

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEFRIARS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Boughton Drive, Rushden, Northants, NN10 9HX

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121904

Headteacher: Mr D Threadkill

Reporting inspector: Andrew Folker
2437

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th October 2000

Inspection number: 224462

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:	Boughton Drive Rushden Northants
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Catlin
Date of previous inspection:	3 rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Andrew Folker	Registered inspector	English as an additional language, Science, History	How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Catherine Fish	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Moles	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities, English, Information Technology, Design and Technology, Religious Education	
Diana Wright	Team inspector	Mathematics, Art, Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Patrick Playfair	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Geography, Physical Education	The school's results and achievements, Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This average sized primary school serves an area of mixed rented and private accommodation situated 18 miles to the east of Northampton. There are 261 pupils organised into 8 single year group classes. Most pupils transfer from the neighbouring infant school although approximately twenty per cent attend from outside the immediate area because of parental preference.

Pupils come from a range of backgrounds. Children enter the school at the age of seven with attainments that are above average. There are a smaller number of pupils than average eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils from ethnic minorities is well below average and none have English as an additional language. There are 68 pupils on the schools register of special educational needs which is above the national average. Two point four per cent of pupils have a statement for their special educational need. This is slightly above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Whitefriars is a very effective school. Pupils achieve high standards in most aspects of their education and make good progress because of the very good teaching they receive. Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning allow them to achieve their full potential. The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to working together in close partnership to raise standards even further. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school's results show that standards are improving and are now well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The very good quality of teaching contributes to the high standards attained by children and their rate of learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for so that they achieve well across all areas of the school's work.
- Provision for pupils personal, social and moral development is very good.
- The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader and manager of the school. He collaborates closely with the deputy, other staff and governors in providing a clear direction to the school's work. There is effective delegation that promotes staff professional development.
- The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities.
- Parents have a positive view of the school's work.
- Resources are used well to raise standards and promote pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The use of information communication technology to raise standards across the curriculum.
- The analysis and interpretation of test results to focus attention on aspects of subjects that require improvement and to plot the progress of pupils more systematically.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in February 1997. The good standards in English and science have been maintained and improved. In English, standards of writing have improved and in science, an increasing number of pupils are now achieving at the higher levels in national tests. In mathematics, standards have risen from average to above average. Standards in other subjects have been maintained, except in music, where the standards are now satisfactory rather than good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs remains good and the good progress they make, which was noted at the time of the previous inspection, have been maintained.

The school has been successful in addressing all the key issues identified in the previous report. It has worked hard to maintain the strengths found at that time. These strengths include pupils' attitudes to their learning, behaviour and the quality of relationships. The school has the capacity to improve further. The provision for pupils with special educational needs continues to be very good. The quality of teaching has improved. Resources have been improved to at least a satisfactory level in all subjects. Staff receive good opportunities for their professional development and their role as curriculum co-ordinators has been significantly enhanced. The refurbishment of the administrative areas of the school has been effectively carried out having a significant positive impact on staff morale.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above average in English and science and above the national average in mathematics. They match the results of similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment is well above average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. The results of the national tests, taken in 2000, show that these standards are being maintained or improved upon. The evidence gathered during the inspection confirms this picture. In English, attainment in reading remains higher than in writing. In science an increasing number of pupils attained at the higher levels. In 1999 girls achieved better than boys in English and mathematics, whilst boys out performed girls in science. The school is aware of this and these differences are less marked in the 2000 results. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the well planned support they receive in lessons and by the very good assessment procedures and individual target setting which ensures that tasks are well matched to their learning needs. Over the last four years the improvements in results have been broadly in line with the national trend. The school set cautious targets for 1999 that were exceeded for all subjects. The targets set for 2000 were extended and were also exceeded. Standards achieved in geography and history are good. They are in line with national expectations in art, design and technology, music, physical education and information and communications technology. They are in line with the standards expected in the agreed syllabus in religious education. Compared to the previous inspection, standards have risen in mathematics and declined in music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that the school has of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are consistently well behaved in lessons and at other times around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils co-operate well with teachers and each other.
Attendance	Good. All lessons begin punctually.

The positive attitudes displayed by pupils have a significant and positive impact on the standards achieved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall			Very good

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

Teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. It enables pupils' learning to be effective in all lessons resulting in good standards of attainment. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good and makes effective use of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Planning is conscientiously done, to an agreed format, which is used across the school. This contains clear learning intentions that are shared with pupils so they are aware of their own learning. The work set for pupils is well matched to their needs, with teaching assistants providing good support to pupils with special educational needs. Marking of work is good with positive comments that help pupils to improve their work. Homework is regularly set and is well used to support learning.

The quality of teaching was good or better in 74% of lessons. In 41% of lessons it was very good or better and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides a very good range of learning opportunities for pupils. The application of information communication technology skills across the subjects of the curriculum is weak.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils make good progress because of the well planned support they receive.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for pupils' general well being is very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure as the school provides a high level of pastoral care.

The school provides a broad curriculum and is aware of the need to improve the use of information communication technology to support work in other subjects. The school provides clear information to parents about its work. Parents support the home school agreement. Teachers are easily accessible to parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy, staff and governors provides very good leadership to the school. There is a clear educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities. They give good support to the management and development of the school and have a good working knowledge of how it is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school maintains a good overview of its work through the use of tests and teacher assessments. Less attention is paid to interpreting these results to plan improvements in the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school improvement plan is effectively used to ensure that resources support priorities. Very good use is made of specific grants available to it.

The school employs appropriate numbers of well qualified teachers. Good use is made of specialist skills such as the teaching of French. Teaching assistants are well qualified and provide good support to teachers. Teachers who co-ordinate subjects are given well delegated responsibilities and manage their subjects well. All staff receive very good opportunities for their professional development. The aims of the school are fully reflected in its work. The school improvement plan is an effective management tool that ensures a consistent approach to addressing the school's priorities. The accommodation is satisfactory and well maintained. Resources are at least of a satisfactory standard for all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That teaching is good and that standards are rising.• That children like coming to school.• That children make good progress.• That they feel welcome in the school and that questions and problems are handled with care and consideration.• The values and attitudes promoted by the school.• That the school is well led and managed.• That the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities provided outside lessons.• A closer working relationship with parents.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments. Inspectors found the concerns about out of class activities difficult to understand and judge that the range of extra curricular activities provided is good. Inspection evidence shows that the school has worked hard to secure the support of parents and has been successful. Parents are kept well informed about the work their children are doing. Almost all parents have signed the home school agreement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 1999, the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven were well above the national average in English and science and above the national average in mathematics. This was a significant improvement on the previous year when results in English and mathematics were below the national average and results in science were broadly in line with the national average. Since 1996 the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for English, mathematics and science has been broadly in line with the national trend of improving results. In comparison with similar schools, the 1999 results in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with those achieved by similar schools.

2. At the age of eleven the proportion of pupils in 1999 reaching the higher levels of attainment in the tests is well above the national average for English and above the national average for mathematics and science. Overall in 1999, girls performed better than boys in English and mathematics. Boys performed better than girls in science.

3. On the basis of the National Curriculum test and assessment data, taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, there has been a difference in the performance of boys when compared to that of girls in English, mathematics and science. Taking all three subjects together the performance of boys has been above the national average compared to that of girls being close to the national average.

4. Results of the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils aged eleven in 2000 have not yet been compared with the national average or the average for similar schools but appear to be an improvement on the 1999 results. In English the percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above is 83%. Attainment in reading is significantly better than in writing. Ninety five per cent of pupils attained the expected level or better in reading compared to 62% of pupils attaining the expected level or better in writing. In mathematics 81% of pupils and in science 95% of pupils reached the expected Level 4 or above.

