

INSPECTION REPORT

GROVE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Nailsea

LEA area: North Somerset

Unique reference number: 109082

Headteacher: Mr R Bailey

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jan Spooner
18489

Dates of inspection: 14th October – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 246865

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
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Ramplin
Date of previous inspection:	20 th – 23 rd October 1997

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8971	Mrs Judith Hesslewood	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
21581	Mrs Mary Speakman	Team inspector	English Art and design	English as an additional language
27369	Mrs Carolyn Powell	Team inspector	Science History	Educational inclusion Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	Music Physical education Religious education	Special educational needs The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
3586	Mrs Elizabeth Camplin	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography Information and communication technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Grove Junior School caters for boys and girls from the age of 7 to 11. There are 374 pupils on roll, including ten pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, two of whom are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The school is larger than most other junior schools. The number of pupils has remained fairly constant, despite falling rolls in the area. The school is situated to the southwest of Bristol in the commuter town of Nailsea. The school serves a well-established and prosperous community and is much sought after in the locality for the education it provides. The socio-economic backgrounds of most pupils are generally above average. Whilst there is no acute deprivation, and the incidence of free school meals is low, at six per cent, a small number of pupils have significant educational and social needs. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well below average. Of the 12 pupils receiving support from outside agencies, or who have a statement to support their special educational needs, half have a variety of learning difficulties and a further quarter have support to meet their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils are taught in 12 classes. Some of the classes are large, as the school has to admit up to 103 pupils each year. This number is set to reduce to 90 in September 2003. Most children transfer from two local infant schools. Pupils' overall ability when they enter the school is above average. Most pupils come from homes where there is a high level of interest in the life and work of the school. They come to school well motivated and keen to do well.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Grove Junior School is a successful school with some very good features and offers its pupils a good standard of education. Teaching is good and helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average, overall, by the time they leave the school. Pupils also do very well in information and communication technology and physical education. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, coordinators and governors provide the school with very good leadership and management, and this has led to the school successfully taking on new initiatives for the benefit of its pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education are well above average. Standards in science, art, history, religious education, design and technology, reading and speaking and listening are above average.
- The school provides a rich curriculum, which is further enhanced by the quality and range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.
- Teaching is good across the whole school.
- Leadership and management throughout the school are very good. Governors provide very effective strategic support.
- The partnership with parents is very good with the school providing very high quality information for parents.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in writing.¹
- The teaching of investigative science.²
- The quality of teachers' marking.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good degree of improvement in many aspects of its work, since the last inspection in October 1997. The school responded well to the key issues in the previous inspection report and has worked hard to continue to provide a good quality of education. In information and communication technology a policy and scheme of work are now fully implemented, and standards are well above average. The subject makes a significant contribution to several subjects, including literacy, numeracy, art and design, history and geography. Most assemblies now provide appropriate experiences for pupils, however, some classroom assemblies, especially at the end of the school day, are rushed and do not provide as meaningful a spiritual experience as they might. The progress pupils make in mathematics is now good. Assessment has developed further to include the tracking of the performance of individual pupils. This information is used very well to set year-group targets in literacy and numeracy. In many other areas of the curriculum, subject portfolios have been developed well to assess pupils' achievement at the end of each year. The good quality of relationships, noted in the previous inspection, is now

¹ This issue is already being addressed as part of the school's development plan.

² This issue is already being addressed as part of the school's development plan.

even better and is making a significant contribution to the whole-school culture. The contribution of the wider community to pupils' learning is now very good, and the school's relationships with its partner schools are very productive. The governors have developed their responsibilities further, and now make a very valuable contribution to the school's strategic planning. The school has the capacity and commitment to improve further.

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 ³
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	B	C	D
Mathematics	B	A	B	C
Science	C	A	A	B

Key

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

When compared nationally, the test results in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, show attainment to be well above average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. Since 1997, the attainment of pupils has, overall, kept pace with the national trends of improvement. Since 2000, results in science have generally improved at a higher rate than that seen nationally, however, results in English, notably in writing, have not matched national improvements. Over the past five years, improvements in mathematics have been very similar to the national trend. The inspection findings show that the pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining standards in English similar to the most recent test results. In mathematics, however, their attainment is well-above average, and in science it is above average. The difference between the test results in science and the standard of work seen in school is because investigative science, not currently a part of the national tests, is not as well developed as it should be. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. On the basis of inspection evidence, these targets are achievable, particularly as the school has recently introduced the setting of pupils by ability in Years 5 and 6, and proposed in-service training for staff in the areas of developing pupils' writing, and in practical science.

Inspection findings show that standards in information and communication technology and physical education are well above average, by the end of Year 6, in art and design, history, religious education and design and technology standards are above average and in music and geography they are average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	COMMENT
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are generally keen to come to school and show mature attitudes to their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are good. This enables pupils to get the most out of the teaching they receive. At playtime and dinnertime, pupils play well together, enjoying the benefits of the school's extensive grounds.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The relationships between teachers and pupils are a very positive aspect of the school. In lessons, teachers respond genuinely to pupils, always encouraging them to have a go and to achieve as well as they are able. Pupils' personal development is encouraged through well-established opportunities, such as 'circle' time ⁴ and the school council.
Attendance	Very good.

³ 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

⁴ 'Circle' time is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

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 overall. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent, with four-fifths of the lessons being good, or better. In English and mathematics, the quality of teaching is good, with much teaching that is very good and, on occasions, excellent. In literacy and numeracy lessons, the way in which teachers plan, prepare, and manage their lessons ensures that pupils improve their skills and grow in confidence. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well through many different areas of the curriculum. In the best lessons in the school, teachers' expectations are made very clear to pupils who are engaged and challenged by good questioning and high-quality activities to match their different abilities. In some of these lessons, very good use is made of information and communication technology. The quality of relationships established throughout the school also makes a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Marking is, however, inconsistent, with pupils rarely being given guidance about what they can do to improve further. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their lessons. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive good-quality help from support staff. The pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English receive good-quality help from staff from the local education authority, who advise staff on strategies and resources for learning. Pupils settle well to their independent activities in lessons, enabling teachers to focus their attention on individual groups. This helps ensure that all pupils make good progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has continued to provide a broad and appropriately balanced curriculum for its pupils, and this has ensured that high-quality provision has been maintained.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Work is matched to the needs of these pupils, and specific, additional support is given to individual pupils. The support given by teachers and support staff helps ensure that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The individual needs of pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English are provided for effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision is very good for pupils' moral and social development, good for their spiritual development, and satisfactory for their cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to become self-motivated and independent learners with a personal sense of responsibility and self-discipline. Pupils' cultural experiences are developed in subjects, such as art and design and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school, which has good standards of pastoral care. Pupils' academic progress is supported very well by the monitoring of standards at the end of each school year. This information is then used well to guide the planning of the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and all key staff, ensure that the school is able to fulfil its vision and be successful.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The school is supported well by a very effective governing body that is aware of its strategic role. The governors have a wide range of expertise that they use effectively to help shape the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is a reflective school that sets itself high standards. The school evaluates and monitors its performance rigorously to continually support school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's financial planning is clear, and supported by effective systems for financial management. Good quality resources have been purchased to support the school's priorities and to benefit the pupils.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has a good match of appropriately qualified teachers. There is also an adequate number of support staff. Learning resources are good, overall, and there is now excellent provision for information and communication technology. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, with teething troubles linked to the new buildings being gradually overcome.

The strength of the leadership and management lies in the way that the headteacher shares the responsibilities, and enables all staff to contribute positively in a culture of openness and mutual support. All the teaching and support staff possess a very strong commitment to the school and its success. The school is aware of the need to ensure that it achieves good value. It consults parents and the school community, including the pupils, about their views and takes them into account when making decisions. The school compares its performance with other schools and considers thoroughly the provision it makes for its pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is led and managed well. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Their children like school. Parents feel comfortable approaching school with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree fully with parents' positive views. The inspection found that the school makes very good attempts to work closely with parents and provides them with excellent written information about its work, the curriculum taught, and pupils' progress. Inspectors found that the school provides a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, for all age groups, both during lunchtime and after school.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are, by and large, continuing to improve. At the time of the last inspection standards exceeded national expectations overall. The school has generally kept pace with the national trend of improvement and standards are currently above average overall. This has been achieved through the school's high-quality strategic planning, and a coherent and very effective programme of in-service training to ensure that teachers are well trained and prepared for new initiatives in education. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, and the commitment of the teachers to whole-school improvement and effectiveness, ensure that the school is in a good position to continue to raise standards.
2. The results of the national tests in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, were in line with the national average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results were below average in English, average in mathematics, and above average in science. Compared with similar schools, the number of pupils reaching a level higher than expected was well below average in English, it matched the average in mathematics, and was above average in science. In English, results in reading showed that nearly half the pupils attained a level higher than expected, whereas, by contrast, in writing, few pupils achieved this level. Since the last inspection, the standards in mathematics and science have, in general, kept pace with the rate of improvement found nationally. Standards in English rose between 1997 and 2000, however, during the last two years, standards have not been maintained, and results have not kept pace with national improvements. As most pupils enter the school with a level of attainment that is above average, the results in English, mathematics and science, at the end of Year 6, indicate a satisfactory level of achievement overall.
3. The school keeps a careful track of pupils' progress. There is a very meticulous approach to setting targets for individual pupils that involves all teachers and coordinators. These are formally agreed by governors and shared with parents. Progress towards these targets is monitored carefully. Rigorous monitoring by subject coordinators, the deputy headteacher and the headteacher ensure that all teachers in the school have a good overview of the whole process and have high expectations of pupils' achievement. The schools' targets in all subjects are appropriately challenging. The staff work very hard as a team to achieve them. Each year, pupils' performance is analysed very thoroughly; these analyses are then discussed with coordinators and shared with the whole staff. This gives a very clear picture of specific strengths and weaknesses and what the particular year groups need to focus on to improve further. This year in mathematics, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are focusing on measures, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 on problem solving. Within these overall areas, targets are set for the different abilities. In English, the targets set relate to the individual year groups and, through the school, aim to ensure that all pupils gain a greater understanding of the structure and function of different styles of writing. The school also analyses its results by gender and compares year groups to ensure it is aware of the progress of different groups through the school.
4. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school in Year 3 is above average in mathematics and science, and in all aspects of English except writing. In both comprehension and mathematics, over half the pupils reached a level higher than expected, in the tests taken at the end of Year 2. In writing, this level was achieved by only one in ten pupils. From when pupils enter the school, the pattern of progress is very steady, and the results show pupils making satisfactory progress overall.
5. In English, the inspection findings confirm that the pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining similar standards to the results of the national tests in 2002 and this represents a slight improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in speaking, listening and reading is above average and in writing it is average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils speak well on a wide range of subjects. As they move through the school, pupils become enthusiastic, capable readers. The youngest pupils are able to use reference books confidently and understand how to skim texts to seek information they need. At the end of Year 6, standards in writing are securely in line with the national average. Observations made during the inspection show pupils benefiting from the increased attention being given to writing. Girls do better than boys in both reading and writing tests. Progress is particularly good in Year 5, where pupils are achieving high standards for their age. This is due to improvements in the teaching of writing and the influence of

the English coordinators. The youngest pupils in Year 3 are already beginning to use a good range of descriptive language. As they move through the school, pupils are given regular opportunities to write for a widening range of purposes, including narrative, play scripts, book reviews and instructions. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in writing, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, and of the need to raise the level of boys' attainment in English.

