

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHESTER PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Fishponds, Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 108920

Headteacher: Mr Robert Alway

Reporting inspector: Mr Jeff Lemon  
21116

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 246836

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:	Ridgeway Road Fishponds Bristol
Postcode:	BS16 3SY
Telephone number:	0117 9654649
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ella Beard
Date of previous inspection:	12 <sup>th</sup> January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21116	Jeff Lemon	Registered inspector	Design and Technology, Physical Education, English as an Additional Language	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	English, Geography, History, Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	Science, Information and Communication Technology, Art and Design, Education Inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23999	Catherine Davey	Team inspector	Mathematics, Music, Religious Education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Chester Park Junior School serves the local community in the Fishponds area of East Bristol. The school is housed in Victorian buildings and although there has been some modernisation, space is at a premium in the school. Most pupils come from the mixture of private and local authority housing within about one mile of the school. The school is popular and has more applications than it can accommodate. It is an average sized school with 244 pupils aged between seven - eleven arranged in eight classes. There are currently more boys than girls. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 18.6, which is average. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is 4.5 per cent, which is higher than average although very few of these pupils are at the early stage of language acquisition. Attainment on entry to the school is wide ranging but generally below average.

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

Chester Park is an effective school which makes good provision for the community it serves. The school is well led and managed and pupils are well taught; because of this pupils achieve well and have very good attitudes to learning. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Leadership and management are good, staff with management responsibilities make a significant contribution to raising standards.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and relationships are very good.
- The extra-curricular activities provided are very good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is well provided for and pupils social development is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and very good for statemented pupils.
- Information to parents is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good with a significant amount of very good teaching and as a result pupils achieve well.

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

- Standards of writing which are too low.
- Timetabling arrangements which limit the opportunity for independent learning and practical investigations in some subjects.
- The use of data to track progress and the assessment and recording of attainment in the non-core subjects.
- The school development plan and some aspects of financial management.
- Health and safety procedures.

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

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

When the school was previously inspected in January 1998, it was found to be a happy caring school with a commitment to raising attainment. Since then, improvement has been good with a trend of improving achievement. The issues from the last inspection have been tackled well. The school now provides swimming for Year 3 and 4 pupils. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching in the school and the percentage of very good and excellent teaching has increased. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils is now good. Improvements have been made to the school development planning and financial management issues have been mostly addressed. The procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are now well established.

## 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	C	D	E	E
Mathematics	D	C	C	C
Science	D	D	C	C

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

The table shows that standards in English are well below average when compared to all schools and similar schools, but that the school achieves satisfactory standards when compared to these schools in mathematics and science. There is evidence that the school's results are improving in mathematics and science although standards of writing are not yet high enough to show that standards are securely rising in English. The percentage of pupils who reach the higher levels of attainment (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science is in line with the performance of all schools and similar schools. Boys continue, as in previous years, to do less well than girls in writing.

Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that standards reached in English, mathematics and science are average.

Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' listen attentively and productively. Standards in writing are below average by Year 6. However, standards are improving slowly and pupils make steady progress. They understand how to plan a story and make a good beginning that engages the reader's attention and then build up interest. Although no significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection, the school has identified the need to improve the performance of boys.

Currently, eleven-year-old pupils are set to attain standards that are satisfactory in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils in each year group are reaching standards that are good because they are given challenging work, enabling them to become confident mathematicians.

In science, evidence indicates that pupils' attainment has risen steadily each year. This improvement is the result of the school acting on better analysis of pupils' performance, of increasing confidence among the staff in teaching the subject and the subject acquiring a higher profile in the school's curriculum.

Standards in numeracy and literacy are average and these skills are used suitably in other subjects. For example, accurate recording using graphs in design and technology work. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected nationally, and are broadly similar to those seen during the last inspection. No judgement about standards in design and technology is possible, as there is insufficient evidence. In some lessons, attainment is good and pupils make faster progress in learning, for example in art when Year 6 pupils make good progress in some aspects of their art work because the teacher has high expectations that they will improve on their first efforts.

The school is gathering better data on the attainment of the pupils who enter the school and using this data there is secure evidence that most pupils make good progress through the school. The school has used the careful analysis of test results in mathematics to determine strategies to raise standards. For example, the way in which the school has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and addressed areas of weakness as well as using booster classes for Year 6 pupils. The school is now applying similar practices to address the low writing standards of boys in particular.

In the 2002 tests the school reached the targets it set. This process is well established and has improved recently as more effective use of pupils' average points scores on entry is used to determine their chances of reaching particular levels in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. The governors have been suitably involved in this process. Data is not yet effectively used to identify the progress made by individual pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The school is caring and welcoming with a positive ethos; as a result pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning and this has a positive effect on their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Rules for behaviour are simple; this means that pupils are very clear about what is expected. Because pupils have helped to formulate school rules they observe them. Moving around the building, and at playtime, pupils behave in a responsible manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to learn independently. Relationships are good and pupils are self-confident.
Attendance	Satisfactory

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on learning. Teaching was always satisfactory and in 57 per cent it was good or better. Very good and excellent teaching was observed in 13 per cent of lessons.

Teachers have good knowledge and some show very good knowledge. This knowledge is well used to improve the skills of pupils, for example in a Year 6 art lesson where the teacher modelled the techniques of sketching in the style of Marcel Duchamp and then supported pupils in improving their drawing skills. In the best lessons, teachers use demonstration very well, for example in a Year 5 games lesson the way to feint to send a pass in order to deceive an opponent was modelled very well. Similarly in a Year 3 lesson teachers showed the points of technique for sending a chest pass well, stressing the feet position and spread of fingers. Teachers have taken on the teaching of basic skills well. The literacy and numeracy skills that pupils need are well taught and, as a result, the achievement of pupils is good.

Support staff are well used and they mainly focus on supporting pupils who have special educational needs. They are well briefed by teachers and have very good relationships with the pupils they work with. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not have significant language problems, but teachers are suitably aware of the needs of these pupils and often take extra time to clarify the meaning of words and to modify worksheets as required. These pupils make satisfactory gains as a result of this support.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Across the school, the quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school teaches every aspect of all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, and has reinstated its provision for the teaching of swimming. The proportion of time allocated to each subject is appropriate, but sometimes does not allow enough time for pupils to work in a sustained way on an investigation, or to pursue a line of enquiry in sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good arrangements to support pupils' learning in classes, where support staff work with individual pupils or with small groups
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not have significant language problems but teachers are suitably aware of the needs of these pupils and often take extra time to clarify the meaning of words and to modify worksheets as required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall provision is good with very good provision for social development and good moral and spiritual provision. Cultural development is satisfactory. Working together and caring for each other are normal parts of everyday life. Pupils are respected as individuals but they are very aware of the thoughts and feeling of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The governors and head teacher are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all the pupils. At present, not all health and safety policies and procedures are fully in place because of a major re-launch by the local authority. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory.

Parents are pleased to send their children to Chester Park Junior School. They believe that the governors and staff take good care of their children. Most parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. The Governors and staff are fully committed to working with parents to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress. A significant minority of parents still feel that the school does not keep them well enough informed of their children's learning, progress and what is going on. The school is aware of this and is already taking steps to improve the situation.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The impact of this is that the pupils at the school achieve well and have very positive attitudes to school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and is very well supported by the commitment and hard work of the deputy headteacher and the staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall the school does this well. Teaching and learning are satisfactorily monitored and co-ordinators have good understanding of standards in their subjects. Data is collected, but needs to be more effectively used to set individual targets.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the limited accommodation. Teaching and support staff are well used to ensure pupils make good progress. The governors

	are not yet applying the principles of 'best value' satisfactorily.
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In Chester Park Junior School, although classroom accommodation is just satisfactory, there is absolutely no spare space. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Children are given the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about how their children are getting on.</li> </ul>

The views of the parents are in line with the findings of the inspection team. The inspectors felt that information provided to parents was very good but noted that the school is aware of parents' views and is anxious to improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There is evidence that the school's results are improving although standards of writing are not yet high enough. This represents a similar picture to the last inspection. The school is gathering better data on the attainment of the pupils who enter the school and using this data there is secure evidence that most pupils make good progress through the school. The school has used careful analysis of test results in mathematics to determine strategies to raise standards. For example, the way in which the school has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and addressed areas of weakness as well as using booster classes for Year 6 pupils. The school is now applying similar practices to address the low writing standards of boys in particular.

2. In the 2002 National tests, pupils aged eleven achieved results which were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and in line with the average for science when compared to all schools. When compared to schools having a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, the pupils reached standards in English that are well below average and standards in mathematics and science that are average. The percentage of pupils who reached the higher levels of attainment (Level 5) in English, mathematics and science was in line with the performance of all schools and similar schools. Boys continue, as in previous years, to do less well than girls in writing.

3. In the 2002 tests, the school reached the targets it set. The target-setting process is well established and has improved recently as more effective use of pupils' average points scores on entry is used to determine their chances of reaching particular levels in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. The governors have been suitably involved in this process. Data is not yet effectively used to identify the progress made by individual pupils.

4. Evidence gathered during the inspection showed that standards reached in English, mathematics and science are satisfactory. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory at the end of Year 6. Pupils listen attentively and productively. In lessons, most pupils respond thoughtfully and show respect for the opinions of others. In reading, pupils achieve well and by the time they complete Year 6 attain average standards. Pupils' enjoyment of and interest in books develop well as they move through the school and is a strength of their learning. Most pupils can find information in reference books, using an index of contents and are beginning to develop satisfactory research skills. However, their referencing skills are not well developed and few pupils are familiar with the Dewey system of classification. Standards in writing are below average by Year 6. However, standards are improving slowly and pupils make steady progress. They understand how to plan a story and make a good beginning that engages the reader's attention and then build up interest. Although no significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection, the school has identified the need to improve the performance of boys.

5. Currently, eleven-year-old pupils are likely to attain in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils in each year group are reaching standards that are above average because they are given challenging work, enabling them to become confident mathematicians. Comparing attainment on entry to the school as seven year-olds to when they leave at the age of eleven, all pupils, including the significantly high number of pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. This is because the quality of teaching is now good, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Another major contributory factor is the way in which the school,

together with local authority and government inspectors, has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Areas of weakness within each class are being addressed, such as the way in which mathematics is used in other subjects, and the improvement of pupils' understanding of rounding numbers.

6. In science, results in national tests indicate that pupils' attainment has risen steadily each year. This improvement is the result of the school acting on better analysis of pupils' performance, of increasing confidence among the staff in teaching the subject, and the subject acquiring a higher profile in the school's curriculum. Although the school sets broadly appropriate work to higher-attaining pupils, standards overall could be even higher if the difficulty of the work offered was even more closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

7. Standards in numeracy and literacy are satisfactory. Throughout the school, the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is also satisfactory. Opportunities are taken to broaden the range of writing experiences through subjects such as history, geography and religious education. However, there are missed opportunities for the higher-attaining pupils to use their literacy skills systematically in explanations and conclusions in science. Good use is being made of numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils interpret data from their bar charts to find the highest resting pulse rate, and the use of time-lines in history develops pupils' understanding of chronology.

8. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected nationally, and are broadly similar to those seen during the last inspection. No judgement about standards in design and technology is possible as there was insufficient evidence available to inspectors. In some lessons, attainment is above average and pupils make faster progress in learning. For example, in art when Year 6 pupils make good progress in some aspects of their art work, it is because they are expected to achieve highly and because the teacher has high expectations that they will improve on their first efforts.

9. Standards of work in information and communications technology (ICT) are in line with those seen nationally by Year 6, although pupils' ability to organise and present information is above the national expectation. The school has kept pace well with the increased demands of the subject, including use of the internet. The school's computer suite offers pupils regular opportunities to practise the necessary skills with the result that they become adept at accessing and manipulating information. Skills in ICT are beginning to impact on standards in other areas of the curriculum, for example, when accessing literacy texts and editing and amending them.

10. In music, pupils use music vocabulary appropriately to compare music of different styles and can sing in parts and maintain their own line independently. Pupils show an appropriate awareness of rhythm and adapt the style of their singing to the moods of the music. In religious education, pupils have a secure knowledge not only of their own religion but also that of others. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils are taught to apply what they have learned from religion to their own lives. Whilst standards in physical education (PE) are in line with expectations, the lack of a field on the school site hinders the development of skills in athletics and games.

11. Those pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, are suitably supported and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs, make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, and in the development of self-esteem and confidence, because of the good teaching they receive and the suitability of their targets. The school is aware of the need to

identify gifted and talented pupils although there is no policy, and procedures for supporting such pupils are not formalised.

12. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the light of their previous attainment. This is most apparent in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Progress is supported by the use of individual educational plans, which are used to set targets, which are small steps in the development of key skills. Although pupils' attainment remains below national expectations on account of their special educational needs, there is clear evidence of good achievement. Progress continues as they consolidate their skills with regular practice and begin to acquire a wider range of vocabulary. By Year 6, many of the pupils with special educational needs are working within Level 3 of the National Curriculum.

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

13. Chester Park Junior is a caring and welcoming school with a positive ethos; as a result, pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning and this has a positive effect on their achievements. Teachers have high expectations in lessons, therefore pupils try hard because they know their efforts will be rewarded. They take pride in what they produce and work carefully and conscientiously. Lapses do occur occasionally when the pace of lessons is too slow and the tasks they are given do not always suit pupils' needs. Pupils are friendly, courteous and polite, and they help each other, regardless of race, gender or ability. This was clearly evident when higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 worked closely with others to change the lyrics for a popular song during a music lesson. Pupils positively bristled with pride when their performance was well received by the rest of the class, who applauded spontaneously. Pupils show great enthusiasm and attention to acquiring new skills because teachers are careful to introduce and reinforce learning intentions in lessons. Most classes have a calm atmosphere, which is conducive to good learning.

14. The behaviour of pupils in class and around school is usually good, a view endorsed by parents. Rules for behaviour are simple; this means that pupils are very clear about what is expected. Because pupils have helped to formulate school rules they observe them and know clearly that unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with firmly and fairly, in line with the behaviour policy. Moving around the building and at playtime pupils behave in a responsible manner. Teachers are careful to include all in learning and reward pupils for effort; this raises self-esteem considerably. It was noticeable that in a minority of lessons, behaviour deteriorated and noise levels were too high when tasks did not sufficiently challenge pupils. Pupils can be trusted to behave well in extra curricular activities outside the normal school day. This was particularly evident on a residential visit to Weymouth when resident staff commented on pupils' high standards of behaviour.

15. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' personal development was judged to be good. This has been maintained. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to learn independently. As an example, each class has two representatives on the School Council. These are voted for democratically; in some classes hustings are conducted where pupils explain to the rest of the class why they think they should be selected as their representative. This not only boosts self-confidence, but also enhances speaking and listening skills considerably. Pupils' suggestions and complaints are carefully considered at school council meetings. As a result, new playground equipment has been purchased; this has had a positive effect on pupils' behaviour on the playground. The School Council is particularly proud of its efforts to support a local charity for the homeless and has organized collections of blankets and bags to help people less fortunate. The after-school first-aid club helps pupils to take personal responsibility not only for their own health and safety but also that of others. Although pupils are given opportunities to use their initiative when, for example, they work in

pairs to decide how best to portray new characters in a story, these opportunities are not as frequent as they might be in some lessons because teaching is sometimes too directed. This is particularly evident in science. Nevertheless, the very good quality of relationships that exist throughout the school are a major strength and contributes significantly to pupils' learning. The school's motto 'Caring and Happy, Purposeful and Peaceful, Jointly Achieving Success' is truly reflected in the life and work of the school.

16. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their learning. Both within their own classes and when withdrawn for extra support they work hard. Their behaviour is good and the praise and encouragement they receive from staff enables them to 'have a go' and take a full part in all planned activities. They are willing to practice areas that have been identified as part of their individual educational plans and this forms the basis for much of their individual activities during the literacy and numeracy lessons. In a number of cases, improvements in academic standards have helped improve pupils' self-esteem and enabled them to grow in confidence.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good and this has a positive impact on learning. Teaching was always satisfactory and in 57 per cent of lessons it was good or better. Very good and excellent teaching was observed in 13 per cent of lessons.

18. Teachers have good knowledge and some show very good knowledge. This knowledge is well used to improve the skills of pupils, for example, in a Year 6 art lesson where the teacher modelled the techniques of sketching in the style of Marcel Duchamp and then supported pupils in improving their drawing skills. In the best lessons, teachers use demonstration very well, for example in a Year 5 games lesson the way to feint to send a pass in order to deceive an opponent was modelled very well. Similarly in a Year 3 lesson teachers showed the points of technique for sending a chest pass well, stressing the feet position and spread of fingers. Teachers have taken on the teaching of basic skills well, the literacy and numeracy skills that pupils need are well taught and as a result the achievement of pupils is good.

19. Teachers plan well. The arrangement of classes with parallel year groups allows for shared planning and this is done very well ensuring that pupils in the same year group are given equal opportunity. In the best teaching, very good planning combined with good pace and challenging work leads to rapid learning as when a Year 5 class increased understanding of pulse and rhythm in music. Teachers are well aware of the need for clear lesson objectives and they share these objectives consistently with the pupils at the start of lessons and display them prominently in class to serve as a reminder. Occasionally the learning objectives are not expressed in terms the pupils understand, which consequently hampers their understanding of how well they have done. Mostly, however, pupils know what they are learning, for example in a Year 3 science lesson when pupils explained how they would carry out a fair test. In lessons, teachers give ongoing support to pupils to help them understand and then improve their work. Pupils' work is well marked and guidance given on what the pupils need to do to improve. While teachers have high expectation of pupils and insist on good standards of presentation and behaviour the work set for higher-attaining pupils sometimes lacks sufficient challenge. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when pupils were set the task of drawing squares using co-ordinates, higher-attaining pupils were able to complete the task very quickly but were not challenged to try other shapes.

20. Teachers use a good range of methods. Classes are taught as mixed-ability groups and there is mostly a suitable balance of whole-class teaching and group work. Occasionally

teachers overdirect pupils and limit the opportunity to develop independent learning skills. Questioning is mostly well used to challenge pupils' thinking and recap on previous work. In most subjects, there is suitable opportunity for practical work and this is used well to develop the social skills of pupils, for example in a Year 6 games lesson when pupils worked in small groups to devise their own games to practise throwing and passing skills.

21. Time is generally well used, although the timetabling arrangements are restricting the opportunity for sustained experiment particularly in science, which is taught for half an hour each day at the same time. Good use is made of ICT and the new suite is helping pupils to develop their skills and also the application of these skills in other subjects. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson where pupils were able to access a PowerPoint presentation of a text they were studying in 'The Hobbit' and work on screen to add their own character and write in the style of the author of the text. The teacher had prepared very well as the tasks accessed were set at the ability level of the pupils and this helped them to make gains in learning. Other resources are used well to help pupils learn, for example the use of an overhead projector in a Year 4 mathematics lesson to show pupils how to plot points using co-ordinates on a grid.

22. There are very good relationships in classes and this helps the teachers to manage the pupils very well. As a result, teachers are able to create a purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils to maintain concentration and interest. Teachers mostly use effective strategies for gaining pupils' attention or in settling pupils who are working inappropriately, for example in one class a quiet click of the fingers is all that is required to refocus pupils. This practice is not fully secure however, and sometimes teachers assert control inappropriately through a raised voice.

23. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not have significant language problems, but teachers are suitably aware of the needs of these pupils and often take extra time to clarify the meaning of words and to modify worksheets as required. These pupils make satisfactory gains as a result of this support.

24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good both in lessons and in small group or individual activities. Targets on pupils' individual education plans are expressed clearly and provide realistic stages of development. Teaching is sympathetic and appropriate to ensure that pupils' make steady gains in their learning. Activities are sufficiently varied to match the range of attainment of these pupils. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to support the pupils with special educational needs. They know their pupils well and contribute much to their learning. There is good liaison between teachers and support staff through the use of a contact book, which contributes well towards evaluating the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.

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

25. The school teaches every aspect of all of the subjects of the National Curriculum, and has reinstated its provision for the teaching of swimming, missing from the curriculum at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of time allocated to each subject is generally appropriate, and is similar to that seen in many schools across the country. In science, however, while the half-hour lessons ensure regular and consistent teaching, they do not allow enough time for pupils to work in a sustained way on an investigation, or to pursue a line of enquiry in sufficient depth. Most aspects of each subject are accorded the right degree of importance; the curriculum is guided effectively through a range of policies and schemes of work that are regularly reviewed and updated. With the current exception of design and

technology, every subject is managed by a co-ordinator; many of these are well qualified to offer colleagues advice on curriculum development, and, through their own work, often provide good models for others to emulate.

26. Teachers sometimes create good opportunities for pupils to learn from two subjects at the same time. For example, ICT is often used effectively to support learning in science or mathematics, to construct tables or graphs or to calculate values entered on a spreadsheet. Pupils sometimes write at length in history, geography and religious education lessons; however, they are not always offered sufficient opportunities to write at length about their findings or conclusions to science experiments.

27. Across the school, the quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. From the time they enter the school, pupils build successively on previously acquired skills. These are generally well taught, the teachers offering clear explanations and structuring their lessons well so that pupils derive a good understanding of what they have learnt. Teachers generally insist that pupils practise these skills thoroughly in the way they have been taught, although in art, for example, there is not universal emphasis on the need to finish work carefully. Teachers generally use questioning well to determine their pupils' level of understanding and to practise mental arithmetic. Pupils usually have sufficient opportunities to discuss their work in pairs or small groups, although lessons are occasionally too closely directed and pupils have too little time to reflect and discuss.

