

# INSPECTION REPORT

## CARRINGTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Flackwell Heath  
High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110274

Headteacher: Mrs E J Plaskitt

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner  
23160

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 245764

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	4 Chapel Road Flackwell Heath High Wycombe Bucks
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Carrington Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Cameron
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

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9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, art, history.	
15271	Brian Farley	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs, equal opportunities.	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, geography, music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2913	Sue Airey	Team inspector		Provision for pupils in the Social Communication Difficulties Department.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Carrington Junior School educates boys and girls aged from seven to 11 years. There are currently 240 pupils on roll, of whom 116 are boys and 124 girls. The school is of average size for a primary school. The school's roll has grown from 172 pupils in 1998, at which time it was a Middle School. Six pupils have English as an additional language (two and a half per cent), which is higher than most schools. These pupils all speak English fluently. Twenty-one of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is above average. Eight pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals (three per cent), which is below average. There are 42 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (18 per cent) which is broadly in line with the national average. Fourteen pupils have statements of special educational need (approximately six per cent), which is higher than in most schools. The designated Social Communication Difficulties Department (SCDD) provides places for six pupils, although it currently caters for nine of the pupils with statements. During the past year, two pupils joined the school and 11 left it at times other than those of the usual first admission or transfer. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year. Year 6 pupils attained average standards when they entered the school, whilst pupils in Year 3 started with above average standards. The school is oversubscribed and has a waiting list for places.

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

This is a good school with many very good features. The very good leadership and management by the headteacher, key staff and governors ensure a strong commitment to inclusion, self-evaluation and continuing improvement. In Year 6, pupils achieve above average standards and achieve well, because the quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes high expectations. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education and music.
- The very good leadership and management ensure that there is a very clear focus on how to move the school forward.
- The consistently good teaching throughout the school motivates pupils to do well and ensures that all receive suitably demanding work.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to work, their behaviour and personal development, and the very good relationships that exist throughout the school all have a very positive effect on the pupils' achievement.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the SCDD, and all pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development greatly enhances their learning and helps to ensure that the school's aims are fully met.

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

- Assessment procedures in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, which are not fully effective in showing how well pupils are achieving or the progress they are making.

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

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

Since it was last inspected in 1998, the school has made a good improvement. Standards have risen in information and communication technology, music and religious education as a result of increased expertise amongst staff, improved resources and very good leadership in those subjects. High standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science. There has been a very good improvement in the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, the implementation of the curriculum and the pupils' progress. Much of this is due to the increased effectiveness of subject co-ordinators, who now make a significant contribution to leadership and management. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, and the school has recently achieved Investors in People recognition and the Quality Mark. There are more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics, art and design and technology. The quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs is now good and target setting for all pupils has been introduced. Lessons are now planned well to meet the needs of pupils at differing levels of attainment within each class. Taking into account the very strong leadership and shared commitment amongst staff to

raising standards, the good teaching and the very effective support provided by the governing body, the school is very well placed for these improvements to continue.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	B	C	A	C	well above average      A above average            B average                      C below average              D well below average        E
mathematics	B	B	C	D	
science	B	C	B	C	

The table shows that in 2001, standards in mathematics were not as high as those in English and science. The reason for this is that fewer pupils reached Level 5 (above average) in mathematics than in English and science. The school identified this as a priority for improvement and has been successfully implementing strategies to raise standards in mathematics. The school met its target for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English in 2001, but did not meet its target in mathematics. Suitably challenging targets have been set for Year 6 to achieve in 2002 and the school is on target to reach these. Since the previous inspection in 1998, the rate of improvement has kept pace with the national trend in English and science, but has declined in mathematics compared with improvement nationally. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 6 attain above average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education and music. Standards are average in all other subjects, as are those in writing which is a focus for improvement throughout the school. A weaker aspect is the standard of presentation of pupils' work, which sometimes detracts from its overall quality. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in the SCDD achieve very well as a result of the very good provision for them, both within the department and when they are taught alongside other pupils in their year group.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and are fully involved in school life. They apply themselves purposefully to their work, have very good levels of concentration, and work equally well in pairs, in small groups or independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils follow the school rules and have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Behaviour at lunch and play times is very good and all pupils get on well together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school. Pupils understand very well the impact of their actions on others. They respond extremely well to opportunities to take responsibility around school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, because there is a strong emphasis on teaching both basic and more advanced literacy and numeracy skills. The quality of teaching and learning is also good in science, information and communication technology, religious education, geography and physical education. It is satisfactory in art, design and technology and history. The quality of teaching and learning in music is very good, as pupils benefit from the considerable expertise of a specialist teacher. The quality of teaching and learning in the SCDD is very good and enables those pupils to achieve very well. Strong features of the teaching include the very positive relationships between teachers and pupils, and the management of their behaviour, which creates a very positive atmosphere for learning. As a result, pupils are motivated to learn and approach lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They have very good levels of concentration and work very well independently. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and set challenging targets for them to achieve. They ask demanding questions, which extend pupils' thinking and encourage them to work things out for themselves. Work is planned carefully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils within each class. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning, especially pupils with special educational needs. The pace of learning is generally brisk, but a few lessons lose impetus when teachers spend too long talking to the pupils. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and some is more helpful than others in showing pupils what they have done well and how they might improve their work still further.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a wide range of good quality learning opportunities, which are well planned and meet all statutory requirements. There is very good provision for personal, social and health education, and a very good range of extracurricular activities, visitors and visits enriches the curriculum. The school's very good links with the local community and other schools further enhance its provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, both for pupils in mainstream classes and those in the SCDD. Provision is very well managed and pupils are given very clear learning targets, which are reviewed regularly. All pupils are included very well in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of the six pupils who have English as an additional language requires specialist language support. They all have sufficient command of English to participate fully in lessons across the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues and many opportunities to develop social awareness, both in lessons and extracurricular activities. The school makes good provision for developing pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage and their appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides very high levels of care for all pupils and takes great care to ensure their welfare, health and safety. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour which are reflected in the school's happy and well-ordered environment. Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics but are still developing in other subjects.

The school works very well in partnership with parents and this is reflected in the parents' positive views and their willingness to become involved in school life.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, key staff and governors provide the school with very clear direction for its continuing development. Teachers with subject responsibilities play an important role in determining priorities for future improvement. All staff work very well together as a team and share a common vision for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well and how it could improve further and they act as highly effective critical friends. Their systems, procedures and documentation are of outstanding quality and help to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of committees. The governors have a clear vision for the future of the school and demonstrate very high levels of commitment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This is a very self-critical school with a carefully planned programme of monitoring, which involves both staff and governors, and ensures that all subjects are evaluated in rotation. Curriculum assemblies serve as a highly effective means of monitoring pupils' work, the curriculum, and the quality of teaching and learning. The analysis of assessment data is very detailed and is used effectively to raise standards. There is rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very efficient use of all its resources to promote pupils' progress. Financial planning is linked very well to the priorities in the school improvement plan. Governors evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending very well and work hard to ensure that the school receives best value when purchasing goods and services. The school's administrative officer is very efficient and makes a significant contribution to its smooth running.

There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and the school's accommodation is also very good. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable when approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations of their children.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much/too little homework.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their child's progress.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection confirm the parents' positive views. The team considers that the school provides appropriate amounts of homework for pupils and that it is used well to reinforce learning. The school also provides parents with good information about their child's progress, in end of year reports and through opportunities for parents to meet teachers at the beginning of the school day and at consultation evenings.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the national tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2001, the school's results were well above the national average in English, at the level of the national average in mathematics and above average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results in English and science were average, whilst those in mathematics were below average. Since the previous inspection in 1998, the pupils' performance in national tests has kept pace with the national trend in English and science, but has declined in mathematics compared with improvement nationally. The reason for the relatively lower standards in mathematics is that fewer pupils reach Level 5 (above average) than in English and science. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement and has been implementing strategies to raise standards in mathematics. The school met its target for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English in 2001, but did not meet its target in mathematics. Suitably challenging targets have been set for Year 6 to achieve in 2002 and the school is on course to achieve them.
2. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy. Standards in writing are average, whilst those in reading and speaking and listening are above average. The school has identified writing as a priority for improvement. Standards in mathematics have improved because the school has focused closely on raising the attainment of more able pupils, with the result that the proportion of pupils who reach Level 5 has increased. Standards in English are not quite as high as in the 2001 national tests because this year group contains fewer high attaining pupils. Pupils also achieve above average standards in information and communication technology, religious education and music. In all other subjects, standards are similar to those found in most schools (average). Compared with the findings of the school's last inspection, standards are higher in information and communication technology, religious education and music. Standards have risen in music because the pupils are now being taught by a specialist teacher. In information and communication technology and religious education, very good leadership has ensured that the subjects have been developed well in response to the key issues identified by the last inspection. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, as have curricular planning and resources. Overall, pupils achieve well during their time in the school.
3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, which reported that the progress of these pupils was 'sound'. This is because the targets that are set for them to achieve are now more specific and the quality of their individual education plans has improved. Pupils who are gifted and talented are identified and are given suitably challenging work and opportunities to develop their talents further in many aspects of school life. As a result they progress well. Pupils with English as an additional language, all of whom are competent in speaking the language, make good progress and achieve well. This inspection found no significant variations in the standards achieved by boys and girls or in the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups when compared with those from other groups. Since 1997, the overall differences between the attainment of boys and girls in end of key stage tests have been considerably reduced. This is because of the way in which the school has made use of data analysis to identify and address the reasons for differences. Policies that seek to ensure equal opportunities for pupils in all aspects of school life are regularly monitored for their effectiveness.
4. The school has been designated to support pupils with social communication difficulties. Attainment for these pupils overall is appropriate to their abilities and they achieve very well in relation to their earlier assessments. These pupils make very good progress and derive great benefit both from individual support and group work, and in the class lessons which they take part in alongside the rest of their peers. All pupils in the SCDD have statements of special educational need and their learning and

language needs are identified on entry to the school. Clear progress targets are set on individual education plans and these are shared with pupils and teaching staff and reviewed and modified regularly. These pupils also make very good progress because of the school's strong commitment towards them.

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

5. In the last inspection, the pupils' positive attitudes to their work were a distinct strength of the school. This has been maintained as pupils' attitudes to their work remain very positive throughout the school and this has a very beneficial impact on teaching and learning. All pupils, including those in the SCDD, are very keen and fully involved. They apply themselves purposefully to their work, follow instructions carefully and settle to their work very quickly. They have very good levels of concentration, and they co-operate well in pairs and when working in small groups, as well as working hard independently. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively, try hard, and are keen to share ideas. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and are treated with respect by their peers.

6. Behaviour throughout the school is very good. All pupils follow the school rules and have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are polite and courteous to all adults and visitors to the school. They open doors for adults, form orderly queues and wait their turn. In lessons, they do not call out, but put up their hands when they wish to speak. Behaviour at lunch and play times is very good and all pupils get on well together. Pupils keep an eye on the 'Buddy Bench' to watch for any who may not have someone to play with. A games box is available on a rota basis and pupils make good use of the games supplied. At the time of the inspection the pupils were often engrossed in playing marbles.

7. No oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism were seen during the inspection. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, parents confirmed that the school deals well with rare incidents of bullying and that the school offers good support if their children have a problem. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school. The majority of pupils understand very well the impact of their action on others. Resources are handled very carefully and no graffiti or litter were seen during the inspection. Pupils care very well for the school environment.