6. In mathematics, the inspection findings show that standards are well above average in Year 6 and that pupils are achieving well. These standards are better than those reflected in the national tests in 2002, when results were above average. When compared with similar schools, standards are average. A comparison of pupils' current performance, with their level of attainment when they entered the school, shows that pupils are making good progress through the school. In the past year, there has been a specific focus on mental calculation strategies. This has had considerable impact on the pupils' ability to respond well in mental oral sessions. In Year 3, there are already improvements in pupils' measuring skills and, in Years 5 and 6, most pupils are gaining a good understanding of problem solving and can discuss confidently the strategies they use.
7. In science, the results of the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, showed attainment to be well above average. This is not reflected by the standards seen during inspection, where most year groups are only working at levels above average for their age. In Year 6, considerable focused revision takes place over two half terms, leading to increases in pupils' scientific knowledge. This clearly has a pronounced effect on standards by the end of the key stage. Currently, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not being built on progressively as pupils move through the school. The pupils currently in Year 6 are making satisfactory progress when compared with their above-average level of attainment when they enter the school. The school has identified the need to develop investigative science, and has put in place a two-year development plan that is now in its second year. This prioritises science training for teachers and the planning of an appropriate scheme of work that pays particular attention to investigative science. At the present time, teachers have insufficient understanding of the investigative and experimental aspects of science and the way in which these are fundamental to the whole of the science curriculum. As teachers become more accustomed to planning investigative work, and as pupils use their initiative, think and plan for themselves, standards will be supported more solidly through the school.
8. In information and communication technology, standards are high. There have been real improvements in provision since 1997. In all year groups pupils are highly motivated. The rise in standards since the previous inspection is due to the tremendous efforts of everyone involved in determining the direction of the school. Immediately after the previous inspection, a thorough strategic improvement plan was presented to governors, and implemented with the excellent leadership and management of the coordinator. In Year 3, pupils can now organise, amend and refine their work, by cutting and pasting text, which are skills few pupils had at the previous inspection. In Year 6, pupils can improve the appearance and content of draft reports and newspaper articles. Pupils, regardless of age, ethnicity and levels of attainment in other subjects, are virtually all confident and able to talk widely about information and communication technology and how they use it. Pupils have made very good progress in this subject throughout the school.
9. In physical education, and art and design, standards are well above expectations at the end of Year 6, and all pupils make good progress. In both subjects, the school has maintained the high standards reported in the last inspection. The quality of pupils' balance and control in gymnastics is consistently high. Quality skills are also evident in games lessons in Year 6, where pupils demonstrate good ball skills in netball. Many of the more able pupils demonstrate very well developed tactical skills. This represents very good progress. In art and design, pupils have good opportunities to develop their ideas. The curriculum allows pupils to recall the work of the artists they have studied. A strength in art and design in all year groups is the way pupils are provided with the time to think about the quality of their work, discuss how it might be improved, thereby, gaining a greater understanding of the quality of their work.
10. Standards in religious education and design and technology are as good now as they were at the time of the previous inspection, when they were above expectations at the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils make good progress in both these subjects through the school. In religious education, standards continue to exceed the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in appreciating the similarities and differences between the various faiths and their learning makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. In design and technology, the quality of pupils' work shows that they have a good knowledge of the design process.

11. In history, pupils are achieving standards at the end of Year 6, which are above those expected for their age. This is a rise in standards since the previous inspection. Given the high standards that pupils have achieved, before they enter the school, they make satisfactory progress. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of some major historical events and can debate social aspects of the Second World War, displaying a good understanding of the issues involved. Well-planned opportunities have been successfully incorporated into history to strengthen pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. In geography, standards have also improved since the previous inspection, as pupils now have a more balanced knowledge within the subject. They make more productive use of information and communication technology to support their learning, than they did in 1997. For example, digital cameras now support pupils' understanding of the landscape features surrounding the school. Pupils build well on the firm foundations established prior to Year 3, and they continue to make satisfactory progress.
12. In music, standards are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Year 6, and pupils make satisfactory progress. At the previous inspection, standards were found to be above expectations and these were successfully maintained, until more recently. However, there is now an enthusiastic and capable coordinator in place who has created a strong programme with the aim of raising standards to their previous levels.
13. There are a small number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group, who receive good support and work set to match their individual needs. Most of these pupils make good progress and achieve the expected level for their age by the end of Year 6. The school has a clearly set out policy to identify Pupils who may be gifted and talented. Such pupils are encouraged, directed and supported by the school, and they also make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those at early stage of acquiring the language, progress at the same rate as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. There have been no exclusions. Since the previous inspection, attendance has improved and is now very good.
15. Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and in most of their lessons. However, in the instances when lessons are occasionally repetitive and lack challenge, older pupils say they are bored. Pupils are not distracted when, very occasionally, a very small number of pupils with recognised behavioural problems display negative attitudes. Pupils particularly like extra-curricular activities in which many participate, including 'out-of-school' clubs and visits to places of interest. They appreciate the opportunities provided to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, have positive attitudes, to learning and most listen well. These pupils respond well to the additional help that they receive, and form friendly and cooperative relationships with support staff. Pupils enjoy the activities in lessons, especially when these are matched well to their differing needs and abilities. Most pupils have positive self-esteem and want to succeed.
16. Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, because of insufficient space for pupils when they are seated on the carpet, a few have difficulty exercising self-discipline, despite the good teaching seen in many lessons. Behaviour in the playground is good and has recently improved during the mid-day break, due to a consistent approach to behaviour management, and to the appointment of an additional supervisor. Most pupils come to understand the impact of their actions on others through the good support found in 'circle'⁵ time. However, pupils lack a degree of courtesy in their response to adults around the school. They appear unaware, for instance, that, as they are progressing one way on steps, that there is anyone else travelling in the other direction. They do not hold doors for adults, or each other, and do not show the common courtesies seen in many schools.

⁵ 'Circle' time is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

17. The school is inclusive in its practices and there are positive relationships throughout the school community. Boys and girls get on well with each other and the pupils mostly show tolerance and respect for the feelings of others. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix well together at playtimes and lunchtimes. Nothing was seen to suggest that, when misbehaviour occurs, it is oppressive, or that there is vindictive bullying, sexism or racism within the school. If any such incident should occur, pupils say that teachers readily sort out the problem.
18. The pupils respond very well to the school's extensive provision for their personal development. Pupils get on well when working together in pairs and groups. They are mutually supportive and appreciate each other's contributions. They respect the fact that others may have a different opinion and listen to them with interest. Pupils find ways to arrive at a group response, despite having different individual views, for example, in personal, health and social education, and subjects such as history, when this type of response is well planned. Here, they discuss and develop views about moral and social issues in a sensible manner. When given the opportunity for responsibility, which steadily increases through their school life, they accept readily. Most pupils have the capacity to be more effective as independent learners, particularly in lessons. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others in the school, and this is apparent in the way the majority relate to each other both in lessons and elsewhere. Opportunities to explore wider cultural understanding and issues would further enrich the personal and social education programme.
19. Attendance at the school is well above the national average. Pupils have maintained their high levels of attendance and very low levels of unauthorised absence since the previous inspection. Punctuality remains good. Registers are accurately maintained according to statutory requirements. The short, but efficient, calm, and orderly registration periods provide a good start to the day's work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The overall quality of the teaching is good, as a result of which, pupils make good progress in their learning. Parents feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection evidence endorses this viewpoint. Four out of five lessons observed during the inspection were good, or better, and over a quarter of these were very good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Teaching is almost equally as strong in all the year groups.
21. The good quality of the teaching observed in the last inspection has been maintained overall and continues to be a significant strength of the school. The positive aspects noted at the last inspection are still features of lessons now. The quality of teaching has been sustained, due to the strong and effective leadership of coordinators supported by the headteacher. This has continued as a strength, despite changes to the coordinators in several subjects. In most subjects, there have been opportunities for coordinators to monitor and model lessons. This has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching, in particular the knowledge and understanding of the different subjects, and the best ways of teaching them. There has been much good-quality in-service training for staff, especially in information and communication technology, and mathematics. The initiatives in information and communication technology to support literacy, numeracy and science, and to engage new technology, have also enhanced the teaching in other subjects. Two aspects, however, have not improved since the previous inspection. At that time, teaching resulted in pupils being able to plan and conduct experiments and investigations in science especially well, and it significantly enhanced their progress. Although the science lessons seen were taught well, investigative processes were not as well developed throughout the school. The quality of marking still varies, with little consistency across the school. The policy is considerably out of date and in need of review. The best marking is diagnostic and points the way forward for pupils in their learning.
22. The teaching of English and mathematics is usually good and, frequently, very good. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very effectively, and the teaching methods developed have generally had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The structure of lessons and the overall approach help pupils to learn well. Reading is taught very well. In the best lessons, texts are really brought alive by the teaching. Pupils' understanding of the richness of language is developed successfully. Pupils have a good knowledge of literature, and most read fluently with delightful expression and obvious enjoyment. Writing is taught well when pupils are encouraged to 'think like a writer'. Teachers offer good examples, which encourage pupils to

become more analytical and able to identify techniques that writers use to build up tension in their writing. Pupils sometimes evaluate each other's work. When this happens in Year 5, writing is discussed seriously and pupils show maturity for their age. The less successful lessons are characterised by slower pace and activities that do not challenge some ability groups in the class. Numeracy lessons follow a similar pattern throughout the school, as set out in the numeracy strategy. Mental oral sessions at the start of lessons are carried out at a good pace and these encourage pupils to think and reason why it is best to carry out a calculation one way, as opposed to another. Questions are pitched with varying degrees of difficulty to include all pupils. The interaction of the teacher and pupils in this first part of the lesson establishes a rapport that is a strength of teaching across the school. Whiteboards are used very effectively to focus pupils' attention and provide good assessment opportunities for teachers. As the main activity is introduced, the objectives of the lesson are always shared with pupils. This is good practice and ensures that pupils are clear about what they are going to learn. Good explanations are features of numeracy lessons. Visual support is often provided at this stage of lessons to aid pupils' understanding. The provision of different work for different abilities is a good hallmark of the lessons. The match of work to the different abilities in a class enables pupils to work independently, with a fair degree of challenge. Only in a relatively small number of lessons are lower-ability pupils provided with additional adult support. When this does happen, it is highly effective and enables pupils to be even more involved in their activities. Even without this support, class teachers cater well for pupils with special educational needs.

23. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good right across the school. As a consequence, positive learning environments are forged in the classrooms. Most pupils show confidence in being prepared to have a go. In the best lessons, genuine, warm and yet challenging relationships are established. Pupils value one another's contributions. In these lessons, respect for teachers is clearly evident. In over 90 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils responded well, or very well, to their learning. This reflects the quality of teaching and the relationships established in the lessons. Pupils are good at working independently or in their designated groups. Classrooms have a positive, quiet buzz, particularly during this activity group time. Occasionally, small numbers of pupils, usually boys, are inattentive. This is not helped in some lessons, for example, in music, when boys are allowed to group together and distract each other. Occasionally, when lessons are repetitive or lack challenge older pupils say they are bored.
24. One of the strengths of the teaching is the planning. The schemes of work for each subject provide valuable support for teachers' medium-term planning. Planning is especially effective as it draws on the strengths of several members of staff as they work together in year-group teams. Teachers across a year group will work together to plan half-termly programmes of work and, again, for weekly planning in literacy and numeracy. In Years 5 and 6, collaborative planning ensures that lessons at the start of the week flow smoothly in to the lessons at the end of the week, in which pupils are set according to ability. Teachers will openly discuss their highs and their lows, seeking support when they feel they need it. The support networks that are a working feature of the school are to be commended. Targets are set across literacy and numeracy from Years 3 to 6 in five different ability bands. This helps ensure that planning is targeted to respond to the assessments and monitoring that have been carried out.
25. The school works hard to meet the needs of all pupils. The recently introduced system of setting in Years 5 and 6 in literacy and numeracy for two days a week has yet to be evaluated. Inspection evidence shows that the teaching in these lessons at least matched that of other lessons. A positive feature of the lessons was that the teachers were able to focus more directly on the ability of the different groups. The attainment achieved by the majority of pupils, even in the lower set, reached national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. It also gave pupils in the upper sets the opportunity to be challenged more and to have dynamic discussions and interaction with teachers, and each other, as a result of which they achieve standards far in excess of national expectations. Planning extends to catering successfully for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are skilled in identifying such pupils and are fully involved in drawing up individual educational plans for them. These plans are detailed and helpful and ensure that pupils achieve well. Teachers and support staff work closely and successfully together to this end. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are also directed by teachers towards seeking new challenges and extending their learning both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities.

26. There are many other aspects of teaching that contribute to the good standards that have been seen. In information and communication technology very good teaching reflects lessons that are planned and adapted carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. These lessons are very successful in inspiring the interest and enthusiasm of lower- and higher-attaining pupils alike. In physical education, too, the main strength of teaching lies in the organisation of lessons. An example is the gymnastic routines that are developed, step-by-step, to have a positive effect on achievement. In science, teaching is good, where teachers organise well-planned and interesting activities. In the better lessons, scientific language is used at every opportunity and pupils are challenged and encouraged to think for themselves. In the lessons that do not motivate pupils as well, pupils are not encouraged to be independent, or use their initiative as much as they could. Good teaching in art provides all year groups with the time to evaluate the quality of their work, to discuss how it might be improved and, thereby, gain further understanding of the quality of their work. In design and technology, teachers provide a variety of resources and have high expectations of pupils to use time and materials constructively. Pupils are encouraged effectively to reflect on the quality of their work. In geography, teaching is consistently good because it is firmly underpinned by a stimulating programme of academic work and backed up by plentiful resources. Lessons are linked in many imaginative ways to other areas of learning, and incorporate a very good range of educational visits and visitors. In history, imaginative teaching and good resources are used well to motivate and arouse feelings, such as in a topic on the Second World War, when pupils imagined what it would be like to be an evacuee. In music, teaching is strongest when it is lively and imaginative and pupils are given maximum opportunity to practise, develop and perform new skills in the time available.
27. Building up teachers' confidence and providing training are the main focuses for all the subjects being prioritised in the 2002/03 school development plan. This will begin to address issues, such as the understanding of investigative and experimental aspects of science, and the way in which these areas are fundamental to the science curriculum.

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

28. The school provides a rich and varied curriculum of very good quality, enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, to support teaching and learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, which reported similar strengths and identified weaknesses in information and communication technology. The school has very successfully addressed this issue. The school has significantly improved conditions and facilities for teaching and learning and now achieves much higher than expected standards in the subject. In addition, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to use computer skills in most areas of the curriculum, for example, for editing and publishing their work in English. Literacy and numeracy are successfully promoted, both through the National Strategies and through teaching in other areas of the curriculum. In history, for example, pupils are given good opportunities to develop writing skills in the course of their research on the Aztecs. Similarly, they practise their numeracy skills by using coordinates in geography and outdoor pursuits. There is a good scheme of work for personal, social and health education, which provides opportunities for pupils to explore moral and social issues, such as drug awareness, family responsibilities and relationships. It also enables them to discuss their own sexual development, an aspect that is supported by advice and guidance from the school nurse. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, which fully meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is based on a very good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils. Pupils, parents, teachers and the special educational needs coordinator meet regularly to ensure that the academic and other needs of pupils are being addressed as they should be. Clear targets are set in place and programmes of study adapted or changed to provide good opportunities for these pupils. The school identifies pupils who are considered to be 'more able' and directs them towards activities, both in school, and beyond, which might extend their particular talent. The school is committed to ensuring that all aspects of the curriculum and extra-curricular activities are accessible to everybody and successfully achieves this aim.
29. A significant strength in the school's curriculum is the very effective strategy, which the headteacher and governors have established for reviewing and planning across the range of subjects and aspects. All teachers in their turn are invited to submit a development plan for their area of responsibility and are then given an extensive period during which to monitor progress,

continuity and improvement. This system is having a very positive effect on the quality of teachers' planning and on achievement across all areas of the curriculum.

30. A strong commitment to catering for pupils' personal development has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school's vision is very clear in its key aims and values, and provision is still good overall. Parents particularly value the way in which the school promotes self-esteem, good behaviour and caring and responsible attitudes amongst all pupils. They see their children becoming increasingly confident, reliable and mature, so that, by Year 6, they are very well prepared for secondary school.
31. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development. Every classroom has a code of conduct on display. Pupils are proud of their simple rules and try hard to meet them. Systems for rewarding pupils for effort and achievements are popular with pupils. The presentation of a Merit Cup in every class once a week, for example, motivates them. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, who have not yet succeeded in their aspiration to win it, look forward to the day when they do. Teachers constantly reinforce the principles of right and wrong, justice, honesty and personal integrity. They lead by example, behaving towards each other and parents with courtesy and consideration. All members of staff are successful in fostering a sense of community, where pupils work co-operatively and harmoniously as a member of a group or team. Teachers find creative ways of promoting pupils' understanding through, for example, drama, debate, sport, and creative subjects.
32. Pupils' spiritual development is provided for well. The current theme of 'Relationships' in personal and social education lessons shows how teaching objectives impact subtly on pupils' spiritual development. Teachers make time for pupils to consider what makes them unique and special. For example, a teacher in Year 3 drew very effectively on her own experience of what gives her a sense of self-worth. As she shared her thoughts with pupils, she enabled them to reflect on their own personal qualities. These pupils shared a lot about the caring, thoughtful and generous things they do to help others. Assemblies can be very effective too. Pupils from Years 3 and 4, for example, listened with a considerable degree of awe and wonder when they heard about how their headteacher spends his leisure time, and why. They were fascinated by the account of walks on the Cornish coastal path, an explanation of why a church is a special place, and most of all, why an allotment is rewarding to work on. Their understanding of why places are special was reinforced very well.
33. Pupils' cultural and spiritual development is imaginatively promoted through the programme of visits and visitors. There are good opportunities to watch films, listen to accounts of life in the past, and to discuss works of art and literature. Pupils have produced, for example, some carefully crafted pictures of a day at Slimbridge to study wildlife. Their thoughts and feelings about school camp and the experience of children who were evacuated during the Second World War are very well communicated in their writing. Teachers ensure that pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are fully integrated and cared for well. These pupils feel happy at school, because teachers listen to, and act on, all pupils' suggestions and concerns. The recent initiative to establish a school council is a further example of the way the school aims to improve opportunities for pupils' to share thoughts about what works at school and what does not work quite so well. The school development plan also contains exciting plans to develop international links across the globe.
34. Nonetheless, there are features of school practice that could be improved, particularly within pupils' cultural development. Here, there is satisfactory provision for pupils. There are striking examples of pupils' work in art on display in the hall, but most lack captions to promote reflective thinking and appreciation of the diversity of culture that exists in the school community. The captions that are there are not sufficiently prominent to have a strong impact. There are few opportunities for pupils to prepare displays for weekly assemblies, or to recognise music that is played as they gather in the hall. Pupils discuss the resolution of conflict and show in their role-play in Year 6 that they have some understanding of racism, sexism and victimisation. They were not, however, given the vocabulary to recognise that the issues they were discussing related to these complex concepts. Pupils throughout the school write reflective diaries, but, in Year 6, the quality of the content is very variable. They contain little that shows thoughts and feelings about the significance of cultural and religious heritage. Some pupils even appear to no longer truly value these diaries as a learning opportunity. Reports to parents always contain comments about pupils' personal development, yet few describe what progress has been made in their spiritual and cultural development.