5. This inspection found that as a result of very good teaching and learning, the positive attitudes of the pupils and the very good quality and range of learning opportunities, the overall attainment of pupils at Key Stage 2 is beyond that expected for pupils aged seven to eleven and that pupils of all abilities are achieving well. As a result of good assessment and additional support, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils who are gifted and talented make sound progress. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, geography and history. They are in line with expectations in information and communications technology [ICT], religious education, art, design and technology, music and physical education. When compared to the previous inspection standards have generally been maintained. They have improved in mathematics and declined in music. The very effective introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies is having a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. Good attention is being given to the use of technical vocabulary and the application of numeracy in other subjects, although the use of ICT is underdeveloped across the curriculum. The school has recognised the need for greater efforts to be made to improve standards of writing, both in English and other subjects.

6. The school set cautious targets for English and mathematics in 1999. In both subjects the target of 60% of pupils attaining Level 4 or better was exceeded by 22%. The

target for 2000 was raised to 71% for both subjects and these have been met and exceeded by 12% in English and 10% in mathematics. Targets have been increased by a modest 4% for 2001 but account has been taken of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6. The school collects a good range of assessment and test data and takes effective steps to meet its targets although this data is not yet systematically analysed. There is a clear determination and commitment to raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The school has maintained the high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school, display very good behaviour and establish very good and constructive relationships with one another, with teachers and other adults working in and visiting the school. Pupils comment on how much they admire their teachers and the hard work that goes into making their lessons interesting.

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They take a great pride in their work and know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and effort. During lessons they settle quickly and work productively in their groups. The school encourages confidence and independence and expects all pupils to make a positive contribution to the life of the school. There is good support for after school clubs and activities. The school continues to be a happy and well ordered community.

9. Because the pupils behave so well their teachers are able to devote the maximum amount of time to teaching. In turn this leads to the good standards of work and learning seen throughout the school. On the rare occasions when pupils become distracted, or fail to respond to reminders about what is expected of them, they accept correction without argument and with good grace. Pupils behave particularly well in the classrooms when they are eating their lunches. They take care not to drop food and show great respect for their classrooms. They are courteous to staff and can be trusted to behave responsibly. Behaviour in the playground is generally very good. However, at lunch times the behaviour on the upper playground can become boisterous, although no incidents of bullying or harassment were observed during the time of the inspection. There have been no exclusions of pupils during the school year prior to this inspection.

10. The school provides a secure environment in which pupils can successfully develop both their academic and personal qualities. By assisting with the school bank and the tuck shop older pupils relate well to younger pupils and show admirable patience when explaining banking procedures or when money becomes mislaid in a pocket. There is often genuine appreciation at the efforts of pupils. For example, pupils in a Year 5 physical education recognise the good quality and skills demonstrated by four pupils in catching and passing a basketball. Pupils know that their contributions to lessons will be valued. This is seen in a Year 6 numeracy lesson where pupils are confident to suggest answers without fear of being criticised if they are wrong. Pupils readily acknowledge the contribution made by individual pupils as they compose a group performance in a Year 6 dance lesson.

11. The school is very successful in meeting its aim of stressing positive social attitudes through a respect for honesty, courtesy, helpfulness and self-discipline, and the encouragement of good relationships to create a sense of achievement.

12. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a fact with which parents agree. The rates of attendance and authorised absences have remained similar for several years. However, the school is working hard to reduce the number of unauthorised absences and to improve the punctuality for the few pupils who persistently arrive late. The school has good

relationships with the educational welfare service and can call upon its assistance, if required.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. The school has maintained and improved upon the quality of teaching seen in the previous inspection. Overall, teaching is good or better in almost three-quarters of the lessons, with all other lessons being satisfactory. As a consequence of this good teaching, pupils' learning is very good.

14. Teachers have a secure knowledge of all the subjects they teach with the exception of information communication technology where they lack confidence in using it to support work in other subjects. Their knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies is very good so they are able to teach the basic skills effectively which helps to raise standards in all subjects. All teachers are skilled in teaching phonics and in developing mathematical reasoning. Long term planning ensures coverage of the National Curriculum and teachers' weekly planning identifies precise learning objectives, which are effectively communicated to pupils and written on the board. These objectives are referred to during the lessons to focus pupils' attention and are then re-visited at the conclusion of the lesson. Weekly lesson plans are completed to an agreed school format. They are of a high standard and contain a suitable balance between direct instruction, group work and a shared session to recapitulate on what has been learnt. Group work is well matched to pupils' differing attainments.

15. There is very good teaching of pupils with special education needs. Teachers have very positive expectations of what pupils can achieve. Detailed planning to meet individual needs and effective questioning by teachers ensures that key learning points are understood and pupils can meet new work with increased confidence. The high quality of pupils' individual education plans and the close liaison between class teachers and the very knowledgeable and dedicated team of support staff ensures that pupils on the register of special educational needs are able to benefit fully from all class work activities.

16. Teachers have good questioning skills, which they use to assess and extend pupils understanding. They make good use of ongoing assessment to move pupils' learning on and correct misunderstandings. An example of this was seen in a science lesson, when one pupil stated that the spine was the longest bone in the skeleton and the teacher used this contribution to give correct information on how the spine is made up of vertebrae. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and thorough, with the best examples identifying what the pupils need to do next to improve.

17. Classroom management is effective so that little time is wasted and there is consistency across the school in the ways classrooms are organised. Lessons start punctually and proceed briskly. Lessons usually start with a brief summary of previous learning and some assessment of pupils' understanding before the teacher provides some direct teaching of new knowledge. When pupils are set to work, teachers focus their attention on precise teaching to various groups. Lessons usually conclude with a brief plenary session to assess pupils understanding. This well focussed teaching maintains pupils' levels of interest.

18. All pupils are aware of what needs to be learnt and are encouraged to settle quickly to their work sustaining good levels of concentration and putting good effort into all they do. They take a pride in their work and teachers' high expectations of them and their behaviour are well met in practice; consequently they make good progress in using and applying their newly acquired skills and understanding. Because of the very positive attitudes developed by

the school, all pupils show good personal development and are able to benefit from the positive relationships they establish with other pupils and the adults with whom they work. Consistent encouragement and support ensures that pupils with special educational needs have the satisfaction of achieving personal targets and acquiring the confidence to succeed. For example, in a withdrawal group for additional literacy support there is a grasp of recognition and understanding as pupils see that different phonemes can make the same sound. Homework is used well to support the learning of all pupils.

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

19. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. It is effective in meeting the school's academic and social aims. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, although the school buildings provide some difficulties of access for any pupils with limited mobility. The school is aware of the differences in achievement between boys and girls in literacy and is addressing this. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy is reflected in the good standards of achievement. Since the last inspection schemes of work have been revised and blocks of time are now allocated for the foundation subjects. This supports the teaching of subjects such as history, geography, art and design and technology, but some lessons in physical education are overlong. The school has recognised that outdoor activities and gymnastics are underdeveloped. The allocation of time to information technology is low and the application of ICT skills across the curriculum is weak. The curriculum for Year 6 pupils is enhanced by the provision of French lessons. The school motivates the pupils to apply themselves well in lessons and take a pride in their work, thus preparing them successfully for the next stage of their education.

20. Pupils with special educational needs have very good access to the whole curriculum. They have the same breadth and quality of learning opportunities as other pupils and any group work undertaken outside the classroom is closely matched to that taking place with the remaining pupils in the class. The care taken to match work to individual needs, the consistently high expectation of staff and the very effective monitoring of provision make a significant contribution to the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Higher achieving pupils in Year 6 receive good support to ensure they reach their potential in the national tests at the age of eleven. The school makes satisfactory efforts to meet the needs of gifted and talented pupils.