8. Pupils are encouraged to take on additional responsibility around the school, and they respond extremely well to these opportunities. Year 6 pupils are prefects and they have areas of responsibility around the school; these range from looking after the environmental area to ringing the school bell for the beginning and end of lessons. In class, pupils act as monitors. In Year 3, pupils are encouraged to befriend and look after the Year 2 children who are moving up to the school. Younger pupils organise and run competitions for each other. This is so popular that there is currently a waiting list of pupils wishing to participate. Representatives from each class sit on a student committee, which discusses a range of issues raised by pupils in their classes.

9. Attendance was good at the time of the last inspection. This has improved and attendance is now very good, being well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at school and registration periods are very efficient with lessons beginning promptly and pupils settling down to work immediately with no fuss. The attendance of pupils in the SCDD is very good. This is supported by the vigilance of the teacher and teaching assistants in the department. Although these pupils have to travel long distances to school, all are eager to come and arrive punctually.

10. Pupils with social communication difficulties show interest and are able to sustain concentration as a result of well planned support. Their attitudes towards school and learning are very good and enable them to make very good progress in learning. They are also supported in their learning by a well managed and stable staff, which enables them to feel secure. Although they may find concentration difficult, through sensitive management by teachers and assistants, these pupils persevere and keep trying to overcome their difficulties. Pupils from the SCDD are also supported by

their peers, and at break times and lunchtimes, there are opportunities for all pupils to play alongside each other. Most other pupils understand their particular needs well. All pupils benefit from the school's positive approach to behaviour management, and the reward system of praise and recognising achievement is supportive of these pupils.

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

11. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The previous inspection found teaching to be "a strength of the school". This is still the case, although it is even stronger than it was four years ago. In that inspection, five per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory, and approximately 50 per cent was at least good. In this inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching, and more than 70 per cent was at least good. A quarter of the lessons seen were very good, which is the same as in the previous inspection. Overall, 56 lessons were observed; of these, 14 were very good, 26 were good and the remaining 16 were satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, geography and physical education. It is satisfactory in art, design and technology and history. The quality of teaching and learning in music is very good, as pupils benefit from the considerable expertise of a specialist teacher.

12. The major strength of the teaching is the way that teachers build relationships with the pupils and manage their behaviour. This creates a very positive atmosphere for learning, where pupils are motivated to learn and approach lessons with interest and enthusiasm. A very strong feature of the pupils' learning is their ability to concentrate on a given task and their willingness to work independently rather than constantly relying on the teacher for guidance. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and set challenging targets for them to achieve. They ask demanding questions, which extend pupils' thinking and encourage them to work things out for themselves. The previous inspection found that the same tasks were often set for the whole class and these were too difficult for lower attaining pupils while not providing sufficient challenge for high attainers. This has been addressed well and teachers now plan work more carefully to meet the needs of different groups of pupils within each class. In English and mathematics, pupils are sometimes taught in 'sets' formed on the basis of their previous attainment. This is particularly effective in meeting pupils' needs and can be seen to benefit pupils at all levels of attainment. Also, in the last inspection, the pace of learning was too slow in some lessons. This weakness has been eradicated in almost all lessons. The pace of learning is generally brisk, but a few lessons lose impetus when teachers spend too long talking to the pupils.

13. The previous inspection found that a contributory factor to ineffective teaching was the over-use of poor quality worksheets and commercial texts, especially in mathematics and religious education. There has been a good improvement here with the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy and the new scheme of work for religious education, neither of which relies heavily on worksheets or commercial texts, although both are used in moderation. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach have also improved, especially in information and communication technology and religious education, which were formerly identified as weaknesses.

14. A relatively weaker aspect of teaching is the quality of teachers' marking, which is variable. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, and teachers also give useful verbal feedback to pupils, some marking is more helpful than others in showing pupils what they have done well and how they might improve their work still further. In addition, teachers' expectations of the presentation of pupils' work vary between classes and are not always high enough.

15. The good features of teaching were illustrated in a Year 5 literacy lesson, where pupils were learning to identify how writing is used to inform and persuade the reader. The teacher made the purpose of the lesson clear to the pupils at the outset and began with an activity which helped pupils to distinguish slang words from more formal English. The well planned and structured lesson progressed at a good pace as pupils were asked to explain what they understood by the terms 'half-truths', 'bias' and 'ambiguity'. Through skilful questioning, the teacher encouraged pupils to look beyond the words

and identify possible hidden meanings in phrases such as "lively nightlife" in a holiday brochure or "Ideal for DIY enthusiast" in an estate agent's sales leaflet. The teacher used carefully chosen examples to stimulate pupils' interest and made effective use of an overhead projector to focus pupils' attention on specific phrases in a text. While this lesson was taking place, a small 'booster' group of pupils from the same year group was taught separately by another teacher, with a good focus on raising their attainment to the level expected for their age. They were covering the same topic at a level suited to their previous attainment and were given good explanations and examples to help increase their understanding.

16. The teaching of pupils with social communication difficulties is very good. Working as a team, the head of the department and teaching assistants plan together to ensure a calm and relaxed environment. The lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils at their own level, and also to enable social interaction and for pupils to develop skills for greater co-operation. An example of this was seen in a religious education lesson, where pupils were given the opportunity to try to understand different customs and symbols. All pupils took part in the first part of the lesson when the teacher was explaining some of the Hindu traditions and use of their important preparations for worship. She used a range of artefacts, which enabled pupils to see, smell and touch and to take part in the lesson at their own level of understanding. The activities that followed also meant that pupils could try to show what they had understood in their own way, either by writing responses, matching their answers or talking to the staff. Adults in the department are also very skilful in building up the length of time that pupils spend on a task and anticipating the pupils' reactions. They make good use of the opportunities to practise social interaction, eye contact and turn taking, keeping gestures direct and clear and simple. In a geography lesson, pupils were encouraged to contribute fully to the lesson and the teacher and assistants also understood the need to stand back at times and allow pupils to be independent learners which helps to aid progress. When pupils from the SCDD are integrated into mainstream classes, teachers are particularly sensitive to their needs.

17. Day to day assessment of the attainment of pupils in the SCDD is thorough, particularly in English mathematics and science. The teacher and assistants constantly review pupils' targets and also set short-term targets. Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to these assessments. When homework is set for these pupils it is appropriate and allows them to continue with their learning at home if possible.

18. The quality of teaching for other pupils with special educational needs is good and makes a valuable contribution to the good progress that they make. Teachers and assistants have copies of pupils' individual education plans and good use is made of these to provide appropriate levels of intervention. Where assistants are deployed, they provide a good level of support to pupils. They are unobtrusive, but are for the most part very successful at keeping pupils involved in learning. The calm and orderly atmosphere in lessons also contributes particularly well to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are sometimes withdrawn from lessons, on a rota basis, so that they benefit from close and intensive teaching.

19. Pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for specific support are not disadvantaged because the arrangements ensure that they do not regularly miss the same lessons or parts of lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when concern was expressed about withdrawal arrangements. The whole-school focus on good behaviour ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn. Lessons are planned with clear objectives that pupils understand and classes are organised carefully to avoid an imbalance of higher or lower attainers. The teaching of English and mathematics in 'sets' helps to ensure that both high and low attainers have work well matched to their capabilities. Specialist teachers, such as those for special educational needs, and support assistants are deployed well and contribute significantly to the pupils' attainment and progress.

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

20. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are good and promote the aims of the school well. The requirements of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education are fully met. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects and each receives an appropriate amount of teaching time. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection when a key issue was to "ensure the programme of study for information technology and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education are implemented in full". It also identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics, art and design and technology. The school has adopted national guidelines for planning in all subjects of the National Curriculum, including literacy and numeracy, and has adapted the planning appropriately to include problem solving and investigative activities. Team curricular planning in year groups ensures parity between different classes across the age group. The deputy head teacher has an overview of all the planning documents, with subject co-ordinators being responsible for the monitoring of planning in their own subject. The head teacher also sees the teachers' weekly plans to ensure that all subjects are being taught at an appropriate level for all pupils. A particularly innovative way of monitoring the curriculum is through the subject curriculum assemblies. Each class presents an element of their work in each subject over the year, which the co-ordinators monitor for parity and progression in pupils' learning across the year groups. Samples of the pupils' work from each class in all subjects are also collected in and monitored by the co-ordinators, who note the National Curriculum levels.

21. The school follows the format of the literacy hour in all years and this is having a beneficial effect on the development of pupils' skills, especially their reading skills. The school is considering strategies to increase the time allocated to pupils' writing. The school teaches the Additional Literacy Strategy as a support for pupils whose skills are below average in Years 3 and 4. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well, and this has now been effective in raising standards. Teachers plan work together and teach according to the strategy. However, most use professional judgement to decide an appropriate balance of direct teaching and of activities within the framework of each lesson.

22. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and there are many opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. The school is a safe and healthy place and the detailed policy and planning which takes place means that many themes are covered well through other subjects. In addition, specific lessons cover self awareness, citizenship, drugs awareness and health education, including sex education, as well as environmental issues. Outside agencies such as the community policeman, school nurse, fire officer and dog wardens come into school to discuss issues with the pupils.

23. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are of good quality and have clear and specific targets with appropriate teaching strategies identified to meet them. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, when targets were described as "not specific enough". The withdrawal of pupils for intensive teaching has also been improved because this is now organised so that they do not regularly miss the same subjects as was reported by the previous inspection. The school makes very good use of data and assessment. This helps to identify the particular needs of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who under-achieve and those who are gifted and talented. Pupils are well prepared to live in a diverse society.

24. Care is taken to ensure that pupils in the SCDD receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum and, in addition, appropriate speech and language therapy and social communication training. Pupils take part in a highly structured programme in English, mathematics and science with an emphasis on literacy and communication. The class teacher and assistant plan work together using whole school curricular plans to ensure appropriate coverage of the subjects within the department. Work is planned with class teachers to ensure that the curricular provision is appropriately broad and balanced. Pupils who are able also integrate into appropriate classes for subjects such as numeracy

and physical education and parallel work is provided for other pupils to undertake in the department. All of these pupils have access to extra curricular activities and school visits. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum.

25. The additional activities undertaken by the school are wide and varied and add an extra dimension to the planned curriculum. These include visits to Hampton Court, Ivinghoe Environmental Centre, the Science Museum, the British Museum and a Hindu Temple at Neasden to supplement classroom work in several curriculum areas. Visitors have provided workshops for the pupils about the Tudors and the Victorians and have brought a portable planetarium into the school for the pupils to explore. In addition, a whole school percussion workshop and a music concert introduced pupils to the delights of an orchestra as well as individual instruments.

26. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are able to participate in clubs during the lunch time and after school, where they can learn to play the recorder, have the opportunity to play in the orchestra and band, play football, netball and lacrosse, take part in athletics and learn how to juggle. In addition, there is a Christian Union club held for pupils during the lunchtime. Pupils take part in various sporting activities with other schools, where they are often successful. Matches played in football and lacrosse show excellent results, with the lacrosse team becoming champions in the Southern Region tournament. Pupils in Year 6 also won the recent Wye Valley District Athletics Area championships.

