

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NORTON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Norton, Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106685

Headteacher: Mr M Fellows

Reporting inspector: Keith Bardon  
11807

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> June – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2003

Inspection number: 246618

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Campsall Balk Norton Doncaster South Yorkshire
Postcode:	DN6 9DG
Telephone number:	01302 700303
Fax number:	01302 709108
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Rafferty
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11807	Keith Bardon	Registered inspector	Design and technology History Physical education Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
13459	Eva Mills	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?
15015	Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30853	Sue Betts	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music	
19120	Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

HeadStart & Associates

Higherland Bridge  
49 West Street  
Gargrave  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 3RJ

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Norton Community Junior serves two village communities on the northern fringes of Doncaster. Most pupils live relatively close to the school although about one in ten travels from the nearby town of Askern. There are 209 children on roll aged between seven and eleven, and because of the reducing birth rate in the area, pupil numbers are falling. Twenty eight pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is an average proportion. All pupils speak English as their first language. Eight pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Twenty six pupils have special educational needs, mainly for learning or behaviour difficulties. This is a broadly average figure. Seven pupils have a statement of severe special educational needs, which is an above average proportion for a school of this size. In general terms, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is similar to that often found at this age.

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

Norton Junior provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils enjoy school and the atmosphere in which they learn is pleasant and welcoming. Most pupils maintain a steady rate of progress and attain standards that are broadly average and which meet national expectations. Most aspects, including teaching, learning, leadership and management and the value for money the school provides, are satisfactory.

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

- Standards in science are above the national average
- Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support for their learning
- Pupils' personal development is promoted well and this helps them become pleasant, sociable and well behaved individuals
- Good provision is made for pupils' care and welfare
- The quality of financial management is good
- The school forges effective links with parents that have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning

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

- Some aspects of the teaching and learning, particularly those relating to the development of pupils' thinking skills
- Pupils' ability to give detailed verbal answers, put forward ideas and contribute orally to class discussions
- Pupils' attainment in the aspect of mathematics that requires them to use and apply their knowledge in practical and problem solving activities
- Systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching and learning

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

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

Since the school was last inspected in 1998 it has made satisfactory improvement. Pupils' performance in the national tests for 11 year olds increased significantly in 1999 and since then results have been maintained or built upon. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented constructively and standards of writing have improved. Standards in design and technology have risen and are no longer of concern. Better strategies of assessment have been established and schemes of work have been put in place for all subjects. The challenge provided for higher attaining pupils has increased in some lessons but there is more to be done to ensure that these pupils consistently attain all they could. The provision the school makes for pupils with special educational needs has

strengthened. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by senior staff have been developed to some extent but more is required to provide them with the information they need. Pupils have access to much better resources for information and communication technology and developments to the building have raised the quality of the accommodation. The outlook of senior staff is very positive and with careful planning and rigorous implementation there is every likelihood that school development will 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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	C	C
mathematics	D	C	C	C
science	D	C	C	B

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

Pupils' results in the national tests are steadily improving with science showing the most significant gains. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average and meet expectations for pupils of this age. Standards in science are above average. Pupils of all ages maintain a steady rate of progress and their achievements are satisfactory. The strongest aspect of pupils' attainment is their knowledge and understanding and ability to recall information. Pupils' skills are less well developed and many are unable to investigate, solve problems and apply their knowledge to new situations as effectively as many pupils of this age. Standards in reading and writing meet national expectations but when speaking in class, many pupils have difficulty explaining themselves fully and putting forward their ideas.

The school just failed to achieve its targets for pupils' performance in 2002. The 2003 targets have been set at a much higher level and it remains to be seen whether the school has achieved them. The likelihood is that the results will be a little short of target.

Standards in art and design, history, design and technology, music, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education meet national expectations and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Standards in geography are below average because pupils' mapping skills are weak.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils come to school willingly and readily participate in lessons. They show interest in what they are doing and generally try hard. However, the contribution pupils make to their own learning is rather limited and the level of initiative they show in lessons is often low.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well both in and out of classrooms. They are polite and well mannered, work and play happily together and take pleasure in each other's company.
Personal development	Good. Pupils develop into sensible, caring individuals. They act responsibly



and relationships	and show due consideration for the rights and opinions of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance are very similar to the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The teaching of both English and mathematics is sound. Teachers use the national strategies effectively when planning their daily lessons and provide a satisfactory platform for pupils' learning of both literacy and numeracy. However, too little attention is paid to the teaching of speaking skills and there are weaknesses in pupils' learning of how to use and apply mathematics.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and regularly praise them for their efforts. There are times when teachers do too much for pupils and do not challenge them to think for themselves. As a result pupils are rather passive in class and teachers often have to work hard to get them to respond to questions and to come up with ideas of their own. Pupils and teachers work hard but more lively interaction, discussion and debate would benefit many lessons.

Activities are planned carefully and objectives for what pupils have to learn identified. In the better lessons these have a sharp focus and are shared productively with pupils. They are not always reviewed at the end of the lesson and when this happens pupils are left wondering how well they have done. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and keep a close check on their progress. At times this information is not utilised well enough to ensure that pupils of differing attainment have work that is suited to their specific needs.

Lessons are generally well organised and class discipline is good. Learning support assistants work well alongside teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who have special educational needs. All pupils are given equal opportunities to learn and participate fully in the range of activities teacher plan.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and an appropriate amount of time is spent on each. Frequent educational visits and visitors to the school enrich pupils' experiences and add interest to the curriculum. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the thinking skills they need to make decisions and formulate ideas.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The support for pupils with special educational needs is structured well and supports their learning effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes good provision for pupils' social and moral development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Teachers raise important issues sensitively and encourage pupils to discuss them openly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' health and welfare are well established and effective. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and sound procedures for monitoring progress and development are in place.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Parents hold positive views of the school and there is regular and constructive contact between school and home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides sound leadership and has a clear vision of the educational direction the school needs to take. The deputy headteacher and recently formed core curriculum team share the headteacher's views and there is a cohesive approach to school development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and actively support the work of the school. They are, however, a little too reliant on information from the headteacher for their overview of the school and how well it is doing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher analyses carefully the data the school collects and receives from outside and draws realistic conclusions from the information. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are less effective and currently unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Senior staff and governors construct the budget carefully to make the best use of the funding available and to maintain a positive balance. Finances are managed securely and efficiently. The principles of best value are understood and applied well.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teachers and support staff. Learning resources are at least adequate in all subjects and the accommodation is pleasant and in good condition.

## 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>• Parents feel that the school is well managed and that their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children enjoy school and behave well.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and the school has high expectations of what its pupils can achieve.</li> <li>• They find staff very approachable and would be comfortable raising issues or discussing any problems.</li> <li>• The school helps children to develop caring attitudes and a sense of responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority of parents would like more information about the progress their children are making and feel that the school could work more closely with them.</li> <li>• A significant number would like to see the school offer a wider range of extra curricular activities</li> </ul>

Inspectors share many of the positive views parents hold of the school although the teaching is satisfactory rather than good. The information parents receive is generally good and links between home and school are positive. Although there few regular clubs after school the curriculum provided for the pupils is frequently enriched with visits, visitors and musical performances and competitive team games.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 their attainment is broadly average in many subjects, including both English and mathematics. This represents a satisfactory standard of achievement. Most pupils enter Year 3 having been given a solid start by their infant schools. This firm base is built upon by the teachers and during their time at Norton Junior, pupils maintain a steady rate of progress. High academic standards have not always had the status they should have, either by the school, governors or many parents. It has taken some time for the school to establish the right climate for high performance in the national tests. To some extent this change of priority has only been partially achieved and while results have been brought up to a satisfactory level, there is scope for further improvement.
- 2 In 2002, the performance of Year 6 pupils in the national English and mathematics tests was broadly in line with the national average and results were much the same as those of schools in a similar context to Norton. In English and mathematics approximately three quarters of pupils attained or exceeded the expected level and a quarter attained the higher level. In the science tests pupils' attainment was above both the national average and that of pupils in similar schools. Almost all attained or exceeded the level expected of them and nearly half attained the higher level. Overall the school's results in 2002 represented a satisfactory level of achievement.
- 3 The school was just a little short of the targets it set itself for pupils' performance in 2002 and has set much higher targets for their test results this year. The school is due to receive its 2003 results very soon but it is likely that the targets will have proved a little too challenging. Owing to a more focused approach on the national tests and a higher attaining cohort of pupils, the school's test results rose significantly in 1999. Since then there has been further progressive improvement in mathematics and science. Standards in English have been somewhat more erratic but are showing an upward trend overall. Taking all three subjects together, the improvements in standards that the school has made mirror those which have taken place nationally.
- 4 Year 6 pupils are currently attaining standards that are broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. At the time of the last inspection there were concerns over the quality of pupils' writing. The school has put considerable effort into improving the quality of the teaching and learning of writing and has been successful in raising standards to the level expected for junior age pupils. Most pupils write effectively in a range of different styles, punctuate correctly and spell common words accurately. A minority of lower attaining pupils write relatively short pieces and use a limited range of words. The majority of pupils read both fiction and non fiction texts with a satisfactory level of understanding and are able to decipher words they are not familiar with by sounding out their component parts. While most pupils listen carefully and have a good understanding of what is said to them many do not speak as well as they should by this age. This is particularly the case when they have to give explanations, discuss issues in class or put forward their own ideas. The expectancy amongst staff that pupils will do this is not high enough and insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to develop these skills.
- 5 The majority of Year 6 pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of numbers, shapes, measures and data handling and are able to calculate with the

accuracy expected. Higher attaining pupils show good mental recall of number facts and make mental calculations quickly. Lower attainers find this a difficult skill to master and often have to jot things down before they can work them out. Pupils' ability to solve mathematic problems and their understanding of how to apply their knowledge effectively in new contexts is not as well developed and is below average. Many, including the higher attainers, do not have the investigative and thinking skills needed to make them into good rather than satisfactory mathematicians.

