupils at level 2 and beyond are provided with individual education plans, which set clear targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed each term, with new targets being set if appropriate. The special needs co-ordinator keeps extensive records, and the progress made by the pupils is carefully checked. The governor appointed to monitor special educational needs provision, carries out her responsibilities effectively.
63. The school manages its budget satisfactorily. The most recent financial audit found the school's procedures to be of a high standard; one minor issue has been dealt with. Day-to-day financial management is good. The school management uses the school development plan sensibly to prioritise spending. The governors carefully scrutinise the work done in the school to ensure that there is good value for money. The school uses comparative budgetary figures from the local education authority to make some comparisons of performance and expenditure. In this way the school implements the principles of best value satisfactorily. Specific grants – such as those for the National Grid for Learning – are carefully and effectively used.
64. The school has a high expenditure per pupil, but this is entirely due to the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. Given that it is an effective school and serves an area of some socio-economic deprivation, the school provides good value for money.
65. There is an appropriate match in the number of qualified and experienced teachers. They are assisted by the learning support assistants, whose skills are well balanced to the demands of the curriculum. The main exceptions in subject expertise are ICT, religious education and physical education. Curriculum support assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. All staff, including the head teacher and deputy head, have responsibilities for curricular co-ordination. Each member of staff has the appropriate job description. The arrangements for appraisal and professional development of staff are good. Professional development of staff is

linked to the targets set in the school development plan. Training is arranged for primary helpers and meal supervisors.

66. Accommodation is good and is generally used effectively in teaching and learning. There are two separate playgrounds, one is used by pupils in Years 3 and 4, and the other by the older pupils. Classrooms are attractive, showing work done by pupils, and there are additional pleasing displays of pupils' work in the school corridors. The school building is well maintained and decorated. Both playgrounds look immaculate and pleasant to look at from the surrounding open space. The school has installed four closed circuit TV cameras encompassing both the front and rear of the school grounds.
67. Learning resources are generally satisfactory for the implementation of the curriculum. Books and equipment are generally in good condition, up-to-date and are stored to provide easy access for both teachers and pupils. Future purchase of books and equipment and the refurbishment of the library will be linked to the school development plan.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. All who work at Murston Junior School share a strong commitment to the pupils and the community which they serve. In order to continue to improve and raise standards the school should:
- 1) Continue to use information from assessment to raise standards by improving teaching and learning at the school. In particular the school should focus more strongly on raising standards in literacy, by co-ordinating efforts to teach literacy across the whole school curriculum. Improvements in levels of literacy will also lead to higher standards in other subjects. (Paragraphs 18, 75)
 - 2) Develop policy and practice which recognise and meet the needs of pupils with previously higher attainment in order to provide the appropriate challenge. These changes will help raise the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 in national tests at the age of 11 in mathematics. (Paragraph 80)
 - 3) Raise teachers' awareness of issues relating to independent learning and employ teaching methods which encourage pupils to work more on their own, particularly in using the library as an area for research. (Paragraphs 18, 29)
 - 4) Develop some teachers' skills, particularly in the management of pupils, so that there are fewer opportunities to behave badly and lessons can be held at a good pace. (Paragraph 24)
 - 5) Continue to make all possible efforts to involve a larger proportion of parents in the work of the school. (Paragraph 54)

A minor issue that the governing body may like to consider is:

Ensure that pupils' spiritual education is developed in a wide range of curricular and other activities. (Paragraph 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	17	18	3	0	0
Percentage	0	10	40	43	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	203
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	51

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	95

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	29	19	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	16	14
	Girls	10	7	8
	Total	25	23	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (41)	48 (41)	46 (47)
	85 (78)	75 (70)	72 (69)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	24
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	29	28	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (48)	58 (51)	77 (53)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	129

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	420,955
Total expenditure	420,326
Expenditure per pupil	2081
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,741
Balance carried forward to next year	21,370

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

203

Number of questionnaires returned

38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	42	19	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	26	45	18	3	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	16	42	3	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	46	22	13	0
The teaching is good.	34	47	6	8	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	24	42	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	39	8	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	34	13	8	3
The school works closely with parents.	18	32	34	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	24	34	24	10	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	16	47	21	8	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	37	11	8	7