28. The school employs good strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There is a sound and systematic programme for teaching reading, and pupils read regularly to adults. Explanations are clear, and pupils are offered work that closely reflects their learning needs. Writing skills are practised regularly in subjects such as history and religious education, but are used less frequently than expected in science. In numeracy, pupils practise mental and written skills thoroughly, teachers allowing sufficient time for class work, discussion and independent work. Mathematics adequately supports learning in science, but sometimes the opportunity for its application in other areas of the curriculum, such as physical education, are missed.

29. In almost every respect, pupils have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race or disability. The school works hard to ensure that each may take part in every aspect of school life. Although pupils of greater aptitude and ability are not always challenged sufficiently in science, their learning needs in other subjects are generally well met. Pupils with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils, receiving good support in their efforts. This aspect of school life has improved significantly since the last inspection, when the work of lower-attaining pupils was not always well matched to their needs. The school has focused much effort on ensuring that boys perform as well as girls; for example, by choosing appealing themes for writing and art work. The progress of pupils withdrawn in lessons for specialised tuition, for example in music, is not adversely affected over time, but the school should take steps to ensure that those regularly withdrawn from collective worship always work purposefully.

30. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good arrangements to support pupils' learning in classes, where teaching assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. The Additional Learning Support programme, delivered by a well-qualified teaching assistant, is providing an effective strategy for pupils in Year 3 and 4 to develop their understanding of phonics. Individual education plans are well thought out and targets are designed to meet the learning needs of each individual. They are reviewed termly and pupils and parents/carers are appropriately involved in the target setting process. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous inspection when individual education plans were found to be incomplete or poorly presented. The school has



revised its Special Educational Needs policy to reflect the new Code of Practice and has made provision to support pupils through 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' plans. Alongside this, the special educational needs co-ordinator has produced a very useful 'Provision Map' that outlines details of the in-class support. The needs and care of pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well met and annual reviews provide a good focus for further development. Provision for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is suitable.

31. The school makes good provision for the personal and social education of its pupils, currently through incidental opportunities, although timetabled lessons are also soon to be introduced. Without overstating its insistence on the need for pupils to be aware of their responsibilities towards themselves and to others, the school has created an ethos where pupils are clear about their value as individuals and of their obligations towards the community at large. For example, the school offers a first-aid club in which life-saving skills are competently and thoroughly taught. The school council, comprising representatives from every class, regularly proposes sensible initiatives that are adopted because they are to the benefit of all, and also sometimes supports the needs of the wider community. Older pupils befriend those new to the school, helping them as they adjust to their new experience. As a result of these and other measures, the school functions well as a community, pupils develop a strong sense of their roles and responsibilities within it and are well prepared for the obligations of citizenship.

32. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and has improved even upon the good provision noted at the time of the last inspection. These include not only sports, but also first-aid, performing arts and drama, information and communication technology, chess and art. Some of these afford not only opportunities to practise existing skills, but to develop new ones at a deeper level; for example, pupils have gained national recognition in their display of first-aid skills. These activities are open to all, and many are well supported. The school makes equitable decisions about attendance where clubs are oversubscribed, for example, in drama. Pupils are regularly involved in competitive sports, and the school generally makes good use of day and residential visits to enhance the quality of their learning. Visitors sometimes contribute to the quality of the curriculum in English, music and history by sharing their expertise or experiences with the pupils.

33. The school has developed close links with the Infants school with which it shares a site, ensuring the smooth transition of pupils at the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 5 are paired with younger ones about to transfer, helping them to deal with any anxieties and providing a point of contact as they enter Year 3. Those transferring to secondary education at the end of Year 6 are generally well supported in the transition months. On a professional level, co-ordinators for some subjects have developed strong associations with colleagues in secondary institutions, for example to develop ICT and PE, but these are not equally strong in all curricular areas.

34. The school effectively enlists the assistance of the community in its work. Members of local churches regularly lead collective worship, and the school visits the parish church for Christmas celebrations and to enrich its work in religious education. Visitors sometimes share with pupils their experiences of growing up in the local community, and the school takes advantage of the expertise of the police and other members of local services to enrich pupils' understanding of citizenship.

35. Daily acts of collective worship are used to encourage pupils' spiritual growth. An assembly led by one of the local clergy, for example, had time set aside for pupils to explore their own thoughts and feelings about the world around them. A whole-school practice of the

song 'Day by Day' included time for pupils to appreciate that it was also a prayer with words and meanings, upon which they should reflect.

36. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, there was a real sense of delight and wonder as an 'angle eater', which pupils had made, correctly found a series of right angles. In an excellent Year 5 religious education lesson, the teacher successfully helped pupils to reflect, develop and eventually share their own, private 'special things'. In a Year 5 music lesson, there was an atmosphere of sheer delight as groups of pupils managed to clap complex rhythms. In another Year 3 lesson, pupils successfully used colours to illustrate a wide range of emotions. Music, ranging from Pachelbel's canon to Strauss waltzes, helped to set and change moods in the classroom.

37. Pupils are respected as individuals but they are very aware of the thoughts and feeling of others. A good example of this was a Year 4 display on the qualities of 'Purposeful and Peaceful People'. It highlighted qualities such as 'thoughtful, meditative, quiet, calm and chilled out'.

38. The school's efforts to help pupils' moral development are good. Chester Park's whole-school approach to behaviour and discipline underpins pupils' moral development. Everyone understands the need for standards of conduct and the impact that good and bad behaviour have on others. At the beginning of the school year pupils devise and agree the school's rules. At meetings such as the School Council, pupils maturely debate what is and is not acceptable behaviour at playtimes and the importance of supporting organisations such as the Julian Trust which help those who are less well off than themselves.

39. Wider moral issues are tackled throughout the curriculum in, for example, assemblies, history, English and geography lessons. In the first of these, the whole school considered the impact which individuals' lack of care for the environment had on all creatures. In the second example, Year 3 pupils discussed the issues surrounding Henry VIII's divorce. In the third, Year 4, wrote letters to a newspaper about the killing of whales. In the fourth, Year 5 debated the impact of water wastage. A prominent wall display incorporated the United Nations' declaration of human rights.

40. Pupils' social development, which was judged to be good by the previous inspection team, is now very good. Chester Park Junior's vision of a 'Caring and Happy' and 'Jointly Achieving' community is very much a reality. Working together and caring for each other are normal parts of every-day life. Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the community by helping their teachers prepare before lessons, and clear up after. They deliver attendance registers to the office. An excellent personal developmental opportunity for older pupils is the annual 'summer camp' in Weymouth.

41. Events such the first-aid competition in London, help pupils to discover ways in which they can contribute to the wider community. Through their charitable work for example, the Julian Trust and the NSPCC pupils learn about the needs of others and ways in which they can help them.

42. The School Council is an impressive example of the ways in which pupils learn about the principles and practice of democratic society. Elected representatives respectfully and supportively listen to each other as they suggest, discuss, debate and agree ways and means of improving the school. Current agenda items include: cleaner lavatories, new games and sensible use of playground equipment.

43. Cultural development is fostered through lessons, visits to local places and participation in a range of cultural and competitive events. In music, pupils explore a wide range of traditions from major orchestral works to contemporary rap.

44. The school is committed to ensuring that pupils grow up to understand and respect others' beliefs and cultures. Through their religious education lessons, pupils learn about a wide range of faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The school always celebrates the festivals of Eid and Christmas. Ethnic minority pupils' dress, ideas and beliefs are accepted and respected by everyone. Their parents contribute to everyone's' cultural development by lending the school various artefacts.

45. In lessons, pupils learn about life and work in other continents. A major display at the entrance to the school shows some of the results of pupils' work on the theme of 'One World'. This display includes poems from children in other continents about the importance of going to school. History and geography lessons have helped pupils explore the life and culture of Tudor England, Ancient Greece and Nigeria.

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

46. The governors, headteacher and staff are committed to ensuring the health and safety of all the pupils. The site is secure. There are two well-qualified first-aiders on site during the school day. In addition, a number of other staff have recognised first-aid qualifications. However, there is no designated room in the school for the treatment and care of the pupils. Not all health and safety policies and procedures are fully in place as there is a major re-launch by the local authority, started in September 2002, of health and safety arrangements in its schools. This means that the school is giving highest priority to ensuring for example, appropriate training and full risk assessment procedures are properly in place. Child Protection systems are satisfactory. Although most staff have had the appropriate training and are kept up to date through regular briefings from the headteacher, this good practice has not yet been extended to newly-appointed staff.

47. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, there has been a steady improvement in the procedures for assessment. For example, there is now a consistent approach to recording the outcomes of assessment of pupils' work and to the marking of pupils' written work. Teachers have also met to examine samples of pupils' work to determine and agree on the levels attained in English, mathematics and science. However, systems for recording the progress pupils' make in order to provide teachers with a clear picture of what each pupil is achieving are still not fully developed.

48. At the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, the school uses the optional tests for English and mathematics that are similar in content to the national tests that take place in Year 6. The results of these tests and the school's own science tests are monitored carefully and used to forecast the level pupils are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6. However, they are not used to track the progress of individuals or to predict the level pupils are likely to achieve in each year group.

49. Data from the monitoring of numeracy is analysed thoroughly and the data and performance of each year group is fed back to the teachers with areas for development highlighted. The outcomes of end of key stage tests are also analysed carefully and provides the school with much useful information. For example, it enabled the school to identify the under-achievement of boys in English. As a result it was included in the school's Strategic Plan and training for all staff, including teaching assistants was provided.

50. Reading, spelling and ICT are among the other areas and subjects assessed across the school. There is no formal system for assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress in most other subjects. However, teachers do some successful evaluation and marking, which they use to adjust their planning according to pupils' needs and address the areas for special attention. Target setting for individual pupils is at an early stage of development and does not yet extend to providing pupils with the information of what they should aim for to reach the next level.

51. Staff pass on all the relevant assessment information they have to the teacher in the next year, as pupils move through the school.

52. The school has been successful in maintaining pupils' punctuality and attendance since the previous inspection. Procedures for analysing, monitoring and following up absences are satisfactory and the education welfare officer supports the school in this area. Attendance records are regularly examined to identify patterns of absence and any noticeable concerns are referred to the Education Welfare Service. The school has a small number of families that take extended holidays to the Indian Sub-Continent. An attendance plan is being developed.

53. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The headteacher and staff know all their pupils very well and pastoral care, which was praised by the previous inspection team, is still a strength of the school. The personal and social development of pupils is of great importance to the school and this ethos is encapsulated in the vision statement, 'Caring and Happy - Purposeful and Peaceful – Jointly Achieving Success'. Everyone, including non-teaching staff, the caretaker and lunchtime supervisors work hard to ensure that pupils' personal and learning needs are closely attended to. Pastoral issues are dealt with sensitively. 'Sharing' services celebrate the success of pupils and build their self-esteem. Each pupil has a personal file that contains an end of year personal review where they identify things they are good at and things they need to improve. Pupils' personal development is also supported through setting targets for improvement after discussion with teachers.

54. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school's behaviour policy is based on pupils accepting that they have rights and responsibilities. All pupils are involved in agreeing the school rules at the beginning of each year. The school has a clear policy on bullying and racism and pupils are always treated equally. When significant problems arise, parents are involved by staff early on to ensure that problems do not escalate. An atmosphere of calm purposefulness pervades the school. As a result teachers concentrate on teaching and pupils get on with learning. Parents confirm that the school is very caring. They are very pleased with pupils' attitudes and with the way pupils get on well. No concern was expressed about bullying or racism.

55. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and support staff know the pupils they work with very well. The whole-school ethos is well reflected in the way it ensures that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their achievements are well recognised. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school and appropriate arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. However, this has yet to be linked to a tracking system to record the standards they achieve as they move through the school. Effective use is made of agencies outside the school to provide help and support for individual pupils and their specific educational needs.

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

56. Parents are pleased to send their children to Chester Park Junior School. They believe that the governors and staff take good care of their children. Eighty-seven per cent of parents who filled in the pre-inspection questionnaire and all those who attended the parents' meeting felt that the school was helping their children to become mature and responsible.

57. There is a home school agreement to which more than 90 per cent of parents have signed up. The overwhelming majority also fully supports the school's attendance procedures.

58. Formal documents are well produced. The prospectus, for example, contains useful information about all aspects of school life. A notice board and regular newsletters keep parents in touch with what is going on in school. There are leaflets about 'topics' and various aspects of the curriculum.

59. End-of-year formal reports, which were criticised in the last inspection for lack of information, are now very good. They contain comprehensive information about progress and targets in all aspects of the curriculum and, where appropriate the results of national tests. There is also space for parents' comments. There are three consultation meetings each year, which are attended by approximately 80 per cent of parents. The school does what it can to ensure that as many as possible of the remaining 20 per cent have a formal progress meeting with their children's class teachers.

60. The governors and staff are fully committed to working with parents to ensure that all their children make the best possible progress. The headteacher operates an 'open-door' policy and teachers make themselves available at the beginning and the end of the school day. However, according to the pre-inspection questionnaire, a significant minority of parents still feels that the school does not keep them well enough informed of their children's learning, progress and what is going on. The school is aware of this and is already taking steps to improve the situation. An innovative, questionnaire-based survey of parents' views on partnership, information, standards, behaviour, homework and complaints was carried out in June 2002. As a result there have already been changes to homework, new topic information leaflets have been prepared and staff make themselves available at the end of the day. The last of these actions has been particularly successful, with good relationships between teachers and parents very evident as teachers circulate and parents come into school.

61. Many parents help their children to learn by supporting the school's homework schemes. Numeracy targets are sent home every term along with guidelines on how parents' can help their children to learn. Parents of children who have special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress and, where appropriate, are involved in the development of individual education plans.

62. The school is particularly sensitive to the needs of individual families and groups who, on religious grounds, withdraw their children from assembly and religious education lessons. It makes appropriate alternative arrangements for the care and development of these pupils during these times.

63. A small number of parents are employed as support staff. There is also a small group of volunteers who come regularly into school to help look after the library. Many more parents help with one-off events and an active, successful friends association organises social and fund raising events such as the summer fair and Christmas party.

64. Relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good, and a high priority is put on communication with them. The pupils and their parents are appropriately involved in the process of target setting. Regular consultations are offered to all parents of pupils' with special educational needs and they are encouraged to be involved in their child's support.

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

65. Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The impact of this is that the pupils at the school achieve well and have very positive attitudes to school. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future of the school and is very well supported by the commitment and hard work of the deputy headteacher and the staff. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. School development planning now involves the staff and governors more fully and links to the curriculum are stronger, but the priorities of the plan are not clearly established. Financial planning has improved but the principles of 'best value' are not yet satisfactorily understood or used. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now more secure and there are plans to improve it further.

66. The positive ethos found at the time of the last inspection has been sustained and this is significant strength of the school. Governors, headteacher and staff have worked together to produce the vision statement based on the initial letters of the school's name. Thus 'Caring and happy, purposeful and peaceful, jointly achieving success' is used as the foundation for all that the school seeks to achieve. This motto has a high profile and is well shared with the pupils, for example in the displays around the hall. The aims of the school build on the vision statement and are reflected in its work, for example pupils are happy and confident learners and they co-operate well with each other in an environment where they want to succeed.

67. Governors and staff were suitably involved in the production of a long-term strategic plan which includes specific targets and strategies for reaching those targets. Project action plans are then produced by governors and staff to form the shorter-term school improvement plan. This provides a good basis for school development but it includes too many areas. The checking of actions completed, the evaluations of the degree of success and attempting to ensure consistent links to the school budget are difficult to monitor effectively. Subject co-ordinators have produced good action plans which reflect the priorities for improvement, for example standards of writing, but is not clear how these fit into the overall school strategic plan.

68. The governors carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. After a number of years of being below full strength, the governing body now has the full complement of governors. New governors are following sound induction procedures and have the potential to contribute significantly to further school improvement. The recently appointed chair of governors is very clear about her role, she visits the school regularly and is aware of the governing body's function to hold the school to account.

69. Financial management is satisfactory, but some issues arising from the most recent auditors' report need to be addressed. The governors are not yet applying the principles of 'best value' satisfactorily. They are aware of the need to seek competitive tenders for items of high expenditure and have recently started to consult parents through a detailed questionnaire. However they do not systematically compare their standards and costs with similar schools or regularly challenge practice, for example to consider whether the arrangement of the timetable is allowing sufficient opportunities for scientific inquiry.

70. Governors receive clear information about the results the school achieves and although they have a sound understanding of the data received, for example by discussing the annual Performance and Assessment report (PANDA) there is a need to improve the use the school makes of data for assessment purposes. Governors have been suitably involved in target setting and the school is effective in the management of procedures to work towards these targets, for example making good use of 'booster' funding and curriculum initiatives such as 'Grammar for Writing'. The school reached its targets for Year 6 pupils in the National Tests in 2002. The committee structure of the governing body is effective and a detailed schedule for meetings is published. There has been some difficulty in recruiting a clerk to the governors and, as a result minutes of meetings are not detailed enough about the progress of the school development plan, developments in health and safety policy or financial matters.

71. All staff with management responsibilities take them very seriously. The deputy headteacher takes a strong lead in curriculum and assessment matters and has a high profile managing the school. Co-ordinators are very hardworking and have very clear ideas for the development of their subject areas. They have produced action plans and monitor the standards in their subjects by carrying out regular scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. There is no co-ordinator for design and technology at present so monitoring of the standards achieved and planning for further improvement is not secure. All teaching staff have job descriptions, but these are rather general and do not relate specifically to the role of co-ordinator at Chester Park Junior School.

72. The previous inspection team was critical of the school's 'peeling paint and bare plaster'. Since then almost all of the school has been decorated, many windows have been replaced and some areas have new carpets. As a result, the school is now a bright, cheery and clean place in which to teach and learn. The buildings, although old, are in satisfactory condition.

73. Classroom accommodation is just satisfactory although there is absolutely no spare space in Chester Park Junior School. There is no first-aid room or dedicated space for special needs and other support work. Teachers and support workers work in the corridors and 'borrow' the library when they have to. The layout of the old Victorian building means that the multi-purpose hall, used for lunches, physical education, and assemblies, is also the main route for adults and pupils as they move around the school and visit the lavatories. Storage is at a premium with the result that the sides of the hall and corridors are cluttered with equipment.

74. There is a large well-maintained, hard play area around the school. The school makes some use of a grassed public area, which is close to the school, but the lack of a field on the school site hinders the development of skills in athletics and games

75. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. They all have job descriptions, annual appraisals and professional development plans. There is one newly qualified teacher who is following a comprehensive and well-planned training programme.

76. The teaching support staff, administration staff, the caretaker and lunch-time supervision team are well trained and make good contributions to pupils' education and general well being. They are all very much part of the Chester Park community.

77. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In history, they are good with a wide range of books, videos, posters and artefacts. Since the previous inspection an

ICT suite has been created. It is well equipped and although it makes best use of the space available it is rather cramped and noisy.

78. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very experienced and carries out the responsibilities efficiently and effectively. She has provided training for all staff in the completion of individual education plans and holds a 'surgery' to provide support to class teachers when required. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous inspection when it was said that the co-ordinator should ensure that the completion and monitoring of individual education plans is carried out thoroughly by all staff. The teaching assistants are well qualified and committed to the support of pupils with special educational needs. They are used to their full potential in lessons across the curriculum. The special needs designated governor is fully involved in the work of the school. The learning resources are good and the funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect. Whilst the governing body does report annually to parents about special educational needs the information it provides is largely descriptive. The report needs to provide more evaluative detail about the effectiveness of the provision made by the school.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

### ❖ Raise attainment in writing by:-

- ◆ continuing to improve pupils' spelling and punctuation;
- ◆ making sure that boys make the maximum progress that they are capable of;
- ◆ implementing a more effective tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress;
- ◆ developing further ways for pupils to know what they need to do to reach the next level.

(The school has already identified this issue as a part of its school development plan.)

Paragraphs 1,2,4,79,82.

### ❖ Improve the use of time by:-

- ◆ revising the timetable for science to give greater opportunities for pupils to carry out practical work.

Paragraphs 6,21,25,84,96,98,99.

### ❖ Improve assessment procedures by:-

- ◆ making better use of data to track pupils' progress through the school;
- ◆ developing manageable assessment and recording of achievement in the non-core subjects.

Paragraphs 3,47,48,50,55,70,106,107,116,121,125,133.

### ❖ Improve the quality of school development planning by:-

- ◆ prioritising issues more effectively and sharpening monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- ◆ costing the plan more accurately;
- ◆ ensuring that the principles of 'best value' are understood and applied and that the recommendations of the latest audit report for improvements to financial management are fully implemented.

Paragraphs 65,67,69.

### ❖ Further improve the care which the school provides for pupils by:-

- ◆ revising and implementing whole-school health and safety policies and procedures which are in line with the LEA's new guidance and codes of practice.

Paragraph 46.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	5	24	24	0	0	0
Percentage	4	9	44	44	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents no more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		243
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	26

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	34	23	57

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	24	29
	Girls	19	18	20
	Total	39	42	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (68)	74 (70)	86 (77)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	27	28
	Girls	19	18	20
	Total	39	45	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (65)	79 (72)	84 (70)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
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			

*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)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	31

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001 - 2002
	£
Total income	496308
Total expenditure	506747
Expenditure per pupil	2052
Balance brought forward from previous year	45954
Balance carried forward to next year	35515

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	79

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	3	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	53	4		6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	6	1	5
The teaching is good.	50	40		1	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	54	8	3	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	3		5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	35	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	23	61	8	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	34	47	4		15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	51			13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	48	6		9

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised concerns that the playing field used by the school is unsuitable.  
 Parents are concerned at the increasing amount of traffic on the roads around the school.