- 6 Most pupils show secure knowledge and understanding of the key ideas of science and higher attainers in particular are able to give sound reasons for how and why things happen as they do. Pupils' understanding of how to carry out scientific investigation and enquiry is satisfactory but not as strong as their factual knowledge. This is due to an imbalance in the curriculum which places stronger emphasis on information at the expense of investigation.
- 7 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology meets national expectations and is improving. There are clear signs from pupils' good achievement that when all the improvements the school has made recently are fully embedded standards are likely to rise further.
- 8 Standards in design and technology are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection brought about by a much clearer programme of work and more effective teaching.
- 9 Pupils achieve satisfactorily in art and design, history, music, physical education and religious education and attain standards that meet expectations for their age. Standards in geography are below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory because pupils' mapping skills do not develop as well as they should.
- 10 In the period since the last inspection the performance of boys and girls in the national tests has been similar and the difference in attainment between the two sexes which occurs in many schools is not found in this school.
- 11 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for their learning. The school makes careful provision for their learning and they receive well structured and effective support from teachers and learning support assistants.
- 12 Although information about particularly high attaining pupils is shared with the high school the school has yet to establish clear procedures for identifying pupils who have particular gifts or talents and is therefore not in a strong position to extend and challenge them fully.

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

- 13 Pupils' positive attitudes to school have been maintained since the last inspection and almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children enjoy being part of the school community. This is mirrored by the views of the pupils themselves and reflects the good provision the school makes for their care, welfare and personal development.
- 14 Pupils in all year groups listen well to their teachers and concentrate hard. They settle quickly to their work and handle the resources entrusted to them responsibly. For example in music lessons where they need to share instruments they do this sensibly and without fuss. They work well in lessons even when not directly supervised. Year 6

pupils working on their artwork in corridors remained fully on task with minimal intervention from their teacher. A less positive aspect of pupils' response in lessons is a reluctance to put forward their own ideas or contribute orally in class discussions. It is not that they are being deliberately uncooperative, quite the reverse in fact, but have become overly compliant and rather passive. Many do not recognise the need to make their own decisions about their work and are heavily reliant on their teachers for everything they do. To some extent this is compounded by teaching that is often too closely directed and which limits pupils' opportunities to develop their initiative. Pupils mostly respond well to their teachers' instructions and answer questions when asked but many pupils are not inclined to respond spontaneously or take responsibility for their own learning. This is a weakness which was identified during the last inspection and is having a negative impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in their development of independent thinking skills.

- 15 Pupils behave well, are polite and respectful to adults and to each other, responding well to the high expectations of good behaviour and the good example set by all adults in the school community. Around school at playtimes and at lunchtimes, pupils conduct themselves well, follow school rules and get along sociably with each other. On the occasions during inspection where outdoor play was not possible due to bad weather, pupils occupied themselves sensibly and behaved responsibly. Pupils, parents and midday supervisors comment that there are very few instances of bullying or inappropriate behaviour and that when they do occur they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. The school's policy for race equality is applied effectively and there are no tensions or incidents of inappropriate conduct. There have been no exclusions from the school during the current year.
- 16 The good relationships identified at the time of the last inspection continue to permeate the school. Pupils of different age groups and gender work and socialise well together. Relationships between pupils and staff are also good. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the opportunities they are given to take responsibility as monitors, carrying out a variety of tasks around school, including organising equipment. During inspection pupils were seen to volunteer to set up resources for an art and design lesson which they did sensibly and well, without direct supervision. Pupils regularly put forward ideas for charity fundraising. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.
- 17 Attendance is satisfactory. Levels of attendance at the school remain in line with those achieved nationally and rates of unauthorised absence are low. The majority of pupils arrive in school promptly.

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

- 18 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection the teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory, with the majority of lessons falling into the satisfactory category. Almost two thirds of the teachers currently working in the school have been appointed since the last inspection. Despite the large number of changes the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained.
- 19 A very positive aspect of the teaching is the warm relationships teachers form with their pupils. This results in a pleasant atmosphere in classrooms and lessons that proceed smoothly. Teachers need only a minimum of effort to maintain discipline and they deal with any minor indiscretions quickly and effectively. Consequently classrooms are quiet and orderly. While this has obvious advantages there is one major disadvantage that is

adversely affecting pupils' learning. Pupils have become so accustomed to teachers providing information and telling them exactly what they have to do that they have become too passive. As a result they do not show the level of independence often found in junior classes and are not developing the thinking skills necessary to make decisions, tackle problems and to determine what needs to be done next. Because pupils are not inclined to contribute, teachers tend to fall into the trap of giving too much information and doing much of pupils' thinking for them. To a large extent this is the reason why, throughout the school, pupils' learning is satisfactory rather than good.

- 20 Class routines are well established and teachers take great care to ensure that all pupils are included and involved in the activities they have provided. Learning support assistants play a full and important part in ensuring that pupils, especially those with special educational needs are able to participate fully and learn effectively. Teachers show a caring attitude to pupils and give them frequent praise for their efforts. This has a marked and positive effect on pupils' personal development and promotes their self esteem effectively.
- 21 Teachers plan lessons carefully and clearly, giving due consideration to what pupils have learned previously. As a result pupils' knowledge and skills build steadily and generally in the appropriate order. Instructions are given clearly so that pupils are fully aware of what they have to do. Lesson plans contain objectives for pupils' learning which in the better lessons are shared fully with the pupils. However, these vary in quality with some having a sharp focus and others simply reiterating what pupils are going to do. Sharply focused objectives give a clear message to pupils of what is expected of them in the lesson and provide a solid base for learning. Too often, however, teachers fail to refer back to the learning objectives when they are summarising the lesson and opportunities to make pupils aware of how much progress has been made and to set the stage for future learning are missed.
- 22 The amount of challenge a lesson generates varies widely and is often dependent on how well the teacher has recognised and planned for the different levels of pupils' attainment. In the better lessons tasks are modified so that higher attainers have work that extends beyond that given to the majority and lower attainers have less demanding tasks that are better suited to their levels of attainment. However, in a significant number of lessons teachers make insufficient use of the information they have gained from their assessments to ensure that all pupils have work that is matched to their learning needs.
- 23 The effectiveness of the teaching of writing was a key issue in the last inspection report. This has improved and pupils' learning in this key aspect of literacy is now satisfactory. However the school's efforts need to continue to consolidate the progress that has been made and to maintain the development. The teaching of oracy skills is in need of attention. There is insufficient focus in lessons on the teaching of this aspect of pupils' English and as a result they do not learn to speak out in class with sufficient confidence or competence. As a result many are reluctant to put forward their ideas unless asked a direct question by the teacher and even then their answers are often short and lacking in detail. This is adversely affecting their learning in all subjects. The teaching of reading is satisfactory and pupils are given regular encouragement to read a range of both fiction and non fiction texts.
- 24 Pupils' learning in most aspects of mathematics is satisfactory and they acquire a solid understanding of numbers, geometry and data handling. The issues surrounding the teaching and learning of thinking skills discussed previously in this section impact on pupils' ability to investigate numbers for themselves and to use and apply their mathematical knowledge. This aspect of the teaching of mathematics is unsatisfactory.

Teachers' use of information and communication technology as an aid to pupils' learning across the curriculum as a whole is developing satisfactorily.

- 25 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Class teachers are now more closely involved in drawing up the pupils' individual work plans, in consultation with the special needs coordinator and the support assistants. The expertise of the support assistants has increased through well focused training. The teachers draw in the weaker pupils well by including them in all question and answer sessions. All adults are good at ensuring that the special needs pupils experience success in front of their peers. The quality of the support that the learning support assistants and the teachers provide for pupils with special educational needs enables them to learn particularly well.
- 26 The quality of marking is satisfactory but tends to give praise rather than making clear to pupils which parts have been most successful and which need further work. Homework is provided regularly and consistently and provides an appropriate extension of school work.

**To summarise:**

- 27 All the lessons seen had positive features and there were none that were unsatisfactory. Satisfactory lessons had some strengths but also aspects that could have been improved.
- 28 The main areas for development in teaching and learning are:
- Ensuring that in all lessons the work given to pupils provides them with challenge but allows for the differing levels of attainment within the class;
  - Providing frequent opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of speaking skills and through this raise the contribution they make to lessons;
  - Encouraging pupils to make more decisions, find solutions to problems and to think for themselves;
  - Planning more opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively, share ideas and learn from each other;
  - Structuring lessons so that by the end pupils have a clear understanding of what they have learned and have some vision of what is coming next.

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

- 29 The curriculum has improved and is stronger than at the time of the last inspection. The coordinators have provided appropriate schemes of work for all the subjects and these have produced a better framework for lesson planning. Consequently the school offers pupils a sound, well balanced curriculum enriched by a well planned selection of visits to places of educational interest and an effective programme for pupils' personal, social and health education, which includes sex and drugs education. The school's scheme for religious education, based on the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus, is a model being adopted by other schools.
- 30 As in many schools, much time is given over to literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan well using the national strategies for these two subjects as the basis of their teaching. This has helped to improve standards in English and mathematics. However, the frequent use of standard worksheets significantly reduces the opportunities for pupils



to develop subject skills, such as using and applying mathematics in practical situations. The curriculum for English does not contain sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop research skills or to extend their speaking through open discussion, sharing ideas and structuring questions. The curriculum overall does not put a high enough value on the training of pupils to acquire independent learning skills which they can later apply on their own initiative within the classroom activities. These weaknesses are recognised by the school and form part of several coordinators' action plans.