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

ENGLISH

69. In 2000 the standard of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was well below national averages and well below average in comparison with similar schools. Over the years 1997-2000 standards fell slightly in 1998 and 1999, but improved in 2000 when compared with the national averages. Results from 2001 show similar percentages of pupils reaching level four and above, this despite having a larger number of pupils with special educational needs than in 2000.
70. Inspection activities show that pupils' standards of speaking and listening are well below average. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils tend to lack confidence as speakers and their listening skills are below what would be expected. They lack a wide vocabulary and the familiarity with speaking at length, which would enable them to speak with sustained clarity. Some pupils at the end of Year 6 discuss matters of interest with growing maturity, making the appropriate responses, but few of them can adapt the way in which they speak to a variety of purposes. Most pupils still lack confidence when speaking to adults and their speech in such circumstances can be terse and uncommunicative. Through the school pupils have poor listening skills; this is evident in some lessons where, when they are given instructions, they can be slow and confused in moving on to individual activities.
71. Pupils' attainment in reading was well below the national average. At the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils lack a broad knowledge of books. However, most are familiar with dictionaries and are able to use them easily. Pupils handle fiction texts satisfactorily and take them home regularly. However, there is a lack of fluency in their reading and they do not have the expected levels of confidence when reading aloud to adults. Some pupils have too few strategies to help them read words that they find difficult. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 lack sufficient familiarity with the school library; some cannot remember when they last visited it. The school does not sufficiently encourage pupils to use the books for research purposes.
72. Attainment in writing is also well below national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in writing is limited by the vocabularies of most pupils and the lack of confidence in using more adventurous words. For example, very few pupils are able to vary their styles of writing to suit the needs of different audiences and they find it difficult to sustain ideas in what they write. Many do not write at length, easily. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are usually correct, and books are generally neatly presented.
73. Teaching of English is satisfactory with some good elements. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and have used it to develop children's interest and in an attempt to raise standards. The strategy's teaching objectives are used well to give structure to medium term and lesson planning. Teachers are calm and purposeful in their good management of pupils. In a school where pupils lack concentration and frequently resort to conversation, firm and consistent handling is the norm in lessons. Teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils make their best efforts to meet the announced learning objectives. Pupils at the school are essentially passive learners; teachers encourage pupils, tirelessly, coaxing them to give of their best. Lessons invariably have a strong pace. In a lesson to Year 3 and 4 pupils, explaining shape poems, the teacher showed high

expectations of both work and behaviour and was careful to involve as many pupils as possible in the discussion of various works. The clear final session of the lesson gave pupils a chance to demonstrate and recapitulate on what they had learned.

74. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of phonics and phonic sounds are taught consistently. Lessons are carefully planned with activities usually adapted for different levels of ability. With mixed age classes, this means that some higher attaining pupils are not given sufficient challenge. Planning to meet individual education plans ensures that pupils with special educational needs have work sufficiently adapted to their needs. Support staff are well informed, so that they are able to participate fully in all elements of lessons. A very good lesson on writing 'newspaper reports' showed a number of strengths. The texts chosen to demonstrate the appropriate style were lively and interesting. The teacher showed good subject understanding as she encouraged pupils to respond; her good relationships encouraged pupils to give thoughtful answers. Group work was particularly well planned; with the teacher's insistence on good behaviour pupils rapidly settled to produce some neat and interesting work, from given headlines. While the co-ordinator for English monitors teaching regularly there are some variations in the quality of teaching. Pace in a few lessons can be slack; the group tasks are not always given deadlines, so that pupils work at their own, often slow, speed. These lessons tend to lack sufficient urgency. These difficulties are usually associated with weaknesses in discipline, so that sometimes teachers take too long to settle pupils down and the drive in the lesson is lost. Work in books is satisfactorily marked, but there is too little written dialogue with pupils and no evidence of regular target setting for pupils being undertaken. Pupils usually behave well but can lack concentration. They find working independently difficult and need constant encouragement.
75. The co-ordination of English is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is determined and energetic in her efforts to raise standards. She has considerable autonomy and uses this well in allocating the budget where it is most needed and in ensuring that teachers undertake training, which will help them in the classroom. The co-ordinator frequently delivers valuable training to her colleagues. The regular pupil assessments are carefully analysed. Literacy targets are developed to meet the pupils' needs, which have been identified from these tests and activities. Detailed action is outlined in these targets; for example, training opportunities for teachers largely derive from this careful analysis. However, there are some areas for development. The school lacks a policy for literacy across the curriculum to systematically address the low standards of English in all subjects. Resources used for the literacy hour are satisfactory. However, the use of the non-fiction library has been rather neglected over the last few years. Its stock of books is satisfactory but pupils are not encouraged to use the library often enough. Most have little idea how books are catalogued and visit it rarely. This weakness is having a negative impact on the development of pupils' reading.
76. Since the last inspection standards in English have fallen. The management of the subject has improved as have the support and monitoring of teaching, but the library has not been sufficiently developed.