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

### **ENGLISH**

79. Overall, pupils attain satisfactory standards in English by the age of eleven, but standards in writing however, are below expectations. This judgement represents an improvement on the 2001 national tests, which reflects the school's strong commitment to raising standards. The previous inspection judged Year 6 pupils' standards in speaking and listening and in reading to be average, but below expectations in writing. The school has recognised the considerable variation in the composition of different groups of pupils and has set a realistic target for 70 per cent of its pupils to reach or exceed the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English in the Year 2003. Although no significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection, the school has identified the need to improve the performance of boys, particularly in writing. It is clear that the strategies already implemented by the school show signs of becoming successful in raising boys' achievement. From a low starting point, all pupils make good progress and are achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because they are fully integrated into mainstream classes, where their support is well planned and effectively provided by teachers and support staff.

80. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory at the end of Year 6. Pupils' listen attentively and productively. In lessons, most pupils respond thoughtfully and show respect for the opinions of others. Many pupils readily engage in discussions, talk confidently and offer ideas and relevant information. A number of pupils, who find learning more difficult, need help to use appropriate terms and language to express their opinions and ideas clearly. Most teachers have successfully adopted the strategy of allowing pupils to discuss their ideas with one another before contributing to a class discussion. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and extend their responses rather than giving single word replies. The school places considerable emphasis on extending pupils' vocabulary. The focus is making a good contribution to improving standards in writing. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils used words such as 'proudly' and 'seriously' when writing stage directions and selected words such as 'fiercely' and 'delightedly' to convey feelings and emotions. Although there are appropriate planned opportunities for pupils to participate in drama activities, there are fewer opportunities for the majority of pupils to speak in more formal contexts. However, when given the opportunity, as for instance, at meetings of the 'School Council', it has a significant impact on the range of vocabulary used.

81. In reading, pupils achieve well and by the time they are in Year 6 attain average standards. Pupils' enjoyment of, and interest in, books develop well as they move through the school and is a strength of their learning. Most pupils read an appropriate range of texts fluently and with accuracy. They talk readily about what they read and express their views about books that they have enjoyed. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, read with great expression. They are undeterred by difficult words and text and draw on a range of techniques to decipher them and clarify meaning. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to read a selection of more challenging texts, such as 'Macbeth' and 'The Hobbit', in guided reading sessions and in literacy lessons. Less-able pupils read appropriate books effectively, but are sometimes too passive in their approach to reading unfamiliar words. Most pupils can find information in reference books, using an index of contents and are beginning to develop satisfactory research skills. However, their referencing skills are not well developed and few pupils are familiar with the Dewey system of classification.

82. Standards in writing are below average by Year 6. However, standards are improving slowly and pupils make steady progress. They understand how to plan a story and make a



good beginning that engages the reader's attention and then build up interest. In the best writing, there is a good range of vocabulary and a lively use of language to create deliberate effects. An example of this was seen when a pupil effectively created a feeling of suspense in a story by writing, 'As we trekked through the forest at midnight, we could hear the trees rustling and see the shadows moving menacingly'. In general, however, few pupils use complex sentences and, while their choice of vocabulary is improving it is not rich enough to reach the higher standards. The less-able pupils use a narrow range of words to convey meaning and require the structure of a worksheet to develop their ideas coherently. A small number of more-able pupils are beginning to use paragraphs appropriately in their writing. However, the analysis of the pupils' writing indicates variable levels of accuracy, particularly in the consistent use of basic punctuation. Most pupils present their work in appropriately formed and legible handwriting, but there are considerable variations in spelling.

83. Overall, pupils write in a wide range of forms, including newspaper reports, instructional writing, play scripts, stories and letters to newspapers setting out personal views on such issues as the killing of whales and keeping birds in cages. Strengths of pupils' learning in English are the use of words in their poetry writing to evoke strong feelings. For example, after listening to a piece of music, a pupil wrote,

'This piece of music makes me feel,  
Like an old dog left outside in the rain,  
Like a once crying man is smiling again,  
Like a child scattering petals around some ones grave  
Thinking of a little ill lady that nobody can save.'

84. Throughout the school, the development of literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities are taken to broaden the range of writing experiences through subjects such as history, geography and religious education. In ICT, pupils develop individual research skills by using the internet. However, there are missed opportunities for the higher-attaining pupils to use their skills systematically in explanations and conclusions in science.

85. The quality of teaching and learning in English is good. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory in most lessons and sometimes good. All teachers share the learning objectives at the beginning of lessons making sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. Expectations are realistically high and the teachers' enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge of the subject have a positive effect on pupils' attainment, progress and attitude to the subject. Good relationships with the pupils create a positive climate for learning and enable pupils to enjoy their work within clear guidelines. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Throughout the school, teaching assistants are well deployed and provide particularly good support to pupils with special educational needs so that the progress they make is good. The marking of pupils' work is good. In the best practice, pupils are given good recognition for their achievements, combined with constructive indications of how they can improve their work. Although individual targets are set, they do not provide guidance on what pupils should aim for to reach the next level. On a very few occasions, there were times when teaching was less purposeful. This was so when the management of pupils was less effective. Consequently pupils lose interest and the pace of the lesson slows because the teacher has to stop to remind pupils to stay focused.

86. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were well illustrated in a very good literacy lesson, taken in the information and communication technology suite by a Year 5 teacher. The high-quality planning and very well considered tasks already on the computers effectively matched the pupils' different abilities and enabled them all to learn at a rapid pace. The high expectations and challenging task of writing new

characters into the story 'The Hobbit' in the style of the author, involved pupils in reading the text first, before beginning the writing exercise. The teacher skilfully interspersed questions to test their understanding and because the dialogue between the teacher and pupils was particularly good, pupils quickly learned to think for themselves. As a result, many pupils managed to emulate Tolkein's style and used increasingly adventurous words to add power and give clues to the characters in the story. In Year 3, there is a good focus on linking all three elements of English in literacy lessons to improve pupils' skills. For instance, the teacher made good use of a newspaper article to extend pupils' command of specific vocabulary, such as column, paragraph and edit and to draw their attention to the difference between past and present reported speech. As a result, by the end of the lesson, the majority of pupils produced some interesting sentences in the style of a report. A Year 6 lesson based on investigating suspense stories was effective because of the teacher's good knowledge of the subject and well pitched questions that encouraged all pupils to contribute their ideas. There was a productive discussion as pupils attempted to define 'suspense' and after a while, one offered 'ends on a cliff-hanger'. The teacher's confident presentation and clear explanations of how personification can be used to add interest to their writing contributed to the good gains pupils made in their ability to change the language used in text to add a sense of suspense. Overall, teachers' expectations are sufficiently high to promote good progress for pupils of all abilities. All teaching assistants provide very effective support to both the teachers and pupils during the literacy hour.

87. The quality of the English curriculum is good overall. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and is having a good impact on pupils' learning. The school provides additional literacy support to groups of identified pupils in Years 3 and 4 and a 'booster' programme for pupils in Year 6. Homework is used appropriately to support reading and spelling across the school and, at times, is used well to reinforce the work covered in class. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and committed and has a realistic view of the issues facing the subject. Her monitoring role in planning and sampling pupils' work is sufficiently well developed to enable her to have a good overview of the subject. However, this has not been extended to classroom observations. Assessment procedures overall are good and include the use of optional tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 that are similar to those at the end of the key stage. Teachers have also met to examine samples of pupils' work to determine and agree on the levels attained. Although the school uses the data from the tests to set targets for the end of Year 6, the tracking of pupils' progress is not sufficiently rigorous to monitor the standards they achieve as they move through the school. Neither are pupils provided with targets that inform them of what is needed to reach the next level. Resources in English are in general adequate. There is a good range of sets of group reading books and a suitably wide selection of fiction books to support pupils' learning. However, books in the classrooms are not particularly well presented and do not encourage pupils to browse and select a book to read quietly in their own time. Good use is made of the daily time allocated to guided reading sessions. The range of non-fiction books in the library is limited, as during a recent audit, many of the older books were discarded and have not yet been replaced. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through the opportunity to work together and through reading a range of traditional tales, poems and stories from other cultures. The subject is enhanced by the opportunity for pupils to join a 'Performing Arts' club. The school's own productions provide memorable experiences for all pupils, either as participants or as part of the audience. The school is very aware of the needs to raise pupils' attainment in English, particularly that of boys, and has begun to put effective strategies in place, which is already impacting well on standards of achievement in writing.

## MATHEMATICS

88. Currently, eleven-year-old pupils are set to attain standards that are satisfactory in numeracy and all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape and measures and data handling). This represents a similar picture to the last inspection. Higher-attaining pupils in each year group are reaching standards that are above average because they are given challenging work, enabling them to become confident mathematicians. Comparing attainment on entry to the school as seven-year-olds to when they leave at the age of eleven, all pupils, including the significantly high number of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. This is because the quality of teaching is now good, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Another major contributory factor is the way in which the school, together with local authority and government inspectors, has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Areas of weakness within each class are being addressed, such as the way in which mathematics is used in other subjects, and has improved pupils' understanding of rounding numbers, for example. As part of his own performance management, the headteacher has been responsible for implementing national initiatives for raising standards for lower-attaining pupils in Year 5. This is now being extended to other classes, and, together with 'booster' classes for Year 6 pupils, is having a significant impact on raising attainment.

89. Challenging whole-school and individual targets that are set following analysis of national and school tests are being consistently met, and the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is closing. New systems for recording pupils' progress have been introduced, although the school acknowledges the need for closer monitoring of the rate at which pupils reach their individual targets. A major strength of the school is the very good quality of relationships that exists between staff and pupils. Pupils feel valued and want to do well, with the result that they develop the right attitudes to learning from the start. Teachers are careful to use correct mathematical language, and learning intentions for lessons are displayed prominently and are constantly referred to, so that pupils are crystal clear about what they are expected to learn in lessons.

90. The teaching of numeracy is good. Mental recall sessions at the beginning of lessons are used well and the skills pupils need to solve mathematical problems are taught in a careful sequence. As a result, pupils use and apply these skills with growing confidence. As an example, during one very good lesson seen, Year 5 pupils successfully selected the correct sequence to carry out a calculation involving multiplication and addition by first resolving the part of the problem in brackets. Because the tasks were modified to suit their needs lower-attaining pupils used smaller numbers, average-attaining pupils found answers by partitioning, while higher-attainers found common patterns and used more compact ways of finding their solutions. Teachers find innovative ways of reinforcing numeracy skills, as was seen when Year 3 pupils used an imaginary 'number machine' to mentally add and subtract numbers to twenty. These pupils understand the vocabulary of comparing and ordering of numbers and most use numbers to 100 with increasing confidence. By the age of eleven, pupils are mostly confident with written and mental computation using the four operations and have a secure understanding of ratio and proportion and use fractions and percentages when describing them.