- 31 The staff are beginning to expand the links between subjects that mutually reinforce the learning in each. For example, computer lessons for Year 5 link activities involving art software to awareness of shape and space in mathematics and to new learning in art and design about the use of colour and pattern. The whole creates a potentially strong learning package. These links are at an early stage of development, and while there is a good map of all the topics to be covered, there is no master plan to track this new pattern of curriculum development and pupils' response to it. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of, for example, coordinates are not progressing evenly because they are not taught in mathematics at the best time to bring out their value in geography. The lack of a whole school tracking document also means that the levels of skills and knowledge to be expected at the end each year, to benefit learning in the next, are not made explicit.
- 32 Teachers take care to ensure that long term planning provides equality of opportunity. This works best in the good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. This provision has maintained the high quality found at the time of the previous inspection, and remains a strength of the school. The teachers adjust the curriculum for the special educational needs pupils by means of individual education plans. These plans are now recorded on a clearer format giving pupils fewer, but more precise targets. The quality of the plans is good in many classes, but some do not show sufficiently precise criteria against which successful achievement of targets may be measured. Some individual plans still contain quite general targets and the quality is not consistent throughout the whole school.
- 33 Staff have found the various booster and other support groups valuable in enhancing pupils' progress, and these cover a range of abilities. However, the teachers' lesson planning, drawn from the mid term plans, still does not allow for sufficient extension for more able pupils and at times the worksheets used are daunting for those who find the work more difficult. When average and some lower attaining pupils are successfully completing the worksheets intended for the top groups it raises the question, "are those worksheets challenging enough?" The school does not yet have a register of gifted and talented pupils.
- 34 A strength of the school's planning is that it consults with parents and pupils, and takes their views into account. In the questionnaire they complete halfway through the year, the pupils give the teachers valuable insight into their view of progress. The pupils themselves have a positive view of the curriculum. They use words like "interesting, helpful, and fun" to describe their impressions. They particularly value the range of educational visits. The older pupils are a mature and level headed group, with a strong loyalty to the school, which they feel has helped them progress well, especially in preparation for the next stage in their education. The pupils have noticed the abundance of English and mathematics around the time of the national tests and many of them express regret at the lower attention given to the more practical and creative subjects as a result.

- 35 The school has sustained and in some instances extended its links with the community and with other schools and this has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. The school is well regarded by the local community and participates well in village events. Members of the local community also support the school well. Local shops and other businesses provide sponsorship and donations. Some pupils recently visited a nearby archaeological dig where they buried artefacts. The school has close links with both the nearby infant school and the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. A programme of reciprocal visits with the infant school makes transition smoother and ensures that information is exchanged effectively. The school also has good curricular links with the secondary school, especially in music and design and technology.
- 36 Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, the same as in the last inspection. The headteacher's vision, shared by the staff, to develop confident, polite pupils, aware of the consequences of their actions is planned most successfully in moral and social aspects of the curriculum. The planning for spiritual development is satisfactory but somewhat ad hoc. The teachers' awareness of spirituality has been raised by training and discussion, but the lack of a coordinator means that planning is not monitored to ensure a wide range of opportunities are built into the everyday activities of the school. While staff recognise and utilise some instances of awe and wonder as they occur, equally many are missed. Many assemblies focus well on moral issues such as fairness and temptation. They do not capture the ethos of a school family celebrating the triumphs of the human spirit in success and adversity. The strong capacity of the pupils to reflect and think below the surface of things, demonstrated in many religious education periods, does not transfer effectively to other situations. Pupils make little contribution to the planning or conduct of assemblies.
- 37 The arrangements for pupils' moral and social development are good. All adults act as good role models for the pupils. A sound programme of personal and social education is planned to give pupils guidance and information at suitable points in their development. The staff have high expectations of the pupils in terms of behaviour; and the routines of the day help the pupils to comply. This is what gives the school its distinct ethos of tolerance and good manners. Pupils learn generosity by supporting many charities during the school year, often linking the school to the wider, global, community. The opportunities for pupils to develop initiative are more restricted, including in their academic learning.
- 38 The arrangements to promote the cultural development of pupils are satisfactory overall. Basic skills are taught well through the curriculum for art and design, music, dance, literature and history and geography, but teachers do not sufficiently raise the pupils' awareness of the contribution that these subjects make and have made to their culture. Some opportunities are grasped, for instance when Year 6 pupils explored literature and the nature of myths and legends. Other opportunities are missed. For example, in assemblies pupils are not immersed in music, its feeling, personalities and provenance. The school introduces pupils to some of the diverse groups in our society, and effectively raises their awareness of different world religions and belief systems. However it does not expose pupils to the full range or richness of the cultures now resident in modern Britain, and the impact this will have on their future lives.

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

- 39 As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides good personal care for its pupils. The school creates a secure environment where pupils are valued. The headteacher has a pivotal role in the pastoral support of pupils and knows them well.

Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' personal circumstances and genuinely care about their well being. Governors are also involved in the support of pupils, with the chair of governors acting as a mentor for pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Other members of the governing body provide valuable support by accompanying pupils on residential visits. The arrangements for child protection are very good.

- 40 Procedures to ensure the safety of pupils in school and on out of school visits are good with appropriate written risk assessments in place and regular checks of the building carried out to identify any potential hazards. The site supervisor and governors provide good support in ensuring a safe environment is provided for pupils. Recent guidelines which have necessitated the appointment of a designated educational visits coordinator have been fully implemented. Safe practices are promoted in lessons and around school and pupils are reminded regularly about the need to observe rules to ensure their safety. Supervision at playtimes and at lunchtime is well organised and of high quality. An appropriate Internet safety policy is in place. The school follows local child protection guidelines closely. All staff are fully aware of procedures and documentation for this is all now fully in place, which constitutes an improvement since the last inspection.
- 41 Very good procedures are in place to encourage, praise and reward good behaviour effectively. Staff have high expectations of pupils' good conduct and instances of poor behaviour are recorded, extra support given and parents involved. Bullying and unkindness are not tolerated and pupils and parents report that rare instances are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school's merit system is well understood and appreciated by pupils and parents. Pupils can accumulate points and exchange these for prizes. A trophy and treat, such as an extra outing, are awarded to the 'Top Class' each half term and points can be deducted from the class when standards of behaviour fall below that which is expected. Pupils from Year 6 choose the two members of the year who they feel have made the most significant contribution to school who are then awarded the much valued 'Percy Roberts Award'.
- 42 Procedures which encourage and reward good attendance are in place and effective. Due to careful monitoring of attendance, a slight fall in attendance rates this year has been identified and steps are being taken to address this. Any lateness to school is recorded and followed up if necessary.
- 43 The procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. There have been several improvements in this aspect of the school's work since the previous inspection. An assessment coordinator has been appointed who liaises with the senior management, the core coordinators and other colleagues about all aspects of assessment, which is enabling useful developments to take place. Sound procedures are in place for the regular assessment of all subjects. These use a balance of periodic tests, some statutory and others optional, regular evaluations following a piece of work and less formal day to day assessments. Teachers keep thorough records of assessments, which help give them a clear view of the progress that pupils are making. However, the marking of pupils' work with comments that are constructive or inform pupils how they might improve is not consistent in the school.
- 44 The school analyses in detail the assessment data in mathematics, reading and writing and uses this satisfactorily to follow the progress that pupils make as they move through the school. This data is used to identify clearly any areas of strength and weakness that need to be addressed by different groups of pupils and to inform the targets the school is required to set in English and mathematics. These targets are reviewed annually by senior staff and governors to measure the progress that the school has made towards them. In some areas such as mental mathematics, data has been used by teachers to

good effect to inform their teaching. The use of individual pupil targets is still at an early stage of development and there are weaknesses in the way assessment data is used to pinpoint the specific learning needs of pupils and subsequently to match work in lessons to pupils' abilities.

- 45 The special needs coordinator is closely involved in the assessment of pupils, once teachers have expressed a concern about their learning. She uses a sound range of test materials to identify pupils' needs, and gives guidance to the teachers on drawing up individual pupil plans. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly, and the support assistants keep a daily record. The dates set to review progress cover the same timescale as in other schools. The school has developed very good links with specialist support agencies, and is able to call on them for assessments of pupils on the higher School Action Plus scale. These links work to the benefit of the pupils and contribute to their good progress. The school is able to meet or exceed the provision required for the seven pupils who have statements of special need.