MATHEMATICS

77. At the end of Key Stage 2, national tests in 2000, the pupils' results in mathematics were well below the national average. Even when compared to similar schools they are still well below average. Standards have risen over the past three years; this rise has been broadly in line with those of similar schools, but results remain low. Indications are that the 2001 results continue to show improvement despite a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. At the time of the last inspection, national test results were below average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standards has improved gradually, in spite of the increase in the number of pupils with special needs.
78. Inspection activities indicate that, by the end of Year 6, standards are below the national average. However the majority of pupils achieve well in relation to their previous attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, which is well below average overall. The school has placed a strong emphasis on developing number skills, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 a minority of children are able to manipulate numbers in their heads effectively, indicating good understanding. The four rules of number, including fractions, are practised on a very regular basis. However, there is little evidence that this skill and knowledge are used to good effect in mathematical problems. Pupils are able to identify the standard units of measurement and appreciate degrees as a measure of angle. Effectively differentiated work gives less able pupils access to similar problems and they make good progress. There is less evidence of extension work for the more able and, although fewer in number, their needs are not being fully met. In one mixed class of Year 3 and 4 children the most able were able to identify whole numbers and interpret scales but found sub-divisions difficult. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are generally able to perform operations with money and able to write correct decimal notation. In some lessons it was apparent that, although some Year 3 children could add on 10 to other numbers, a significant proportion did not understand when they had an incorrect answer. The use by pupils of their mathematical skills and knowledge in other areas of the curriculum is evident, especially in science, geography and design technology. They use programs in ICT, which further promotes mathematics in the curriculum.
79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some examples of good teaching. Where teaching is good, the content of lessons appropriately matches children's needs and abilities. The pace of such lessons is brisk, and the enthusiasm of the teacher shines through. Very good use is made of learning support assistants who, in turn, know the content of the lesson and just what is expected of them. Teachers give individual help to children; however, this can be an opportunity for the less focused children to distract others and not complete the task in hand. Even though the pupils are in mixed age ability sets for mathematics, the range of ability and attainment is still wide, and work is not always appropriately matched for individuals. Planning is good and children are always made aware of the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson. In lively and interesting lessons pupils are motivated and eager to learn. Teachers generally show good subject knowledge and are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect. They use its three-part format as the basis for planning their lessons. The quick-fire mental activity at the start of the lesson is well established and is clearly helping to develop pupils' speed and accuracy of mental computation. The use of individual white boards for them to show the teacher their answers was particularly effective. Pupils are eager to participate in these oral and mental sessions and show evident enjoyment in these

activities. The use of the closing part of the lesson is less well developed; teachers frequently miss the opportunity to revisit the learning objectives or to assess pupils' understanding of the concepts in order to inform future planning. There is already an indication that the numeracy strategy is having a positive effect on standards. The quality and presentation of pupils' work are variable. There are occasions when some work is not marked and there appears to be little follow-up when children have made errors in their calculations. Often pupils' learning appears to be at its most productive when they are working in class or small groups with the teacher or support assistant. Some children, usually boys, find independent work more difficult and become restless and inattentive. The teacher is not always aware of their behaviour.