91. Pupils achieve well in other areas of mathematics because teachers devise exciting activities. During a good lesson in Year 3, pupils made 'angle eaters', then used them effectively to find right angles around the classroom. Higher-attaining pupils sorted shapes with right angles using three different criteria, although this activity would have been more successful if pupils had been given access to real two-dimensional shapes rather than those on a worksheet. In finding the area of a perimeter, pupils in Year 4 made fair estimations by using their fingers to trace and count simultaneously. In another lesson, pupils used co-

ordinates successfully then gave the results to their partners to check in order to further reinforce learning. In enhancing skills in data handling, pupils draw tables and graphs and use these to find, for example, which school scores the most goals in football matches. Although examples of the use of information and communication technology to enhance mathematics were seen, this has been appropriately identified as an area for development in the school's action plan. Good use is being made of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. During a science lesson, pupils interpreted data from their bar charts to find the highest resting pulse rate, and use of time-lines in history develops pupils' understanding of chronology. In developing their understanding that computers can calculate costs Year 4 pupils used a spreadsheet to input information, but found difficulty in understanding how to add a formula to enable several calculations to be made quickly. The school has appropriately identified the need to further develop the use of information and communication technology as an aid to teaching and learning in mathematics.

92. The national numeracy strategy together with the programmes of study for the national curriculum for mathematics are well implemented, and are used as a basis for planning. Modifications are being made in the light of experience to match the needs of the school. Work is generally well planned to match individual needs, although in a minority of lessons and through analysis of previous work this is not always consistent. The marking of pupils' work is consistently good and pupils know how they can improve. Work is carefully and neatly presented and pupils are proud to talk about their work.

93. Teachers ask thought provoking questions and plan challenging tasks that make pupils want to participate and, because teachers' expectations are usually high and pupils know their efforts will be rewarded, they try hard, work with intense interest and concentration, and behave very well. Lapses do occur, however, when whole-class sessions are too long, the noise level is too high and pupils are not suitably challenged. Lessons usually proceed at a brisk pace with good on-going teacher assessment to check pupils' understanding in both mental and group tasks. Because frequent well-planned opportunities are given, pupils work harmoniously and fairly in group tasks and use their initiative when finding the quickest method to solve a mathematical problem or when deciding how to set out their chart for a scientific investigation. Nevertheless, teaching is sometimes too directed, thus preventing pupils from taking responsibility for their own learning.

94. The school is careful about how the budget for mathematics is spent which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers make very good use of resources, which have been considerably enhanced through the school's involvement in the trialling of materials for mathematics. Pupils use white boards very effectively to show the results of their mental calculations. Extra-curricular activities include a board-games club which further extends learning. Pupils have the chance to pit their powers of logic against each other when they play games such as chess and dominoes. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and the way in which well-informed teaching assistants support learning is a credit to the school; they make a major contribution to the good progress that all pupils make, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

95. The recently appointed enthusiastic co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher and other members of staff and is already implementing a well considered action plan. The potential for further improvement is therefore good.

## SCIENCE

96. Standards in science are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6, and those seen in the course of the inspection confirm the school's results in national tests for the subject in 2002. Although standards were similarly reported at the last inspection early in 1998, the school's results in national tests since then indicate that pupils' attainment has risen steadily each year. This improvement is the result of the school acting on better analysis of pupils' performance, of increasing confidence among the staff in teaching the subject, and because the subject has acquired a higher profile in the school's curriculum. The proportion of pupils achieving the level above that expected in national tests is firmly in line with national averages, suggesting the school is offering broadly appropriate work to pupils of higher attainment; however, standards overall could be even higher if the difficulty of the work offered was even more closely matched to the learning needs of different groups of pupils.

97. While overall standards of work at the beginning of Year 3 are just below those seen nationally, pupils make good progress as they move through the school because the subject is taught systematically. Pupils have the opportunity to experiment and to discuss the results of their findings with their teachers, who offer clear explanations and monitor well pupils' progress in their work to ensure that they are clear in their understanding. In Year 3, pupils become familiar with the properties of different materials, comparing, for example, their elasticity or durability with the purpose for which they are used. They begin to acquire an understanding of what constitutes a fair test and to appreciate the need to design an experiment that will measure what they intend. In Year 4, pupils learn about the human skeleton and compare this with those of animals. They make simple models to imitate the contraction of muscles in the arm. Building on this work, older pupils look more deeply into recording and explaining results from experiments, and examine the ways in which plants and animals are adapted to the environment in which they live. The principal difference in the standards of work between higher-attaining and average-attaining pupils across the school lies in the degree to which they explain what they have found out. While average attaining pupils record and describe their findings without necessarily drawing conclusions, those of greater aptitude and ability seek to explain or analyse the phenomena they have observed, and begin to understand why some experiments do not give the results they expect. However, these pupils do not always record their findings in sufficient detail. Those pupils with special educational needs generally progress a rate similar to that of other pupils because they are well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants. This aspect of provision has significantly improved since the last inspection.

98. However, this good progress could be even better if teachers matched the tasks they set for pupils more closely to their learning needs. Across the school those pupils of greater aptitude and ability in the subject are often set the same work as other pupils and are not always challenged to explore a theme more deeply or to explain why certain phenomena occur. One of the reasons for this is that all lessons are timetabled for half an hour daily. While this arrangement ensures that the subject has appropriate importance and is taught systematically, there is not always sufficient time for pupils to engage in sustained work on a particular theme. This discourages pupils from pursuing an investigation as deeply as they might and inhibits them from developing the research skills they need for independent study. It also sometimes has the effect of dissipating the pupils' sense of anticipation; as the result of good motivation, they sometimes become very enthusiastic to pursue their work, only to be told that its completion will have to wait until the next lesson.

99. The quality of the teaching was sound in all the lessons observed, and it was good or very good in almost 40 per cent of them. A strong feature of science teaching in all classes is the teachers' ability to motivate pupils to do well. Because of their good relationships with

teachers, pupils develop very good attitudes to learning, are enthusiastic to learn and generally concentrate well when working independently or in small groups. This has a positive impact on their rate of progress. Teachers generally plan their work thoroughly and use the time available well. Lessons proceed at a good pace; teachers monitor pupils' progress well and are alert to offer supplementary explanations when these are required. Sometimes they are rather too directive, offering explanations a little too readily instead of asking further questions that will prompt pupils to arrive at a conclusion for themselves. In one very good lesson, however, older pupils were expected to discuss and note how plants and animals had adapted to a particular habitat, the teacher circulating to each group and asking telling questions that helped to clarify their thinking. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, and some convey an infectious enthusiasm that has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. However, while teachers generally set tasks that are matched well to the learning needs of lower-attaining and average-attaining pupils, those offered to pupils of higher-aptitude and ability are not always sufficiently challenging, so that differences seen in the quality of work are more often the consequences of the quality of pupils' perceptions than the result of more being demanded of them. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress because they are also supported well by teaching assistants who offer them the right level of questioning and explanation to ensure that their adapted tasks are well understood. Teachers are at pains to include every pupil in each aspect of the curriculum they offer.

100. The quality of pupils' learning is consistently sound and often good because teachers motivate them well and offer explanations that are clear and interesting. As the result of the good relationships that teachers work hard to establish with their pupils, attitudes to learning in the classroom are very good so that a climate for concentrated effort is easily created. Teachers manage pupils well, ensuring that little time is lost when there is a change of activity or when the class needs to listen for some general explanation. Because pupils are well motivated, they can often give a clear verbal account of what they have learnt. However, a written record of their knowledge and understanding is sometimes less well developed, partially because of the limited time available in each daily lesson.

101. All aspects of the science curriculum are taught in appropriate measure. The school has rightly focused on the need for the further development of investigative work, and this is beginning to make an impact, for example, on pupils' understanding of how to construct and carry out a fair test. However, there is scope for creating more frequent opportunities for pupils to carry out more sustained experimental and independent work, and for higher-attaining pupils to offer more precise explanations and to draw more detailed conclusions. In its current improvement plan, the school recognises this need for pupils to become more closely involved in their own learning. The curriculum co-ordinator, in post for nine months, has a good understanding of the priorities for further developments in the subject because the school has analysed pupils' performance in tests. However, while this analysis informs teachers' medium-term planning, there is scope for extending its use to plan for the particular day-to-day learning needs of different groups of pupils. Currently, there is little monitoring of teaching, although the co-ordinator develops a general overview of what is happening in each class through informal discussions with colleagues.

102. Resources for the subject are adequate, accessible and well used. A science week is held annually to raise the profile of the subject and to share more widely pupils' achievements. The school is forward-looking in its development of the subject; for example, there are links with the local community college enabling staff to acquire a closer understanding of the next phase of pupils' learning in science.

## ART AND DESIGN

103. By Year 6, standards in art and design are in line with those expected nationally, and are similar to those seen during the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress in learning the applications of techniques and materials as they move through the school. Many older pupils, however, make good progress in some aspects of their art work because they are expected to achieve highly and because there is an insistence that they will improve on their initial efforts.

104. Building on the skills they have acquired at Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 3 compose self-portraits in the style of Van Gogh, using broad strokes in pastels or pencil crayon to achieve the desired effect. Following the example of David Hockney, they learn some of the techniques of portraiture, making pencil sketches before completing their final efforts. Pupils extend this work in Year 4, learning to draw facial expressions that convey happiness, sorrow or anger. Using pastels, they depict the vivid images that they experienced in dreams. In Year 5, pupils begin to refine their observational skills, making careful pencil drawings of objects with particular textures, such as the inside of fruit. They systematically attempt to create the effects of light and shade using smudge techniques, and to represent the relative position of half-hidden objects. Pupils in Year 6 generally make good progress in their understanding of proportion and the representation of movement because they are taught to observe closely and because they are expected to refine and improve their efforts before they are satisfied with them. Furthermore, skills are isolated and taught separately so that these pupils concentrate on improving one of them at a time. For example, when imitating the work of Marcel Duchamp, pupils were explicitly told to ignore any attempt at representing facial expression when drawing posture, thus focusing their attention on the particular skill the teacher wished to develop. Across the school those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils. In the lessons seen, these pupils discussed and shared their work freely with others, often receiving support and advice from other pupils with whom they were working.