21. A strength of the curriculum is the effective linking of subjects through careful planning. This ensures that pupils consolidate their learning in one subject by applying or extending their study to another subject. Year 3 pupils apply their knowledge of healthy eating learned in science in a Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lesson when discussing what it is safe to put in their mouth. Year 4 pupils apply their musical knowledge to devise a sequence of movements which they performed in a dance lesson. Teachers make effective use of opportunities for pupils to apply the skills of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils write reports and make accurate measurements of the time taken by different parachutes to reach the ground.

22. A good range of extra curricular activities, open to boys and girls of all abilities, extends and enriches the school curriculum. The inspection team does not agree with parental concerns over the provision of out of school activities. There are opportunities for pupils to join the choir, participate in drama, to learn Italian or chess and to develop their interest in ecology. Sporting interest are well provided for in table-tennis, football and netball clubs. Over thirty pupils enjoy playing mathematical games and puzzles at the Maths Quest

club. Many of these clubs take place in lunchtime and are attended by a large number of children. An after school homework club provides a valuable opportunity for older pupils to complete their homework in a quiet and supportive atmosphere.

23. The school has good links with the local community, which have a positive impact on pupils' learning. A strong relationship with the local Council of Churches provides the school with a range of visitors who make a valuable contribution to school assemblies. The school nurse and the local health education unit provide good support and resources for the health education programme. The school has collaborated with the local police and health authorities to develop a record sheet for pupils to record their progress towards the Junior Citizenship Award. Links with a multi-national firm increase pupils' awareness of the role of scientists and counteract gender stereotypes. An annual residential trip provides an experience of communal life and an opportunity to learn about a contrasting part of England.

24. Well developed links with the infant school and local secondary schools allow for smooth transitions between each key stage. Use of the ICT suite at the local secondary school extends Year 6 pupils' understanding of the uses of information and communications technology.

25. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school has a clear policy, written in accordance with the latest National Curriculum guidance. There are good arrangements to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug misuse and to provide sex education within a supportive environment. By receiving the Healthy School Award the school has demonstrated that it has a comprehensive health education curriculum, commitment to health related exercise, care for the school environment and a record of community involvement

26. The school places a high priority on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. It is successful in meeting its stated aim 'to enable children to enter adult life as competent, confident citizens able to deal with the situations that life brings to them and to make the right decisions that will benefit others and themselves'. Provision for pupils' moral and social development continues to be a strength of the school as found at the last inspection.

27. The spiritual development of pupils is successfully promoted throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to reflect on their work. In the very good and excellent lessons observed there was an element of awe and wonder present. Examples were seen in dance, in history and in a science lesson when a pupil exclaimed in delight 'Did you know there are twenty six bones in the hand?' Assemblies contain valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others. Time is given for prayers and acts of collective worship are spiritual occasions which promote pupils' knowledge and awareness.

28. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and emphasises in its prospectus 'the importance of care, consideration and courtesy'. The behaviour policy is consistently applied and reflects a moral code. Teachers praise good behaviour and pupils' positive contributions to lessons. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own class rules to guide behaviour in their classroom. Pupils play games fairly according to the rules.

29. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Teachers treat pupils with respect and act as good role models for the pupils. The provision for the social development of pupils is enhanced by the good range of extra curricular activities arranged by the school. Pupils at the drama club explained that they were 'learning to trust each other and becoming

more confident to speak in front of the group'. Year 6 pupils exercise responsibility by running the tuck shop and the school bank and by helping in the school office and answering the phone at lunchtime. Year 5 pupils act as school librarians. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for a wide range of classroom activities such as getting resources out and keeping the room tidy. Pupils look after equipment and the school environment well. The school promotes an awareness of the plight of others. Each year group adopts its own charity and raises money for causes such as Save the Whale and the Mozambique disaster appeal. A visitor with cerebral palsy from the charity SCOPE raises Year 6 pupils' awareness of disability. Assemblies are seen as 'times to learn and reflect on common values, aspirations and goals and to strive for a sense of belonging and shared experience.' Pupils celebrate the success of others both in the classroom and in the 'achievement assemblies'.

30. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The annual awards for music and art promote pupils' aesthetic awareness and interest in the arts. Pupils make a geographical study of the local area, and, in history explore changes in Rushden since the middle ages. Pupils are made aware of life in past times and of their own cultural heritage. Year 4 pupils are very knowledgeable about the heritage of the Ancient Greeks. Visits to Islamic and Sikh places of worship introduce pupils to different religions and cultures. The school could develop further, in its curriculum plans, opportunities to emphasise the rich diversity of cultures within our society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The overall very good provision of support and guidance for pupils' educational and personal development made by the school has a very positive impact on standards. The good standards identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained and built on in some areas. The school's staff work very hard in creating an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, valued and supported. They are confident in their dealings with staff, knowing that any concerns that they have will be dealt with efficiently and sympathetically.

32. The requirement for the annual review of statements of special education needs is fully met by the school. The assessment and monitoring of these pupils is very good. Comprehensive records, excellent co-ordination and liaison between the co-ordinator for special educational needs, class teachers, support staff and outside agencies and the ability of the school to adjust the provision to meet changes in need contribute to the very good progress made by these pupils. Individual education plans are of very good quality and the short steps necessary for pupils to improve are clearly noted and used effectively in the class teacher's short term planning and the briefing given to classroom assistants.

33. The school's policies that ensure the health, safety and welfare of its pupils are good. The school buildings are inspected termly and any concerns are dealt with promptly. An assessment of the risks involved are part of the planning of the curriculum as are any trips or activities. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day. Midday supervisors are well involved in all procedures relating to behaviour and bullying and are vigilant in this area. First aid arrangements are good, with accidents correctly recorded and, where necessary, notes detailing accidents are sent home. The school has good procedures for child protection and is familiar with the system of case conferences involved; child protection procedures are reinforced with all staff annually.

34. Measures to promote discipline and appropriate behaviour are very good. They are based on positive encouragement, supported by a good systems of rewards, a graded system of sanctions and a consistent approach by all staff. Pupils strive hard to behave well and most are very successful. However, a very small minority of pupils fall below the high

expectations of behaviour and the sanctions within the policy are well used to support them in coping with their difficulties. Incidents of more serious unsatisfactory or inappropriate behaviour are well recorded and monitored by the headteacher, who always notifies parents at this point. A home school book may be used to monitor the situation and this action is usually successful. The school has looked at ways in which the already very good behaviour can be improved; problem areas have been identified and ways of tackling them are being developed.

35. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is mostly done informally, although some is done through the very good personal, social and health education programme. Annual reports on pupils show that teachers have a good understanding and knowledge of their pupils' personal development.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The results of assessments are used very well to identify pupils experiencing difficulties and those pupils who require more challenge; teacher assistants are also well deployed to support pupils' academic progress through these assessments. Assessment procedures within the classroom are also very effective. The plenary session at the end of many lessons is a very effective way of assessing what pupils have learnt and whether the learning objectives identified at the start of the lesson have been reached. Marking of pupils' books is very often helpful and constructive, giving pointers on ways to improve.

37. Whilst the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good, the use made of assessment information in future planning is only satisfactory. In English, good use has been made of the analysis of Year 6 results that indicated a concern about extended writing and this has been tackled in this year's planning. However, in science and mathematics, the use of optional test results and analysis have not yet fed into the planning.

38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are marked consistently and reasons for absences correctly identified. The headteacher monitors the registers every Friday, looking particularly for absences that have not been explained and for pupils consistently arriving late. Where the school has concerns about attendance, it is able to contact the educational welfare officer easily.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. As in the previous inspection report, the school's partnership with its parents is very good. Parents' views of the school are generally very positive. About a third of parents returned the questionnaire and analysis shows a very good level of support for the work of the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the expectations the school has for their children and the progress they make, the good behaviour in school and the fact that their children like school. They like the fact that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that their children are helped to become mature and responsible. Parents have concerns about a few areas. They have concerns about the amount of homework set, the closeness with which the school works with parents, the information they receive and the range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree with the positive views. Judgements about parents' concerns are detailed here and elsewhere in the report.