80. Assessment and analysis of national test results is very effectively managed in the school. The emphasis on Attainment Target 2 (Number) is because analysis indicated that all pupils were performing less well in their manipulation of number. A mathematics audit of resources is currently under way to enable the curriculum leader to better match these to both pupil and teacher need. The school is also aware of the need to improve the number of pupils who gain a level 5 in the end of Key Stage 2. Teachers have been monitored in the classroom and opportunities for the dissemination of good practice have also been implemented. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the school and indications that staff are working together to raise standards.
81. Since the last inspection, overall standards have improved at the same rate as the national improvement; the quality of teaching has remained at similar levels. ICT is now more fully used and there is much better mathematics display around the school.

SCIENCE

82. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the national average. Pupils are, however, making good progress. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school's overall results were very low in comparison with all schools, and also in comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. At that time the science co-ordinator carefully analysed the test results, identified areas of weakness, and in particular identified pupils' limited understanding of scientific language as a significant contributory factor towards the low standards being achieved. A remedial programme was put in place, supported by much improved assessment procedures. The school also used readers for a number of pupils during their tests. As a result, the school made marked improvements in the national tests in 2001, with the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 rising 30 percent, from 46 percent in 2000 to 76 percent in 2001. This improvement has continued, with the overall standards now being below average. At the time of the school's previous inspection, whilst standards were reported to be in line with the national average, the national tests showed that standards were well below average. Standards, therefore, have improved since that time.
83. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully carry out a range of experiments, using suitable equipment, making observations and recording their findings. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, carry out investigations into heartbeat and forces. Whilst many pupils successfully explain their work, understanding, and using, the correct scientific language, a significant minority find this aspect of the work difficult. They also have difficulties, at times, in clearly answering questions that are asked. Most pupils, however, successfully explain the meaning of fair testing. A majority of pupils are

confident in explaining many of the life-processes of humans, such as the role of the heart in the circulation of the blood, as well as discussing, for example, the importance of the skeleton and the muscles. Most pupils can name the various parts of a flower, and they can explain the different methods of seed dispersal. Many pupils successfully name a variety of materials, they describe their various properties, and they can explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils know that materials can be made into mixtures, and many readily describe how materials can be separated through processes such as sieving and filtration. They are less confident in explaining reversible and irreversible change. Pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work, and most can confidently explain the role of insulators and conductors. A minority of pupils, however, are unable to explain how different types of circuits are connected. Pupils know that sound is caused by an object vibrating, and that the vibrations travel through air and various materials to reach our ears. Pupils can name various sources of light, but they are less certain in describing the formation of shadows.

84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned, with teachers throughout the school making especially good use of practical activities. This has improved since the last inspection. The teachers are also particularly careful to use, and emphasise, the correct scientific terminology, which is having a beneficial effect on the pupils' overall learning. The teachers have good subject knowledge and usually provide clear instructions and helpful demonstrations of the work that is to be undertaken. The pupils generally show great interest in the subject, they display good attitudes and this helps them all, including those with special educational needs, make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. The teachers are enthusiastic, and through the provision of a range of practical activities in particular, most pupils are enthusiastic also. As a result, they work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils – mainly boys - are harder to motivate. The teachers and learning support assistants provide much help and well directed support throughout. The pupils' behaviour is good, and often very good. They work well with other pupils in carrying out activities, and they are very aware of safety procedures. Most pupils take care with the presentation of their work, both the writing and the diagrams. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they rarely add comments of advice to help the pupils improve their work.
85. The school now has an appropriate scheme of work, based on the QCA guidelines, with each year group also being provided with clear further information about the work to cover. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable; she checks the work being undertaken by the pupils, as well as observing her colleagues in their classes. Very good arrangements are now made for assessing the pupils' work, with clear evidence being provided to identify pupils' current attainment, and the information being used to provide suitable future work. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. The written tasks undertaken by the pupils, especially those relating to reporting on practical activities, provide some support to the school's initiative in literacy. Counting and measuring activities in various aspects of the subject support the school's work in numeracy. ICT is also now used effectively, on occasions, to enhance the work in science, such as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced graphs to illustrate pulse-rates. Through identifying some of the wonders of science the subject also helps enhance pupils' spiritual development.
86. At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership of the subject was unsatisfactory. The present co-ordinator, through analysing test results, and introducing new strategies to help the teaching of science, has had a significant

influence on the raising of standards, as well as on the overall provision for the subject. Assessment, teaching and standards have also improved.