105. No judgement can be made on the overall quality of art teaching in the school because too few lessons were observed in the course of the inspection. However, some conclusions may be drawn from these lessons, from displays of art and design and from the quality of work in sketch books. In the three lessons observed, the teaching was of good quality or better. Teachers explained clearly to pupils what was required of them; they demonstrated good knowledge of the necessary techniques and rightly focused pupils' attention on practising the particular skills that they wished them to develop. In one lesson, the teacher achieved this by obliging pupils to mask out most of their previous work in order that they could better concentrate on a detailed drawing of the texture of a small part of it. In one outstanding lesson, Year 6 pupils were constantly urged to take the utmost care with their pastel drawings. The teacher carefully demonstrated the techniques they needed to employ to capture the nature of the human movement they were copying, with the result that most pupils were dissatisfied with their first efforts and impelled to improve continually upon their work. The quality of this teaching perceptibly raised standards of attainment in the course of the lesson. However, there is scope to raise further the expectations for pupils' achievement. Sometimes, for example, pupils imitate the works of famous artists without paying adequate attention to the care with which they finish their work, and teachers do not insist sufficiently that they improve upon their first efforts. Equally, pupils practise techniques without refining the skills involved. As at the last inspection, pupils possess good background knowledge to art and design because they are well motivated and because teachers offer clear explanations in their introductions to lessons.

106. Pupils are taught every aspect of the National Curriculum as they move through the school. The art co-ordinator, appointed to the post relatively recently, possesses a very good

knowledge of the subject, and regularly offers advice to colleagues. As yet, there is no monitoring of teaching in the subject, although the co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in teaching through informal discussions with colleagues. There is no portfolio of work that teachers can consult on standards, and currently there are no formal procedures for assessment. The curriculum is enriched through the provision of a well supported art club that provides pupils with opportunities to express themselves in a variety of media. Resources for the subject are generally sufficient, although a greater range of books and other materials depicting the works of famous artists is required. Pupils currently have few opportunities to visit art galleries or museums, or to meet artists in school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection and the sample of work provided by the school was limited. Therefore no judgements can be made about attainment and pupils' achievements in this subject nor about the quality of teaching. There were no significant weaknesses at the time of the last inspection, the scheme of work was in need of revision and this has been carried out. However, the school now has no co-ordinator so monitoring of the standards and planning for further improvement is not secure.

108. From the small sample of pupils' work seen it is clear that design and technology helps to develop numeracy skills as the results of the 'Bread' survey showed by using a number of graphs to show preferences. The work on display of totem poles also showed that pupils engage in producing ideas and had planned the sequence of their work, used appropriate tools and materials and then evaluated models they had made using success criteria.

109. Long-term planning is suitable and covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. Sound use is made of the QCA schemes of work and these are modified to suit the school's needs. Design and make tasks are planned into the curriculum map and were mostly due to take place in the second half of the term following the inspection. Resources are adequate, although with space at such a premium in the school, their location in a central store makes them difficult to access.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Attainment in geography at the age of eleven is average. The last time the school was inspected, attainment in geography was judged to be meeting national expectations. The pupils are making satisfactory progress in gaining knowledge in the subject and improving their geographical skills. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the effective support they receive in lessons and achieve well. While only a few lessons were seen, additional evidence was gathered through the analysis of pupils' work, a scrutiny of planning and discussions with pupils.

111. By the age of eleven, pupils have made steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of places beyond their locality and use a suitable range of geographical skills to undertake a study of mountain environments. They are aware of the world distribution of major mountain areas and mark them on a map of the world. In the lesson seen in Year 6, the pupils discussed how mountains are formed using the appropriately related geographical vocabulary, such as avalanche, glacier and U shaped valleys in their explanations. The lesson made a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills as they made notes during the teacher's introduction and then used their notes in the follow up work to write a brief description of each feature. Their previous work showed they know about the individual character of three contrasting mountain environments, such as the Alps, Snowdonia and the Andes. In undertaking these studies, pupils make effective use of information and



communication technology to support their learning by using a CD-ROM and the internet to find out more about their chosen range of mountains.

112. In Year 5, pupils make good use of local Ordnance Survey maps and the A to Z map of Bristol to locate water features, such as the River Severn, Chew Valley Lake and Blagdon Lake. They identify the symbols used and give the location by using four figure grid references. In their study of water, pupils obtained information from an atlas to identify places with very high and very low rainfall and marked the areas on a map of the world. In the lesson observed, which involved pupils calculating out how many litres of water was used in their own homes over a week, pupils could see how much water is actually wasted. This work also supported pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development effectively. For example, it enabled pupils to explore the wider issues of wasting water and raised their awareness of less economically developed countries where the water supply has to be managed carefully in order to make the environment sustainable.

113. The analysis of work and lesson observed in Year 3 indicates that pupils have a secure knowledge of the local area. They are developing a satisfactory knowledge and the skill to use an atlas and map of the British Isles to locate specific places, such as the major cities. They locate the nearest town to their own locality and by using a mileage chart work out the difference in length between routes from Bristol to London, to Cardiff and to Edinburgh. This study also entails pupils using a road map of Bristol and plotting a route into the centre from two different locations. In the lesson seen, pupils explained and drew the route they take from their own home to school. They identified and named the landmarks they passed, such as the church, particular public houses and a cycle track. However, there were a number of pupils who found it difficult to put the features in sequence.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is overall, satisfactory. In the school's previous inspection, the quality of teaching in lessons was judged to be good. In lessons observed, teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge and this enhanced the pupils' understanding and the use of appropriate geographical vocabulary. Lessons are well planned and teachers make sure that pupils understand the learning objectives of each lesson. Where good teaching was observed, the pupils were stimulated into developing the confidence to tackle new work successfully. In Year 5 for example, where pupils had been asked to keep a diary of water used in their home during a day, the teacher used the results to get pupils to work out the amount of water used over a week. By providing a list of the average amounts of water used in such activities as taking a bath, washing clothes and brushing teeth and by introducing calculators, the pupils' enthusiastically set about working out the figures. Teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to recall and reinforce pupils' knowledge. They provide well directed support to pupils as they work and help to clear up any misunderstanding individual pupils may encounter. Pupils' work in geography helps them to raise their standards of literacy, for example when they make notes during the teacher's introduction to a lesson and then draw on the information to present their findings. Where teaching is satisfactory, the methods used are generally appropriate and lessons are taught at suitable pace. Analysis of pupils' work indicated that the content of work given to pupils was rarely differentiated to meet their varying needs. However, in lessons, pupils benefit from the individual support provided by teachers. In most lessons, pupils show considerable interest in geography and are keen to offer their ideas. By having the opportunity to share their thoughts and work together, pupils' develop positive attitudes to learning and work hard in lessons.

115. Good cross-curricular links are made with a number of subjects, such as history when they study Ancient Greece and mathematics when they apply their mapping skills to locating places and when interpreting the data of weather patterns. Overall, ICT is used

appropriately to support pupils' learning, as for instance through the opportunity to use the internet for any current information from around the world.

116. The co-ordinator for geography is well qualified and provides good leadership. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are closely monitored and evaluated. However, an assessment system to monitor the progress of pupils has yet to be implemented. Resources are overall adequate to support the units covered. The school makes appropriate use of field visits in and around the local environment to extend the pupils' geographical knowledge.

## **HISTORY**

117. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe three lessons of history. Judgements are made on this evidence, an analysis of pupils' work and displays, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with pupils. The indications are that standards in history are in line with expectations at the age of eleven, which is similar to that of the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. This is largely due to the good teaching that places a strong emphasis on bringing history alive and as a result motivates the pupils. This leads to good learning and the development of their historical skills.

118. Pupils in Year 6 have an increasing depth of factual knowledge and understanding of the periods of history they have studied, including the Victorians, Romans, Anglo Saxons and World War II. They have gained a sound insight into the way that people lived at different periods and the important events that shaped their lives. In their study of Ancient Greece, pupils know how the Gods influenced the lives of the Ancient Greeks and how they used myths to make sense of their lives. They draw conclusions from evidence, such as photographs and images of pottery, buildings and clothes and learn that it can tell them about the life Ancient Greeks led. They show an appropriate understanding of chronology and can construct simple time-lines from their knowledge. Pupils develop a suitable range of specialist vocabulary, such as, 'polis' and 'Parthenon' and write with increasing detail and accuracy. However, there was little evidence of pupils being given scope for independent study.

119. The work in Year 4 pupils' history books showed that pupils have had the opportunity to work in depth on the Romans and Celts. Through this study they gain an increasing awareness of who the Celts were and why the Romans invaded Britain. They know the story of Boudicca and explore the reasons and consequences of the revolt. This work supports the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development well, as they consider the feelings of the Romans and Celts after Boudicca's defeat. Younger pupils in Year 3 know about the life of Henry VIII as king and develop an understanding of why he wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon in order to marry Ann Boleyn. As part of this study, they looked at pictures and quotations about Henry that were written at the time of his reign and used these to consider what he was like.

120. The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning history is good. Teachers are enthusiastic about history and present the work in a way that pupils' enjoy and which encourages them to work hard and develop their historical skills. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of pupils and hold their interest. Teachers use a suitable range of information sources to help pupils investigate the past and are demanding of pupils in their oral responses. They use appropriate vocabulary and tell stories that bring history alive for their pupils. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson about Henry VIII, the teacher effectively involved the pupils in the role-play of Henry VIII's appeal to the Pope for a divorce from

Catherine of Aragon. By the end of the lesson, the pupils gave clear reasons for why Henry wanted a divorce. The lesson made a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills, through discussion and writing letters in role as Henry to the Pope, setting out reasons for wanting a divorce. Showing a good command of the subject, through a mix of questioning, explaining and a lively presentation, the teacher captivated the interest and imagination of the pupils. Older pupils speak with great enthusiasm about history, when they recollect the time they dressed up as Victorian school children and handled artefacts from the Second World War. Throughout the school, once assigned to a task, the pupils apply themselves diligently.

121. The co-ordinator for history is knowledgeable and very enthusiastic about the subject. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are closely monitored and evaluated. Her role in classroom monitoring has yet to be developed, but good support is provided to colleagues. History gives good support to the teaching of literacy and numeracy, for example through the use of time lines, writing letters as historical characters and research work. Information and communication technology is integrated appropriately within the teaching of history, with pupils having the opportunity to access appropriate sites to deepen their knowledge of aspects of their work. At present, assessment procedures are insufficiently developed to systematically check pupils' progress in acquiring historical knowledge, understanding and skills. Resources are good to support teaching and learning of all the units. Curricular provision is enriched by visits including those to the Bristol Museum, the museum of Welsh life at St Fagan's, the S. S. Great Britain and the Caerleon Roman settlement. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development through the opportunity to empathise, to discover the impact of changes and to carry out a study into the lives of people of past societies.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. Standards of work are in line with expectations by Year 6, although pupils' ability to organise and present information is above the national expectation. In this respect, standards have improved since the last inspection. The school has kept pace well with the increased demands of the subject. The school's computer suite offers pupils regular opportunities to practise the necessary skills, with the result that they become adept at accessing and manipulating information.