35. It would help the school if time could now be found to critically evaluate how it promotes, and celebrates, the achievements and contribution of all that make up the society in which we live. There is real potential for the school's practice to be as powerful in pupils' cultural development as it is in the other aspects of their personal development.
36. The school's provision of extra-curricular clubs and activities continues to be very good. All teaching staff are involved in the provision of extra-curricular opportunities. Clubs and activities for the younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 take place during the lunch hour, with those for Years 5 and 6 after school. Some restriction on attendance has to be made because of pupil demand. For example, the Year 6 art club is run for one class per term. This wide variety of additional activities, which includes music, sports, computer, science, art, chess and games clubs, is popular and very well supported. The editing of the magazine 'Grove Gazette' by pupils in Year 6, together with the 'Raise the Roof' festival, are good examples of different aspects of extra-curricular provision.
37. The school has maintained and extended its links with the local and wider community since the previous inspection. The school's involvement in the local community is very good and extends the opportunities that pupils have very well. Pupils continue to take part in and enjoy the local carnival, and actively participate in many varied sporting, music and drama events in conjunction with other local schools. Pupils enter and win many different competitions. The links with local churches are very active. Ministers visit and the school holds services at the parish church. Harvest festival produce is made up into food parcels and sent to 'EuroAid' for families in Bosnia. The deputy headteacher is a member of the Drugs Awareness Forum hosted by the Methodist church. Pupils' well-developed skills in information and communication technology enable them to communicate effectively with the wider community through email and the World Wide Web. This involvement with the local and wider community contributes effectively to the extension of pupils' learning and their understanding of the world.
38. The school has developed and consolidated very effective curricular and pastoral links with the infant schools from which their pupils come, and the secondary schools to which they transfer. Liaison and transfer arrangements are good and very well organised. Transfer of records within this group of schools is electronic and efficient. Communication between sending and receiving teachers is well planned, and effective in ensuring pupils' welfare. Special educational needs coordinators have extended meetings in order to exchange all the information needed to maintain effective pupil support when moving schools. Teachers are very active within this strong group, often taking the lead in areas of curriculum development by providing training and expertise, particularly in mathematics and information communication technology. Activity days planned through the groups, for example 'Drum Crazy', and the technology day for pupils in Year 4, make effective use of the expertise of a range of teaching staff and the extended facilities of the secondary school, as well as preparing the pupils for their transition to secondary school. Pupils are well prepared for the secondary school curriculum, through participation in units of work in English and mathematics, which have been designed to help the transition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. The school continues to provide well for pupils' care and welfare. All staff, working together as a team, provide support, guidance and care which actively promotes the welfare, academic progress and self-esteem of all pupils. Staff are clear about their pastoral roles and responsibilities and positive routines are created within the classroom environment. As a consequence, pupils feel happy and valued and this makes a positive contribution to the quality of their learning.
40. Induction procedures facilitate the movement of pupils between the key stages. Curricular and pastoral information is openly and willingly shared between all schools. Liaison between the teachers involved is good and each pupil's needs are considered individually within an all-embracing process. The school's child protection procedures are good. The regular sharing of relevant information regarding pupils' welfare and behaviour at the 'cause for concern' slot in weekly staff meetings is a good feature. The headteacher is the designated, named teacher for child protection issues. He knows and understands his pupils and their family circumstances well. Staff have regular training in child protection procedures. The school's child protection policy has been updated effectively in the light of revised local protocols. Other requirements, such as a policy on the use of restraint and criminal record checks, are included within it. A significant number of pupils have chronic medical conditions, some serious. Staff are very alert to and well informed about the chronic medical needs of their pupils. Very high quality procedures for managing the

medication and other particular needs of these pupils underpin the school's willingness to promote their well-being actively and include them in every aspect of school life.

41. Overall, the comprehensive range of health and safety policies are implemented consistently and updated regularly. The information in the annually updated staff handbook, outlining school routines, staff responsibilities, and supervisory duties, is clear and easy to follow. However, the policies on school visits and security are out of date. Regular inspections of the school building and grounds are undertaken and a report presented to the governors. Governors are currently considering the implications of the new modular buildings for security procedures.
42. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance is promoted well in the prospectus. There are clear instructions to teachers on the marking of registers and monitoring of attendance. Registers are monitored weekly by the headteacher. Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.00am, if their child cannot attend, and to send a written explanation on their return. However, the school does not routinely follow up any unreported absences, by phoning parents or carers to check why pupils might not be at school. Overall, procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. The behaviour management policy promotes the positive aspects of pupils' behaviour with merit points and certificates, whilst including appropriate sanctions. This together with the pupils' involvement in creating their own rules, for example, the Year 5 'code of conduct for a happy, hardworking year', are good features and very effective within classrooms. The school council recently reworded the whole school code of behaviour for the site. However, both this code and the behaviour management policy rely heavily on pupils' self-discipline and consideration for others. They are not as effective in promoting good manners and consideration for others around the reconfigured site, when pupils are less rigidly supervised or occupied, such as at breaks and lunchtimes.
43. Good procedures are in place for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The headteacher maintains effective records of any reported incidents and sets clear follow-up procedures. Subsequently, all staff actively monitor the behaviour and personal development of those involved. The personal and social development programme actively teaches about bullying and social exclusion. Good examples were seen in a lesson in Year 5 about friendships, particularly towards those pupils perceived as different, and in a classroom display in the same year-group that highlighted the possible oppressive nature of hurtful text messaging. There is a recent initiative to develop targets with pupils to extend their personal development. Plans to review the content and progression of the personal and social education programme, together with assessment procedures, are also in place.
44. At the time of the last inspection, the school's arrangements for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils were judged to be good. The deputy headteacher, in her role as assessment coordinator, gives very good leadership to this aspect of provision. The school has strengthened its procedures for assessment, and these are used very well to help plan the curriculum and provision for individual pupils. There is an appropriate focus on assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Careful records are kept of the tests that pupils undertake in each year group. The school carries out analysis of this data, looking at the comparative attainments of boys and girls, and of each year group. These findings, in addition to teachers' knowledge of the progress pupils make on a day-to-day basis, are used to set challenging yet realistic targets for attainment. Pupils are also set written medium-term class and group targets in writing and mathematics. These are displayed in the classrooms and, in some classes, on the pupils' desks. There are arrangements for assessing some subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, and coordinators are developing procedures for those subjects, where assessment is not yet as well developed.
45. The monitoring of special educational needs is good. At all stages pupils are monitored closely and their individual education plans are updated regularly. The school has a good system of communication between class teachers, support staff and the special needs coordinator, so that concerns about any aspect of a pupil's development can be communicated quickly and addressed promptly. Learning support staff are skilled and fully conversant with the individual education plans of the pupils in their care.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents have a very good regard for and are very supportive of the school. Parents feel that the school is led and managed well, the teaching is good and teachers have high expectations. Their children like school and are making good progress. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. However, a few tend to disagree that school provides a range of activities outside lessons. The relatively high percentage of parents unsure about this and other aspects of the schools' provision is attributed to parents of pupils in Year 3, who had only been in school for a week when the questionnaire was distributed. These parents also expressed some concerns over a lack of communication regarding the postponed starting date of term because of overrunning building work. The school continues to promote a very effective partnership with parents, involving them as partners in their children's education. They are kept fully informed about what is taught and their children's progress and achievements. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are also kept informed of their children's progress at all stages and are invited to regular review meetings.
47. The quality and range of information provided for parents is excellent. The comprehensive governors' report to parents is very professionally presented. The attractive, regularly updated prospectus gives clear routine, welfare and curricular information. Newsletters, full of relevant information, diary dates, given well in advance, and clear reply forms, are written and distributed on a regular basis, so parents know when to look out for them in children's bags. The first, this term, contained a full explanation and apology for the delay in the school opening for the autumn term. Newsletters also contain useful half-termly curricular summaries of what teachers plan to cover with each year group. Pupils' achievements are also shared and celebrated well both within newsletters and the very stimulating Grove Gazette. The home-school agreement reinforces effectively the idea of parental partnerships. All other information about the school and its work, for example policies, development plans, balance sheets, minutes of governors and Friends of Grove School meetings are easily accessible in the school entrance lobby.
48. Termly meetings are arranged with parents to discuss pupils' progress, attainment and general well-being. The school expects 100 per cent attendance at these meetings and works hard to provide suitable alternative appointments when necessary. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given extended appointments or invited for a separate interview to discuss, set and review individual education plan targets and progress. Annual reports give good summaries of pupils' achievements in each subject. Non-statutory test results and teachers' assessment of levels achieved in English, mathematics and science have been included in reports since 1999. A letter accompanying the reports gives a full explanation of how parents should interpret these test and assessment results. This information allows parents to track effectively their children's progress in the same manner as the school and provides a consistent basis for discussions for improvement.
49. Parents make a very effective contribution to their children's learning. They are fully involved in the homework process. Curriculum evenings, both academic, such as those to explain numeracy and literacy teaching, and social, explaining the teaching of sex and drugs education, are well attended and appreciated by parents. The school consults parents annually by means of a questionnaire, and their views are taken into account. An open morning once a month gives parents the opportunity to see the school at work. Parents are actively encouraged to, and do, help in school and on trips. However, the number of helpers has reduced since the previous inspection, probably due to economic pressures and changing social mores. The 'Friends of Grove School' continues to flourish, and its events are well supported by parents and pupils. They raise substantial amounts of money, which supplement the school's resources, particularly providing large numbers of computers. Pupils benefit enormously from this additional financial support, together with the parental help provided in school, on trips and with homework.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are very good. Together with the staff and governors, they have a clear vision of the way they would like to see the school move forward and have set in place good systems to support initiatives. The ethos and values are reflected in the day-to-day life and work of the school and in its vision for the future. The headteacher has been instrumental in creating a staff who feel valued

as part of a whole-school team. Each member of the team is empowered to take on responsibilities that help to ensure the school's collective success.