40. Parents are kept well informed through newsletters and, where appropriate, class letters about school events, trips and activities. Information is provided for parents about what their child will be studying during the term. This also enables the school to ask parents to provide any information or artefacts they may have and parents are helpful in this matter, for example photographs and artefacts about Egypt were recently provided. Annual written reports on pupils are sent to parents at the end of the academic year. Overall, they are of satisfactory quality, giving sufficient details of pupils' attainment and personal development. Sometimes, reports indicate usefully what pupils need to do next. There are good formal opportunities twice each year for parents to consult teachers about their children's progress. Attendance at these meetings is very good. The school tries hard to work closely with parents. They are always welcome to come into school at any appropriate time to discuss any concerns. Attendance is also very good at meetings designed to give parents a better understanding of specific topics, such as homework, behaviour, numeracy and literacy. The school endeavours to hold one such meeting each year, with meetings for specific areas, such as sex education and transfer to secondary school taking place every year. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. They are kept well informed about progress and the dates for the review of statements and individual education plans.

41. There are a number of parents who come into school to help, and their involvement makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents also support the school through the parent teacher association. This organises events, such as discos, mostly centred on the pupils, at which parents provide practical support, selling refreshments and being watchful, and which also raise worthwhile sums of money. These are used to purchase items such as the new chairs for the hall, ICT equipment and new musical instruments.

42. Parents support the work of the school well through good support at home; many help by hearing their children read and encouraging the completion of homework. This involves parents in their child's learning and gives them an opportunity to make comments in the homework book. Last year almost all parents signed the home school agreement, which emphasises the good support they provide. Parents are consulted through surveys undertaken by the school. The last one in June, by the local education authority, showed high levels of satisfaction with the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership to the school. He is well supported by the deputy head and, as a team, they have been effective in maintaining the high standards seen in the last inspection and addressing the key issues identified in the previous report. They are well supported by all other members of staff who share a collective vision for the school, based on the raising of standards and a shared commitment to succeed. The governing body shares this vision and provides a very good level of support. The school improvement plan is well constructed and based on teamwork: it identifies appropriate priorities, timescales and is securely based on implementing the school aims. The leadership and management has improved since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

44. The governors fully meet their statutory requirements and are conscientious in fulfilling their roles. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and hold it to account for its performance. They are actively involved in monitoring the work of the school through a system of governors being linked to curriculum areas. Regular 'position statements' from curriculum co-ordinators and the headteacher's report keep them well informed. Governors ensure that the budget is targeted at meeting the school's priorities from the improvement plan. There is efficient monitoring of financial affairs. Good administrative systems ensure that specific grants, such as for special educational needs or teaching assistance with information communication technology, are used for their intended purpose. As a result of good financial planning, the school has been able to replace furniture and equipment and fund building improvements that have had a positive effect on its life.

45. A comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum based on the school's identified priorities has been established. The headteacher and deputy systematically evaluate the quality of teaching with support from local authority advisers. These lesson observations are used to ensure consistency and coherence across the school, as well as to address any issues of staff training. Effective use is made of a variety of testing to monitor standards, although the results of these tests are not always used to analyse ways in which the teaching of aspects of the curriculum could be improved.

46. All teachers are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Teachers with specialist knowledge, for example in modern languages, are effectively deployed to make use of their skills and to extend the range of learning opportunities for pupils. Performance management systems are securely in place with all teachers receiving regular appraisals with targets for improving their performance linked to the provision of further training. All staff have areas of curriculum responsibility and there is very effective delegation for these responsibilities. This promotes their further professional development and enables them to gain a clear view of their subjects through some observations of lessons, analysing planning, scrutinising samples of work and leading staff meetings. Teachers are very well supported by teaching assistants who have received further training. There is exemplary leadership of special educational needs by the co-ordinator. A strong team of dedicated staff is very well supported by the governing body. There are excellent procedures for the induction and further training of support staff. The good deployment of staff and the effective use of designated funding for special educational needs ensure that the aims for special educational needs in the school are fully met. Pupils with special educational needs experience success in learning and achieve very well. They are provided with suitable learning challenges that ensure a confident transition into the next stage of their education.

47. The accommodation is generally good although there would be limited access for pupils with physical disabilities. Teaching areas are attractively displayed with examples of pupils' work that contributes to the positive ethos of the school. The building is well

maintained and kept clean by the site manager and his staff. New administrative areas have considerably enhanced the school's accommodation. The recently established information technology suite, whilst a valuable addition to the accommodation, is too small for the numbers of pupils involved. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and are now at least satisfactory for all areas of the curriculum. The administrative staff are efficient and unobtrusive and provide good support which allows the headteacher and teaching staff to focus their work on improving pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. The school should now:

- (1) Consolidate and extend the use of information communication technology to make maximum use of the skills of staff and equipment across all subjects.*
(Paragraphs 5, 19, 63, 67, 72, 89, 91)
- (2) Analyse the results of tests and other data more effectively to:
 - address areas of strength and weakness within subjects
 - plot the progress of pupils more systematically.(Paragraphs 6, 37, 45, 63, 68)

* Already identified by the school as an area for development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	29	33	27	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	261
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	26
	Girls	29	28	29
	Total	49	49	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (49)	82(49)	92 (55)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	49	49	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (49)	82 (49)	85 (51)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	258
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.7
Average class size	32.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	435533
Total expenditure	530060
Expenditure per pupil	1503
Balance brought forward from previous year	105377
Balance carried forward to next year	10850

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	261
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	55	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	55	0	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	53	9	1	12
The teaching is good.	40	53	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	57	12	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	39	1	3	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	29	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	47	15	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	49	44	1	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	40	1	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	48	20	1	11

Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. The comments regarding the range of activities provided outside lessons are hard to understand. Inspectors judge that the amount and range of such activities are good. Inspectors consider that the school works closely with parents through providing information on subjects to be covered in the term, effective use of homework done with the good support of parents and teachers who are easily accessible to parents.

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents felt that they were not explicitly invited to help in the school.

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

ENGLISH

49. The pupils currently in the top age group for the school are achieving standards that are above those expected for this age group.

50. The results of National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in 1999 were well above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The inspection found that, in lessons the attainment of the pupils at age eleven, the end of Key Stage 2, is currently above that expected for pupils of this age. Discussion with pupils and observation of their responses in class show that pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above those expected for pupils of this age. When reading to inspectors they demonstrate a good understanding of meaning and are able to make realistic predictions about the outcome of the story. They can find appropriate books, both in the library and their classroom, quickly and on a variety of topics. They use these non-fiction books confidently and can research information accurately, demonstrating good standards.

51. Throughout the school there is no significant variation in attainment among pupils of different gender. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well. They receive well targeted support both in the classroom and through well structured withdrawal groups.

52. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is very good. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and each other and answer questions using a wide vocabulary and correctly-formed sentences. They use their skills very well in a wide range of lessons. For example pupils aged eight are able to draw on their previous knowledge of the Ancient Egyptians to discuss the structure of a text and how this sets out the main points they learnt in a history lesson the previous day. Older pupils use sophisticated and technical language to discuss the relative merits of books and the Internet as research tools.

53. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils attain standards in reading that are above those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils read a wide range of material such as books, poems, worksheets, and access non-fiction reference material competently. They can identify characters, describe reasons for liking their favourite character, recall the plot and predict, with reasonable accuracy, what happens next in stories. They link their current learning with the book they are reading. For example pupils were able to say how 'tension' rose and dipped in the stories they were reading. This followed a lesson on how to structure writing to engender feelings of tension and suspense. They use the library well and research information for projects, using reference material both in school and through the Internet. All older pupils read fluently and with expression.

54. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils attain standards in writing that are above national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This is because the school has made successful use of the National Literacy Strategy as a structure to develop pupils' competence in the technical aspects of writing. They have identified the need to develop the use of this competence to extend pupils' writing and have been successful in this. Pupils can write in a range of forms, for example, a report of a science experiment, a letter explaining the communion service to someone who has not attended one and a story about an alien visiting the earth. Much of this writing contains imaginative and often sophisticated language but is generally brief in length.

55. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. It is never less than satisfactory and on occasion excellent. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well. The very good teaching is characterised by challenging work accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment and very high expectations and innovative teaching strategies. Pupils' achievement in such lessons is marked by fast learning and successful completion of all the planned tasks and learning objectives. Pupils understanding of what they are learning and the reason for it, are very good and this enhances learning very well. Teachers share learning objectives with the pupils and return to them at the end of the lesson to analyse, with the pupils, their success against these objectives and therefore what they may have to do in the next lesson. Teachers frequently link work in a literacy lesson with that in other lessons and this is a very successful strategy. For example, a teacher extended work in a literacy lesson on the use of the library to the use of the Internet, in an information and communication technology lesson. In this lesson she led a debate on the comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of Internet versus books, in research, to the teaching of various ways of assembling notes on the differences between the lives of the rich and poor in Tudor times. This made efficient use of time and effective use of learning in one lesson to advance learning well in the next. Throughout the school, speaking and listening, reading and writing are practised well through these links with other subjects and this aids pupils' understanding of the central role of language and literacy in all other aspects of life. Pupils who have a special educational need are very well taught and work is planned accurately to meet their needs. Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is very good. This means that teachers can work with particular groups or individuals without interruption and engage in lively discussion and debate knowing well that the common conventions of turn taking and respect for others views will be observed. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Assessment is used well in English to identify areas for improvement.

56. The curriculum for English has good breadth and is well balanced. The use of information and communication technology to support extended writing is underdeveloped. There is a good range and quantity of resources. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Provision is extended through an extra curricular drama club. There are two knowledgeable co-ordinators who have been well supported in their role and have had a significantly positive impact on maintaining and the overall standards in speaking and listening and reading in the school and raising the standards in writing. The library has a satisfactory range of books and is used appropriately by pupils to access books for research and class reading. Whilst it is bright and cheerful, it currently shares space with the new computer suite, and is cramped making it difficult for large numbers of pupils to use it at any one time.

MATHEMATICS

57. In the 1999 tests for eleven year olds the proportion of pupils attaining both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 results was above the national average. These results are in line with those for similar schools. Since the last inspection test results show a year on year improvement with the exception of 1998 when standards were lower. Results over this period indicate that boys have made more progress than girls. The school has set an appropriate target for the 2001 end of key stage tests.

58. Evidence seen in books and lessons observed during the inspection confirms that standards are above average throughout the school. In Year 6, pupils use strategies of doubling and halving to multiply two and three digit numbers by five and twenty five in their heads. They use standard written methods to solve addition, multiplication and division problems. By the end of Year 6 pupils are able to convert fractions to decimals, draw nets of

solid shapes and the most able pupils use algebra to find out the diameter, radius and circumference of simple shapes. In Year 5, pupils round three and four digit numbers to the nearest ten or one hundred. They collect data and record it using a frequency table. They construct and interpret simple line graphs. In Year 4 pupils can read and write numbers to one thousand. They know that one hundred centimetres is equivalent to one metre and can express lengths in metres and centimetres. In Year 3 pupils can subtract one, ten or one hundred from any whole number. They can name familiar solid shapes, describe their features and identify lines of symmetry; the most able can classify shapes using a variety of mathematical properties including symmetry.

59. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Teachers' planning identifies clear learning objectives that effectively build on what pupils already know and understand. Pupils of all abilities study the same topic, but the level and task are matched appropriately to the needs of different groups of pupils. The higher attaining children in each class are identified and provided with appropriate extension activities. In Year 4, for example, pupils estimate and then measure the perimeters of classroom objects. Pupils with special educational needs work with smaller numbers and are supported by the classroom assistant, while the most able pupils find different rectangles that have a perimeter of twenty four centimetres. Classroom assistants are well briefed by class teachers and demonstrate good skills in working with individual pupils and small groups. This results in children with special educational needs making very good progress in their learning.

60. The quality of teaching is very good overall and occasionally excellent. No lesson observed was less than satisfactory. Teachers' good subject knowledge supports clear and correct explanations such as the difference between bar charts and bar-line graphs. Pupils are reminded to follow mathematical conventions for constructing graphs such as a title, labelling the axes and choosing an appropriate scale. Good subject knowledge is also demonstrated by well focused and often challenging questions used to extend the pupils' understanding such as 'Does the pattern always work?' Regular homework reinforces the work done in class but often requires pupils to apply their knowledge, for example, by looking for symmetrical shapes around their home. Teachers expect multiplication tables to be learned at home and give a series of awards to motivate the pupils. Teachers help parents to support their pupils' learning at home by, for example, in Year 6, sending home revision guides for the national tests that contain clear explanations of all the knowledge and skills to be tested. In these ways homework helps the pupils to achieve good standards. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly, giving praise and explaining errors. Marking tells pupils what they have learned and often sets targets for the next step. Throughout the school, mathematical vocabulary, number lines and grids are prominently displayed in the classrooms, and teachers use these aids well to reinforce learning and raise standards

61. A particularly strong feature of much of the teaching, is the way that teachers monitor pupils' understanding during the lesson and clarify common areas of difficulty for the whole class. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher reminds pupils of the importance of working systematically when investigating the possible outcomes of throwing two dice. Another teacher reminds the whole class of the need to read the questions carefully and to express the answer in the unit indicated. As a result some children go back and correct their own work and the rest of the work is completed with greater accuracy. Teachers make very good use of the plenary at the end of the lesson to enable pupils to review what they have learned. Year 4 pupils were proud to state that they had learned that the perimeter is the distance all the way around the edge of the shape. Other plenary sessions provide opportunities for pupils to consolidate and apply what they have learned in the lesson. Year 6 pupils explained the probability of drawing a red ball out of the bag. Questions such as 'Why is he right?' enable pupils to give explanations to the class, thus reinforcing their own understanding. Numeracy

is effectively used to support work in other subjects.

62. Very good relationships enable the pupils to contribute confidently to discussions and effectively support the teaching and learning. Throughout the school pupils listen well and are keen to share their strategies and explanations with the rest of the class. This positive classroom climate means that pupils feel secure enough to ask questions when they do not understand, such as the child who asked 'What does interpret mean?' and another child who admitted 'I am confused'. Very good behaviour enables a lot of work to be covered in each lesson. Pupils listen to instructions, settle to work quickly and set their work out neatly and systematically in their books. They work with the minimum of supervision, enabling teachers to support the learning of groups and individuals. This contributes to the good progress made by pupils during lessons. Pupils enjoy mathematics and take pride in the progress they are making, in for example, learning their multiplication tables. This enthusiasm for mathematics is particularly evident in the Maths Quest club which attracts more than thirty pupils from each year group.

63. Since the last inspection the structure and coverage of the mathematics curriculum has improved due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Data handling is now well addressed and there are more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge and understanding to solve problems and undertake investigative activities. The school needs to develop further the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in mathematics. Since the last inspection good quality resources have been purchased for each class and a new commercial scheme is being introduced throughout the school. The school makes good use of assessment information to identify pupils who might reach the national standard, if given extra support, and those pupils who are capable of working at a level higher than the majority of the class. However further analysis of end of key stage and optional test data could be used to inform curriculum planning. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides good support to her colleagues. The monitoring of teaching and learning is well established and has informed a detailed action plan designed to raise standards even higher.