27. The school continues to maintain very good links with the local community, which make a very positive contribution to pupils' experiences and learning. Governors are actively involved through the Pupils, Parents and Community Committee and the school has very close links with local businesses through the Education Business Partnership. Some have donated science equipment and office equipment to the school and staff have attended training workshops. In addition, there are close links with the local church, and the Vicar comes into school regularly to take assembly. At Christmas, pupils visit the Silver Circle and serve tea and mince pies to residents and play and sing to them. The school collects foil from the village to raise funds for guide dogs; last year they collected enough foil to fund a guide dog, and the dog and its handler were invited to the school to meet the children.

28. Links with both the infant school and the local secondary schools remain very good. The Year 3 teachers attend assembly in the infant school, meet the children and observe them working. In addition, the pupils are invited to the junior school to see any productions that take place, and they attend 'transition days' when they are allocated a 'buddy' to take them round and look after them. The school is very involved with the Wye Valley Liaison Group and one of the participating schools, which specialises in physical education, runs a football club for the pupils. The school participates in Wye Valley Sports events. There are very good links with other local secondary schools. A local Grammar School holds weekend workshops in science and design and technology, and Year 6 pupils are invited to participate in mathematics extension classes. Students are allocated to the school for work experience. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils spent a day visiting their new schools.

29. Overall, the school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils. This is an improvement since the school's last inspection when the provision was judged to be good. The provision for the moral and social elements is very good and, for spiritual and cultural development, it is good. The aims and values of the school are evident throughout the life of the school and permeate all its activities. Relationships between pupils and all adults are very good. Adults in the school provide very good role models for pupils whom they treat with courtesy and respect. There is strong emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for pupils in the SCDD. Care is taken to ensure that pupils can participate in assemblies and are given opportunities to reflect on their work and the work of others. Pupils are also taught to develop their independence and social skills and are allowed to make choices about the use of their time during breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils from the SCDD also play an active part in all school activities that are intended to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. There is genuine care and concern for these pupils and

they also help each other in and around school. The school is an inclusive school and places great emphasis upon equality of opportunity for all.

30. Pupils' spiritual development is very well fostered through the teaching of religious education. The study of a number of faiths, including Christianity, in religious education gives numerous opportunities to develop spiritual awareness and the school uses these well. Pupils are encouraged to discuss the attitudes and values promoted by these faiths and to consider important questions and concepts in order to make their own personal responses. The planned programme for collective worship introduces pupils to the idea of thoughtful reflection and, in general, makes a satisfactory contribution to developing their spiritual awareness. Visits to the local church and a Hindu temple, together with input to assemblies from the local clergy, support the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well through the curriculum and this is particularly evident in their personal, social and health education lessons and through literature, music and geography, for example, in their personal, social and health education lessons and in geography many opportunities are provided for the pupils to discuss and consider both local and worldwide issues. Pupils experience the pleasure of making music to a high standard and participating in a variety of school productions, ranging from Christmas performances to this year's summer production of *Joseph*.

31. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The values that permeate the school's ethos make a major contribution and form the basis for the very good relationships in the school. Pastoral care is considered to be of key importance to all. There are clear expectations of high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct is effectively promoted through the school's simple set of rules. Class rules, on display, reinforce the moral and social teaching promoted by the school. The school has a very positive approach to the management of behaviour. Rewards such as house points and the celebration of pupils' achievements in the weekly achievement assembly, accompanied by the headteacher's praise, are successful in building pupils' self-esteem and respect for others. Opportunities arising from discussions in religious education and in their personal, social and health education lessons, such as how to share and value themselves and others and how to improve their own environment, are used effectively to develop the pupils' confidence and personal awareness.

32. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. It creates a strong sense of identity as a very caring community in which everyone is respected and valued. The pupils are encouraged to relate positively to one another. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to work collaboratively in class, in pairs and groups. They are given opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, such as carrying out research for and compiling their own project work in geography. Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities in and around the school, which, by Year 6, involves all pupils in becoming either prefects or monitors. House captains are democratically elected at the beginning of the year, as are the representatives who sit on the school's student committee, where they discuss a wide variety of issues. Social development is strongly encouraged through involvement with the community. The school band provides musical performances for the 'Silver Circle' and for the Infant School. The school also takes part in a local music festival. Pupils raise money for several charities, such as Jeans for Genes, Guide Dogs for the Blind and St. Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital Trust. Social development is promoted well by pupils' participation in a very wide range of extra-curricular and sporting activities, such as football, lacrosse, athletics and table tennis. Several sports teams represent the school in competitions and achieve a high degree of success.

33. The good cultural provision for pupils includes a very strong emphasis on music of different traditions, such as the Blues, African music and music from India. Cultural influences are evident within a number of subjects such as geography, where life in India is explored, and history, in the study of Ancient Greece and Tudor life. An appreciation of the richness of other cultural traditions is nurtured through the study of other religions. The school has made improved provision in this aspect since the last inspection and now develops the work of non-European cultures sufficiently well to

promote pupils' understanding of various cultural traditions. For example, in religious education, pupils have studied the cultural traditions surrounding Hindu festivals and Jewish celebrations and have been introduced to Islam and Buddhism. An appreciation of the work of well known leaders such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and Ellen MacArthur is nurtured through their religious education studies, when pupils are given the opportunity to examine their leadership qualities. In physical education, the multi-cultural context of British society is recognised through black African athletes such as Ben Challenger and Julian Golley coming into the school and providing training for pupils in the high jump and triple jump. A skipping workshop provided by an Indian gentleman inspired many boys to learn how to skip. The school makes the best use of events in the news to promote pupils' awareness of different cultures. For example, during the recent World Cup Football tournament, pupils in Year 3 researched and developed an insight into how people live in the many countries that were represented. This makes a good contribution to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

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

34. The last inspection found that the positive relationships that existed throughout the whole school community and the effective communication between all staff about pupils' individual needs resulted in support and guidance for pupils, which were of a high quality. The school continues to provide very good care for its pupils. The environment is very safe and all staff care for pupils very well. The information that is kept on pupils is detailed and all staff are kept informed of pupils with specific medical or personal needs. This means that they are able to provide good support for pupils, which was confirmed by parents who felt the school offered good support if pupils had problems and that pupils feel listened to and valued.

35. The school takes health and safety issues very seriously and so it identifies and deals with any problems very quickly and effectively. The caretaker and the staff health and safety representative carry out regular inspections, and any problems are identified and reported to the health and safety committee of the governing body. Regular checks are made of grounds, buildings and equipment. There are very good arrangements for the provision of first aid, with all staff in the school having completed a first aid course. There is a designated medical room and appropriate records are kept when pupils are unwell or hurt themselves.

36. There are very good procedures in place for the protection of children. The headteacher is the nominated person responsible for child protection procedures and all staff are kept up to date with procedures through regular discussion and understand the need to inform the headteacher immediately if they have any concerns.

37. The school is good at monitoring pupils' attendance, which is well above the national average, and there are no unauthorised absences to date. Attendance registers are checked regularly and absences followed up. The education welfare service supports the school well in this area.

38. There are very good arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. All staff consistently apply rewards and sanctions, and house points are awarded for good behaviour. Staff monitor any poor behaviour closely and inform parents if appropriate. The school is very good at monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Parents confirm that pupils feel safe in the school and that the very rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with very quickly and effectively.

39. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils' needs and the school's provision for personal, social and health education contribute well. Parents confirm that the school offers good support if their children have a problem and that the school gives very good personal care and attention. For pupils who are underachieving, there is more formal monitoring which may lead to additional support. Special achievements are recognised; teachers and parents nominate pupils and their names are recorded in a special achievement book and read out in special assemblies



40. The school has sound procedures to identify those pupils who have special educational needs, particularly in the early stages. The co-ordinator and a learning support teacher monitor pupils' individual education plans each term to ensure that appropriate progress is made. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when it was reported that there was 'insufficient monitoring of pupils' progress'. Governors have information that enables them to check the success of special educational needs provision across the school. Good use is made of a wide range of services and agencies to help meet the needs of pupils. Their individual education plans are reviewed each term and, where there are statements of special educational need, these are reviewed annually.

41. The school places a strong emphasis on providing effective pastoral care for pupils in the SCDD. The teachers and assistants are sensitive to the needs of pupils and have high expectations of and for them. Procedures for assessing and monitoring their progress and personal development are very good and there is high quality personal support from all staff. The school has well established links with outside agencies to ensure that these pupils receive any additional support required. There are good arrangements for diagnosing and assessing the needs of pupils, which are as required by the requirements of the revised Code of Practice. The requirements of statements of special educational needs are implemented well and annual reviews fully meet statutory requirements. The department also has good working links with the infant school and with the local secondary schools to ensure that there are smooth transitions for pupils when they enter and leave the department.

42. In the school's previous inspection, the school's approaches to assessment were considered to have strengths and weaknesses but were satisfactory overall. Although there have been good improvements in the range and use of assessment procedures to monitor and support pupils' progress, there remain weaknesses in the systems for assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics. The school has an appropriate range of policies relating to assessment, which are closely linked to policies for the curriculum. This provides a good level of coherence to the school's approach and philosophy. On entry to the school, pupils are assessed in mathematics, reading and writing, using both the results from the national tests for seven year olds and the school's own assessment, in order to make predictions for the year to come. Tests take place at the end of every year and pupils' individual progress is carefully monitored. The results of tests are used to set targets for the following year. Careful analysis of the results of these tests has enabled the school to identify issues for improvement, such as pupils' skills in mental mathematics and writing, with a particular focus on boys' writing. These priorities are reflected in whole school planning and review. Individual targets are identified in these areas for all pupils. However, the use and review of these targets are not consistent in all classes.

43. The school also uses the analysis of test results to identify pupils who are underachieving. There is a useful system of monitoring strategies to help pupils improve and to assess their effectiveness. To assist staff in monitoring individual pupils' progress, all relevant information, such as test results and record sheets, is passed to the next teacher. Co-ordinators maintain useful portfolios of pupils' work which indicate a range of work and expectations, but the use of National Curriculum levels is variable and this limits their value to support teachers in their assessments. There are good detailed assessment procedures in place for information and communication technology and music but these do not involve National Curriculum levels. In subjects such as geography, history and art, systems of assessment are still being developed. The school is aware of the need to develop a more coherent system for all subjects, which enables teachers and pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses to support the next stages of pupils' learning. The school has identified a two-year development plan to include assessment in all subjects of the curriculum.

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

44. Parents have a positive view of the school, which they had at the time of the last inspection. The school works very well with parents, and they are made to feel welcome in the school. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, parents confirmed that they receive good feedback from teachers who

are approachable and amenable and they feel that the headteacher is very helpful and well respected by both parents and pupils. Parents feel that the school works well in partnership with them.

45. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good, a view supported by parents at the meeting. Parents support the school very well and contribute very well to their children's learning at home. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a significant minority said that they were unhappy with homework, but this was not reflected in the views expressed at the parents' meeting, or the findings of the inspection, which show that homework is used effectively to reinforce learning. The parents' association, which is run jointly with the infant school, raises significant funds for the school each year. It is currently raising money to fund the provision of moveable staging for the school hall. Parents also provide more general support for the school, such as sorting out drinks for sports days and providing commemorative medals for the children on the Queen's Jubilee. A good number support the school by helping out in the classroom on a regular basis, as well as on school trips and by running school clubs. Parents also run the school library. One parent comes into school regularly to teach music at lunchtimes. Parents are encouraged to play a full and active part in the life of the school and they respond well to this.