ART AND DESIGN

87. At the end of Key Stage 2 the standards in art are above what is expected nationally. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report where pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the standards expected nationally. Displays show work of a good standard, illustrating the various opportunities which are given to pupils. Further examples of good quality work are to be seen throughout the school this term. For example a Year 5 and 6 class used a viewfinder to observe closely a picture in detail. They were able to move from basic forms to more details including light, shade and pattern. The resulting pictures were pleasing to both teacher and pupils. Pupils have sketchbooks which they carry forward to the following year. The work in these varied both in quality and quantity and there appears little opportunity for more gifted pupils to be encouraged to develop their ideas to a higher level of thinking. Each sketchbook contains examples of the different techniques including direct observational work, self-portraits, moving figures and some very extensive work designing and making slippers. Following their construction the pupils were able to evaluate their own designs and those of others. Some pupils who have special needs, particularly those with learning difficulties, are able to excel at art; this improves their self-esteem. They are able to discuss with knowledge and interest their sketchbooks and work.
88. In the few lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. Year 3 and 4 pupils are using symbols to illustrate a journey around the school having first studied the work of Paul Klee, with particular reference to "Jardin de Chateau". They discussed at length the colours, patterns and pathways. The pupils were able to transfer their ideas into symbols even using them to indicate colour, texture, places and sounds. A lesson to Year 5 was effective because, not only did the teacher have appropriate knowledge and skills, but also the ability to get the pupils to look critically at what they had done.
89. The co-ordination of art and design is satisfactory. The planning of the curriculum is effective and has led to manageable schemes of work, based on national guidelines. Work is systematically monitored and assessed. There is an art club, and pupils are entered for competitions.
90. Since the last inspection standards have improved, and pupils' work is now much more thoroughly assessed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. The standards reported at the time of the school's previous inspection have been maintained. During the current inspection only one lesson was seen. Overall judgements are made, therefore, based on discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work, in addition to the lesson observed.

92. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully clarify their ideas for making a product, through class and group discussion. Having decided how to proceed, pupils are confident in identifying the items they need, to make that product. They then draw up appropriate plans, in some cases first closely examining commercially produced items, such as slippers and containers, to help them. Having produced their plans, pupils choose from a range of materials, including paper, card, felt and wood, and tools, such as scissors, saws and drills. They successfully measure, cut and shape the materials, and join them with items such as sticky tape and glue. Pupils provide appropriate finishing techniques, such as painting, where required, and they confidently evaluate their work, both as they proceed and when they have finished. Younger pupils have, for example, produced model vehicles and containers for items such as money and personal effects, and older pupils have made copies of Victorian toys, as well as designing and making alarm systems, slippers and fairground rides. At present, some work is undertaken in food technology.
93. Only one lesson was observed in design and technology, and teaching and learning were good. An examination of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and an examination of some of their finished work show that, overall, both teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well, providing a most suitable range of materials and tools, and pupils are given opportunities to carry out all relevant activities and develop all appropriate skills. Opportunities are also provided, on occasions, for pupils to evaluate commercially produced items, before they make their own, and this helps them to identify the components they need themselves. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject, and they readily discuss the work they have produced, how successful it has been and how it could be improved. The range of activities provided, the instruction received and the enthusiasm displayed clearly help pupils to make satisfactory gains in both their designing and making skills. In the lesson seen, the teacher had good subject knowledge and provided particularly clear explanations and demonstrations for pupils. The pupils responded very well, worked most thoughtfully together, and were able to make good progress during the lesson.
94. There is a suitable scheme of work in place, based on QCA guidelines. Useful additional guidance has also been produced to ensure the appropriate development of skills and techniques through the school, and all aspects of work are most suitably covered. The co-ordinator, who is newly qualified, is enthusiastic, and already has a clear knowledge of the work that is being done. There are good assessment procedures in place, and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Relevant information is now recorded to identify both pupils' current skill levels and the progress they have made. The writing activities undertaken in planning and evaluating work give limited support to the school's initiative in literacy. Measuring activities, such as in cutting card and wood accurately, support the work in numeracy. The making of Victorian toys helps to raise pupils' awareness of their own culture.
95. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and assessment has improved considerably. Teaching remains satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