SCIENCE

64. Attainment, by the end of Key Stage 2 in the 1999 national tests, was well above the national average and broadly in line with the results obtained by similar schools. These results are an improvement on the previous year. The results from the current year show a steady improvement, notably in the number of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, where almost two thirds of pupils achieved this level. In 1999 boys performed better than girls although the results from the Year 2000 tests show that the schools target of raising girls achievements has been successful.

65. Inspection findings, from observations of lessons and looking at work, show a similar picture of pupils' attainment. In Year 3 pupils working on the human body, studying nutrition, are able to classify various foods and are aware of the need for a balanced diet. They use terms such as 'fats' and 'dairy produce' accurately, although terms such as 'carbohydrate' are too complex. One group of higher attaining pupils were able to use information provided on packaging to sort foods into groups. Further work on the human body in Year 4 focussed on the skeleton. Pupils were able to relate information found in reference books to their own bodies. Good gains were made in the use of correct terminology for the major bones. Year 5 pupils, studying forces, demonstrate a secure knowledge of friction and relate this to their own experiences of riding bicycles. In Year 6, work on electricity involved the making of series circuits and ways of increasing or decreasing the brightness of bulbs. Pupils are able to draw circuit diagrams, using correct symbols to represent batteries, bulbs and switches. They make reasonable predictions about the effects of changing variables and are able to

test these predictions fairly. Throughout the key stage pupils are aware of the need to control experiments in a scientific manner. Their use of correct scientific vocabulary is promoted in all classes.

66. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They are enthusiastic about finding out new information. In a Year 4 class one child excitedly exclaimed to his teacher and peers 'did you know there are twenty seven bones in your hand'. Pupils show good concentration and are keen to be accurate in recording their observations when conducting experiments. They collaborate well together in groups when researching information or conducting experiments and their behaviour is good.

67. Teaching is good overall with a third of lessons being very good. Teachers plan thoroughly, clearly identifying what the pupils will learn and ensuring that pupils are aware of what these learning intentions are. The organisation of the lesson allows for a suitable balance of direct teaching and investigative work to take place followed by a review of what has been learnt. Teaching assistants give effective support to pupils with special educational needs. Good subject knowledge enables teachers to use very effective questions to assess pupils' understanding and pupils' answers are used to correct any misunderstandings they might have, such as the spine being one single bone. Expectations of attainment and behaviour are high and no time is lost in lessons, which all proceed at a brisk pace. Resources are well prepared and kept in good condition so that experiments, such as making rheostats to alter the brightness of light bulbs can be completed effectively. There is some limited use of information communication technology but this is not yet effectively used to support work in science. Homework is effectively used to extend classroom learning, such as asking pupils to discover the scientific names of five bones.

68. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who provides a good role model in her own teaching. She has ensured that the subject has improved since the last inspection and has attended further training to improve her understanding of science. Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed at the end of each unit of work. Nationally produced test materials are used annually and the results of these used to set targets for individual pupils, although they are not sufficiently analysed to provide information on any changes that may be necessary in the content of the curriculum. Resources have been improved to a satisfactory level and the school is aware of the need to use information technology more systematically to support work in science. There is very effective monitoring of teaching and of pupils' attainment through a systematic programme of work sampling, lesson observations and analysis of planning. The current scheme of work ensures full coverage of the curriculum but is being reviewed in the light of recent changes to the National Curriculum. There are good links with local industry, notably Unilever, who provides effective support and have run science days in school to show everyday applications of science such as how an ice cream factory operates. Regular reports are made to the governing body to ensure they are aware of the state of the subject and the designated governor maintains close links with the co-ordinator.

ART

69. Only one art lesson was observed during the period of the inspection. Additional evidence was gathered from art work displayed around the school, discussion with teachers and pupils and scrutiny of planning. This evidence indicates that pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils mix subtle shades of brown and demonstrate good brush control to paint pictures of Saxon houses. Older pupils select appropriate papers and fabrics to make collages that evoke images of World War II such as the Blitz, air raid shelters and war memorials.

70. The evidence seen indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. In the good lesson

that was observed, still life paintings and drawings, from periods ranging from the early Dutch school to Van Gogh, led to a lively discussion of how the artists had achieved different effects. The teacher reminded the pupils that they had practised creating light and dark shades with pencils in the previous lesson and of the importance of looking closely at the objects they were about to draw. Pupils are given a choice of tools and materials whenever appropriate. A good range of pencils enhanced pupils' drawing in the lesson observed.

71. Pupils enjoy art and are able to talk about their work critically. Pupils discuss their work with each other during the lesson which enables them to improve and further develop their drawings. Some of the work on display is accompanied by written accounts of how they had selected ideas to use in their work.

72. Since the last inspection a significant number of good quality tools, materials, prints and books have been purchased. Art is now taught in one hour lessons, in blocked units which supports the development of skills over a half term period. Detailed planning ensures that pupils have experience of drawing, painting, printing, collage, clay and three dimensional work each year and that demands are progressive. Pupils are introduced to a range of art, craft and design from Western cultures but there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to investigate styles and traditions of art from the wider world. Effective links are made with other subjects, particularly history. Study of the Ancient Greeks, for example, inspired Year 4 pupils to make some realistic drawings of Greek pots. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to develop their creativity and to increase their knowledge and understanding of art, are underdeveloped. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced and there is an agreed plan to raise standards further. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and reports regularly to governors.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. During the inspection no teaching was observed but from the scrutiny of work and teachers' plans, pupils' standards are judged to be satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2. Over their time in the school the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils make increasingly complex models and undertake more demanding activities as they move through school and they appropriately build on previous experiences and skills.

74. The use of the design process is satisfactory and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils, of eight years old for example, design baskets to hold small items. They select a range of materials to construct the baskets and make appropriate suggestions to improve them. Older pupils build model houses as part of an activity on the Vikings. They design and construct timber frames to support the thatch roof and write evaluations of the success or otherwise of the roof structure. At age eleven, pupils research the origins of patchwork, they design patterns for their own patchwork, taking into account the need for the shapes to tessellate and their own ability to sew complex shapes together. They then draw up a detailed plan of action including the different fabrics and shapes required. Pupils throughout the school take part in food technology lessons and design and make and evaluate such items as pizzas, selecting and arranging the toppings in attractive ways and ensuring a good range of textures and flavours. The learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. The quality of the work seen, including artefacts and design and evaluation work, indicate that pupils have good attitudes, take care and try hard to produce work of at least a satisfactory standard.

75. The quality of teaching throughout the school is judged to be at least satisfactory. Teachers' plans take into account many aspects of designing and making and there is sufficient evidence that pupils are given appropriate opportunities to develop an increasingly wide range of skills in these aspects as they move through the school. Interviews with the staff indicate that the health and safety aspects of the subject are secure, for example, in food technology where hygiene and the correct handling of knives and other kitchen equipment is taught appropriately. Teachers' plans show that appropriate language is being taught including such vocabulary as tessellate and technology. Such awareness contributes well to pupils' literacy skills and understanding of the practical application of mathematics.

76. The subject fulfils statutory requirements. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and uses design and technology effectively in his own teaching. The resources for the subject, including food technology, are adequate. There is satisfactory storage of resources and they are used well. The new food technology room is a good asset and good use is made of a knowledgeable classroom assistant to teach small groups the design and preparation of food.