46. The information provided for parents by the school is good. They receive information about what their children will be learning each term as well as newsletters and other more general information. Parents have been invited to an evening on numeracy. Documentation for parents is informative and meets statutory requirements. An information pack is sent to prospective parents. Induction procedures for new children are very good. Induction meetings are held, parents are invited into the school and the headteacher discusses procedures and rules and answers any questions. Year 6 pupils show families round the school and also answer any questions.

47. A significant minority of parents in their questionnaire responses felt that they were not well informed about their children's progress. The inspection's findings are that, overall, parents are well informed. Pupils' end of year reports provide parents with information on what their children have achieved and include information on how they can improve. There are informal opportunities for parents to meet staff at the beginning of the school day in addition to the formal consultation evenings, which are held in October and February. The headteacher and staff are always available to discuss any problems and parents confirmed that their concerns are dealt with promptly and fairly.

48. Although parents of pupils in the SCDD come from outside the immediate area they are kept well informed about progress. The home-school contact book is used for daily messages and there are regular meetings and telephone contacts with parents to discuss the very special educational needs and targets for these pupils. Parents are invited to the annual review and information regarding pupils' individual education plans is sent home regularly. The school has a termly meeting with parents, which also provides opportunities for them to meet with each other. Parents are very supportive of the work of the department.

49. A strength of the provision for all pupils with special educational needs is that parents are fully involved. They are invited to discuss the targets in their children's individual education plans or statements and their contributions in discussion are particularly valued by the school.

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

50. The school's leadership and management are very good. This is essentially the same judgement as that made by the previous inspection, which described the headteacher's leadership as "very strong". Other staff with management responsibilities support the headteacher very well. This creates a very strong team spirit amongst the staff, which is reflected in all aspects of school life. There is a firm commitment to self-evaluation and continuing improvement, which is shared by all staff and governors. The school's aims and values are very clearly reflected in its work. The headteacher and governors have successfully managed the transition from Middle School to Junior School and the almost complete turnover of teachers since the previous inspection. As a result of their very good

leadership, the school has made a good improvement over the past four years and has been successful in addressing the issues raised by the previous inspection. The school has also achieved the Quality Mark and Investors in People recognition during that same period. The shared commitment to continuing improvement and the school's capacity to succeed are very good.

51. The headteacher leads by example in all aspects of school life, values staff and governors and the contribution they make, and shows care and concern for every member of the school family. Respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents, she has a clear vision for the future of the school and has built a strong management team to drive the school forward. All members of the management team share the headteacher's vision and play an important role in monitoring and evaluating the school's progress. Since the previous inspection, the role of subject co-ordinators has developed very well. Previously, there was insufficient monitoring of the standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects. This is now generally very effective and leads to the identification of priorities for improvement and strategies to implement them. A few co-ordinators, who are relatively new to the post, are developing this role well. There is a carefully planned programme of monitoring, which involves both staff and governors, and ensures that all subjects are evaluated in rotation.

52. An excellent initiative has been the introduction of curriculum assemblies, which serve as a highly effective means of monitoring pupils' work, the curriculum, and the quality of teaching and learning. Each subject is highlighted in turn, and pupils from each year group make a presentation to the rest of the school to show what they have learned from the most recent topic covered. The co-ordinator for the subject observes, listens, notes key points from the presentation, and afterwards examines samples of the pupils' work. Governors also attend these assemblies and find them very useful tools for their own monitoring of curricular provision. They compare what the pupils show with the curricular planning for each year group to check that the planned curriculum is being taught.

53. Senior staff and governors are also involved in analysing performance data and using their findings to set targets, identify priorities for improvement and formulate the school development plan. The school development plan focuses well on what the school needs to do to move forward and is regularly reviewed and evaluated. Co-ordinators contribute to the plan by setting out priorities and how they will be addressed in their own subjects. Performance management procedures are linked closely to the process of school development planning. For example, teachers' personal and professional objectives relate to whole school priorities. Governors negotiate challenging targets for the headteacher and review these throughout the year. There is a coherence about the school's management procedures that ensures all are working towards the same goals and that all initiatives are carefully planned within the agreed framework.

54. The governors make a very good contribution to the school's leadership and management. They play a significant role in shaping the direction of the school and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. Governors have a very good understanding of what the school does well and how it could improve further and they act as highly effective critical friends. Their systems, procedures and documentation are of outstanding quality and help to ensure the smooth and efficient operation of committees. Governors are kept fully informed of all events and developments through the excellent reports provided by the headteacher to each committee. The governors have a clear vision for the future of the school and demonstrate very high levels of commitment. They consult parents annually through a questionnaire and respond to any concerns, and they also take pupils' views into account, as when they recently involved pupils and parents in a project to improve safety outside the school.

55. The quality of the management of the SCDD is very good. The policies and other documentation are detailed, the budget is well managed and staff employed to support these pupils are given clear direction. The record keeping and management are effective and informative both for teaching staff and assistants. The procedures for target setting and distributing key information about

the pupils are also very good and statutory provision identified in statements is correctly managed. The head of department, supported by the headteacher and governors, has high expectations for these pupils and knows them and their needs very well. The support and provision are also monitored well in order to evaluate their effectiveness. Also, through the enthusiasm of the head of the department and the teaching assistants, staff and governors are informed about developments for pupils with social communication difficulties, which also helps to steer the whole school in its drive towards inclusive practice. The head of department and teaching assistants take part in appropriate training and their personal commitment and involvement are of great benefit to the pupils. School staff are also supported and receive training and advice in the use of specialist techniques especially for pupils with social communication difficulties. There is a real sense of teamwork in the department and pupils come first.

56. The school has a very clear commitment to all aspects of inclusion and major issues for development feature clearly in the school development plan. There is a strong focus on raising achievement by removing barriers to learning, increasing the self-esteem of pupils and greater community involvement. The school has a co-ordinator for inclusion and good use is made of data analysis to check that no pupils or groups of pupils have unequal access or opportunities to all that the school offers. Appropriate use is made of assessment data to set suitable learning targets for pupils. School staff and governors regularly monitor the outcome of the various policies and, therefore, have a clear understanding of what needs to be developed or improved. The school complies with all relevant legislation for inclusion.

57. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership and has been responsible for many aspects of its development and improvement. A new policy has been produced, but there are some omissions of which the co-ordinator is aware. Good progress has been made in the implementation of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. The school provides very comprehensive and detailed information for its governors so they have clear understanding of the effectiveness of provision and the use of resources. Teachers and assistants have received good training in the identification and support of pupils with special educational needs. A learning support teacher visits the school regularly to advise and help monitor procedures. There is limited use of information and communication technology in the administration of special educational needs.

58. The financial management of the school is very good. The headteacher, bursar and governors ensure that expenditure is carefully linked to the school improvement plan and take good care to ensure that the school receives best value for money. The bursar has very efficient systems for monitoring expenditure and ensures that the headteacher and governors are kept well informed about the budget each month. At the end of the previous financial year, the school carried forward reserves amounting to approximately ten per cent of its total budget. This money was allocated for building work which was not completed before the end of the financial year and had to be carried forward. The school's projected reserves are much lower for the current financial year at around two per cent of budget. Governors are giving due consideration to alternative strategies for managing a projected fall in the roll in the next financial year and its potential impact on funding levels. Overall, the school's administrative procedures are very good and contribute significantly to its smooth running.

59. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is very good. Teachers and assistants work very well together as a strong team. Subject co-ordinators are well suited to their roles, and all staff receive regular training, both in their specialist subjects and in whole school issues. The school employs additional part-time teachers to allow for smaller teaching groups in some lessons in English and mathematics and also to provide teachers with sufficient time to carry out their management roles. A specialist music teacher is employed to teach all classes, and this greatly enhances the pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are also well trained and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Specialist staff in the SCDD offer very high levels of care and expertise which enable these pupils to achieve very well. There are good arrangements for the

appraisal of all staff and very good support for newly qualified teachers, supply teachers and students on teaching practice. The school's strong commitment to the professional development of all staff is reflected in its recognition as an Investor in People.

60. The school's accommodation is also very good. Classrooms are light and airy and provide a pleasant environment for learning. The spacious library provides a central focal point for the school, and is well laid out and welcoming to pupils. The school also benefits from a large activities room, a hall with a stage, a music room and a room for design and technology, including food technology. The recently installed computer suite is having a significant impact on the school's provision for information and communication technology and is helping teachers to raise standards in the subject. The pupils benefit from ample playground space, some of which has colourful games markings, and a large field for sport. The swimming pool is used well when the weather permits. The school also has exclusive access to the village library, which shares the same site, on some days. This greatly enhances pupils' research skills and also offers further opportunities for using the Internet.

61. The school is well resourced. Books and equipment to support teaching and learning are good in science, information and communication technology, religious education, music and physical education. They are at least satisfactory in all other subjects. There is a good range of resources to support pupils with special educational needs. Resources are very good in the SCDD. The library is well stocked and is used effectively to support learning.

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

62. In order to improve the school's provision still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**1. Improve assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics to the same standard of effectiveness by:**

- ensuring consistency of approach between teachers;
- relating assessments to the criteria and levels of attainment in the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education;
- developing a consistent approach to marking pupils' work which both recognises achievements and shows pupils how to improve.

(Paragraphs 14, 43, 72, 79, 87, 91, 94, 101, 105, 121)

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

1. Raise the standards expected of pupils in some classes in the presentation of their work to a consistently high standard.

(Paragraphs 67, 79, 93)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

56
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32
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### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	26	16	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	46	29	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

240

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

8

#### **Special educational needs**

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

14

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

42

#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

6

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

2

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

11

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.6

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

		Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year		2001	22	38	60
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	16	20	
	Girls	34	27	37	
	Total	53	43	57	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (73)	72 (76)	95 (84)	
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	17
	Girls	31	28	31
	Total	44	43	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (72)	72 (76)	80 (80)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	219
Any other minority ethnic group	13

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

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

**Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	30

**Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	583397
Total expenditure	549354
Expenditure per pupil	2259
Balance brought forward from previous year	33727
Balance carried forward to next year	61390

**Recruitment of teachers**

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

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	73

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	53	1	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	53	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	65	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	55	15	10	1
The teaching is good.	49	48	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	48	16	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	32	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	47	0	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	58	12	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	47	0	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	61	1	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	45	12	4	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

63. Overall, standards in Year 6 are higher than those usually seen (above average). However, standards in writing are average. Similar standards were observed in the school's previous inspection. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed during the inspection. Pupils in Year 6 entered the school with broadly average attainment in English. Pupils achieve well in the school to reach above average standards in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are involved well in all classroom activities and have work that is matched to their needs. They are given good support by teachers and assistants and, as a result, make confident contributions to classroom discussions and reach standards that are good in relation to their starting point. Pupils in the SCDD achieve very well. This is the result of pupils' very effective involvement in classes with their peers, and the very good support they receive from teachers and assistants in the department.