51. The leadership and management are effective at all levels. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have strengths that blend together well. The school believes firmly in a 'flat' management style, in which everyone takes on responsibilities as part of the team. This has been highly effective in securing the continued improvement of the development of the school in a time of unprecedented change. Subject coordinators fulfil their roles extremely well. They are given time, according to the priorities in the school development plan, to monitor lessons and evaluate the impact of their policies and schemes of work on standards. In English, mathematics, and information and communication technology, completely new approaches have been successfully introduced since the last inspection. This has been achieved with the support of high-quality strategic planning, which has provided an effective foundation and guided initiatives successfully. The substantial improvements in the provision for these subjects have led to further improvements in the standards that pupils achieve throughout the school. Investigative science is a focus of the development plan this year. The special needs coordinator provides very good support and guidance for teaching and support staff. The co-ordinator has worked hard to put efficient and practical systems in place to ensure that pupils' individual education plans are relevant and that the targets are achievable. As a result, the school has been successful both in reducing the need for additional support and in raising attainment for a significant proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs.
52. Strong leadership from the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very clearly reflected in the monitoring of standards and other aspects of the school's work. Each year, there is a very thorough evaluation of the end-of-year results that pupils achieve in the National Curriculum tests and the voluntary tests carried out in Years 3, 4 and 5. Where weaknesses are identified, as was the case this year in the disappointing test results in writing at the end of Year 6, staff, led by subject coordinators and the deputy, determine what action should be taken. Advisors from the local education authority are suitably involved to reassess and determine revised action planning. This year, this led to adjustments in the time allocated to different aspects of literacy and numeracy, to setting clear targets and to the consideration of setting as a way to meet the varied needs of pupils and reach even higher standards for all pupils. The cycle of school improvement is supported by an in-service training plan that both supports whole-school development and meets the needs of the individual. Staff are encouraged and supported as they take on national training initiatives such as the National Professional Qualification for Headship. Arrangements for performance management are fully in place and are an integral part of the whole-school development plan.
53. The highly effective governing body plays a full part in school development and has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors bring a wide range of professional knowledge and expertise to their roles and use these well in the service of the school. They are fully informed about the life and work of the school, through the headteacher's reports and the work of the finance, curriculum and strategic planning committees.
54. Curriculum coordinators and coordinators of key aspects of school management, such as assessment, give presentations about the progress of their area of responsibility to committees or the full governing body. Each governor is linked to a particular class, which they visit regularly, and they are invited to attend staff meetings. The findings from these contacts are fed back to the governing body. With this wide range of information, governors are able to make informed judgements about the success of the school's development priorities.
55. The governors and the headteacher monitor spending closely. The governors are appropriately involved in monitoring the management of the school's finances, through the work of the finance and strategic planning committees. The school's development planning shows clearly what the school needs to do to improve further, and these improvements are closely linked to the school's finances. Governors are involved in setting the costings for school improvement. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties very well.
56. The school has a good match of qualified teachers to subjects, some with particular specialisms, such as physical education and music. There is also an adequate number of teaching assistants. Learning resources are good overall, and there is now excellent provision for information and communication technology. The new portable classrooms have recently been put on site, but this

has created problems concerning the playground area to the side of the building and access to the upper play areas. The headteacher and site manager have worked diligently to keep the disruption to the minimum. The site manager maintains a litter-free site in difficult circumstances.

57. The toilet arrangements in the main reception area are insufficient for the number of staff in the school. The car park and central courtyard flood in heavy rain and require considerable attention in order to drain the water. The field does not have wheelchair access, and the tarmac play area has a ramp, but this is too steep for wheelchair use. There are no connecting corridors between classrooms, and the replacement modular buildings, rather than extending the existing building means that pupils and staff have to brave all weather conditions in order to reach the hall, library, information and communication technology suite or offices.
58. When the development is completed the building should provide adequate accommodation, although extending the main building would appear more convenient, practical and preferable. Some classrooms are a satisfactory size but others have a 'kiva' or raised floor, which restricts the space available. Other rooms are cramped, particularly when seating pupils on the carpet areas for a particular class activity. Pupils' artwork and displays are attractive features in the hall and entrance areas.
59. Principles of best value are applied well. Parents, pupils, staff and governors are consulted regularly when new initiatives are considered and decisions need to be taken. The governing body invites formal tenders for building maintenance and ensures that the school obtains value for money when it selects contractors. The governors take a keen interest in the analysis of assessment results and the decisions the school takes to secure further improvement. They have a wide range of business expertise which is used to good effect in the decision making process of the governing body. Financial planning is very thorough. It ensures that the school uses resources and available grants effectively. It has been difficult in the past few years to predict accurately the numbers of pupils likely to be admitted to the school. Increased numbers through the school year have meant carry-forward amounts greater than are desired by the governors. As the admission number is set to fall to 90 in September, to respond to falling rolls in the area, it is hoped that financial planning will be on a more secure footing, and financial sums carried forward will be stabilised. Staffing is seen as a priority, and funding found to release coordinators for their very valuable monitoring role found to be very cost-effective in terms of school improvement.
60. The school is very ably supported in its day-to-day management by a highly effective and efficient office administration team. The welcome received by visitors reflects the genuinely calm, ordered and helpful nature of everyone at the school.
61. The funding allocated to the school is less than that given to many other junior schools. When account is taken of this, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, and all the aspects of the school's work, including the good teaching, the progress pupils make, pupils' attainment in most subjects by the end of Year 6, and the effective systems that continue to support school improvement, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve the quality of education, still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - Raise standards in writing to match the high standards seen in reading by:
 - working to incorporate the revised English action plan;
 - using the expertise of the subject coordinators.
(Paragraphs 2, 5, 22, 63, 64 70 and 74)
 - Provide consistent and purposeful marking to inform pupils of the next steps in their learning by:
 - agreeing a new marking policy, which includes providing informative feedback for pupils;
 - determining the links between target setting, objectives and marking.
(Paragraphs 7, 21, 27, 73, 76 and 105)

- Raise pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding by: ⁶
 - working on the second year of the science action plan to ensure that investigative science underpins teaching in science;
 - matching resources to the new revised scheme of work for science.
(Paragraphs 21, 85 and 87)

⁶ These issues are already being address as part of the school's development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	19	42	15	0	0	0
Percentage	3	24	54	19	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		374
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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	56	47	103
National Curriculum Test/Task Results					
		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4	Boys	44	45	53	
and above	Girls	45	43	46	
	Total	89	88	99	
Percentage of pupils	School	86 (86)	85 (87)	96 (95)	
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)	
Teachers' Assessments					
		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4	Boys	43	44	52	
and above	Girls	45	41	46	
	Total	88	85	98	
Percentage of pupils	School	85 (90)	81 (86)	95 (93)	
at NC level 4 or above	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	359	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27:1
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	148

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	736,543
Total expenditure	747,008
Expenditure per pupil	1,981
Balance brought forward from previous year	53,082
Balance carried forward to next year	42,617

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	374
Number of questionnaires returned	150
Percentage of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	39	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	1	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	55	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	57	6	1	6
The teaching is good.	52	40	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	52	7	1	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	47	2	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	33	47	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	53	43	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	52	1	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	53	13	1	5

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

ENGLISH

63. Standards attained by pupils in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 improved in line with the national trend from 1998 to 2000. Since then, standards have not kept pace with national improvements. However, the standards achieved are comparable with the national average, and below the standard seen in similar schools. The number of pupils attaining a higher level than expected in writing was lower than the school's target figure. This is in contrast to reading, where almost half the pupils achieved the higher level. The girls achieved higher standards nationally, compared to their counterparts, than did the boys. Taken as an average over the past three years, the performance of boys and girls has been broadly the same. The school is aware of the need to raise the standards in writing, particularly amongst the higher-attaining pupils, and of the need to continue to raise the level of boys' attainment in English overall. There is a detailed action plan in place to address these concerns. This is beginning to have an impact on the standards of pupils' work, although there is a way to go yet in raising standards in writing to the same level as those in reading. A recent initiative is the organisation of pupils in Years 5 and 6 into sets, based on their prior attainment, for two lessons a week. These lessons focus particularly on developing pupils' writing skills. These arrangements enable the more able pupils to work at a very challenging pace and for the less able to work at a pace that gives them additional opportunities to consolidate and practise their learning. It is too early to judge how successful this initiative will be, but lessons observed during the inspection were successful and enjoyed by teachers and pupils.
64. Overall, standards observed during the inspection are similar to those found in the national tests and represent some slight improvement since the last inspection. When pupils enter the school, their reading and speaking and listening skills are above average, whilst very few pupils achieve above the national standard in writing. These standards are maintained as pupils move through the school and satisfactory progress is made overall.
65. Nearly all pupils who speak English as an additional language have similar skills in English to their classmates and make the same amount of progress. Additional support is provided on a daily basis for the very few pupils who are in the early stages of learning English to enable them to acquire a range of language that is relevant to school life. School records show that these pupils are making reasonable progress in acquiring English.
66. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening throughout the school. Most pupils participate well in lessons and share their ideas both in whole-class and group discussions. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to talk with a partner or a group in order to develop their ideas and knowledge. As they get older, pupils learn to take account of other views as well as asserting their own. By the end of Year 6, they speak with clarity and authority on a wide range of topics. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils discussed an extract from 'Call of the Wild', by Jack London, and pupils considered the techniques the writer had used to build up tension. Through discussion, they became more and more analytical in their understanding of the text. Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to consider the purpose of lessons and to evaluate how successful they have been in achieving their objectives. This is instrumental in developing pupils' insights into the quality of their own learning.
67. By the end of Year 6, the great majority of pupils read with fluency, expression and insight. As they move through the school, they read a widening range of texts with growing confidence, and their enthusiasm for reading grows. During literacy sessions, pupils learn about the different strategies that authors use to establish character and atmosphere in a story and can identify these features in the fiction they read. They report that they find the group reading aspect of the literacy session very helpful in improving their reading. In a literacy lesson seen in Year 3, in which pupils were learning about different sentence constructions, they learnt how to emphasise the tone of the sentence by their use of expression, for example, by giving an order in an assertive voice. They knew that the punctuation in a piece of writing was a useful indication of how to pace the reading. Pupils understand how to use information books to help them with personal study. They use reference books confidently and understand how to skim the text to find the information they need. Older pupils are developing a good general knowledge about a variety of authors of both children's' and adult literature and enjoy the writing of authors such as J.K. Rowling, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ian

Fleming and Jacqueline Wilson. Pupils maintain a record of their reading and older pupils keep a reading diary, which includes evaluative comments about the books that they have read.