96. Although only two geography lessons were seen, discussion with pupils, in conjunction with the analysis of the schemes of work, planning and an interview with the subject co-ordinator, indicate that standards are at the expected level. Pupils use atlases and maps at various scales competently. They know that the lives of the people living in the settlements along the River Nile have changed as the area has developed, and that environment and climate affect the way people live. Pupils are able to use the Internet to gather information about their world.
97. Teachers' plans are comprehensive and the learning objectives are shared with the class at the beginnings of lessons. One class of Years 3 and 4 children was studying the local area. The teacher engaged the class in a brainstorming activity about the urbanisation of a natural area. She discussed in some detail the notion of natural and man-made. Some very appropriate resources were used looking through an imaginary window showing changes over a twenty-year period. This stimulated some mature discussion. It was particularly pertinent as she was able to say that a building development was soon to commence in an area close to the school and visible from the class window. The current class structure in the school necessitates a fairly complex allocation of units of work to ensure that aspects of the curriculum are not missed out or repeated. The water cycle, studied in Year 4, is particularly well presented. The work on rivers, in the upper part of the school, used the resources to good effect; the final presentation for some of the pupils was of a good standard.
98. The subject leader is particularly enthusiastic about geography. During her four years in the post she has been able to build up some quality resources which are maintained appropriately for staff use. She monitors teachers in the classroom and is able to give support and advice so that their knowledge and understanding can be improved. Within the budget for the humanities subjects there is an element for in-service training, which the leader uses to develop teachers' skills.
99. Pupils are enthusiastic about geography and usually work well together. Pupils with special needs progress well and receive support from the learning support assistant. Generally work is insufficiently adapted to the full range of ability found in classes; therefore the needs of the more able pupil are not always met.
100. When the school was last inspected, Year 6 pupils achieved standards in geography which were in line with those expected nationally and this standard has been maintained. At the time of the last inspection there was no curriculum co-ordinator and there were issues about monitoring and the use of assessment to inform planning. Much of this has been addressed in the last four years, particularly in the monitoring of both pupils' work and teaching in the classroom.

HISTORY

101. Due to the nature of the school timetable it was only possible to observe two history lessons during the inspection week. Judgements are based on these lessons and the analysis of exercise books, displays and other documents, interviews with teachers and discussion with pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is below national expectations. The progress of many pupils is hampered by their low literacy skills. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge of the major topics they study and can describe some characteristics of these periods. They can write about the changes in these

eras and offer some simple explanations as to why they happened. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of chronology. They can do basic research from simple sources to find out how, for example, Victorian children lived. But there is little evidence that older pupils understand the various ways in which the past is represented or that historical documents may contain bias.

102. Based on limited observation, the teaching of history is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned. Teaching is strongly focussed on learning objectives and teachers show determination in their constant encouragement of pupils to meet the lesson aims. They work hard to overcome reluctance from some pupils to learn. In a lesson to Year 5 pupils on Victorian times the teacher's persistent questioning gradually overcame the difficult behaviour of some boys so that learning was effectively consolidated and advanced as pupils began to show greater interest. Resources are usually interesting and well used by teachers. Marking of history is satisfactory, but lacks guidance to pupils how to improve their work. Pupils do not always act on the advice they are given in their books. There is little evidence that history is being used systematically to develop literacy skills; for example there is insufficient extended writing in pupils' history books.
103. The co-ordination of history is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when there was no co-ordinator. Curriculum planning is now satisfactory; the co-ordinator has developed clear, simple schemes of work based on QCA guidelines adapted to meet the needs of the school. There are good systems in place to assess what pupils know. These are also improvements on the last inspection. Since the last inspection, standards have remained at similar levels. Improvement is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Most pupils are able to use a variety of word processing and other programmes, including data handling. They are familiar with and frequently use the Internet. The mixed class of Years 5 and 6 were able to show clear understanding by using appropriate vocabulary such as animation and text setting buttons. At the present time the pupils do not have experience of the elements of modelling and control.
105. Although only two lessons were observed the teaching was satisfactory with some good elements. It was also possible to see pupils' workbooks and observe them working outside the classroom in activity areas where most of the computers are kept. The majority of them are placed on trolleys so that they can be moved into different places. All members of staff have completed appropriate training and demonstrate good subject knowledge and skills. In one lesson the teacher discussed with the class the advantages of using a PowerPoint demonstration over one of "Word". The teacher had high expectations of behaviour and the pace of the lesson kept all pupils focused. They are keen to use the computers and put their acquired learning into practice at other times of the school day. The school now uses the QCA guidelines to inform planning and it uses these to good effect. Pupils with special educational needs use the computers effectively; there are several programs which support and improve their learning.