64. Standards in speaking and listening are above average throughout the school. This was also the case in the school's previous inspection, when it was regarded as a strength of the school. Pupils take part confidently in whole class discussions and in question and answer sessions. They speak and read aloud clearly and audibly and are interested in being involved and in offering their opinions and ideas. They use an appropriate range of vocabulary confidently, and sometimes precisely, and most speak with a good level of accuracy. Pupils listen well throughout the school. They pay good attention in class and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's contributions. Pupils take part in assemblies, willingly offering ideas and reading their work aloud fluently and often with a good regard for punctuation and expression. The previous inspection identified the need for more opportunities to engage in open class discussions. Some good opportunities were seen during this inspection in subjects across the curriculum and in some year groups' planning. However the lack of a whole school curriculum plan for speaking and listening places some limitations on the further development of pupils' skills in this area.

65. In reading, standards are above average. Pupils read their texts in class with a good level of comprehension and confidence. Most pupils are confident, accurate readers and many read fluently and with good regard for meaning when they read aloud. Most are able to give brief summaries of what they have read and some discuss their reading in detail. Above average and average pupils are able to talk about authors they enjoy reading and give reasons why they enjoy their books and why they appeal to people of their age. Many of these pupils consider relationships between characters and issues in books at a more complex level. Some below average pupils read more hesitantly and the depth and range of their discussion and reading are more limited. Most pupils have a secure grasp of strategies to help them in their reading. The school agrees that this is the result of the good support below average pupils receive from additional support programmes and teachers and assistants in the school. There are some useful opportunities for pupils to develop research and referencing skills across the curriculum, and pupils benefit from their own well organised library and from the use of the adjacent community library. As a result, most pupils understand how to use library systems appropriately.

66. Standards in writing are average in Year 6. The school has identified the development of pupils' skills in writing as a priority and believes that the introduction of booster classes for those pupils whose standards are just below average and extension classes for the more able are having a positive effect. Pupils write for a good range of purposes, which include narratives, writing from different points of view, such as characters in their reading, writing about their reading in the form of book 'blurbs' and summaries of books such as *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*. They write persuasively

when they write about conservation issues and develop an argumentative style when they write about topics such as 'Should we have mobile phones in school?' They write playscripts and modern versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and traditional tales such as *Little Red Riding Hood*. There are some good opportunities for pupils to write collaboratively and at length in their class books. These books show that they are able to sustain an exciting narrative over a series of chapters and provide an interesting format for a story with multiple options within the plot. Although there are limited examples of pupils' ability to write sensitively and imaginatively, individual pupils sometimes feel sufficiently confident to embark on their own poems. One pupil wrote in a poem entitled *Poppy*, using imaginative ideas and expressions well, 'Do not fear for what I am, I am a spirit of your past, or their lost souls.'

67. Above average pupils are confident, fluent writers who use an effective range of language and expression, including a growing ability to use more formal language. They use a good range of complex sentence structures and have a consistent level of accuracy in both spelling and punctuation. They use paragraphs and punctuation for direct speech appropriately and consistently. Average pupils often take a lively approach to their writing and their choice of vocabulary and punctuation. However, the accuracy of spelling, punctuation and the use of paragraphs are more variable. The writing of below average pupils is generally coherent and organised into simple sentence structures. Whilst they communicate meaning clearly, the levels of accuracy are variable with some significant weaknesses in spelling. They are aware of paragraphs but do not use them accurately or consistently. Presentation across the school is satisfactory. Most pupils use a joined style of handwriting, and the majority write neatly and present their work carefully. However, expectations for standards of presentation are inconsistent between classes and good levels of neatness are not always maintained.

68. Standards of literacy across the school are above average. The development of literacy across the school is good. In history, there are good opportunities for younger pupils to develop their writing skills when they write letters as Roman soldiers in Britain and as monks experiencing a Viking invasion. Older pupils develop their description of feelings and responses when they imagine a day in the life of a poor or rich child in Victorian Britain, or when they write about a day in the life of Henry VIII. In geography, there are good opportunities for pupils in Year 4 to develop their investigative and information retrieval skills when they write in their projects about India and in Year 6 in project work about the River Thames. In Year 6, pupils write a story illustrating environmental issues and, in a well organised formal debate on Milford Creek, they develop their awareness of constructing and developing an argument. In religious education, pupils are given good opportunities to explore feelings and responses and to develop their understanding and expression of these in their written work. Older pupils use information and communication technology well to develop their projects on Islam. In science, pupils annotate and label diagrams and charts appropriately.

69. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good, as at the time of the previous inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and some very good teaching was also observed. Good, and sometimes very good, relationships in the classroom enable pupils to develop their confidence well and pupils of all abilities are included and involved in lesson activities. Most lessons are carefully planned, with good regard for the elements of the literacy strategy, and activities are appropriately matched to pupils' ability levels. In the best teaching, there is a brisk purposeful pace and pupils quickly understand what they are going to be doing and how the lesson links to their earlier work. This ensures that pupils' attention and concentration are well focused on the lesson activities and that they apply themselves purposefully to their work.

70. A very good lesson in Year 4 illustrated the strengths of teaching and learning. The teacher had planned an effective link with pupils' work in history on the Viking invaders. Pupils had studied the construction of a Viking longboat in some detail and the teacher now introduced them to the idea of using persuasive language to advertise a new model. As a result of the work they had already done in history, pupils could embark on the task with a similar level of background knowledge and a good level of existing interest. The teacher used questions very effectively to plan the advertisement with the

pupils, emphasising the use of 'powerful' language. Pupils were encouraged to think about the effects of using devices such as alliteration and to remember who was their target audience. There was very good involvement throughout the lesson because pupils were stimulated and interested and because the teacher had high expectations of the standard of their work and their attention to it. By the end of the lesson, pupils had produced a first draft of the description of their longboat using phrases such as 'super slasher' and 'silent slayer'. They developed very effectively their understanding of how persuasive language is used in advertising.

71. Where teaching is weaker, the pace of the lesson occasionally slows down as a result of some repetition and overlong explanations. This in turn restricts the amount of time pupils have to spend on their own tasks. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson, where the teacher was very effectively encouraging pupils to develop their skills in reading aloud together. As too much time was spent on this activity, other parts of the lesson were rushed and were not as productive as they might otherwise have been. In some lessons, the text chosen, while interesting and stimulating, did not always challenge the most able pupils in the class. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson where the poem chosen was comfortably within the grasp of the more able pupils in the class and did not require them to extend the depth or detail of their discussion of the language or the meaning of the poem.

72. Teachers generally mark pupils' work carefully and supportively, but the use of comments to help pupils develop their work further is more limited. Individual target setting is in place for writing and, in some classes, the system is used effectively to focus pupils' attention on what they need to do to improve. However, the use of targets and their regular review are currently too variable to be of benefit to all pupils. Teachers keep a good range of records in their assessment folders and some keep informal notes, which indicates effective ongoing assessment in lessons. Homework in the subject is set regularly and provides good support for pupils' work in class.

73. The school provides booster and extension classes in Year 6 and, as a result of their effectiveness, is currently trialling booster classes in Year 5. Assessment procedures in English are good. Although good practice was also identified in the school's previous inspection, the report also referred to the need to use assessment information in a more systematic and analytical way. There has been good improvement in this area. The results of regular tests in reading, spelling and writing are now used to track pupils' progress across the school and to make predictions across a year. These predictions act as targets for the following year. Information is systematically recorded and collated and passed on each year to the next teacher.

74. The co-ordinator for the subject has a very good understanding of her role. She is well organised, understands the needs of the subject and is a very good practitioner. Relevant priorities have been identified for the subject, which cover a wide range of areas, but which are also clear about the main priorities. The co-ordinator has been able to observe teaching in every class this year and also monitors teachers' planning regularly. Curriculum assemblies provide a useful means of monitoring pupils' work. There is also a good level of informal discussion and support within the school, which all staff appreciate. Resources in English are satisfactory and meet the needs of the curriculum. The school is currently reviewing its provision of books for guided group reading. The school library provides a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts for all ability levels and there are good and effective links with the community library adjacent to the school and with the adjoining infant school. The school library is of a good size and allows space for groups to work and to find information. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum is additionally enhanced by twice yearly book weeks and by visits from local authors and visiting theatre groups. The visits of theatre groups to support history and science have a beneficial effect on pupils' speaking and listening skills and their awareness and experience of drama. Pupils' writing is given a high profile and, where possible, published to audiences outside the school, for example, in the writing of booklets for Year 2 pupils about to join the school and in the school prospectus. The school's links with other schools around the world through e-mail motivate and

support the development of pupils' writing skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through appreciation of stories and poetry, discussion of issues and focus on working together in pairs and groups.

## **MATHEMATICS**

75. The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 are above average, which is similar to the finding of the previous inspection. Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress. The effective use of classroom assistants contributes well to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. Those in the SCDD are very well supported and make very good progress. When they are integrated into mainstream classes, they also work well. There are no significant differences in how well pupils do in the four aspects of the subject: using and applying mathematics; number and algebra; shape, space and measurement; data handling. This is an improvement since the previous inspection because pupils are now much more involved in using and applying mathematics.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In some lessons, there are very good features that contribute particularly well to the standards that pupils reach. A good lesson in Year 6 was characterised by particularly effective use of questioning that challenged pupils to review what they knew and then identify a very wide range of number factors. In this investigation, a brisk pace kept them very attentive to the task. Learning was consolidated when pupils exercised their skills to solve number puzzles mentally. In this part of the lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge was very clearly presented and enhanced with the aid of diagrams. This ensured that pupils reviewed and then used a good range of appropriate strategies. Opportunities were provided for them to explain how they had worked out various problems. This helped to improve their understanding because they had to think very carefully about what they had done. Their verbal responses also enabled the teacher to assess the extent of their understanding. Because the teacher provided well-matched tasks to different groups in the class, which in itself was a 'set' of pupils of similar attainment, they worked with sustained interest and, therefore, made good progress.

77. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 6 indicates that they understand place value, recognise and use fractions and use efficient written methods for computation. They show understanding of perimeter and area and more able pupils know the sum of the angles in a triangle and that of angles at a point. Pupils understand and use the terms mode and range to describe sets of data and they construct and interpret simple line graphs. High attaining pupils draw appropriate conclusions from information presented in graphs and diagrams. In Year 5, an interesting paper and pencil game challenged pupils to sharpen their skills of mental calculation. This good lesson, for a set of higher attaining pupils, held their attention well and they worked in pairs to solve the various problems encountered. Pupils clearly understood what they had to do and drew upon the various strategies that they had learned in order to tackle the tasks. The lesson was well managed and this contributed to the good progress made. In the plenary session that concluded the lesson, the teacher reviewed the tasks and questioned pupils about the strategies used. This was further developed when they had to identify types of questions that could be answered mentally and those that needed the use of pencil and paper. This effective extension of ideas gave pupils opportunities to expand their understanding of the appropriateness of different mathematical approaches. The most significant weaknesses in Year 5 lessons occurred when lower attaining pupils had insufficient understanding of basic mathematical skills such as partitioning. This resulted in a lack of confidence and readiness to tackle tasks set.

78. Very clear presentation and a high level of challenge for pupils resulted in their sustained interest and concentration in a Year 4 lesson. In this very good lesson, the teacher had very high expectations of this set of lower attaining pupils. She made very good use of large diagrams to explain decimal notation and the connection between money and decimal place value. Pupils were very involved throughout and eagerly volunteered answers to questions and worked hard on the exercises set. The teacher provided a very good balance of explanation and questioning, underpinned by a good pace appropriate to the needs of all pupils. Therefore, they responded very well and developed key

mathematical ideas successfully. In this lesson, classroom assistants gave particularly good support to a number of pupils with special educational needs. This ensured that they made good progress. Where there were weaknesses in Year 4 lessons, it was because a few pupils did not listen as well as they might have; some lost concentration and the teacher did not immediately act upon this.