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

- 46 The school has maintained the support of parents since the last inspection and continues to make good efforts to involve them in the education of their children. As at the time of the last inspection, parents are supportive of the school and their views are positive. Parents are particularly pleased with the teaching in school and the standards of behaviour achieved. All parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that expectations are high and that the school helps pupils become mature and responsible. They feel that the school is well led and that staff are approachable. Some have reservations about the range of activities provided outside lessons.
- 47 Inspectors agree with most of the positive views of parents although the teaching is satisfactory rather than good. Provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory and the curriculum is enriched by a large number of visits out of school including residential visits in Years 3 and 6.
- 48 Information provided for parents about the school and its work is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report are comprehensive and easy to read and newsletters keep parents well informed on day to day issues. Information on pupils' progress is provided at the adequate number of consultation evenings, which are very well attended by parents, and the annual written report to parents. These reports are detailed and give parents much useful information about what their children can do and how they are achieving, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The reports contain targets for pupils to work on although these are sometimes rather vague. The school's open door policy and the approachability of all staff ensure that any parent who would like to discuss their child's progress has adequate opportunity. Homework diaries provide a useful means of communication although their use by parents is rather inconsistent.
- 49 Parents are encouraged to help in school and many do. Some parents have had training in order to help them to support pupils' reading. Others provide useful assistance with sewing, cooking, sport or on visits out of school. The 'Friends of Norton Juniors' organise social and fundraising events which, as well as enhancing the life of the school, provide substantial additional funds which are used to supplement the resources for the benefit of pupils. These include a kitchen area, improvements to the play areas, computer and physical education equipment and kits for the school's sports teams.

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

- 50 The headteacher provides sound leadership, which has enabled the school to improve its standards steadily in line with national trends since it was last inspected in 1998 and to maintain its standing within the local community. Parents continue, with justification, to hold positive views of the school. The headteacher has a clear vision of what he wants the school to provide for its pupils and on the standards they should attain. His energy and commitment to the school generate a sense of shared purpose amongst staff and governors who are keen to make the school successful. He largely succeeds in his aim to ensure that the school is at the heart of the local community, providing a broad range of learning experiences as well as care, support and nurture for pupils. However, his desire to raise the attitudes and aspirations of teachers and parents to help improve pupils' performance and achievement has yet to be fully realised.
- 51 The headteacher, working effectively with the experienced deputy headteacher, has established a climate for school improvement but more work is needed to put in place the strategies to enable this to happen. The headteacher is supported by a team of senior teachers, which meets regularly, has clear roles and responsibilities, and is starting to make a positive impact on the drive to improve pupils' performance. A review of the school aims is over due because they do not focus enough on raising achievement. A thorough analysis of test data is carried out and realistic implications drawn. However, this is not yet used to full effect as part of a coherent strategy to help raise standards. For example, the information from assessment is not always being used effectively to ensure that all pupils have work which is matched to their needs or to establish targets for all pupils to help them to develop ownership in their learning.
- 52 The school's improvement plan is satisfactory and gives clear pointers to future developments as well as identifying initiatives for the current school year. It provides a solid framework for staff and governors because it sets clear targets, establishes who will oversee each task and identifies completion dates and the resources needed to get the job done. Links to the budget and to systems for monitoring spending are identified. The headteacher compiles the plan, although all staff and governors are consulted in the planning process to enable it to provide a sound steer for the school.
- 53 However, the following weaknesses impair the improvement plans' overall effectiveness:
- the document is too wordy and it is unclear which are the key priorities because they become entangled with others of lesser importance;
  - the criteria through which the success of identified priorities are evaluated are not always precise enough to enable the school to assess easily and systematically how much progress has been made;
  - parents are not consulted as a matter of course to enable them to comment on the direction the school is taking.
- 54 The school's procedures for monitoring the quality of education are not rigorous or regular enough, and are therefore unsatisfactory at present. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning, which has helped identify strengths and point to areas for development. However, an effective strategy for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is not yet embedded in the school's work. There is a need for staff training to help them understand the procedures to use and what to look for. Pupils' work is not checked for consistency, quality and quantity with sufficient regularity. As a result there are variations from class to class that have not been picked up or acted upon.
- 55 The governing body is increasingly involved in helping to shape the future direction of the school. This is largely due to the experienced chair of governors, who sets a good

example to others through his regular and productive meetings with the headteacher. Relevant committees are established and have clear terms of reference. Outcomes are recorded and fed back to meetings of the full governing body, which are held each term. The governing body holds the school accountable for its test results. It is involved in monitoring the progress towards the achievement of targets in the School Improvement Plan. Governors know what the strengths of the school are and some of the further developments that are needed. However, they are not yet involved enough in monitoring the teaching, the standards pupils achieve and the school's overall performance. Although the governing body meets its statutory requirements, they are a little too reliant on the headteacher for their information and need to probe and challenge more.

- 56 The school has a good performance management programme. Targets for the headteacher and teachers are linked both to the priorities in the School Improvement Plan and to areas identified by them for their own professional development. For example, a recent whole school focus on improving the quality of mental mathematics has been successful in helping pupils to improve their speed of mental recall. Support staff also attend courses to help improve their skills and the impact of this can be seen in the quality of support they provide for pupils. The school has good arrangements for the induction of all new staff to help ensure that they quickly become familiar with the school's approaches.
- 57 The management of special educational needs is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. The coordinator oversees this important area effectively and organises the complex but smooth running timetable of classroom support well. She manages the training of the learning support workers thoroughly. Because of this their already strong expertise is growing steadily. Lines of communication between coordinator, special needs assistants and teachers are well established and effective. Good links with partner schools help the coordinator to anticipate future needs and pass on vital information to the next stage. The close links with the local education authority ensure that the special needs budget is monitored closely to ensure value for money. The school has yet to set up effective systems for the identification and support of pupils who are gifted or who show particular talents.
- 58 Financial planning and monitoring are good. Financial planning is carried out appropriately. It ensures that the school's budget is used in the best interests of pupils, and that additional grants, such as those provided to support information and communication technology in schools, are used very well for their intended purpose. The governing body uses principles of best value to ensure competition in tendering. It challenges and questions the school over the level of spending and planned improvements, but is not proactive enough in questioning how well pupils are doing.
- 59 Daily routines are well established and the school runs smoothly. The headteacher and both secretaries have established working practices that minimise any overlap of responsibilities and result in very efficient administration and organisation. There are clear systems for ordering, checking deliveries and processing invoices, with most information stored electronically. The areas for improvement identified in the school's most recent audit have been addressed.
- 60 The school has an experienced teaching staff who are suitably matched to the subjects they lead and manage. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. They form a committed team who work together in the interests of the pupils at the school. A recent development has been the sharing of the coordination of some subjects between two members of staff. Those responsible for information and communication technology, for example, report that this has improved

their capacity to contribute positively to the progress that is being made in the subject. One part time teacher has responsibility for easing the transition for pupils in Year 6 between Norton School and the secondary school, which is a helpful link.

- 61 Learning support assistants provide support to teachers and pupils and are a valuable asset to the school. One assistant is also the information and communication technology technician, and makes a good contribution to the smooth running of the information and communication technology suite. Other specialists who enrich the life of the school include four visiting peripatetic teachers of music, and the school nurse. The office staff, caretaker, kitchen and cleaning staff set high standards in each of their areas, so that the school runs smoothly and is a pleasant place to be.
- 62 The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory and generally in good order. The Friends of the School have provided the school with a smart and useful kitchen area providing enhanced opportunities for pupils to learn food technology. There are extensive school fields and the play areas include a quiet area with wooden benches. A particularly attractive area is the school quadrangle, which has a pond and picnic tables where pupils can eat packed lunches. The hall accommodates the whole school so that acts of worship can involve all pupils at one time. The school toilets are not in as good order as the rest of the school and are in need of refurbishment.
- 63 Learning resources are sufficient for the pupils' needs and there has been a significant improvement to the quality of resources for information and communication technology since the last inspection. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Resources to support learning are good for religious education, physical education, art and design and information and communication technology and the school regularly reviews the number and quality of resources available. Classrooms have fiction and non fiction books and book stocks are enriched by the schools' library service. There is a fairly spacious room stocked with sets of books for use in lessons but there is no fully resourced library for pupils to use, a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. There are satisfactory displays of pupils' work, and many attractive photographs of recent residential trips. These interest pupils and inform parents and visitors about the work of the school.
- 64 Teaching and learning is at least sound for all pupils. Behaviour and relationships are good, although there are not enough opportunities for pupils to show initiative and for personal development. Pupils with special educational needs make mostly good progress as they move through the school. Leadership is sound and the school runs smoothly. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. Taking all of these factors into account as well as the overall standards that the school achieves, the school gives satisfactory value for money. However, there is clear potential for further improvement which is fully recognised by the school.

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

- 65 The headteacher, staff and governors should now address the following key issues:
- (1) Raise the quality of teaching and learning in order to generate high levels of achievement by:
    - constructing and rigorously implementing a consistent and cohesive whole school policy for teaching and learning;
    - providing more opportunities in all lessons for pupils to put forward their ideas, make decisions and to develop thinking skills;

- implementing strategies that increase pupils' involvement in learning, encourage them to interact with adults and other pupils and give them a clearer understanding of the progress they are making;
- making better use of the information teachers acquire through assessment to ensure that pupils of differing attainment have work that challenges them at an appropriate level.