106. The subject leader joined the school at the beginning of the Summer Term 2001, but has held the responsibility for this area for only two weeks. She has a good working knowledge of computers, but finds it necessary to spend a considerable amount of time making sure appropriate programs are available and that any day to day issues are dealt with so that the pupils can have access to the hardware as much as possible. Several examples were seen of ICT being used to support other areas of the curriculum. These include literacy (drafting and redrafting a newspaper story), history (using the Internet to gain information about the Aztecs). Teaching is monitored in line with school policy, and feedback is given. The in-service training provided for teachers has contributed to the improved quality of teaching.
107. In the last inspection ICT was one of the key issues for action, in that the school should improve teachers' knowledge by the provision of appropriate training in the National Curriculum and improve the quality of management of ICT through more effective planning and monitoring of teaching. The school has been successful in raising standards by addressing both these issues. There are now about twenty computers in the school, most of which are linked to the Internet. The ratio of pupils to machines is approximately 1:10 but it is the school's intention to reduce that to 1:8. The budget for ICT has been increased to help to meet these demands. The quality of the hardware has improved, but the school still finds it necessary to use a very old machine with a different operating system.

MUSIC

108. In the one lesson seen, the attainment of pupils was broadly in line with that expected for their age. Pupils listen well and they make satisfactory progress, participate actively and can sing tunefully. During the inspection it was possible to see videos of school productions, in which both the singing and the playing of musical instruments were of a good standard. However, overall, the standard of music has declined since the last inspection report.
109. The peripatetic teacher visits the school one afternoon a week; this enables her to take each class for half an hour once a fortnight. Her knowledge, skill and understanding are of great benefit. A very good range of musical instruments are on display and easily accessible in the main hall. Some of these have had considerable use. The peripatetic teacher uses this area for her teaching. In a Year 5 lesson the pupils came into the hall enthusiastically. The quality of teaching was very good. The teacher insisted on good breathing and used rhythmic chants as a warm-up activity. Pupils are introduced to correct music vocabulary such as pulse, pitch and rhythm. Pupils listened well and in a very short space of time were singing in tune. Their voices responded well to her direction so that the song had elements of light and shade. During the lesson the class teacher was present and supported the music teacher. This proved to be very successful in-service training for the teacher who would be able to follow up the lesson later in the week. Although the school is fortunate to have the expertise of the peripatetic music teacher, the amount of time allocated to this subject is rather low. As well as the Year 6 end of year productions the pupils are also involved in music activities at Christmas and Harvest Festival. During the whole school assembly the Year 3 and 4 children sang to the rest of the school accompanied by their class teacher on the guitar.
110. The head teacher is currently the subject leader for music. Curricular materials from QCA have been introduced recently and form the basis of the scheme of work. The

staff are monitored in line with the school policy. The new peripatetic teacher is not able to support the previously run extra-curricular activities, consequently there is no choir or instrumental clubs.