79. Analysis of work previously done by pupils in all years shows that they have had experience of a good range of work. Effective use has been made of worksheets to learn and use important skills, including those of investigation. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the quality of presentation and the layout of pupils' work are too variable between classes and, in a number of instances, this has led to inaccuracy and low output. Overall, most pupils have made good progress over the year. Teachers mark work regularly, but do not often indicate in their marking how pupils' work can be improved.

80. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and there is appropriate use of mathematics in other subjects, such as science and geography. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning with regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum and numeracy strategy to ensure appropriate coverage. The implementation of the strategy has meant that the curriculum now has a much better focus on using and applying mathematics. Reliance on the commercial mathematics scheme, noted in the previous inspection as a weakness, has been overcome. Homework is set regularly and this helps pupils to develop their skills and understanding. Assessment procedures are good and provide teachers with valuable information. This is analysed to a greater extent than reported in the previous inspection and is, therefore, beginning to help teachers plan the curriculum with improved effectiveness. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and was appointed to the post within the last year. Leadership and management are good. Mathematics has been a major focus in the school development plan, which has identified appropriate priorities for improvement. Teaching has been monitored and this has made a good contribution to the identification of what needs to be done to raise the standards of pupils' work. The effectiveness of booster classes is being monitored. Classroom assistants provide very effective support to lower attaining pupils and this generally contributes well to their good progress. Resources are at least adequate and are used well so that pupils' learning is ensured.

## **SCIENCE**

81. Standards in Year 6 are above average, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Achievement in science is good including that of pupils with special educational needs, those who have English as an additional language and the more able pupils. The support given to pupils with statements in the SCDD is very good and enables them to achieve well in science. The analysis of pupils' work throughout the school shows that the emphasis given to the teaching of experimental and investigative science is particularly effective and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development and their achievement.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good with a number of strengths that have a positive impact on the pupils' learning in lessons. Planning is done jointly by the teachers in each year group to ensure that all pupils have similar coverage of the curriculum. This also means that teachers can share their ideas, knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, which enables them to make useful teaching points that help pupils to learn new concepts securely. The standard of questioning is high and the teachers' clear explanations and good use of time spent in discussion motivate all pupils and result in good scientific learning. Teachers emphasise the importance of using the correct scientific vocabulary when pupils are asked to give an explanation of their work. This not only improves the pupils' knowledge and understanding but also enables the teacher to recognise any misconceptions the pupils may have and help to clear them up. This was illustrated in a very good lesson in Year 4, following a visit to the Chiltern Study Centre. The teacher immediately established a purposeful working atmosphere, which involved all the pupils in a high quality discussion about the different animals and plants they had observed in a variety of

habitats. The skilful questioning required the pupils to think carefully and tested their understanding. The teacher treated the pupils as real scientists and constantly challenged them to give precise answers to the questions that ensured they used the correct scientific vocabulary. The level of interest was high and was maintained by the teacher's clear explanations, which helped the pupils to draw conclusions that matched their observations and relate these to their knowledge about the habitats. As a result, by the end of the lesson, many of the pupils were able to understand the feeding relationships within a habitat and give examples of food chains using the words 'predator', 'prey' and 'consumer'. The analysis of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 supports this and indicates that many pupils use the appropriate scientific vocabulary when presenting their findings. In their investigative work, they know how to conduct experiments, make predictions and interpret the results. Their work is recorded in a variety of forms using charts, diagrams and graphs.

83. Throughout the school, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out a scientific enquiry for themselves. A Year 3 lesson about shadows exemplified the effective way in which teachers' have implemented this approach to science. The task itself was challenging and involved pupils in using their knowledge about light and shadows to predict which materials would form a shadow and to plan how to test this. The good use of time spent in discussion motivated the pupils and ensured that they knew what was expected of them in the lesson. The teacher's questions encouraged the pupils to think for themselves and devise their own fair test. As a result when the pupils were presented with a collection of objects, materials and a torch they set about the investigation with confidence and enthusiasm. They tested their predictions by comparing the shadows formed and recognised that to make the test fair they had to put the torch in the same position and at the same distance from each object. They recorded their results and were able to compare the shadows formed in terms of being lighter or darker according to whether the materials and objects were opaque, transparent or translucent. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, learned from this lesson, as they were encouraged to talk about and share their ideas.

84. In Year 6, a similar approach to science is used effectively to help pupils plan and carry out an investigation. This was well illustrated in a lesson which involved finding out how the swing of a pendulum could be changed. The high expectations of the teacher were clearly evident in the challenging task and were illustrated by the intention that pupils should plan and carry out a systematic investigation. This involved pupils in having to think about the factors they could change, choosing the variables and producing a table of results that could be represented as a line graph. The level of interest was high and was maintained by allowing the pupils to explore and undertake the investigation for themselves. They carried out the tests with an appropriate sense of precision, considered changes such as the length of the string and how far back to pull the pendulum and observed the effect it had on the number of swings the pendulum made within a set time. The teacher maintained a brisk pace, ensured that the pupils made systematic observations and that they used the appropriate scientific language. Consequently, by the end of the lesson, the pupils were able to describe the pattern in their results and draw conclusions that showed an increased understanding of how to control variables when carrying out a fair test.

85. Their previous work on forces shows that Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the effects of air and water resistance. They know that weight is a force and can be measured in newtons, and use terms such as upthrust and gravity to explain their findings. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding through the context of scientific enquiry. In their work with solids, liquids and gases, for example, the pupils applied their knowledge and understanding well to investigate the changes that occur when a solid is added to liquid. They recognised that the solids remain in the solution when they dissolve and that there is a limit to how much solid will dissolve. Throughout the school, all aspects of the science curriculum are carefully taught. Pupils' work on life processes and living things shows they have an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of plants and how they reproduce. They know the names for parts of a

flower such as stamen, style and stigma and describe the processes of pollination, germination and fertilisation with understanding.

86. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching is the opportunity for pupils to work together to discuss and develop their own ideas. In all lessons, pupils are well supported and secure in their understanding of what they are going to learn. Teachers manage their pupils very well and the work set is challenging. However, the lesson plans are not always sufficiently focused on the levels expected of different groups of pupils. Where teaching is satisfactory there are missed opportunities to extend fully pupils' ideas to support the higher levels of attainment. The analysis of pupils' work revealed some variation in the standards of presentation.

87. The school has a coherent scheme of work based on national guidelines, which provides good guidance for the teaching of science. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall and include end of unit assessments. Marking of pupils' work is generally satisfactory. Although their work is marked regularly, it does not often tell pupils what they have to do to improve it. Science is well led by the deputy headteacher, who is knowledgeable and has high expectations for pupils' learning. Her monitoring role is well developed and provides her with a very clear overview of provision and the pupils' progress. Good links with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology were evident during the inspection. Learning resources for science are good and, in addition, the school has a wildlife area with a pond within the grounds to support the teaching of environmental science. The curriculum is further enriched by visits to places of interest such as the Science Museum and environmental study centres and visitors such as those who brought a Planetarium are invited into the school. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through the opportunity to work on investigations in groups and to explore and experience the excitement of finding out what may or may not happen when undertaking an investigation. Improvement since the last inspection is good overall. The school has developed its monitoring and evaluation procedures effectively to include classroom observations. This has helped to maintain the high standards in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe two art lessons. Judgements are based on these observations and evidence from displays, pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Standards in Year 6 are similar to those expected for pupils of this age, as they were at the time of the school's previous inspection. All pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs and those in the SCDD. These pupils receive a good level of support and encouragement, which enables them to work effectively alongside and with other pupils in the class. All pupils enjoy their work in art and are involved well in the good range of opportunities offered by the school.

89. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection and pupils' work indicates that, across the school, some units of work are well taught. However, in areas such as observational drawing and the control of materials and techniques, older pupils' skills have not been so effectively developed and this limits the quality of some of their work. The strengths of teaching and learning were illustrated in a good Year 6 lesson, where pupils were creating pieces of sculpture for the front of the school. Pupils had been given good opportunities to collect ideas through their visits in the local area and their studies of the work of artists such as Andrew Goldsworthy. Discussions with pupils indicated that the process of developing, planning, selecting and evaluating ideas and materials at different stages of the project was well understood. The teacher had planned the series of lessons carefully. Her effective management of the pupils ensured their good involvement and understanding of what they were trying to achieve. Pupils understood how to use some simple techniques to manipulate and shape clay, wire mesh and papier mache, because this had been practised in earlier work in making clay tiles. In the best pieces, pupils had been able to create more detailed effects with a good awareness of the shape and proportion of animals such as a



crocodile and a hedgehog. Others needed additional guidance to achieve or to modify more ambitious designs. The teacher guided all pupils carefully in their evaluation of their original designs and how they might further amend or adapt them. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had developed their understanding well of how to proceed with putting their ideas into practice.

90. Analyses of pupils' work indicates that pupils have a broad and interesting range of opportunities which includes both two and three-dimensional work. There are good links with other subjects, such as history, when Year 3 pupils make Greek vases using both clay and papier mache and Year 4 pupils create Roman jewellery using card, paper and paint. Pupils in Year 5 designed and made their own models of chairs as part of their study of the local chair-making industry in local history. There is a clear and effective focus on understanding the processes of developing ideas, selecting materials and evaluating their work. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is satisfactory and supports pupils' developing awareness of colour. Pupils use their skills in art to illustrate and present their work for display, particularly in literacy. However, some aspects of their work are explored more superficially, with the result that older pupils' awareness and use of fine detail in their drawings, their exploration of tone and a range of markings to represent shape, proportion and relationships are often limited.

91. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well organised. While still relatively new to teaching, she has developed a good understanding of the priorities for developing the subject. The school has recently adapted national guidelines to form the basis of its scheme of work for the subject. The co-ordinator has observed teaching and is developing a useful portfolio of pupils' work. She has worked with all colleagues in their year groups to discuss possible approaches to topics. A key issue from the school's previous inspection was to provide more opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore choices. The school has addressed this issue well and there are good opportunities for pupils to make choices of materials and media, to consider a range of ideas and to evaluate and improve their work. Assessment in the subject is still developing. Whilst teachers link their comments in their end of year reporting to parents to the descriptions in the National Curriculum, the school has identified the need to ensure that all teachers have a shared understanding of how these descriptions are used. The school makes good use of the local environment to enhance the curriculum and its links with other subject areas. Resources in the subject meet the needs of the curriculum and are regularly evaluated and updated as required. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and social development, although pupils' awareness of a range of art and artists from other cultures is more limited.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

92. No lessons were seen in Year 6. However, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that attainment is broadly average in Year 6. A display of structures for Victorian houses and of moving toys indicates satisfactory use of skills and acquisition of knowledge in making. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of design work and some lacks precision and good layout. The previous inspection made similar judgements. Overall, pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, judged from a limited range of work seen, is satisfactory.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Although teaching was not seen in Year 6, a display of work indicates that it is at least satisfactory. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson, pupils were eager to finish the musical instruments that they had designed and were making. They were confident and talked knowledgeably about what they were doing and why. They followed instructions carefully, but at times were too noisy and the teacher did not always check this. They worked well together with good relationships evident. A satisfactory lesson in Year 4 had a good introduction that enabled pupils to know exactly what was expected of them. They had to write instructions for a final design for a habitat storybook that had moving mechanisms. The teacher, with the aid of clear diagrams, gave good explanations and pupils knew what they had to do, as was evident in the way that they were keen to talk about their work. The teacher intervened appropriately when pupils needed more help or guidance and this enabled them to progress well during the lesson. Very

positive encouragement was given and this allowed pupils to approach the task in different ways. Thus, they were able to work with a good degree of independence and imagination, adapting their ideas as the work progressed. Analysis of design work produced by pupils in all year groups indicates that teachers do not sufficiently emphasise the need for accuracy, good presentation and overall quality.