GEOGRAPHY

77. In addition to the observation of two lessons in Years 5 and 6 and discussions with pupils, a sufficient sample of pupils' work was seen during this inspection to assess standards in Key Stage 2. Above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils aged eleven continue to attain standards above the level expected for their age. Pupils continue to achieve well and to benefit from the good range of learning opportunities planned by their teachers. The expectation that pupils will work hard and be able to demonstrate good literacy, numeracy and map making skills, in presenting their work, ensures that they have a good grasp of the relevant knowledge, understanding and skills by the time they move on to the next stage of their education.

78. Pupils in Year 5 have a good understanding of the features that determine the geographical character of a region. They know that human activity can have an impact on the life of an area and that damage can occur to the landscape when large numbers of visitors visit a National Park. Pupils can use an atlas to locate Snowdonia and can draw a map of the region with reasonable accuracy. Higher attaining pupils show particularly well developed map making skills. Good attention is paid to the scale of the map and coloured shading is used appropriately to distinguish the differences in the height of the land. Of particular note is the capacity of all pupils to make notes whilst watching a video and to use these notes as the

main messages in the written presentation of their thoughts and observations. Good attention is also given to numeracy when pupils are asked to provide alternative descriptions for the number of visitors who come to Snowdonia each year.

79. Pupils in Year 6 can judge the success of efforts to control flood water and appreciate the need to conserve water supplies. Good use of numeracy skills in a Year 6 lesson improves pupils' understanding of the amount of water used each day in their homes. Scrutiny of previous work shows that they understand the reasons why the landscape will change through the forces of nature. Pupils can describe the process of erosion and can distinguish features of a river by reference to its source, mouth and sand banks. They can make reasoned arguments about the effectiveness of different forms of transport. They have a good understanding of scale and map references and can use secondary sources of evidence to make judgements about landscape, human activity and habitats. All pupils are expected to use geographical thinking in presenting their answers and ideas and this makes a significant contribution to ensuring that pupils achieve well and make good progress.

80. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they receive effective individual support and their work is planned to take account of their individual needs.

81. Teaching in the Year 5 lesson was very good. The teacher planned the lesson knowing that it was vital for her pupils to gain a secure understanding of the issues presented in the video. Because of this attention to detail the pupils will be well prepared to present and to justify their particular points of view in a later lesson. Very good questioning by the teacher constantly triggered pupils' ideas, observations and comments. The good subject knowledge of the teacher and her use of geographical language is a significant influence on the pupils' knowledge, understanding and achievement. Although well planned, the teaching of a Year 6 lesson is not successful in extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding of water conservation. Opportunities for using information and communications technology are missed and pupils are not prompted to consider the impact of world water shortage and how changes in the environment affect people's lives in underdeveloped countries.

82. A thorough review of the curriculum has been undertaken since the last inspection and has made a significant contribution to the good quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils and to the good standards and impressive achievements currently seen. The knowledgeable and hard working co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management for the subject. The time devoted to curriculum planning, and a clear understanding of where improvement and future development is required in the subject, continues to benefit both teachers and pupils. The school is aware of the need to develop increased opportunities to use information and communications technology. The development of links via the Internet with schools in Europe and the USA is a useful contribution to the provision for pupils' cultural development. There is very good monitoring of pupils' attainment and performance through the sampling and assessment of pupils' work. The school recognises the need for closer monitoring by the co-ordinator of teaching quality across the school and this is planned to start in November 2000. Improvements to resources have been made since the last inspection and these are now adequate in number and of good quality.

HISTORY

83. The standards achieved by pupils by the end of the key stage are above those expected nationally. The school has maintained the high standards seen in the previous inspection. The evidence from lessons seen, work on display, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their books shows that all groups of pupils make good progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding of life in the past.

84. In Year 3, pupils are learning about life in Ancient Egypt through the use of information books and replicas of various artefacts. They are aware of the different beliefs and practices of that time and are able to compare these to their own experiences. They use words such as 'hieroglyphics' and 'mummification' accurately and understand the characteristic features of the period. The Year 4 work on Ancient Greece is sensibly linked to the Olympic games occurring at this time so that pupils are able to compare differences and similarities between the ancient and modern events. Pupils show a good factual knowledge of the period describing myths and how people lived, as well as understanding how our own alphabet is based upon the Greek alphabet. They are able to explain how various types of evidence contribute to our understanding and to consider the relative value of this evidence, for example comparing writing of the time with peoples interpretations. No lessons were seen in Year 5 but displays of work and discussion show a good understanding of Viking times with good links to design and technology in work on models of Viking houses. In Year 6 work on the Tudors, pupils are able to describe the main events of the period and further their knowledge of how to interpret historical evidence by comparison with an inventory of their own belongings. Understanding of chronology is developed through the use of time lines. In previous work, good attention was paid to the differences between fact and opinion such as when pupils were asked to make judgements on Alfred the Great using sentences such as 'He defeated the Danes in a superb and glorious battle'.

85. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching seen which contributes to the standards achieved. Teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is actively communicated to the pupils. Lessons are well planned and prepared with a good balance maintained between conveying information and opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves. Teachers have a good knowledge of the periods being studied and each lesson has clearly identified learning intentions that are made plain to the pupils. Effective use is made of questions to assess and extend pupils' understanding. The high expectations of work and behaviour that teachers have are well met in practice.

86. As a result of this good teaching pupils enjoy history and have positive attitudes to the subject. They are encouraged to think critically about evidence and to concentrate on tasks, such as considering how an inventory of artefacts from Tudor times can provide evidence of how different groups of people lived. Their behaviour in lessons is very good and they produce a good amount of written work taking pride in the quality of presentation. Art, employing a range of media from oil pastels to collage, is well used to represent their knowledge such as the drawings seen of Greek pots.

87. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality and range of resources for history to a satisfactory level by purchasing information books and collecting artefacts, such as ration cards from World War II. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for history and has a secure knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There is a planned focus on improving the use of information technology to support classroom work. The school is adapting the scheme of work to ensure all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Effective use is made of the locality, such as visiting Victorian houses in Rushden, local museums and inviting members of historical societies into school. On one occasion a local historian and actor set up a medieval hut in a

classroom.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

88. The pupils currently in the top age group for the school are achieving standards that are in line with those expected for this age group.

89. Pupils aged eight, confidently retrieve previous work and amend text, using both the insert key and highlighting as methods. They discuss the relative merits of the two methods and give appropriate reasons for their preferences. Older pupils design title pages for geography folders using different fonts, point sizes and centre or right/left register. Eleven year old pupils confidently use the Internet to research historical details of life in Tudor times. They knowledgeably discuss the advantages of the wide sources of information on the Internet comparing these to the immediacy of reference books to hand on their table. Learning is good. Pupils are taught skills and given appropriate activities and tasks to enhance their understanding of the ways information and communication technology may be used to improve and develop the presentation of their work and for gathering data and information. Whilst pupils are becoming technically competent in these skills and procedures, their use of these to support their work in other areas of the curriculum, for example, translating data into graphs in science or mathematics is still limited. Older pupils however gain considerable practical experience by running the school bank in which all transactions are recorded on computer. Pupils with special educational needs learn well.

90. The quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and, on occasion, it is excellent. Teachers are being trained well in the use of information and communication technology and are confident and competent in their teaching of the subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has appointed a support technician who plays a significant role in the teaching of the subject to groups of pupils in the computer suite. This use of specialist support has a significant impact on the quality of learning experienced by the pupils as they move through the school. Pupils' attitudes are very good, they are interested in using information and communication technology and keen to learn new skills. They behave very well and are sensible. Such attitudes greatly aids pupils' learning of many aspects of information and communication technology that pupils of this age should have experience and use of.