(Paragraphs: 5, 14, 19, 21, 22, 28, 30, 33, 73, 75, 85, 101, 107, 126)

- (2) Raise standards of oracy by focussing closer attention of the teaching and learning of speaking skills in lessons in all subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 4, 23, 30, 67, 72, 75, 95, 96, 107)
- (3) Raise standards of practical mathematics by improving pupils' ability to solve problems, investigate numbers and apply their knowledge and skills in a wide range of contexts.  
(Paragraphs: 5, 24, 78)
- (4) Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning and subsequently the quality of information it provides by:
  - implementing a training programme which provides teachers with the skills they need to monitor and evaluate effectively.
  - establishing a clear programme of regular evaluation which incorporates the full range of strategies needed to collect high quality information;
  - providing staff with the time and opportunities to carry out the tasks for which they are responsible;
 (Paragraphs: 51, 54, 91, 98, 101, 109, 126)

In addition to the key issues the governors should consider the following additional less significant issues for inclusion in their action plan and:

- (a) Raise standards in geography by improving pupils' mapping skills.  
(Paragraphs: 9, 100)
- (b) Establish a register of gifted and talented pupils so that full provision can be made for those who fall into these categories.  
(Paragraph: 12, 57)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		5	13	26			
Percentage		11	30	59			

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	209
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence

%
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Unauthorised absence

%
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School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0.2
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	30	25	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	29
	Girls	17	18	23
	Total	39	41	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (68)	75 (70)	95 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	24	27
	Girls	17	20	23
	Total	37	44	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (64)	80 (70)	91 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

## Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
201	3	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1
Average class size	26.1

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	411,640
Total expenditure	429,336
Expenditure per pupil	1,960
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,132
Balance carried forward to next year	29,436

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

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	207
Number of questionnaires returned	64

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	41	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	56	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	66	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	47	48	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	56	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	38	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	48	16	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	41	50	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	61	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	27	25	5	13

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

### **ENGLISH**

66 By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English that meet expectations for their age. Reading standards are average. Pupils' listening skills are average. Pupils' skills in speaking are average in some respects, but in specific situations they are below average. The school has acted with determination to address the points raised in the previous inspection report, and this has enabled it to raise attainment in writing to a broadly average level. Girls have in the past performed better than boys. The staff have concentrated attention and resources on this, and in their workbooks and in lessons there is no evidence of gender differences. The expertise of the staff has grown with training and practice in implementing the literacy strategy. The teachers plan literacy as a key feature in many other subjects, to enable pupils to find information and record their views.

#### Speaking and listening:

67 There are many examples of pupils listening intently to their teachers. They follow instructions with understanding. When teachers give them the opportunity, pupils discuss eagerly in pairs or small groups. They readily exchange opinions and learn from each other. Such discussions are often animated, indicating that pupils have a very positive attitude to this kind of activity. The quality of the pupils' speaking in this respect is satisfactory. Occasionally it rises above average, for instance when the topic is of an abstract nature. For instance, Year 4 pupils show an unusual capacity to pursue difficult ideas until they feel they have a working understanding. In their work on Japanese Haiku poems they ferreted away until they had a grasp of 'subtlety.' They achieved this by bouncing ideas off each other. Summarising what they have learned and presenting it to the whole class is more problematic. Year 5 pupils, for instance, identified a range of special effects that mark performance poetry while discussing in pairs. They could not convey a summary of their ideas easily to the class, nor could they answer the teacher's questions fast enough to move the lesson on smoothly. In general, pupils do not expect to have to formulate ideas. Lessons in many subjects lack the spontaneity of pupil input and response that often characterises the primary classroom. To a marked extent this is because teachers have only recently seen the need to build the teaching and learning of speaking skills into their lessons as a key component.

68 The subject coordinator has identified this as a key area for development. The action to be taken is in two stages, outlined in the School Development Plan. First an assessment system to find exactly what pupils' attainment is, then the creation of a learning programme for oracy that will develop skills smoothly and progressively.

#### Reading:

69 The pupils enjoy reading. The teaching is satisfactory, and teachers ensure that pupils receive training in the basic skills and sufficient time to practise. Most pupils make satisfactory progress. A strong project of paired reading helps the pupils who have special educational needs particularly. The support assistants give these pupils quality individual support, and the impact is seen in better than expected progress. Pupils get sound opportunities to use their reading skills, for instance in finding information to aid their learning in science and religious education. Since the last inspection the curriculum has been improved and now includes the advanced reading skills of skimming and scanning. Although the school made provision for a room to become the

library, it is used more as a storeroom. When required teachers make sure enough books are brought in from loan sources. The small class libraries are unkempt and unclassified. They are not a suitable resource for pupils to learn how to access books for personal, directed research or to follow individual lines of enquiry.

- 70 The class fiction sections are also quite small. For the older, high level readers the range is not challenging enough, and these pupils often bring books in from home. Although they know about different types of text their range of reading is not wide enough. The school still does not get as many pupils to the higher levels of reading because the pupils are not adept at comparing authors, something that has a direct link to weaknesses in speaking. Pupils know what they want to say about the author's style and purposes, but they lack the confidence to use the vocabulary of abstract and evaluative terms. When teachers read, they do so in a lively and engaging manner. The pupils pick this up well, and most read with good expression.

#### Writing:

- 71 The subject coordinator made an important adjustment to the curriculum by separating writing into two strands. As well as narrative writing (the stories that pupils were used to) teachers introduced non narrative forms. The work in pupils' books shows a wide range of different styles such as diaries, complaints, persuasion, description and poetry. The range extends further within other subjects, such as geographical reports, scientific experiments, design evaluations. Pupils make sound progress with standards around the national average overall. However, the proportion of pupils attaining at an above average level is not yet high enough. The school has targeted these groups for special attention. The work teachers and support staff do with pupils who have special educational needs is effective, and reduces the number of pupils who attain at a low level. The various booster groups are also effective and are steadily reducing the proportion of pupils who do not reach the expected level. The teaching in lessons is satisfactory. Most teachers are using the literacy hour with increasing flexibility, avoiding long introductions and getting pupils involved in an activity early on. In some lessons good teaching is particularly effective in using pupils' discussions as a basis for lively writing. There is, however, a tendency to dwell too long on technical components so that pupils do not get a long enough time to practise their writing. Although planning is usually good, the writing component is often deferred to late in the week which makes it difficult for pupils to retain a sense of continuity.
- 72 Many pupils identify English as their favourite subject. This is not surprising, as most teachers are enthusiastic about it and use lively question and answer sessions to begin the lessons. Most are careful to include all abilities in the responses, but occasionally in classes where there are more boys, they tend to dominate. A particular strength is the attention the teachers give to figurative language. From Year 3, learning about homonyms, to Year 6, recognising alliteration and onomatopoeia, pupils gain a good sense of embellished writing. Teachers regularly urge pupils to use powerful words. However, they do not give pupils access to the source of those words often enough. Even the older pupils say they rarely use a thesaurus. Yet many pupils relish new words, for instance Year 6 pupils came up with good vocabulary as they struggled to express their ideas about myths. They saw their characters having "muddled emotions" and "with a bit of compassion" could arrive at a happy ending. The coordinator has rightly identified better speaking as the key to improved writing, and the action plan includes the urgent formulation of a speaking scheme to link with writing.
- 73 Pupils' handwriting peaks in Year 4. The school has moved forward on the teaching of how to plan stories and other writing. Consequently the older pupils do a lot of note



taking as they marshal the information they need. This is tending to reduce the quality of handwriting, even though pupils can recover it when doing 'neat work'. The use of structured writing plans, known as 'writing frames' has been very effective. Year 6 pupils can recall key elements for different styles of plan. Planning for narrative writing has not been as effective, and pupils are putting almost as much text in the plans as in the stories. This is because the skill is not embedded early enough, and the range of formats is restricted. There is little sign, for instance of the 'mind mapping' flowcharts which many pupils find quick and useful. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is improving. The strategy of telling pupils what they need to do to improve is becoming more common and beginning to have a positive impact. It helps pupils to know what improvements to try, and punctuation in particular is improving because of it. Year 6 pupils have started looking at levels of writing on completion of some work, but overall they have limited knowledge of their own learning. This strategy could be extended to give pupils even more detail of their progress, for instance how quickly they are moving through the levels. Assessment procedures help teachers to track pupils' progress, and enable them to identify pupils for the appropriate ability groups and level of work given. However, assessment is not used in a strategic sense to indicate if a whole group or class is moving quickly enough through the necessary components of writing to reach the overall targets, and to find the right levels of challenge for the brightest pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 74 By the end of Year 6 standards in mathematics are similar to the national average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the one reported at the time of the last inspection and indicates that the school has maintained standards at a sound level and kept pace with the national rise in attainment. On balance, there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since 1998, although some of the weaknesses identified at that time still remain. In 2002 three quarters of the Year 6 pupils who took the national mathematics tests reached or exceeded the expected level and almost a quarter attained the higher level. These results were very close to results obtained in similar schools, but they did not quite reach the target the school had set for pupils' performance. This year's target is a challenging one as it is considerably higher than last year, and provides clear indication of the school's commitment to higher standards over time.
- 75 All pupils make at least sound progress in the development of understanding of number, shape, space, measures and in their ability to handle and interpret data. By the end of Year 6, most pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide with increasing understanding and accuracy. Higher attaining pupils change fractions to decimals and percentages. Pupils employ mathematical instruments, such as protractors correctly and accurately, and higher attaining pupils explain the differences between a rhombus and a trapezium. However, the inability of some to recall number facts, such as their tables, slows their progress. Many pupils are reluctant speakers in lessons and teachers have to work hard to elicit responses from them. As a result many pupils do not confidently share their thoughts and ideas about finding solutions to number problems, and teachers have to input a considerable amount of information to move pupils' learning forwards.
- 76 Pupils with special educational needs make good gains against the targets set for their learning. Their individual needs are identified clearly and they receive well structured and effective support from committed support assistants and their teachers.
- 77 Teaching and learning are mostly sound with some good features. Very good teaching was observed in Year 4. In these lessons, teachers' high expectations result in challenging work, and pupils putting more effort into getting things right. Purposeful

questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. A good choice and use of resources ensures that learning is effective. High levels of enthusiasm from the teacher, good relationships, sound subject knowledge and a brisk pace help to keep pupils motivated and involved. However, pupils sometimes have too little time to practise and develop important skills. This is because teachers spend too long with introductions, which sometimes holds more able pupils back. However, even when they have to spend too long listening, pupils usually respond well, and try hard to produce their best work.