94. Planning for design and technology is based on national guidelines with some modifications. This provides good support to teachers. However, the design element is not implemented into teaching with sufficient rigour. Because of this, there is wide variation in the quality of work produced by pupils. The school is aware of the need to improve upon this. It has been decided that the design aspects of art and design and of design and technology will be given clear and separate emphasis in the future so that the more detailed requirements of the National Curriculum for design and technology have greater prominence. Assessment procedures are being developed to support the work of teachers, but do not help them to plan the curriculum in any depth or breadth. The co-ordinator was appointed relatively recently and is enthusiastic. She has identified what needs to be improved and has recorded this in an action plan. Effective use has been made of curriculum assemblies to identify aspects of good, and of less appropriate, practice in the subject. Good use is made of a design and technology room and the resources for the subject, but there is insufficient use of information and communication technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

95. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are average, which is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection. However, based on the lesson observations and on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, their achievement is good. An explanation for this is the focus given to developing pupils' mapping skills from the time they enter the school and the strong emphasis on environmental studies, not only in geography but also through the personal, health and social education curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the SCDD make good progress for their previous attainment.

96. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the previous inspection, teaching was reported as being 'sound' and sometimes very good. In Year 3, the analysis of work indicates that the pupils' knowledge of their local area is good. They have looked carefully at local maps and identified a variety of locations and features. They conducted a class survey to identify adults' jobs within and beyond the village and investigated how far people needed to travel to work. Their map work shows that they have used atlases to locate countries of the world, the main countries of Europe and the major cities in the British Isles. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used a walk they had taken around the village effectively to raise pupils' awareness of how people can affect the environment. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher gave pupils the opportunity of discussing the visit and jotting down their observations on to whiteboards before looking at what could be done to address any problems they identified. Skilful questioning encouraged pupils to put forward their ideas and they were quick to voice their concerns about the litter, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, exhaust fumes and, in one case, the broken window in a local supermarket. The teacher involved all pupils in the discussion, listened carefully to their concerns and encouraged them to consider what could be done to help overcome the problems.

97. In Year 4, pupils have studied how people live in a village in India and have discovered what life is like for the children who live in the village and how it compares with their own life. They have looked at Ordnance Survey maps of the local area and used the key to identify the motorways, A roads, B roads and the minor roads. Although no geography lessons were observed in Year 4, good use was made of a personal, health and social education lesson to help pupils recognise the need to save water. The teacher captured the attention of the pupils by making the lesson relevant, for example, having to predict how much water an average family uses in a day. After considering how many litres of water it takes to have a bath or shower, use a washing machine and a dishwasher, the

pupils were amazed when told by the teacher the exact amounts. Questions were used well to prompt the pupils into considering ways of saving water.

98. The analysis of work in Years 5 and 6 showed an appropriate range of topics and average attainment. Pupils in Year 5 build on their previous knowledge and understanding of environmental issues appropriately and have carried out surveys on the level of noise around the school at different times of the day and the amount of rubbish collected over four days. There are good links with mathematics and information and communication technology in this year group as pupils produce block graphs and pie charts to show their results. In a lesson based on a traffic survey they had carried out in the village, the pupils considered what could be done to ease the congestion. The teacher effectively used their ideas to illustrate the questions they could use when carrying out an interview to find out the views of people in the village. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well in this lesson as they had the opportunity to discuss and share their ideas with a partner before compiling a questionnaire. Most pupils make good progress in the development of their geographical skills. For instance, in their study of a village in the Peak District, they locate places on maps using four-figure grid references and use the scale to work out the distances between the major cities and Stanton in Peak.

99. By Year 6, pupils have made steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of water and rivers. Pupils draw sketch maps of the route of a river, label the main features and describe how rivers erode and deposit materials to produce particular landscape features. The geographical vocabulary they use when undertaking this work is well developed. They use atlases to locate the major rivers of the world and mark them on a map. The work set is imaginative and often includes problem-solving exercises, when pupils have to apply their knowledge and understanding to real life situations. This was illustrated in a very good lesson in Year 6 where the teacher held a 'public meeting' for the development of the 'Millford Creek' area. The pupils were divided into small groups and were given a role-play card and a map of the Creek to prepare for the public meeting. In role, they had to decide what to say and how best to get what they wanted. This led to a very lively 'meeting' as representatives for the different groups put forward their proposals. For example, the 'Millford Wildlife' group wanted to create a new nature reserve, while the 'High Tower Residents Association' wanted a park and playground for the children. The teacher skilfully controlled the 'meeting' and motivated the pupils to take their roles seriously. By allowing them the opportunity to feel free to disagree with the ideas of other groups, many of the pupils were able to participate in the debate and were prepared to defend their ideas. Finally, at the end of the lesson, still in role as a Council official, the teacher brought the meeting to a close and informed the pupils that the Council would take all their ideas for the new development into consideration before giving them a final decision the next day. The very good use of time and opportunity for pupils to express opinions and present a case effectively extended their understanding that people have different views on how the environment should be managed and improved. The lesson made a very good contribution to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills as they had to justify their views and deal politely with opposing points of view.

100. Overall strengths in the teaching of geography are the good range of methods used to motivate the pupils, the opportunities given for discussion and the good contribution to pupils' social development through their environmental studies. Teachers manage pupils very well and, consequently, pupils respond positively and work hard. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace is slower at times and, as a result, the lesson does not fully engage the pupils in their learning at all times.

101. Geography is well supported by the scheme of work that is based on national guidelines. The teaching of mapping skills supports pupils' learning well. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post, but has already carried out observations of lessons and monitored the quality of pupils' work. However, assessment procedures for geography are not in place. This has been recognised as an area for development. Curricular provision is broad. It includes good use of the local area, an appropriate

element of varied map work and a strong emphasis on consideration of environmental issues. This promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well as, for example, they learn about their own and other cultures, know how man affects the environment and have the opportunity to work together. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are applied well in the subject. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to find out information and to present findings in a suitable variety of ways. Learning resources for the subject are generally satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

102. During the inspection, it was not possible to see lessons in Year 6. Judgements are based on the lessons seen in other years, an analysis of pupils' work in all years, discussions with Year 6 pupils about their work and discussions with teachers. Indications are that, in Year 6, standards are average. All pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. The good support pupils with special educational needs and those in the SCDD receive from teachers and assistants and the good and often very good relationships in the classroom enable them to achieve at the same rate as their peers. In the school's previous inspection, similar standards were achieved.

103. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching and learning was also observed during the week of the inspection and was evident in some units of pupils' work. The good qualities of teaching and learning were observed in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were developing their knowledge of the Viking way of life through their study of photographs of artefacts. The teacher had organised and planned the lesson effectively and was confident in her knowledge of what pupils needed to know. As a result, the lesson proceeded briskly. The purpose of the lesson was clearly explained to pupils at the beginning of the lesson and this helped them to become involved quickly. The teacher used questions well to reinforce pupils' existing knowledge of the Vikings and moved purposefully on to demonstrate how pupils could use their observations and questions about a Viking pot to build a more detailed picture of the Viking way of life. The resources were interesting and the tasks were well structured to enable all pupils to be productively involved and to work together effectively. In a good link with literacy, higher attaining pupils were expected to organise their written work in paragraphs.

104. The history curriculum makes good use of the resources and expertise in the local area to develop older pupils' understanding of the impact of changes during the Victorian period and during the last century. Pupils in Year 5 develop their understanding well as the result of a well organised and detailed study of the chair making industry in the Wycombe area. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of some of the information in the local census of 1851 to explore the range of employment in the area. In the units of work which enable older pupils to produce more detailed work and to investigate in greater depth, above average and some average pupils reach standards which are higher than those found in most schools. However in other units, such as the Tudor period, pupils' exploration of issues and knowledge are superficial. This was supported in discussions with pupils in Year 6 who were able to recall some significant elements of life in Victorian times but whose awareness of how these elements fitted into the bigger picture of changes during the period was more limited. Some effective links with literacy are planned, such as in Year 4 where pupils write letters as Roman soldiers in Britain and as monks who have experienced a Viking invasion. Pupils in Year 6 write an account of a day in the life of a rich child and as a poor child in Victorian times and prepare a biography on the life of Dr Barnardo.

105. In the school's previous inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching but the overuse of worksheets was identified. The school has now improved on the use of worksheets and there is an appropriate balance of pupils' own recording and the use of worksheets. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted national guidelines in the subject. These have been adapted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils in the school. The co-ordinator is an experienced teacher who has a personal enthusiasm for the subject which is reflected in her own teaching. There have been no opportunities to monitor teaching in the subject this year but the co-

ordinator has monitored pupils' work through the curriculum assemblies. She has a good understanding of the priorities for improvement and has correctly identified the need to develop the use of assessment in the subject. Teachers refer to the descriptions of different levels of the National Curriculum in pupils' end of year reports but systems for assessing pupils' work during the year are not consistent across the school and do not provide good support for the development of pupils' skills. The curriculum in history is enhanced by the additional experiences the school offers pupils. It makes good use of the expertise of groups and individuals, such as the Onatti Theatre group and Living History, to offer pupils Roman, Victorian and Tudor days at school. The school itself organises Greek and Egyptian days for younger pupils. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the direct experiences they offer. Local historians and the local museum service provide good insights into life in the area in the past and the school organises visits to places such as the British Museum and St Albans. There is appropriate use of information and communication technology in pupils' individual projects but this is not fully developed within the curriculum. Resources in the subject meet the needs of the curriculum and these are supplemented by the teachers' own resources when required.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. In Year 6, pupils reach above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. At that time, pupils made limited progress in the controlling, modelling and monitoring aspects of the subject. Progress is now good in all aspects. Overall, pupils achieve well in the subject and use it effectively to support and enhance their learning across the curriculum.

107. Pupils in Year 6 operate data handling programs competently when they create spreadsheets and pie charts to cost out a party. They are confident in using computers for word processing and make good use of different features such as changing the size, colour and style of font to suit the task. When creating an interactive web page, using a combination of text and graphics, pupils scan in pictures and understand that this requires different procedures depending on the source of the pictures. They are competent at finding their way around different programs, and enjoy exploring them and finding out what they can do. Pupils use CD ROMS and Internet websites independently to carry out research in other subjects, such as history and science. They communicate with pupils in other schools by e-mail. Pupils learn how to control mechanisms, such as traffic lights, by writing a program to determine the sequence of changes. Some pupils devised a program to control a level crossing barrier.

108. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, building effectively on previous learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 produce simple bar graphs to show pupils' eye colour whilst those in Year 4 progress to line graphs to show changes in recorded temperature. In Year 5, pupils explore a database about birds and learn how to create their own database using information about pupils in the class.

109. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when it was "variable, but sound overall". Since that time, the school has invested considerable time and money in improving provision in the subject. This has included the installation of a computer suite, staff training, improved curricular planning and a more extensive range of software. Teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject are higher, as are their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. There is good teaching of skills and knowledge, and well planned opportunities for pupils to explore and experiment independently. Teachers make effective use of a data projector to demonstrate procedures to pupils on a large screen, which ensures that all are able to see easily and follow the teacher's instructions. The computer suite is used well for whole class teaching and provides opportunities for all pupils to spend sufficient time practising new skills and investigating how different programs work.

110. Sometimes, teaching is very good, as in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were learning to create an interactive web page. In the very effective introductory session, the teacher used the data projector to show some pupils' work to the rest of the class. This provided a very good opportunity to

discuss potential problems and ask pupils how they would overcome them. The teacher's very good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils were evident in the skilful questioning which made pupils think through procedures and work things out for themselves. The lesson had very good pace and this encouraged pupils to apply themselves enthusiastically to the task and to concentrate very well. A pupil from the SCDD was included in this lesson and worked very well with a partner to carry out the planned activity. The teacher provided very good support for all pupils as they worked, prompting them to consider different approaches to a problem and encouraging them to learn from their mistakes.

111. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership in the subject and has high levels of expertise. He has a clear view of the developments required in the subject and has devised a comprehensive development plan to ensure its continuing improvement. The school is using national guidelines well to support teaching and learning and the curriculum is well planned to ensure progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. There are good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress, and the co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards throughout the school. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, although there was little evidence of its use in design and technology.

## **MUSIC**

112. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average. This represents an improvement since the school's last inspection, which judged the standard of pupils' performance in music to be sound and in some instances, good. The lessons observed during the inspection indicate that the specialist knowledge of the music teacher has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' attainment. Pupils' throughout the school delight in their music making and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with statements in the SCDD take a full part in all activities and achieve well. The school caters well for those pupils who have a talent in this subject and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to achieve at a high level.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. In the previous inspection, there was not enough evidence to judge the teaching of music. A specialist teacher is employed by the school to teach music to all classes. The lessons are challenging and move at a brisk pace. The very good relationships between teacher and pupils inspire confidence and the teacher's very good subject knowledge creates high expectations. With a good eye to detail, the teacher challenges the pupils to work hard, concentrate and improve their performance during the lessons. Lessons are well planned, prepared and presented with clear explanations of what the pupils are expected to learn. The good use of questioning and emphasis given to the vocabulary of music stimulates pupils' thinking and ensures that they use and understand the correct musical terminology when answering questions.

114. Consequently, pupils make good progress in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Many pupils can compose rhythm patterns and write them on a simple score. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils composed a 'clock rondo'. The pupils initially explored ways in which they could use their voices to create the sounds made by different clocks such as, cuckoo clocks, wristwatches, alarm clocks and Big Ben. Once this was established, the teacher carefully introduced the concept of a rondo to the pupils. As a result of her expertise, the pupils made very good gains in their composing skills. They not only performed a rondo using their voices, but also presented the pieces in their music books as A B C B D B to show how one sound keeps on recurring. The previous work of pupils in all classes shows clear evidence of good progress in composing skills in music, written in both graphic and traditional notation.

115. Pupils show good skills in listening to and appraising music. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, they were completely immersed in listening to a number of pieces of music from various films, composed by John Williams. The teacher skilfully used these to develop the pupils' awareness of how a composer can capture the mood of a film through music. Good links were made with literacy, as the pupils were asked to consider not only how the music made them feel, but also to give each piece of

music an imaginary title. The pupils responded well to this and produced titles such as, 'Leave in Peace' and 'Fields from Afar', to express the mood evoked by the music from the film *Schindler's List*. Throughout the lesson, the teacher constantly reminded the pupils to think of how the combined musical elements of tempo, dynamics and texture were organised and used to communicate the different moods and effects. The lesson captured the imagination of all pupils, including pupils from the SCDD, who joined the class for the lesson, and inspired all to achieve high standards. The quality of learning in this lesson was increased because the pupils enjoy music and their interest enables them to make the best use of the opportunities provided by the teacher.

116. Music makes a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher introduced pupils to different aspects of Indian music. She skilfully included Indian instruments in the lesson and used the appropriate Indian musical vocabulary such as, 'Tal', 'Drone' and 'Rag' when discussing the distinctive features of Indian music. In this lesson, the pupils not only learnt to maintain a complex rhythm with the instruments but also produced a very pleasing sound as a group, which combined an improvised melody with a continuous sound played on a tampura drum in the background.

117. The standard of pupils' singing is good. Most pupils perform with confidence, controlling their voices well. For example, when practising for their summer production of *Joseph*, the pupils showed a good understanding of style when singing songs that ranged from *One More Angel* to a Calypso song. Pupils in Year 5 sang a song as a round with good control of tempo and dynamics, whilst in Year 6, pupils learnt to sing an Indian song that showed good attention to pitch and rhythm. Videos of previous school productions, such as *Bugsy Malone* and *Wind in the Willows* showed pupils singing a wide variety of songs with equal enthusiasm, skill and pleasure.

118. The music teacher provides very effective leadership through her knowledge and enthusiasm. The subject is well supported by the scheme of work and resources for music. There is a good supply of tuned and untuned instruments, including ethnic instruments, and a good range of music for pupils to listen to that enables them to broaden their skills in musical appreciation. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are good and include end of unit tests devised by the music teacher. Pupils have opportunities to join the school band and orchestra, take recorder lessons and receive musical tuition from a wide range of visiting specialist teachers. School productions allow every member of the school to take part in making music. The school is involved in the Marlow festival and the High Wycombe Schools Music Association. Pupils have performed at the Wycombe Swan Theatre and play for the 'Silver Circle', a group of elderly people. The curriculum is enriched by the performance of live musicians who are invited into the school to play for the pupils. Overall, music makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through listening to a range of live and recorded music from different times and cultures, and providing opportunities for pupils to engage in school productions, music enhances pupils' experiences and plays an important part in the life of the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. In Year 6, attainment is in line with national expectations. In the previous inspection, it was judged to be 'above expectations'. The main reason for this difference is that no gymnastics, dance or swimming was seen during this inspection and judgement is based solely on games activities. In these lessons pupils learned techniques for relay races, jumping sequences or simple skills of movement. In the previous inspection, progress was judged to be inconsistent. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, now make good progress and achieve well.

120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, which is broadly the same as the finding of the previous inspection. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils were ready for strenuous activity by engaging them in a short programme of warm-up activities. They carried these out with good concentration and application because the teacher took part and explained clearly, what

was expected. Good explanations were given about the technique of relay race running and a demonstration of baton changing gave them good understanding of the aims of the lesson. This was effective because pupils tried hard to learn and use the skills taught. Later, the teacher reviewed what had been learned and suggested points for improvement. In this lesson, there was a good level of challenge to which the pupils responded well with strenuous physical effort. The 'cooling down' part of this lesson was also effective because the teacher reminded the pupils of the reasons for this. A good lesson in Year 4 was characterised by a good warm-up, appropriate expectations, clear presentation and careful management of pupils. They took part with interest and most of them clearly improved their performance of jumping in a progression of sequences during the lesson. Weaknesses in teaching occurred when pupils had to listen for too long to explanations before they could engage in activities and when, in some lessons, they did not listen well to the teacher or became too noisy.

121. Leadership and management in the subject are good. Some teaching has been monitored and the co-ordinator is, therefore, in a good position to know what needs to be improved. A priority in the action plan is to ensure that pupils experience a good progression of activities as they go through the school. Pupils are able to swim in the on-site outdoor learner pool. Outdoor and adventurous activities are limited because the school no longer takes Year 6 pupils on a residential visit. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to expand this aspect of the physical education curriculum. A very good number and range of extracurricular activities take place. At the time of the inspection, pupils had the opportunity to play lacrosse and to benefit from coaching by the English Association. Pupils also take part in a good range of inter-school and county sporting events. Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and, therefore, their use in planning the curriculum is unsatisfactory, although there are plans to improve this situation. The school has a good range of facilities and resources for physical education and makes good use of them. Arrangements for games lessons in wet weather have been improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122. In Year 6, pupils reach standards that exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' work shows that they have a good range of knowledge and understanding of different faiths, their traditions, festivals and associated symbols, and are able to respond sensitively to religious issues. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment was "broadly average" but some fell "below national averages". The report also stated that pupils "could make more progress in the subject". Pupils now make good progress and achieve well.

123. The reasons given for the shortcomings in the subject were that provision was "uneven" between the classes and the Agreed Syllabus for religious education was not being implemented fully. Some teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and expertise in the subject and there was a lack of progression in teaching knowledge and understanding. There has been considerable improvement in all of these aspects of the school's provision, and the quality of teaching and learning is now good. Teachers achieve an effective balance between imparting knowledge and providing opportunities for pupils to consider important questions and concepts and to make personal responses. Pupils are given work that builds well on their previous learning and helps to develop a maturity of thought and an awareness of the importance of religious teachings for their own lives.

124. After brainstorming what makes a good leader, pupils in Year 6 write knowledgeably about leaders they respect, such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Ellen Macarthur and their own parents, giving reasons for their choices. They examine the qualities that make a good leader, and some interview the headteacher and the vicar as part of their research. When writing "If I ruled the world..." pupils consider some of life's perplexing questions and dilemmas and suggest the changes they would make. After visiting the local church and a Hindu temple, pupils express thoughtful personal responses to the spiritual atmosphere and its effect on them. Teachers use an imaginative range of methods to stimulate pupils' interest and make learning more relevant to them. For example, when discussing the qualities required for a good leader, pupils took part in a role play situation.



Stranded in the jungle, with problems to solve, they first had to select and appoint a leader. Part of the task involved explaining how they made their choice and the qualities they identified.

125. There are good opportunities for group work, discussion and writing, and there is effective use of stories to develop pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Year 4 read and discussed *Dinosaurs and All That Rubbish* to develop their understanding of the need to care for the earth. Pupils take a pride in their work and most is presented neatly. Although there is still occasionally a tendency to fall back on drawing and colouring in a few classes, this is not as prevalent as in the previous inspection. There is a good emphasis on teaching pupils about the major world faiths, with a particular focus on the Hindu religion. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils developed a good understanding of the symbolism of the puja tray and its importance in Hindu worship. The teacher, through skilful questioning, helped pupils to increase their appreciation of what worship means to different people. By demonstrating and explaining the different elements of a puja tray and asking pupils to suggest how and why they might be used, the teacher held pupils' interest and reinforced their understanding of its symbolism.

126. The improvements in the school's provision for religious education can largely be attributed to the very good leadership provided by the co-ordinator, who has produced a very good policy and scheme of work for the subject to guide teachers. The Agreed Syllabus is being implemented fully and the scheme of work has been modified to take account of recent changes. The co-ordinator has provided very good support and training for colleagues, who now have significantly more knowledge and expertise than at the time of the last inspection. She has attended a number of courses and is very well informed about developments in the subject. She has observed lessons in each year group and samples pupils' work through the curriculum assemblies. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but still developing and the subject is well resourced with a good range of books, videos and artefacts on all the major world faiths. Religious education makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with its emphasis on encouraging pupils to consider moral and social issues and to express personal responses to religious questions, and on developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.