68. The school has a wide-ranging collection of literature and reference information available for pupils and takes account of the differing reading interests of boys and girls.
69. At the end of Year 6 standards in writing are securely in line with the national average. Pupils are now beginning to benefit from the increased attention being given to writing. Progress is particularly good in Year 5, where pupils are achieving high standards for their age.
70. In Year 3, the more able pupils are producing independent pieces of writing that are accurately spelt and punctuated. They are beginning to use a good range of descriptive language. They have broadening vocabulary and a developing awareness of how to use language for effect, for example, by using phrases such as 'to their surprise' to emphasise the response of a character. Although the average-attaining and less able pupils generally produce writing that is logical and accurately punctuated, they do not make use of such a wide vocabulary and their spelling is not always accurate. Pupils with special educational needs are able to produce short sequences of sentence, with some support from the teacher. As they move through the school, pupils are given regular opportunities to write for a widening range of purposes, such as narratives, play scripts, poetry, book reviews, and instructions. Pupils' writing benefits from learning how to structure their writing, by using language and figures of speech for effect, as well as giving regular attention to spelling and punctuating correctly. Older pupils are given opportunities to evaluate the quality of each other's writing and to make suggestions as to how their writing might be improved.
71. Taking account of the lessons observed and the findings of the scrutiny of pupils' work, teaching is good overall, with very good teaching being observed in all year groups. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the requirements of the literacy strategy and their expectations of what pupils can achieve are usually high. These expectations have a positive impact on the pace of the lessons, the rate at which pupils learn, and the standards they achieve. Lesson planning is very thorough. Teachers plan together in their year groups and this ensures that pupils have similar learning opportunities in each class within the year.
72. Lessons always start with a consideration of the lesson's purpose and teachers ensure that pupils understand what is required of them. In the better lessons, teachers set tasks which are purposeful and interesting, and enthuse pupils, who work very hard, gaining a great deal of satisfaction from their achievement. Teachers plan work for pupils which is very well matched to pupils' prior abilities. The more able pupils are challenged by tasks that extend their capabilities, and the less able are given tasks that enable them to consolidate what they have learnt and to acquire new understanding at a pace at which they can cope. Class teachers cater well for those pupils who have special educational needs, moderating tasks so that they are at an appropriate level for their learning needs and using additional support well. In a very good lesson seen in Year 5, the pupils were required to edit a piece of narrative writing and add characters and interest to it. This was a really demanding activity and the pupils rose to the challenge well. They used whiteboards to try out their ideas, and shared these in discussion with their partners and then the class. The teacher encouraged the pupils, deservedly, making good use of some of the examples she was given. The teacher's emphasis on pupils using 'powerful verbs' really motivated the pupils to find some very precise and interesting vocabulary to enliven their writing. The pupils worked very hard. Whilst they were writing, they concentrated so hard that not a sound could be heard. They then benefited from sharing their work with a partner and discussing the quality of each other's writing. They took this task very seriously, and showed considerable maturity of approach and refined their writing to produce some very interesting results that were of a very high standard for their age.
73. The occasional, less successful lessons are characterised by slower pace and uneven provision. Sometimes, the tasks set for some of the pupils are carefully structured and matched well to their learning needs, whilst others in the class are not being sufficiently challenged. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously; they indicate the mistakes pupils have made, and praise their successes. However, the comments written about pupils' work rarely give advice about what pupils have to do to improve their work further. Opportunities are missed to link pupils' achievements to progress towards their targets.

74. The subject is very well co-ordinated by two experienced teachers. There is a consistency of provision throughout the school that does much to enable the pupils to achieve well. All classrooms contain displays that promote the aspect of literacy they are studying and display samples of pupils' work in an attractive and inviting form. There is very good use of information and communication technology in English lessons. Teachers take the opportunity to develop the pupils' literacy skills in many subjects besides English, for example, by using subject-specific and technical language consistently, and by giving pupils opportunities to undertake independent research. Good use is made of test scores and other data to identify areas in need of development, the school correctly recognising the need to improve writing standards.

MATHEMATICS

75. Since the last inspection, the standards achieved in mathematics have risen, and many aspects of the way the subject is taught have improved. Improvements have, by and large, mirrored the substantial improvements seen nationally. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average. Results are average when compared with similar schools. Almost all pupils achieve the national standard, and an increasing number of pupils are achieving the higher level at the end of Year 6.
76. At the last inspection, in a small minority of instances, the use of the scheme of work did not correspond with the capabilities of some of the average- and higher-attaining pupils. This is now not the case. When work is planned for the numeracy strategy, care is taken to ensure that activities for different ability groups are appropriately matched. Activities are taken from a range of sources, including some being created by teachers at levels exactly right for individual groups. In the last inspection it was noted that there was some variation in the range and frequency of teachers' use of constructive and critical comments in marking. Marking still varies and is only occasionally diagnostic to help pupils work towards achieving their targets or learning objectives. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced in recent years by the coordinators.
77. The inspection findings show that standards overall are well above average for the oldest pupils and these pupils are achieving well. These standards are marginally better than those reflected in the results of the national tests in 2002. Pupils throughout the school have good numeracy skills. Observations during the inspection, and comparison of pupils' current performance with their prior attainment, shows that pupils are making good progress as they move through the school. The school is currently trying out setting pupils by ability, in Years 5 and 6, for two days each week. This is in order that all aspects of the numeracy lesson can be targeted more directly to the needs of the group. Certainly, in the lessons observed on the last day of the inspection, pupils in the upper ability set were achieving well above the nationally expected standard, and those in the lower ability set were achieving as expected for their age. These pupils, some of whom have special educational needs, are also making good progress. In Years 3 and 4 the 'Springboard' programme is provided for those pupils who need a little extra support in numeracy. This is found to benefit pupils who then soon achieve at the expected standard for pupils of their age.
78. In the past year, there has been a specific focus on developing mental calculation strategies. The staff have developed different approaches to teaching mental calculations and a variety of activities to use during the mental oral sessions. In lessons, a variety of suitable approaches to the teaching of mental oral mathematics was observed. Some sessions supported the main lesson theme and others focused on unrelated mental calculations. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed the 'beat the clock' tables card game, trying to beat their previous best time. In one class, pupils were enjoying matching fractions to percentages using magnetic cards. In another class, tables were checked imaginatively using bingo cards designed by pupils. In several classes, individual whiteboards were seen being used effectively to enable pupils to write down their answer and show it to the teacher. This enabled the teacher to quickly gauge the level of pupils' responses before posing the next challenge. Monitoring by coordinators and observations during the inspection show that pupils' mental oral skills are improving and they are responding very well to the pace and rigour of this part of the numeracy lesson. Pupils throughout the school have a very good knowledge of shape and space, beginning in Year 3, when most pupils can identify the properties of shapes. They are also developing a good understanding of reflective symmetry and shapes that have more than one line of symmetry. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of decimal notation, through the use of money, and are able to try out different approaches when they are solving problems. The study of pupils' work shows that, throughout the school, pupils can measure

accurately in activities relating to length, weight and capacity. The knowledge they gain is being applied well to mathematical problems and data handling.

79. Teaching is good overall; a third of the lessons seen during the inspection were very good or excellent. Good teaching and secure subject knowledge are helping pupils develop a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. Most pupils in Year 5 can explain what a 'numerator' and 'denominator' are, and the more able pupils can convert improper fractions to mixed fractions, and vice-versa, without any support. All pupils in this age group are developing a good understanding of equivalent fractions, though some play a game in class to support their recognition of such fractions. In Year 6, more able pupils carry out very challenging work with fractions, independently. In the best lessons, pupils are enthusiastic and motivated by teaching that is enjoyable and fun. In these lessons, the teacher achieves a good balance between explaining points and setting challenging questioning that encourage pupils to think for themselves. These lessons have phenomenal pace that retains the interest of pupils and the concluding sessions challenge pupils to think even more. In one lesson in Year 6, pupils were challenged to find the fraction that made $5\frac{1}{4}$ when they had been given $2\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$. The problem was displayed visually with the two amounts being written at the corners of a triangle and $5\frac{1}{4}$ inside it.
80. The leadership shown by the coordinators has been highly effective. The monitoring of lessons, and the planning for mathematics has been particularly thorough. This, together with an in-depth analysis of last year's national and voluntary tests, has led to curriculum targets being set for the second year running. The targets vary with different ability groups. Targets for Years 3 and 4 are around measures, scales and number lines. Pupils in Year 3 are already learning to measure accurately in centimetres and millimetres. For Years 5 and 6, the targets centre on problem solving. Medium-term planning priorities have been adjusted to allow for greater time to be spent on the aspects of numeracy that pupils are finding more challenging. Some time this term has already been spent on problem solving with pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils from Year 6 can clearly explain many of the processes involved in problem solving. Teachers had been developing these skills with them. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves; they know that they should estimate answers, check to see if the answer is near the estimate and, if it is not, reconsider their answer. They know, too, to check using the reverse operation, for example checking addition by carrying out a subtraction calculation. The work undertaken by the coordinators to support planning across all the year groups has led to staff having greater confidence to plan numeracy lessons. The scheme of work reflects all the necessary elements of numeracy. The youngest pupils in Year 3 are developing a good understanding of reflective symmetry and shapes that have more than one line of symmetry. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of decimal notation, through the use of money, and are able to try out different approaches when they are problem solving.
81. Currently, the use of information and communication technology to support numeracy is developing well. In many lessons, programs are used effectively to reinforce learning for one or two pupils whilst others carried on with their usual activities. Numeracy skills are also developed in the information and communication technology suite. Pupils in Year 5 enter data into a spreadsheet and learn that formulae can be used to calculate totals. Through this, pupils build on their prior knowledge of grid references to describe the way each simple formula should be entered. In a numeracy lesson in Year 3, an interactive whiteboard was used superbly to increase pupils' understanding of two-dimensional shapes, referring to reflective symmetry, faces, edges and vertices. This enabled pupils to be fully involved in the tasks and learn very effectively.
82. Numeracy displays throughout the school are very attractive and purposeful. Most display group targets for pupils and have visual images to support the concepts they are learning. Homework is used to reinforce the learning that is taking place. For the first half term, as pupils settle into their new classes, homework is not set for different ability groups. The school does this after the first half term. In Years 5 and 6, this year, homework will be set by teachers taking the different ability groups for the last two days of the week.

SCIENCE

83. The results of the national tests in 2002 taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average. Standards were above average when compared with similar schools. These judgements are similar to those of the previous inspection. However, this level of attainment is not reflected in pupils' attainment in lessons, or when looking at their earlier work, as pupils reach

levels that are only above average. This is confirmed by talking to pupils in Year 6 and analysing pupils' workbooks across all year groups. Pupils enter the school having achieved above average standards. Up to and including the first half-term in Year 6, this reflects satisfactory progress through the school. In Year 6, considerable focused revision takes place over two half terms, leading to an increase in pupils' scientific knowledge. This clearly has a positive effect on standards by the end of the Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do pupils with English as an additional language.