91. The provision fulfils the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has considerably increased its resources since the last inspection. A computer suite has been installed and very good use is made of this. Whilst the suite is well organised, it is situated in the same room as the library and can only provide accommodation for half a class at a time. This leads to half a class being taught in their own classroom with just one computer whilst the rest are taught in the suite. Timetabling in this way is not the most efficient use of time. The head teacher has been the co-ordinator for the subject in recent years and has had considerable impact on the training and thus quality of teaching of the subject and on the resource provision. He now shares this role with another member of the staff, sensibly dividing the roles down the hardware/software lines. They both recognised the need to consolidate the gains made in teacher expertise and pupil experience and to make the maximum effective use of the skills and equipment and suite to support the work of pupils to access the full range of curriculum opportunities.

MUSIC

92. Only two music lessons were seen during the inspection. Singing was observed in assemblies, hymn practice and the lunchtime choir. On the basis of the evidence, standards achieved in music are in line with those expected of pupils the end of Key Stage 2. Younger pupils listen carefully and describe how musical elements are used to create different moods and effects. Older pupils use percussion instruments to improvise rhythmic phrases as part of a group and maintain their own part following a simple score. The quality of singing is satisfactory. The last inspection report considered that standards overall were above average. Recent national initiatives in literacy and numeracy have resulted in music having less time throughout the school and this has contributed to the lower standards in music.

93. The quality of teaching was good in both lessons observed. Skilful questioning helped pupils to describe the pitch, speed and rhythm of the music for each character in Peter and the Wolf and to plan appropriate movements for each character. The teacher established a purpose for listening carefully by explaining to the pupils that they would perform their own movements in their next dance lesson. Older pupils tried out their musical ideas in a supportive environment due to the very good relationship that the teacher had established with the class. At the end of the lesson she asked pupils to evaluate their success in maintaining the rhythm in a group composition and helped them to identify their need for further practice. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm for music. They use instruments sensibly and put them away with care.

94. Pupils' learning of music is supported by a variety of good quality percussion instruments. The curriculum is enhanced by specialist music teaching of the violin, clarinet and keyboard. The choir and recorder groups provide opportunities for pupils to perform in assemblies, at the Summer Fair and in school productions. The annual Music Award provides an opportunity for the whole school to enjoy music together. The experience of listening and responding to music such as The Swan by Saint Saens, Mars by Holst and Nimrod by Elgar makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to listen to music from non-Western cultures.

95. The new music co-ordinator has recently introduced a new scheme of work to ensure progression in knowledge, skills and understanding. In order to raise standards she has identified the need for staff development, particularly in composing and performing. The school joins with other schools to perform to a wider audience. The monitoring of teaching and learning in music is scheduled to start in the summer term.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. Overall pupils are attaining standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in swimming and dance are good and are better than those in games. It was not possible, during this inspection, to observe pupils' work in gymnastics. The achievement seen in a range of activities is broadly typical for pupils aged seven to eleven and there are examples of highly accomplished performances in dance in Year 6.

97. Pupils in Year 6 perform vivid and imaginative dances in groups. They use gesture and whole body movements very effectively. They appreciate and respond to changes in musical rhythm and there are glimpses of exceptionally skilled and innovative dramatic dance. Pupils make a good effort at explaining new technical vocabulary which, once understood, is applied very effectively to their group performances. Accomplished performance is the result of pupils having the confidence to improvise and adapt their work.

However, the same group of Year 6 pupils are not so successful in improving their ball handling skills and applying these skills to a small sided team game of tag rugby.

98. Pupils in Year 5 make excellent progress in developing their basketball skills. They can pass, dribble and receive the ball both in practice drills and in small sided team games. This group attains standards beyond those expected for their age. The skills of pupils in Year 4 are underdeveloped and they cannot consistently pass or control a football. On occasion errors in technique go unchecked, with the result that pupils find it difficult to apply the skills effectively in four-a-side team games. Skilful pupils use space well and can pass accurately, controlling the ball before they shoot.

99. Outstanding teaching in two of the lessons observed results in pupils' learning quickly, achieving impressive results and progressing quickly as they improve their performance in dance and their skills and teamwork in small sided team games. Excellent lesson organisation, the planning of progressive learning activities, the effective use of pupils to demonstrate the required skills and the time given for pupils to evaluate their work make a telling contribution to the pupils' achievement. These pupils also have excellent attitudes to the subject. They work hard and want to do well. They take pride in their performance and show good attention to detail. Poorer lesson planning leads to pupils spending too long on the main activity and endeavours to make too great a leap from the practising of skills on to their application in small sided team games. The result is that the ineffective skills and poor understanding of teamwork reinforce weaknesses in the pupils' skills and understanding and prevents them from rectifying errors.

100. The lack of outdoor and adventurous activities noted in the previous inspection remains a weakness in the range of learning activities offered to pupils. The school needs to consider the value of providing one hour games lessons for its younger pupils. There is the risk, as seen with pupils in Year 4, that unless carefully planned these lessons can drift with the result that pupils lose interest and forget the key learning objectives. The school recognises the need to develop further the pupils' standards in gymnastics and to ensure that staff are confident to teach this aspect of the subject. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Games are played according to the rules, decisions are accepted and good performances recognised and appreciated. A suitable range of extra-curricular sporting activities are provided. The school regularly participates in a wide range of competitive sporting fixtures with other local schools and achieves some success. The co-ordinator brings excellent specialist knowledge to his very effective management and leadership of the subject. He recognises the need to develop further the assessment of pupils' performance and that teachers need clear pointers as to what they should be assessing within their lessons to improve pupils' achievement. Arrangements for monitoring the teaching of physical education across the school are good, but at present no time is given for the co-ordinator to monitor and observe the quality of teaching at first hand. Resources are stored safely and are of good quality.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. During the inspection little teaching was observed, but from the scrutiny of work and teachers' plans and the one lesson seen, pupils' standards are in line with those expected for pupils by the end of Key Stage 2, in relation to the Agreed Syllabus of the Local Education Authority. Over their time in the school the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.

102. Pupils study an appropriate range of the major faiths of the world such as Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam as well as Christianity. They make visits to places of worship such as the local churches and a temple. Visitors contribute well to pupils understanding of the differences between the faiths and the different orders within those faiths. They write rules for their own lives and study the lives of famous people both ancient and modern and consider what messages the lives of people, such as St. Stephen or Mother Theresa, may have for them.

103. From observation of pupils in one lesson and in assemblies, attitudes and behaviour are judged to be very good. Pupils listen attentively to teachers and are mature, sensible and sensitive in discussion. They show respect for each others views and those of different religions. This allows for detailed and deep discussion, which has a significantly positive impact on pupils' learning and their personal development.

104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Scrutiny of teachers planning shows they have a secure knowledge of the themes under discussion. In the one lesson observed the teaching was good. In this lesson the teacher introduced the pupils to the communion service. She sensitively drew on the experiences of pupils who regularly attend church and they spoke with confidence to their class mates. The teacher then skilfully encouraged pupils to record their understanding of the service through writing an individual letter to someone who had never experienced such a service, setting out what happens in the service and what it means to believers. Teachers also used assemblies well to expand on the themes in the religious education syllabus. For example one teacher considered the temptation of Jesus in the desert and how he had struggled with his conscience and compared it to modern day stories and the pupils own experiences. Such thoughtful discussion and reflection made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Teachers use a range of ideas to make the themes being studied relevant to the pupils' lives. For example one teacher asked pupils to wear uniforms to school showing the different groups they belong to and how those groups carry certain responsibilities and then linked this to the responsibility which people undertake when they join a religious group.

105. There is a knowledgeable and well trained co-ordinator who is also co-ordinator for personal, social and health education who skilfully combines the elements of both subjects. This means that pupils gain a good understanding of the links between religious education and their own lives. The school has increased the range and quality of resources for religious education and through the work of the co-ordinator has raised staff confidence in the subject. Both of these aspects are improvements since the previous inspection.