- 78 Despite the teaching having a range of positive attributes, there are too few lessons in which pupils are engaged in investigative tasks involving real life problems. The lessons teachers provide give pupils a solid grounding in basic calculation, measurement and data handling, but too few opportunities to make decisions and to develop the skills of problem solving. Very few pupils readily look for different ways of arriving at an answer and often fail to appreciate that one of the keys to success is to choose a method with which they are confident and comfortable. As a result many are unable to select and use a method of calculation which works for them and are heavily reliant on the teacher when something new appears. This is the main reason why pupils' achievements in mathematics are satisfactory rather than good. When these skills are taught effectively they have a marked effect. In Year 4, for example, teachers are promoting this very important principle of choosing the most effective strategy consistently and continually. The positive effect that this has on pupils' learning and on their motivation is clearly seen in the quality of their work and attitudes to the subject. These benefits were very evident in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils confidently investigated reflective shapes and came to well formed conclusions as to what was happening.
- 79 There are times when pupils do not achieve as much as they could because the work they have been given is not matched carefully to their precise needs. Too often higher attaining pupils are required to complete the same work as the rest of the class before proceeding to suitably challenging tasks. Particularly in number, there is often too much unnecessary consolidation of work, and pupils do not move on to the next stage of their learning as quickly as they could. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about percentages, in which all pupils were required to calculate price reductions, pupils were required to complete too many very similar examples, which led to lower interest and involvement from pupils.
- 80 In the majority of classes pupils clearly take pride in their work and in the quality of the presentation but there are inconsistencies between classes and in some books the work is untidy and space is wasted. At its best, teachers' marking gives a clear indication of what pupils have done well and what needs to be improved. However, marking often lacks useful comments and pupils are not made fully aware of their own learning. There is some use of information and communication technology to promote pupils learning in mathematics, such as when Year 5 pupils use spreadsheets to assemble data they have collected during a science experiment, but this is in need of further development. The development of number skills through other subjects is uneven. In history pupils' understanding of the passage of time features prominently in lessons, but in design and technology there is too little use of dimension and scale.
- 81 The subject management is satisfactory and there are clear plans for its continued development, such as a strong emphasis on pupils developing and understanding a wide range of mathematical vocabulary. Through her effective teaching the coordinator sets a good example for others to follow. The recent focus on mental mathematics has helped pupils to improve their speed of mental recall and gain confidence in the subject. Mathematics is well represented in the curriculum in all years and National Curriculum

requirements are satisfactorily addressed. However, despite recent initiatives to discourage the slavish adherence on commercial schemes, identified as a weakness in the last inspection, these, and the use of worksheets, are relied on too widely in many lessons. Assessment arrangements are rapidly becoming embedded in the school's work to help teachers to track pupils' progress and inform them what they know and understand.

## SCIENCE

- 82 Pupils' attainment in science at the end of Year 6 is above national expectations. Similarly, pupils' performance in national tests in 2002 was above average when compared with both national results and also those of similar schools. There has been good improvement in standards in science since the time of the last inspection.
- 83 By the end of Year 6 most pupils develop a broad knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes. For example, pupils can explain how plants make food, know that salt can be recovered from a solution by evaporation, and can relate night and day to the spin of the earth on its axis. More pupils than average have a deeper understanding of a range of science concepts. For example, during discussions it was evident that some pupils in Year 6 could readily transfer their knowledge to everyday situations. They could explain that a pencil remained motionless on the table because of the balanced forces on it, and are able to describe what these forces are.
- 84 In the most effective lessons, pupils improve their knowledge and understanding of science concepts through practical enquiry. Pupils begin in Year 3 by carrying out simple tests. In one lesson seen in Year 3, pupils had to decide the best way to find out how well light passed through different materials. After carrying out their experiments, pupils were able to suggest the uses of some transparent and opaque materials and could relate this work to their knowledge of shadows. By Year 6, pupils can select which factors should be changed and which kept the same in order to make a fair test. On one occasion this helped them find out which is the best material to insulate ice. However, the extent of pupils' involvement in scientific activities varies between year groups, and sometimes even between parallel classes so that pupils' progress in scientific enquiry is erratic. The school does not have a progress map for the skills of scientific enquiry and this adversely affects teachers' planning for pupils' skills development.
- 85 The quality of teaching of science is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. Pupils learn particularly well when their own ideas are incorporated into the learning. In a lesson in Year 4, the teacher made excellent use of pupils' prior knowledge and allowed them to test their suggestions so they better understood ideas involved. Lessons run smoothly, because teachers are well organised and manage pupils well during activities. Pupils enjoy science and are well behaved. They collaborate well, making gains in their personal development as a result. A particular strength of teachers' use of literacy in science is the importance placed on scientific vocabulary. Teachers focus carefully on correct terminology, so that by Year 6 pupils know the meaning of a good range of technical words. This is evident in pupils' recorded work where pupils use words like vertebrate, chlorophyll or carbon dioxide in the correct context. Teaching assistants provide valuable help to teachers and to pupils with special educational needs. This was observed in a challenging lesson in Year 6 where pupils were planning a fair test by choosing which factors they should vary and those they should keep the same. The learning support assistant took aside some pupils with special educational needs, and worked with them on a similar task at a slower rate. This meant that these pupils were included fully in the lesson and could achieve the lesson objectives. Further emphasis on asking pupils for explanations or reasons for their

observations and results in practical work would increase the challenge for potentially high attaining pupils.

- 86 The curriculum in science is enhanced well by a variety of residential visits, which often provide pupils with the valuable opportunity to study plants and animals in situ. Activities shown in photographs on display include pupils identifying pond animals using keys, and examining rocks and soils in a range of different locations.
- 87 Although pupils do have access to some multimedia programmes, and use the information and communication technology suite, for example to prepare spreadsheets, they have yet to use monitoring equipment to measure temperature, or light or sound levels. The coordinator is aware of the need to extend the use of information and communication technology in science and plans have already been made to purchase further equipment.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 88 Standards in art and design are broadly in line with national requirements by the end of Year 6, as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, some pupils' work, which involves recording from direct observation, is above national standards.
- 89 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound and sometimes good, progress in their ability to explore and develop ideas, investigate and make a finished article using design and a variety of skills, techniques and materials. This is because the subject has a secure place in the curriculum and a clear structure to facilitate learning. It is soundly led and there are clear plans for its continued improvement. A visiting artist and part time teacher at the school help to extend and enrich pupils' learning. Important skills, such as in drawing, are given good emphasis, often through the use of sketch books. Displays, a weakness when the last inspection took place, are used well to instruct and motivate pupils as well as to celebrate their efforts and achievements.
- 90 In a study of environmental art, Year 3 pupils make attractive small models of larger sculptures. In drawing, they complete half a face by closely studying the remaining half, showing good use of shading to create effect and ensure symmetry. Year 5 pupils complete pictures that faithfully reflect the style of L S Lowry, after studying some of his work. By the end of Year 6, pupils complete portraits of people in action to a good standard from photographs, successfully recreating skin colour and showing a developing eye for detail. They complete careful and colourful pictures of landscapes using different media, some of which capture mood well, and show correct perspective to enhance realism. Good observational skills are evident in the detailed sketches of animals and birds that pupils make. Many have begun to evaluate their work realistically to consider possible improvements.
- 91 Weaknesses exist, however, which prevent pupils from making the best possible progress. For example, there is a general lack of emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding of the work of famous artists to help pupils contrast ideas, methods and approaches with their own work and develop a range of styles. The coordinator has no opportunity to observe lessons to learn what works well and what doesn't, and is therefore not yet a fully effective manager of the subject.
- 92 Teaching and learning is at least sound overall, and was good and very good during the inspection. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on the theme of journeys, in which some pupils showed a journey on a clay tile while others did so by sewing on fabric, good

classroom organisation ensured that all pupils had worthwhile tasks to perform and were able to access the materials they needed. The teacher placed clear emphasis to the development of important skills to ensure pupils made good progress. Her subject knowledge was secure, she was enthusiastic in her approach and adult helpers assisted her well in giving pupils much encouragement and support. As a result of such approaches and strategies, pupils enjoy art, and for some it is their favourite subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 93 By Year 6 standards of attainment meet national expectations and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is a distinct improvement since the school was last inspected and satisfactory progress has been made in addressing the key issue from the last report which required the school to raise standards. Most Year 6 pupils appreciate the necessity for careful planning and have a sound grasp of the design and make progress as a whole. However, they still need a considerable amount of step by step support and guidance in order to convert an initial idea into a finished article. The majority have acquired a range of making skills that are appropriate for their age. Construction skills with fabrics, for example, have enabled them to produce attractive and well made slippers that quite rightly are a considerable source of pride. Pupils who sometimes find work in more academic subjects difficult often achieve better levels of success in design and technology which does much to enhance their self esteem. This is particularly evident in the good progress that pupils with special educational needs often make in this subject.
- 94 Throughout the school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills develop steadily and progressively. Prior to making their own sandwiches, Year 3 pupils enjoy evaluating shop produced ones and through this learn the importance of basing design decisions on solid information they have gathered for themselves. The emphasis teachers place on good hygiene adds an important extra element to pupils' learning. Year 4 pupils learn how simple mechanisms operate and make pop up storybooks in which the characters perform a variety of actions. Such projects not only help pupils to develop subject skills but also extend their reading and writing. By Year 5, pupils are working with a wider range of materials and using tools such as bench hooks and saws effectively when constructing wooden musical instruments.
- 95 Although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, it is limited by their general reluctance to make decisions for themselves. Many rely too heavily on their teachers and do not take the initiative when they could. For example, in the Year 5 lesson seen, the majority of pupils were making identical xylophones to a design provided by the teacher. While pupils show good levels of interest and work hard to produce something of good quality, there is often too little individuality. In addition, many pupils do not yet recognise how the skills and techniques they have been taught in previous projects should be utilised and adapted to fit new circumstances.
- 96 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are provided with an interesting range of activities and given clear instructions on how to use tools and materials correctly. Lessons are organised well and a constructive, hands on approach is adopted. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and are able to trust them to behave responsibly. Pupils move about the classroom in an orderly way, collecting materials for themselves and getting on with their work without having to be continually supervised. The atmosphere in lessons is pleasant and productive. However, at times, teachers over direct the lesson and give too much information, which compounds pupils' reluctance to make their own decisions. As a result, when pupils hit a snag they almost

inevitably seek the teacher's advice rather than try to solve the problem themselves. This is limiting the development of their thinking skills.