84. Standards seen in school are not as high as results of the national tests, because of a lack of opportunity for pupils to carry out investigative science, which does not form part of the tests. The school has identified the need to develop this aspect of science through a two-year development plan, now in its second year. The main focus areas are science training for teachers, and planning an appropriate scheme of work that pays particular attention to the investigative aspects of science. The revised plan shows the stages found in the national guidance for science. These should ensure that pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are built on more systematically and progressively, as pupils move through the school. The need for a more systematic approach was highlighted in discussions with pupils in Year 6, who had little understanding of friction and confused it with gravity.
85. A study of the work done by pupils in Year 6 last year, shows clearly the programme of revision that improves scientific knowledge. The scrutiny of the work carried out by the pupils currently in Year 6 shows some inconsistencies between classes in terms of presentation and, in particular, the way investigations are represented and recorded. There is also an imbalance in the amount of work covered between classes within year groups. Throughout the school, the marking of pupils' work is not used regularly to show how they can improve their work, and some repeated spelling errors are not corrected. Work seen in lessons during the current inspection reflects pupils' lack of familiarity with the investigative aspect of science. Pupils in Year 6 are not yet at a stage where they are able to plan or initiate their own investigations.
86. Teaching overall is good, with some lessons that are very good. In the lessons where teachers organise well-planned and interesting activities, pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 4 lesson separating solids, more able pupils were given opportunities to extend their knowledge and repeat experiments to check their results. In these better lessons, scientific language is used at every opportunity, and pupils are challenged and encouraged to think for themselves, with some drawing their own conclusions from an investigation. In Year 5, pupils have gained a good understanding of conductors and insulators. Their circuit diagrams show a working knowledge of electricity. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils used their knowledge and understanding of materials to predict the results of adding water to mixtures. Pupils correctly used technical language, making relevant observations and using simple equipment. Discussions with groups of pupils show they are not entirely enthused by science. They say they are 'bored' with repeating aspects such as 'changes', over and over again, and want to be more directly involved in 'finding out'. Nevertheless, in lessons that are good, pupils do show enthusiasm, and become involved in their activities.
87. At the present time, however, there is insufficient understanding of the investigative and experimental aspects of the science curriculum and the way in which these are central to scientific enquiry. Resources are good overall, in both quality and quantity, but some will require re-organisation to meet the needs of the new science curriculum. This is identified in the school's development planning for science. More books are required for research purposes in order to extend pupils' skills of enquiry.
88. The current leadership is good, with the subject undergoing a period of change in order to match the elements of science found in the local cluster group of schools. The new system of assessment in all year groups will provide teachers with more secure information about the prior attainment of pupils. This will help raise teachers' expectation of pupils' achievements. The Year 4 science club and the 'environmental visits' enhance the subject, although the use of computer skills to support teaching and learning is identified as an area for development by the school.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Standards in art and design are higher than those generally seen at the end of the Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language,

achieve well in art. These are similar standards to those reported at the time of the last inspection. The use of information and communication technology in art and design has developed considerably since the last inspection, and its use makes a good contribution to the standards achieved by providing pupils with the opportunity to design pictures in the style of famous artists using the computer.

90. Throughout the school, pupils learn about how to apply colour in different ways using paint, pencil, oil and chalk pastels. In Year 3, pupils create vivid and lively floral patterns using oil pastels. They learn to manipulate various media with increasing skill. For example, in Year 4 they use their detailed observational drawings, as a design for mono printing, and they learn to apply paint to a block, and to manage the media and equipment with sufficient expertise to achieve a pleasing mono-print. In Years 5 and 6, pupils build further on the range of skills they have acquired. Pupils in Year 5 learn to mix paint with increasing subtlety. They mix powder paint to make exactly the correct tone to match with pictures they are basing their work on. Pupils in Year 6 create pleasing compositions using a narrow range of colours to good effect, for example, a seascape in which a whale disappearing into huge waves is evoked through use of dark blues, greens and greys. In such paintings, paint is applied with confidence and skill.
91. Work in art and design is sometimes linked to topic work in other subjects and always with relevance. In Year 3, when pupils were learning about the Ancient Egyptians, they had the opportunity to experiment with drawing in pen by making careful pen drawings of some Ancient Egyptian artefacts in their sketchbooks. In Year 6, pupils are studying Britain since the 1930s in history and the art curriculum complements this by looking at the work of the ceramics artist Clarice Cliff. Pupils used their knowledge of Clarice Cliff's style and use of colour to good effect when they designed their own jugs. In all year groups, pupils have a good understanding about the work of notable artists' such as Mondrian, Picasso and Lowry, and their knowledge of different artists' styles informs their own artwork. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good recall of the artists they have studied, and talk knowledgeably about their different approaches to their work.
92. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers develop pupils' skills systematically and this enables pupils to make good progress and to develop confidence in their own capabilities. Sketchbooks are used appropriately to encourage pupils to try out new ideas, record detail in careful observational drawing, and experiment with colour. These experiments are then developed into finished pieces of work. Pupils in Year 4 examine different textures in fabric and paper and then experiment with different ways of illustrating these textures using line and shade. A strength in the teaching is that teachers in all year groups provide pupils with the time to evaluate the quality of their work, discuss how it might be improved and gain further understanding of the quality of their work.
93. The coordinator assumed responsibility for the subject at the beginning of the current term. She has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve provision further, and the subject is a priority in the school's development plan. Later this year, the school has plans to introduce an international dimension to creative arts. This will further enrich the art and design curriculum. The scheme of work is being updated to take account of recent developments in the subject, and opportunities for assessment are being identified. Opportunities to visit places that provide interesting source material for art and design, such as the local church, are organised, from time to time, but there is no established programme of visits to art galleries. Pupils' work is displayed attractively in classrooms and around the school and does much to enhance the visual environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards are as good now as they were at the time of the previous inspection, when they were above national expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well. The quality of pupils' work shows that they have a good knowledge of the design process. They securely develop the ability to identify products and systems that will meet a variety of very complex needs. They consider a wide range of contexts for designing and making things to use in the home, for leisure, in industry, trade and commerce. They understand that to make products that are safe, reliable, durable and attractive, care must be taken when selecting and using tools and deciding on construction and finishing methods. Pupils realise that they can learn from trial and error. Having made something once, they are happy to evaluate how successful they were, and willing to change what they do to improve specific aspects of their work.

95. The school has worked hard to address the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Progress has been good. Food technology, a missing feature of provision then, is now imaginatively planned. Very effective use, for example, is made of facilities at the local secondary school to prepare a picnic lunch. Pupils in Year 4 conduct surveys to find out what they enjoy eating. They then plan, make and evaluate nutritious sandwiches to bring back to school to eat. The school allocates sufficient time for lessons and ensures that pupils have access to a well-balanced programme of work. Experience of using information and communication technology to communicate ideas graphically and in writing is much better than it was. Plans are also well advanced to extend this further, through the use of a recently purchased computer control box that will enable pupils to power models made from construction kits.
96. Teaching is consistently good. Through thorough planning, purposeful links are made with other subjects, such as, English, mathematics, science, art and music. Teachers provide a variety of resources and have high expectations of pupils to use time and materials constructively. They encourage pupils to reflect on the quality of their work. The opportunities presented to pupils also have a wider purpose. They promote personal development too. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and gain a lot of personal satisfaction from the success they achieve. They share tools and space safely and value each other's ideas. Furthermore, pupils are beginning to appreciate issues of conservation and positive and negative messages in media advertising. They consider and write about the importance of using materials and sources of energy responsibly. They consider visual and graphic effects when designing posters that reflect their thinking about important issues, such as bullying and drug prevention. These have particular value as they enable pupils to explore anxieties and personal experiences that they may be reluctant to discuss in more formal settings.
97. Evidence of pupils' effort, interest and concentration is plentiful. In Year 4, for example, pupils design and make picture frames. They research in depth first, to identify the range of shapes, size and cost of products available in shops. They compare them, to decide which they like best, and why. They use their findings to generate ideas, and go on to make a frame of their own using the school's satisfactory range of materials. In Year 6, pupils use a selection of construction kits, a variety of materials and electric motors, to make and test moving vehicles. Lower-attaining pupils make as rapid progress as their higher-attaining classmates. They label drawings very well and write useful instructions, from which it would be possible for a reader to achieve a similar outcome. Higher-attaining pupils write perceptive evaluations of what worked and what could be improved.
98. The use of visits and visitors makes a very strong contribution to the quality of learning. For example, in the week prior to the inspection a theatre group spent two days in the school working with pupils in Year 3. They organised a puppet show and then led a workshop for each class in the year group. This resulted in pupils making a very effective display of 'Puppets from the Deep.' The teachers made this experience even more fun by using the projector and a screen to create a shadow puppet show.
99. Responsibility for the subject is delegated effectively and it is ably led and managed. The coordinator has a good overview of standards. Potential has been clearly identified to raise standards further, for example, by extending links with local supermarkets. There are plans for pupils to visit big stores to find out more about the different ways of packaging goods and what issues are involved with disposing of them. Pupils will also be able to watch experts demonstrate the use of power tools, and discover how to make interesting and useful objects, such as bird boxes. These are worthwhile experiences that should promote pupils' talents and teach them to appreciate the range of skills and expertise in the community. The coordinator is aware of the need to continue to improve the way work is evaluated and pupils' progress is assessed. Teachers' comments do not, for example, summarise the contribution the subject makes to pupils' moral, cultural and spiritual development, and, yet, its contribution is significant. The school recognises that there have been losses, as well as gains, from adopting suggestions in national guidance for design and technology. The school should not be afraid to reinstate tasks that it knew fostered initiative and were more representative of pupils' interests and cultural backgrounds.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Standards in geography have improved since the previous inspection. The vast majority of pupils in Year 6 work comfortably within the expected level for the age group and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a more balanced knowledge of the subject, and make more productive

use of information and communication technology to aid their learning, than they did in 1997. They use a digital camera, for example, to record features of the landscape surrounding the school. They access the Internet to conduct research about the habitat of animals and birds, and to publish statistical information about distance, temperature and area.