123. Overall, pupils make sound progress in the subject as they move through the school, although it is good in some aspects of the subject. For example, pupils in Year 3 make rapid gains in their understanding of how to access and change information from the time they enter the school, practising skills systematically and using the computer's tools to make practical designs or to format text. Building soundly on previously acquired knowledge, pupils in Year 4 manipulate the mouse dextrously to access information in folders and files. They learn how to edit text using cut and paste tools and begin to appreciate the relative advantages of the computer over more traditional ways of amending information, and also to understand its limitations. In Year 5, pupils make good progress in using the computer to handle and present data, employing spreadsheets to produce lists and learning how the computer may function as a calculator. By Year 6, pupils begin to adapt information more sensitively for particular purposes; for example they download pictures and text from the internet, some manipulating the computer's tools adroitly to modify and interpret them for their own use. Across the school, pupils of different aptitude and ability work in pairs at the computer, the more skilful ones often supporting those who have less confidence or ability. As a result, those of average or lower ability sometimes progress more quickly than expected, while those of higher attainment do not always move forward as rapidly as they might. There is scope, therefore, to offer different, more challenging work with greater

frequency to pupils of greater aptitude and ability; this would also free teachers to direct their support more efficiently towards those in need of it.

124. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall; no unsatisfactory lessons were seen, but some good teaching occurs in Year 3 where pupils make rapid progress in the learning of fundamental skills. Teachers generally display good subject knowledge and have worked hard to keep pace of the growing demands of the subject. As a result, the teaching of basic computer skills is good. Lessons are well prepared, but although the planning caters well for average-attaining and lower-attaining pupils, it does not always take account of the needs of those of greater aptitude and ability. The pace of lessons is generally adequate; teachers' instructions and explanations are clear, and pupils move quickly on to the practical task. However, the rate of learning inevitably slows when any pupils encounter a difficulty because the teacher is obliged to resolve the problem before the whole class can proceed to the next stage of their learning. The work teachers offer is clearly linked to practical, everyday situations that the pupils understand, such as designing a book label or re-organising information. Sometimes, teachers use information technology very imaginatively to display pupils' achievements; some pupils in Year 5, for example, become adept at using the digital camera for this purpose. Because of the good attitudes to learning that teachers promote, pupils generally display an enthusiasm for learning in the subject and manifest a clear understanding of what they have learnt.

125. The school offers a broad curriculum for information and communication technology. All aspects of the subject are covered, although there is scope to extend further pupils' experience of data handling and control technology, particularly among younger pupils. The well-qualified curriculum co-ordinator provides a clear example to colleagues. Although the school plans to introduce shortly procedures for evaluating pupils' performance, there is currently no assessment of learning or monitoring of teaching, so the school cannot be sure that pupils individually are making as much progress as they might. Information technology is used soundly to support other areas of the curriculum; for example, pupils progressively learn word-processing skills and produce bar graphs and tables for science. The internet is used effectively as a source of information, especially by older pupils, and parental permission is appropriately sought before pupils gain access. Resources for teaching the subject have greatly improved since the last inspection, and the school has made the best use of available accommodation. Nevertheless, the new computer suite is cramped when all pupils are present, and teachers have to work hard to combat the sound of rain on the roof-light in bad weather.

## **MUSIC**

126. The satisfactory standards identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. By the age of eleven, pupils use music vocabulary appropriately to compare music of different styles and sing in parts and maintain their own line independently. Pupils show an appropriate awareness of rhythm and adapt the style of their singing to the moods of the music. Although in the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning was of good quality, the analysis of planning together with discussions with staff and pupils suggest that it is satisfactory overall. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory gains in learning, and it was noticeable that the progress of pupils receiving specialist violin teaching was good.

127. Younger pupils know that a pentatonic scale uses five notes and apply this knowledge when composing suitable music after writing poetry to describe mythical creatures, such as dragons. In one such lesson, pupils performed their interesting compositions for others, although they found it difficult to maintain concentration because noise levels were too high in

parts of the lesson and conditions were too cramped for comfort. Because the teacher continually inspired and challenged pupils to think of ways of improving their work and because skills were taught in careful sequence, pupils in Year 5 very quickly began to recognize how improvised patterns in music can be fitted together for effect. Rewards were offered as an incentive for pupils to try hard and the success of all was celebrated, which raised pupils' self esteem considerably. Very good links were made to literacy when Year 6 pupils listened carefully to a well known popular song and then worked collaboratively to transpose newspaper headlines to fit the music, often adapting the words to fit the tune to better effect.

128. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The use of atmospheric music often sets the scene for learning in lessons and assemblies. Pupils are introduced to the works of classical composers such as Bach and Saint Saens, and musical instruments include those from other cultures. There are well taken opportunities for working in groups and pairs, and pupils evaluate not only their own work but also that of others. A calm atmosphere pervades most lessons and pupils usually behave well, although occasionally, management of pupils is not as good as it should be. However, in one good lesson seen in Year 6, pupils positively bristled with pride when they performed their musical composition successfully, because others in the class showed their spontaneous approval.

129. The school uses nationally agreed guidelines as a basis for music teaching and the enthusiastic subject co-ordinator, who has just returned from maternity leave, is already beginning to modify planning to assist some staff with less expertise. Although resources for music are satisfactory, there are no external microphones with which to record pupils' efforts as a means of assessment and use of ICT to enhance music is under-developed. The co-ordinator is aware that visits and visitors need to be increased, although the school has attended concerts in Bristol Cathedral, and visits by the Bristol Boogie Band enriched pupils' cultural experiences. Extra curricular activities include a drama club, which is well attended, and performances in assemblies and concerts also further enhance pupils' learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. Standard in the aspects of PE games and gymnastics, observed during the inspection are in line with expectations. This was the picture at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys. There has been good improvement since the last inspection with the introduction of swimming for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. However the school does not keep adequate records of how many pupils can swim 25 metres by the time they leave the school. The school has now an adequate range of apparatus to allow pupils to work at different levels in gymnastics. Resources are adequate, although the lack of a field on the school site hinders the development of skills in athletics and games. The school makes best use of the playground areas but these would be improved if grids were marked to help with the organisation of games skills practice.

131. The school has maintained the good teaching of PE seen at the last inspection. Pupils are taught well with some very good teaching by the PE co-ordinator. Lessons are well planned making good use of the scheme of work. In the best lessons, teachers use demonstration very well, for example, in a Year 5 games lesson the way to feint to send a pass in order to deceive an opponent was modelled very well. Similarly in a Year 3 lesson, teachers showed the points of technique for sending a chest pass well stressing the feet position and spread of fingers. This teaching results in good learning. In some lessons, the pace of teaching drops and pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop skills as they have to wait too long to take part. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were given opportunity to

evaluate the work of others and suggest ways of improving their own and others' performance, but this practice was not used sufficiently in other lessons seen. Opportunities are missed to use literacy skills in explaining and justifying their opinions about PE performance. Numeracy skills are developed sometimes, as in a Year 5 gymnastics lesson when pupils were challenged to say how many pupils would be in each group if the class of 24 was to work in four groups, but this practice is not yet practised sufficiently. As a result of the good teaching in PE, pupils have positive attitudes and behave well. They work very well together which has a positive impact on their personal and social development.

132. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge and is very enthusiastic. He is currently part of a 'link teacher' project which is giving very good training in all aspects of the work of a co-ordinator and is building strong links with other schools. These links will involve making use of the resources of the secondary school and in playing games against other schools. An annual sports day takes place which celebrates achievement but allows all pupils to take part. There is a very good range of after school clubs including football, rugby, netball and cricket. These activities help pupils to develop a sense of fair play and sporting competition and also increase their cultural awareness.

133. Assessment and recording procedures are not in place although the co-ordinator has clear plans and ideas to address this issue. The co-ordinator has no non-contact time at present to work alongside teachers, which limits his ability to monitor standards and to further improve performance.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

134. The satisfactory standards attained by eleven-year-olds identified following the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils have a secure knowledge not only of their own religion but also that of others. A particular strength of the school is the way in which pupils are taught to apply what they have learned from religion to their own lives. This is reflected in the very good quality of relationships that exist throughout the school and the way in which all pupils, regardless of race, gender or ability, are included in all aspects of the life and work of the school. Pupils take care of each other and are clearly aware of the need to help those people less fortunate than themselves such as the homeless and needy. By the age of eleven, pupils compare, contrast and reflect on what others believe and offer considered opinions as to why symbols are sacred to members of different faiths. The good and occasionally very good and excellent teaching is having a major impact, enabling all pupils to make good progress.

135. Careful teaching to explain the significance and importance of Jewish artefacts and symbols associated with a Seder meal helped Year 3 pupils to link this learning to the story of The Exodus. At the same time they showed empathy with the thoughts and feelings of the Israelites as they went in search of a new country. Excellent teaching in a Year 5 class enabled pupils to identify feelings, experiences and circumstances that may give rise to worship. Sensitive, probing questioning by the teacher resulted in pupils successfully identifying why Hindus respect images of their Gods as a focus for worship. Music was used very successfully as a calming exercise in one Year 4 lesson to help pupils to understand why the Jews place great importance on Shabbat, their day of rest. Nevertheless, over-loud explanation by the teacher in another such lesson, coupled with noisy discussion by pupils, destroyed the calm atmosphere evoked by the music. Although teachers introduce and consolidate learning sensitively and imaginatively, more care needs to be taken to ensure that group tasks, which follow whole-class sessions, are better matched to pupils' needs. Pupils have more opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas through writing than was evident at the last inspection, although analysis of previous work suggests that expectations are

occasionally not as high as they might be. Links to numeracy include the use of time-lines to show key events in history from the time Jesus was born.

136. The subject makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to respect the feelings and beliefs of others, they listen with interest and generally behave well in lessons, and exhibit very good attitudes to learning when they share their thoughts and ideas with others in group and class situations. Multi-faith festivals such as Eid are celebrated, and music is used sensitively to set the scene for learning in lessons and assemblies and to provide pupils with time to reflect. The pupils are generally interested in the content of lessons, even when the religious ideas and beliefs are strange and outside their experiences. Hymns and songs are chosen well and pupils' singing adds significantly to worship in assemblies.

137. Teachers are careful to plan interesting tasks that are well within pupils' understanding. For example, lessons often start with experiences from pupils' own lives, such as evaluating the kind of situations that pupils find calm and relaxing, and teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to discuss and reflect on what they have learned. The very good and excellent teaching seen was characterised by the continual very high level of challenge in lessons, the use of sensitive, thought-provoking questions, and the excellent use of time and resources. Planning is appropriately linked to the locally authority agreed syllabus. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision of what needs to be done next and is currently reviewing the links being made with other subjects. Resources are plentiful and easily accessible and are supplemented by the loan of resources from parents. Good use is made of visitors, including members of the local clergy, although this needs to be extended to include other religions. Pupils visit a local church not only as a source of information but also to perform carol services to which members of the public are invited.