- 97 Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the national scheme of work as the basis of its teaching and learning programme and this, along with other work, has strengthened the curriculum significantly. Older pupils annually participate in a local technology challenge, which this year has been sponsored by a major motor manufacturer. During the inspection, pupils returned from the final evaluation with trophies and rewards for their efforts after successfully building anti collision sensors that could be fitted to the outside of vehicles. The 'Friends of the School' have provided funds to resource a well furnished food technology area. This is currently being used by groups of Year 6 pupils to plan and make a meal for invited guests. Pupils are deriving much enjoyment from this initiative which is providing a fitting end for their studies in the subject before they transfer to the high school.
- 98 The subject coordinator took up the post after the last inspection and has been instrumental in moving it forward to its current satisfactory position. As a result of her work the subject is now firmly established as an integral part of the curriculum. The principle areas of development upon which the subject manager now needs to focus are to raise pupils' level of independence and to establish more comprehensive systems for monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 99 Standards in geography are below national expectations by the end of Year 6. This represents a deterioration since the last inspection when standards were in line with national levels.
- 100 Progress for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory as they move through the school. This is largely because mapping skills, although given much emphasis, are not taught in logical sequence. For example, pupils in Year 3 are introduced to world maps too early to help them to develop essential mapping skills. Pupils do not make enough use of atlases, globes, maps and plans of different scales. As a result, when pupils complete tasks requiring them to mark on outline maps geographical features, such as rivers and cities, and to colour countries, they are often inaccurate and do not demonstrate understanding.
- 101 Other weaknesses prevent pupils from making best possible gains in learning. All pupils usually complete the same task, which slows the progress of higher attaining pupils. The coordinator does not have sufficient opportunity to monitor pupils' work or assess the teaching and learning in lessons regularly and therefore has been unable to acquire a comprehensive picture of the provision the school is making for the subject. As a result she is not able to plan effectively to help take the subject forward. Displays are not used well enough to aid learning, such as to extend pupils' geographical vocabulary. Planning addresses the requirements of the curriculum, but pupils sometimes have to wait too long between one geographical topic and another. As a result, it is difficult for teachers to build on knowledge, skills and understanding because pupils forget what they have previously learnt. Teachers do not give enough emphasis to local fieldwork to help bring the subject to life nor exploit opportunities enough on residential visits to enrich pupils' learning experiences. There are not enough opportunities to develop number and literacy skills in geography at present, although a few examples were seen.

102 The subject is quite well represented in Year 5. Because of this, and the fact that geography is taught in all years to a structured plan, pupils make some progress in limited areas as they move through the school. Pupils' use of information and communication technology to support work in geography is developing. For example, pupils in Year 5 use information and communication technology to represent and compare data from traffic surveys carried out in different places and Year 6 pupils use the internet to find out about Mount Everest. Pupils gain some geographical knowledge as they move through the school. For example, Year 3 pupils use different sources, including a video, to discover how the lives of children who attend a village school in India differs from their own. Year 5 pupils consider how water can erode the landscape and start to compare amounts of rainfall in some of the world's cities. By the end of Year 6, pupils have too little knowledge of places and their location and do not have the width of geographical vocabulary expected for their age. However, they know how some mountains and volcanoes are formed, discover how inhabitants use rivers and valleys, and know how places can be damaged and improved by the actions of people. They learn that a river has different kinds of wildlife at each stage of its journey from its source to the sea. The primary weakness is that pupils' attainment is fragmented rather than forming a cohesive body of knowledge and skills.

103 Because pupils are not achieving enough, the teaching and learning in geography is unsatisfactory. However, there are positive signs that with development this shortfall can be rectified and two of the lessons seen during the inspection were taught well. This was because teachers' choice and use of resources, and their good questioning of pupils helped them to learn. Their secure subject knowledge, enthusiastic approach and the encouragement they gave pupils kept them interested and involved. They wasted no time and kept a clear focus on learning and ensured pupils responded well. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not share the lesson target with pupils to focus them on what they are to learn. Marking is not used consistently to help pupils to move forward, and teachers' knowledge of how pupils acquire and develop mapping skills is not secure.

## **HISTORY**

104 Year 6 pupils attain standards that meet national expectations for their age and across the school as a whole, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' level of attainment has been maintained since the last inspection and the adoption of the national scheme of work for the subject has strengthened the curriculum. Overall there has been satisfactory subject development in the five years since the school was last inspected.

105 Year 6 pupils have a sound grasp of how artefacts from the past enable historical data to be assembled and recognise books and the computer as important sources of information. They appreciate that history is cumulative and that a variety of invaders and settlers have left a lasting mark on Britain. Most pupils show a solid understanding of how life has changed over time, identifying, for example, the advances in medicine that make modern life different from that of the Victorians. Their chronological awareness is not as well developed and many have problems placing eras, such as the Victorian period, on an accurate time scale.

106 The progression of pupils' learning is better than at the time of the last inspection and there is a steady and systematic build up of knowledge and understanding. Year 3 pupils gain much from examining old photographs of the local area and are able to recognise how the local villages have changed over time as well as identify local landmarks that are still in existence but may have changed their usage. Visits to some of these, such as the local Methodist Chapel, help to consolidate pupils' knowledge.

This productive use of artefacts is used by teachers in other years. In Year 4, pupils extract information about family life in the past by examining wills written in old English. This is challenging work but pupils concentrate well and try hard to make sense of the strange writing and expressions they are looking at.

107 The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons thoughtfully and look for ways in which they can involve pupils in finding things out for themselves. Regular educational visits for all ages form a key part of teachers' strategies for history. As well as using the local area pupils embark on visits further afield. A model Viking village, World War II camp and Victorian Hall are just some of the excursions that pupils rate highly amongst the school's most positive features. On occasions the tasks pupils are given do not make full allowance for the range of attainment in the class. Some pupils are not made to think enough or the task is too daunting for the lower attainers and they do not get very far. In general there is too much individual work and opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, discuss their thoughts and bounce ideas off each other are missed. As a result, many pupils tend to select the first answer they think of and do not think to consider alternative possibilities. There is a reluctance to speak out in class and discussions are often reliant on frequent teacher input.

108 Teachers often use history effectively to extend pupils' literacy skills. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils were required to use dictionaries to work out the meaning of a range of commonly used prefixes and suffixes that originated from Ancient Greece. This well conceived activity promoted pupils' understanding of the lasting legacy of this ancient civilisation while at the same time extending their appreciation of the structure of the words they use. Stronger links with numeracy would benefit pupils' chronological awareness and the use of information and communication technology in history is recognised as an area for development.

109 Subject management is satisfactory. The coordinator has a sound view of the direction the subject needs to take but the strategies for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are in need of improvement.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

110 The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 meets national expectations. There have been considerable improvements in the opportunities for pupils to develop skills in information and communication technology at the school since the time of the previous inspection. The pupils currently in Year 6 have made good progress in the two years since the computer suite has been operational.

111 Year 6 pupils have had a satisfactory range of experiences of finding things out, making things happen and sharing and exchanging information and can, for example, use the internet to search for information selectively. In one lesson they used a search engine successfully to retrieve certain insect pictures, which they then pasted into a newspaper page, which they were compiling. Pupils demonstrated competence in multiple skills including designing the layout of the newspaper page, adding borders and 'parking' one program while they imported material from another. During discussions, pupils described clearly how they had controlled a 'turtle' through the computer by giving instructions using 'LOGO' programming. They were familiar with using interactive multimedia, and with sending messages by email. Pupils' understanding of the use of modelling, and of simulations is less well developed because the curriculum places less emphasis on these elements. Equipment for monitoring events like temperature is about to be purchased.