111. In the last inspection music was considered a strength in the school. Since then there has been a decline in standards, although they remain high.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 4 can carry out an appropriate range of gymnastic movements, including hopping, jumping and rolling, showing satisfactory control and balance. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 successfully perform a range of dance movements, carefully imitating the movements of both plants and fish. Pupils produce a steady rhythm into their work, when dancing to music, and they show most suitable variations in speed, level, shape and direction. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully develop their games skills of passing and receiving a ball, and they readily take part in small-sided team games, based on football and hockey, to further develop their skills. They show a developing understanding of the concepts of attack and defence. Pupils recognise the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise, and they confidently explain the effects of exercise on their bodies. Pupils in Year 3 attend swimming lessons for part of the year. All become suitably confident in the water, and by the end of the year about 75 percent of pupils are able to swim ten metres unaided.
113. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, with good examples also being observed in Year 3/4. Teachers produce clear planning, and they provide a good range of resources, to help pupils develop their skills. Detailed instruction is given, and this allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in their learning. Where teaching is good, and where instruction is particularly helpful and pupils are especially well supported, pupils make good progress. Members of staff change appropriately for lessons, and they all join in and demonstrate for pupils. They have sound subject knowledge, and make suitable demands of the pupils' performance. Pupils join in enthusiastically, enjoying themselves and making a satisfactory physical effort. Lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils being given suitable opportunities to increase their skills. Teachers usually show good control and management skills, although occasionally a small minority of pupils do not give their full attention to their teacher, preferring instead to carry on with the activities being undertaken. Teachers often use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are usually missed for pupils to discuss the quality of the work seen, which would help them identify the areas where they might improve themselves. This shortcoming in teaching was also identified at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers provide help and support to pupils, in all aspects of their work, and in particular they emphasise the need for safety. In turn, pupils show good, and sometimes very good, attitudes, behave well overall, work well alone and with a partner or group, and carry equipment carefully and safely.
114. The school has a suitable scheme of work, using QCA guidelines, and all aspects of work are covered during the year. Further detailed planning ensures that this happens. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and skilful. She is fully aware of the work that is being undertaken in the classes, through observing lessons taking place and seeing for herself the standards being achieved. The school has good assessment procedures, and much information is available to help judge pupils' current skills, to

identify the progress they have made and to highlight areas for development. Activities involving counting, especially in games activities, give support to the school's initiative in numeracy. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the provision of extra-curricular sporting activities for pupils, and the school has a number of successful sports teams. These activities contribute significantly towards pupils' social development.

115. The standards achieved at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are familiar with a wide range of world religions, including the Christian, Moslem and Sikh faiths. They confidently relate some of the stories of famous figures from each religion, such as Jesus, Mohammed and Guru Nanak. Pupils successfully identify and discuss similarities and differences between religions, such as in clothing and life-styles. They understand that religions have various ceremonies and special occasions, and they can, for example, explain the importance of Eid to Moslems and Easter to Christians. Pupils readily explain the value placed on holy books, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 can identify the Guru Granth Sahib, the Qu'ran and the Bible, and relate them to the appropriate faith. Pupils are aware of the importance of family and community life, and those in Year 6 know that relationships within these communities are ruled by codes of conduct, such as the Ten Commandments. Pupils show some confidence in discussing a variety of issues, such as their feelings on hearing the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son, in Year 3, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are aware of the need for caring and tolerance, in their dealings with other people. They also readily write prayers to convey their own thoughts and wishes.

117. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and organised, with teachers, for example, reading stories sensitively, and providing an interesting range of issues and information for pupils to consider. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and usually provide clear explanations for pupils, enabling them all, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers make good use of religious artefacts and educational visits to churches, for example, to enhance the quality of lessons. Pupils find the subject interesting, and most concentrate well on the tasks in hand. They listen carefully, reflect on what they have heard, and, although many pupils find it difficult, most try hard to explain their feelings and views. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and this helps them to make appropriate progress. Just occasionally, a small minority of pupils are less attentive. Pupils generally take care with the presentation of their work. Teachers always mark pupils' books, but few comments or advice are usually added.

118. The school closely follows the locally agreed syllabus, and all areas of work are effectively covered. Further planning ensures a full coverage for pupils as they move through the school. The work undertaken provides suitable support for all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and although she has only recently taken over the subject, she has contributed well to the learning taking place. She checks the work being covered in the school, by studying samples of pupils' books, and observing teachers and pupils at work in the classroom. There are now good, and much improved, assessment procedures, and

Careful records are kept of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Through the written activities, which are provided for pupils, religious education gives some limited support for the school's work improving standards of literacy.

119. The standards reported, at the time of the school's previous inspection, have been maintained. The quality of teaching and learning as well as assessment have improved since the previous inspection.