- 112 Pupils of all ages achieve well in information and communication technology. Progress is enhanced by the well resourced computer suite which staff are becoming increasingly confident in using. From Year 3, pupils learn to access their own 'space' on the computer, and how to save information to it. They are beginning to learn some of the more sophisticated skills. In one lesson in Year 3 pupils were learning how to send a message to other members of the group. A particularly useful feature of the suite is the 'class link' which enables the teacher to access pupils' work on a specially designated computer. In one lesson in Year 4, the teacher skilfully used this facility to show pupils each other's poster designs in the last part of the lesson, allowing pupils to reflect critically on their work. Pupils with special educational needs are given good quality support by learning support assistants who provide them with encouragement and make suggestions, yet ensure these pupils to do as much as possible themselves.
- 113 Teaching in information and communication technology is satisfactory overall. A very positive feature is teachers' skilful organisation and careful management of pupils in the suite so that time is used effectively. As a result, pupils enjoy information and communication technology lessons and are generally well behaved. Pupils are familiar with routines and many are willing to attempt to cope with difficulties themselves if the teacher is helping another pupil. Teachers assess pupils as they visit them at the computer, and work hard to give pupils the individual tuition they need in order to build up their skills. This aspect of information and communication technology is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when day to day assessment was regarded as minimal. Other assessment procedures in information and communication technology are currently being developed to better match tasks to pupils' needs. Teachers use the digital projector competently for demonstrations at the start of lessons though these are sometimes a little long. Sharing computers provides good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills which enhance their personal development.
- 114 In some information and communication technology lessons, effective links with other subjects are developing. Subject coordinators recognise the benefits of using information and communication technology to aid pupils' learning across the curriculum as a whole and many have identified this for further improvement. A productive example was seen in a lesson in Year 5 in which pupils were entering data collected in a science lesson into a spreadsheet. They considered which would be the most appropriate chart to present the data. This lesson made links with science and mathematics and effectively promoted information and communication technology as an aid to learning in different subjects. Also, pupils in Year 6 could talk about using information and communication technology in science for virtual experiments, in history for finding information, and in geography for a virtual river tour.
- 115 Two members of staff share the coordination of information and communication technology. They both lead and manage the subject well. The suite has 16 machines with internet access, which means that in the smaller classes pupils can often use a computer individually. The school benefits from a technician for the information and communication technology suite for about ten hours a week. Staff have completed their latest round of training, and learning support assistants are to be trained shortly. The development of information and communication technology is a priority for the school and a comprehensive development plan up to 2004 includes schedules for improvements in hardware and software, development of the school website, continuing staff development and further use of information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum.

## **MUSIC**

- 116 By the end of Year 6 standards in music meet national expectations. Levels of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection when standards in music were also average for pupils of this age.
- 117 Pupils develop a satisfactory range of musical skills during their time at the school.
- 118 Lessons involve pupils in a good range of musical activities so that by Year 6 pupils have been involved in composing, listening, appraising and performing music. During lessons and in assemblies, pupils generally sing tunefully. They sing in rounds, which improves their listening skills and helps them control the pitch of their voices. In one lesson in Year 6, pupils read from a 'score' consisting of notes which could be arranged in several rhythmical patterns. Pupils' rhythmic accuracy and memory for musical sounds improved in a lesson seen in Year 4 when pupils successfully recalled sound signals played on a compact disc and then used tuned percussion instruments to play a series of rhythmical phrases. Pupils also use tuned percussion instruments to compose, and to compare and contrast melodies. In Year 5, pupils could arrange four simple phrases in any order, play them, and then reflect on the sound sequences they had made.
- 119 A particular strength of music in the school is the opportunities that pupils have to enrich their experiences in music by taking part in major productions. These often involve over half the school, and all pupils hone their singing skills when songs from forthcoming productions are practised during singing assemblies. In one such assembly, the whole school practised songs from the musical 'Oliver'. Pupils were led expertly by the music coordinator who has a high quality singing voice, and who encouraged pupils to show expression, a feature of singing, which older pupils found more difficult. A teacher who played the guitar and a group of pupils who used keyboards accompanied the singing well.
- 120 Teaching in music is satisfactory overall. Teachers manage pupils well when they are taking part in musical activities and as a result pupils enjoy music. All pupils including those with special educational needs have a chance to take part. Pupils are used to being 'counted in' before performing though on only some occasions are pupils urged to prepare for singing by 'breathing in' or 'sitting up'. During a lesson in Year 5 the teacher asked the pupils to describe what the music they had composed felt like. This gave pupils the opportunity to be expressive, and to understand how music can create different moods or effects. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities of this nature. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in music are relatively recent, and further development in the use of assessments in planning is underway.
- 121 A published scheme of work to be used alongside government guidelines is just being introduced. This provides useful guidance for teachers who feel they need support with music. One area for development already identified by the coordinator is to use more information and communication technology in music. A wider range of instruments from other cultures would broaden pupils' experiences of a range of styles of music and increase the contribution the subject makes to their cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 122 At the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that meet national expectations. This represents satisfactory achievement across the school as a whole and is a similar picture to when the school was last inspected. There has been satisfactory

development in the subject since the last inspection with the introduction of the national scheme of work and strengthening of the curriculum, particularly for dance.

- 123 The majority of Year 6 pupils are able to sprint at a satisfactory speed with sufficient control to negotiate successfully a slalom course made up of other members of the class. Lower attaining pupils of both sexes have difficulty adjusting the direction of their movement quickly enough and soon show signs of breathlessness. The majority of pupils throw, catch, dribble with feet and direct a ball with a hockey stick with reasonable accuracy and control. Higher attainers do this well and are able to keep a ball under close control while moving at speed.
- 124 Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through from Year 3 to Year 6. Pupils' control over their own actions, ability to perform in dance and aptitude with games equipment, such as balls of various sizes, develops steadily as they grow older. Most have a sound grasp of the importance of gradual warm up and can explain the dangers of becoming too active too quickly. Pupils' ability to self evaluate and to evaluate the performance of others varies but is generally not as well developed as other aspects of their learning. In the most effective lessons teachers develop pupils' ability to evaluate well, but in other lessons the techniques involved are not promoted frequently enough or with sufficient clarity. When playing invasion games, such as bench ball, better performing pupils have started to look at the full picture of what is happening and move into space to make themselves available to receive the ball, but many pupils have still to acquire these more advanced skills. Standards in swimming are well up to expectations and by the end of Year 5 almost all pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres.
- 125 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and on occasions good. Several of the lessons seen during the inspection were rescheduled due to unseasonable bad weather. When this happened the teachers provided worthwhile alternative activities indicating clear and secure subject knowledge. Careful lesson planning ensures a high level of pupil activity and an efficient use of the time available. Relationships are good and pupils respond to the instructions they are given quickly and well. On occasions there is a tendency for teachers to give information and over direct when they should be asking questions to develop pupils' thinking or asking them to make decisions for themselves. Pupils' enjoyment of physical education is clear and they take a pride in representing the school at football and in the local schools' swimming gala. The enthusiasm they show is epitomised by the fact that the school has gone a whole year without any pupil forgetting his or her swimming kit.
- 126 The subject is managed by an enthusiastic coordinator who recognises that more effective ways of monitoring the provision and its impact on pupils' learning need to be developed. The Friends of the School make a positive contribution to physical education. Most recently they have provided new apparatus trolleys and replaced the kits for the school teams. The accommodation and resources are generally good. The school has extensive playing fields and a reasonably sized hall. Equipment is plentiful although the fixed apparatus in the hall is showing some signs of age. Year 3 and Year 6 pupils benefit from residential visits in which they are able to participate in a variety of outdoor pursuits. These are much appreciated by the pupils and enrich the physical education curriculum significantly. Pupils benefit further from the expertise of visitors to the school who provide coaching in a range of sports including football, rugby and cricket.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 127 At the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The impact of the structured planning scheme has grown steadily since the last inspection, and has enabled the pupils to make satisfactory progress. Pupils develop sound knowledge and understanding of Christian traditions, values and beliefs. They achieve particularly well in learning from religion, and this shows in their good moral attitude, pleasant nature and in the care and concern they show for others. The teachers and classroom assistants give good support to pupils who have special educational needs. They are included well in the question and answer sessions, and get good opportunities to express their views.
- 128 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. All teachers plan well, but in the strongest lessons the methods used are inspiring. In these lessons, the teachers get the pupils fully engaged in the subject matter, and thinking about how the learning links to their own experience. For instance, Year 4 pupils had to think deeply about the nature of things, before they could understand the difficult concept of the Five Pillars of Islam. The teacher gave the pupils time to express quite complex ideas, let the ideas build up and then showed them how they had learned from each other. The teacher controlled the flow of answers well and kept up a rapid pace to the lesson. The pupils addressed all their ideas to the teacher. The lesson could only have been improved by encouraging the pupils to engage each other in debate.
- 129 In many lessons the teachers use resources well. The Year 6 teacher strengthened the lesson on Sikh wedding customs, for example, by having one girl dress in the appropriate costume. As each item was added, the class reflected on similarities with Christian traditions. In this way the teachers make pupils aware that different religions focus on similar rituals, but express them in different ways. Pupils show by their own questions that they know that these are important issues, and relevant to special features in their own lives. They have a good attitude to this kind of learning. The teachers do not then take the opportunity of extending this awareness to contemporary issues and the ethnic mix of our population and these missed opportunities detract from the overall quality of the teaching.
- 130 The teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy skills well to read information that will be useful for learning facts and details, and to express their ideas in a variety of styles of writing. In writing that compares new learning with old, Year 6 pupils show considerable insight into the tenets of the Sikh faith, displayed in a way that the teacher and pupils can use for reference during lessons. Teachers are constantly encouraging the pupils to look below the surface, and not to accept the first answer at face value. For instance Year 3 pupils learning about the Sikh holy book, were eager to convince the teacher that they took the same amount of care with the Christian Bible. When the teacher prompted them further, they realised that this was an exaggeration, but that there were many other instances of things they valued at home to which they gave similar care. This deepened their learning about 'specialness' and reverence.
- 131 The good leadership by the coordinator has raised the profile of religious education in the school, as a subject that pupils enjoy and value. The new planning scheme, a model of good practice for other schools, has achieved sound progression of skills and knowledge through the four junior years. The coordinator's action plan gives priority to phasing in a suitable assessment scheme to log pupils' attainment and progress, and the expansion of resources to include more computer software.