101. Pupils build well on firm foundations established during time in infant school. In the aspects of their work associated with making and interpreting maps, a substantial percentage of pupils achieve standards above the level expected. Their understanding of Ordnance Survey maps and symbols, and how to use a compass, for example, are very secure. A good knowledge of countries and continents is also apparent from pupils' exercise books, as well as from informal dialogue with pupils. This is demonstrated in their study of Nailsea, the wider region of North Somerset, and in work associated with India and the Amazon Rainforest. Pupils are perceptive in noting similarities and differences between places and in the lifestyles of people who settle in them. They write concisely and clearly, making good use of geographical vocabulary. They consider the reasons for changes that occur over time, and are aware of conservation issues. They suggest ways, for example, in which the destruction of rainforests in Brazil might be prevented. Pupils of all levels of attainment present their work well. The aspect that is not so evident in individual portfolios, however, is pupils' ability to devise independent lines of enquiry to explore issues of sustainability and morality. When considering, for example, 'What's in the news?' pupils discuss issues such as migration, the circumstances of refugees or how the roles of men and women can be influenced by cultural traditions but miss opportunities to develop critical writing around these issues. Thinking and literacy skills are well enough developed for pupils to achieve more in communicating a deeper understanding of the world in which they live through extended prose.
102. Teaching is consistently good because it is firmly underpinned by a stimulating programme of academic work and backed up by plentiful resources. Lessons are linked in many imaginative ways to other areas of learning and incorporate a very good range of educational visits and visitors. Pupils in Year 6, for example, published a class book about a 'fictional' stay at an Adventure Activity Centre. Every child contributed something, and the book tempts and engrosses the reader by realistic invitations such as, 'Come and experience the thrilling cliffs at the Rock-Climbing Centre.' Pupils in Year 5 also produce interesting individual publicity leaflets about places to visit in and around Nailsea and Bristol.
103. Lessons meet the needs of pupils of different ages, backgrounds and levels of attainment and, therefore, pupils find lessons interesting and rewarding. They thrive on tackling activities that have just the right amount of challenge to extend skills, but that do not frustrate them by being too difficult, dull or long. This was exemplified in Year 4, when a pupil with special educational needs with targets to improve concentration and effort, worked hard, within an allotted time, to find and record three grid references.
104. Some classes contain over 30 pupils and the school has found imaginative ways of compensating for this. When half of the classes in Year 3 go swimming, the other half remains for a geography lesson. The good teacher to pupil ratio in these circumstances is a bonus. There is plentiful space and time for pupils to pore over modern and old maps, and make new, exciting discoveries. In such a lesson, pupils in Year 3 spotted that the old map of Nailsea did not contain landmarks with which they are familiar because they have been built since the map was published. It helped them to realise that maps need to be regularly brought up-to-date. In this lesson, pupils extended geographical vocabulary well as they talked with the teacher.
105. The improvement and developments in geography are due to the hard work of the previous coordinator, in partnership with colleagues. They also reflect governors' interest and willingness to invest in the subject. A report, presented to governors in summer 2002, for example, informed them of the ways in which information and communication technology is being used, and how the development of an assessment portfolio for geography is helping to keep track of standards. Representative samples of work achieved by lower-, middle-, and higher-achieving pupils are now regularly collated in this anthology. Gradually, teachers are developing effective skills in noting pupils' progress targets for attainment described in the National Curriculum. Teachers are committed to improving assessment and have many good examples of practice to draw upon. The task now is to make sure that systems for marking and checking progress are used consistently throughout the school.

106. Coordination of the subject has now been transferred to another member of the staff team who has a degree in geography. This teacher is leading some exciting new initiatives. The subject already makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but the coordinator knows it can be even more successful. To this end, plans are well advanced to improve the international education dimension. Discussions have started to address the themes of environmental change and sustainable development in greater depth in specific topics. Dialogue is also taking place about how the residential camp, a popular and successful feature in the past, can be replaced by equally worthwhile outdoor learning opportunities. All the school needs to do now is to continue with the realistic objectives it has set for itself. Its capacity to succeed is very good.

HISTORY

107. Since the previous inspection, there has been a rise in the standards pupils attain by the end of the Year 6. There has been a significant improvement in the way in which literacy lessons have been used to strengthen pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing, using historical contexts. Standards of attainment are above average at the end of Year 6 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are seen to make good progress in their lessons during the inspection week. Teaching is good overall with very good teaching seen in Year 5. Achievement over time is satisfactory in relation to the high level of attainment on entry to the school.
108. From Year 3 onwards, pupils gather evidence about how people lived during various periods of history. They watch video recordings, visit places of historical interest, read books and can examine artefacts critically, considering the purpose they might have been used in the period being studied. Teachers are imaginative and provide resources to motivate and arouse feelings, such as in a topic on the Second World War, when they encourage pupils to imagine what it would be like to be an evacuee. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of some major historical events and debate social aspects of the Second World War, displaying a good level of empathy.
109. Pupils in Year 6 are developing a sense of chronology. They know how to access and gather information, suggesting a good range of primary and secondary sources. Some history projects contain interesting writing, which makes a sound contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Information and communication technology is integrated into the curriculum and more able pupils extend their projects with examples taken from the Internet. Teachers encourage pupils to work together, to discuss the cause and effect of events in the past. For example, pupils in Year 4 discuss what it would be like to live and work on a Viking ship. Good ranges of local visits are arranged and pupils talk about the history of Nailsea giving a detailed account concerning the production of local glass.
110. The leadership of history has changed this term. The new coordinator has plans to develop the subject and involve more first-hand evidence by inviting visitors to talk to pupils about historical events. Resources are good and the loan of historical artefacts supports each historical period.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards are high and pupils achieve close to capacity in this subject. Pupils are highly motivated and, in so many ways, information and communication technology contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There have been substantial improvements in provision since 1997. The subsequent rise in standards is due to the unstinting efforts of everyone involved in steering the future direction of the school. Immediately after the previous inspection, a thorough strategic improvement plan was presented to governors. It showed how staff expertise and confidence would be improved through a rigorous professional development programme. It forecast how the weaknesses could be successfully overcome, through building learning opportunities into every subject, but particularly in English, mathematics and science. This plan has been carefully and successfully implemented, through the excellent leadership and management of the coordinator. For example, in 1997 very few pupils knew how to organise, amend and refine their work by cutting and pasting text. They use these skills now from Year 3 onwards. For example, in Year 6, they rearrange text to improve the appearance and content of draft reports and newspaper articles.
112. Pupils, irrespective of age, ethnicity and levels of attainment in other subjects, are virtually all confident to talk widely about information and communication technology and how they use it. They explain and evaluate the use of computers, digital and video cameras, calculators and other

devices used in the home and in the world of work. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a mature perspective of how information and communication technology is changing and developing to meet complex needs throughout the world. They are very familiar with the Internet. They know how to log on to different websites to access information and are used to communicating with each other and other people by email. Pupils also understand the limitations of technology and why it can fail the teachers and them, at times, because of over-demand on subscriber systems. Several pupils knew at once what one teacher was talking about when it was explained that, soon, the school would have a system that would be reliable to access the Internet at any time of the day. Pupils are also skilled at reviewing, evaluating and modifying their work as it progresses. This is because this vital skill is being taught and consolidated from Year 3 onwards. This was clearly demonstrated in a computer club with 12 pupils from Year 4. They were working in pairs to make a short animation and encountered a few difficulties, such as their hands showing in the picture frames or objects moving too jerkily. They were able to share ideas to solve these initial problems and make very good progress with making their films.

113. Such are the frequency and range of opportunities for practice, that pupils use information and communication technology widely and effectively in English, mathematics and all other subjects. For example, pupils are very familiar with using a spreadsheet to calculate money, large numbers, or distance and area. Work in the subject portfolio shows that how this skill is promoted in Year 6, when pupils are challenged to plan a party. They all find individual and accurate ways to keep within a budget of £75 to purchase sufficient food and drink for a class of 24 pupils. In science lessons, older pupils set up a programme to simulate traffic lights, pelican and railway crossings, and a lighthouse. In the traffic lights experiment, they evaluate the delay on the red lights and modify the input instructions to improve it. Pupils make imaginative leaflets about the school, personalised calendars, and pictures in the style of famous artists, such as Seurat. They produce well-written and illustrated newspaper articles, laid out realistically in columns and with photographs inserted, for example, in their own version of 'Grove Daily News.' There is virtually nothing to fault pupils' progress and achievements. Potential to achieve even more highly relies not on lack of motivation or effort, but on the school's success in meeting its targets for further improvements in its range of resources.
114. Teaching is very good in all year groups; such is the impact of teachers' enthusiasm, expertise and commitment to information and communication technology. Lessons are carefully planned and adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, and are very successful in inspiring the interest and enthusiasm of lower- and higher-attaining pupils alike. Very effective use is made of the information and communication technology suite, and teachers always make the purpose of tasks very clear, so that pupils very rarely misunderstand what is expected of them. If pupils experience difficulties, they receive plenty of individual guidance to resolve them. In an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils learnt a lot more about symmetry and the properties of shape, as the teacher used an interactive whiteboard as the centrepiece for demonstration and discussion. In Year 5, a teacher also made excellent use of remote learning to demonstrate how to recognise auxiliary verbs in an extract of text. At the beginning of the lesson, pupils were unfamiliar with the term. At the end of the session, by using the computer in pairs, they had made very good progress. They learnt to recognise words that help verbs to communicate past, present and future tense. Lesson objectives are also used very effectively in some classes as criteria for marking pupils' work. Occasionally, however, teachers do not check sufficiently whether techniques, such as 'spell check', have been used correctly. There was a failure, for example, to spot errors, such as 'rite' for 'right' in an exercise where pupils were editing a poem with deliberate mistakes. Time is also usually managed very well. In one lesson only, which took place in a classroom rather than the suite, timing was less successful. The teacher spent rather too long demonstrating how to edit and amend text, rather than allowing pupils to work in their pairs to improve this skill independently. With only one monitor to look at, pupils found it difficult to respond to questions, especially when many of them could not see the text on the screen clearly enough.
115. The leadership and management of the subject are excellent and teachers could not work harder in developing their knowledge and skills. The lead coordinator's contribution is, not only valued by the school, but also fully acknowledged by the local education authority, high school and wider community groups for the vision brought to promoting and developing the subject. The coordinators, and every one of their colleagues, reflect the school's commitment to providing pupils with lifelong learning skills. Funds are appropriately invested to enhance resources. Very effective links have been forged with other schools, especially the high school to which pupils transfer. The school exploits the expertise of people in the community, such as a company from Bristol that

makes films for television. Methods for assessing standards and retaining evidence are rigorous and improving the way teachers plan for future lessons. The plan for developments over the next few years is extremely thorough, properly costed, and builds carefully on the school's audit of relative strengths and weaknesses in provision. The coordinator knows exactly what the school should be aiming for and has set challenging attainment targets for 2003 and 2004. The capacity to meet these targets is excellent.

MUSIC

116. Standards are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Key Stage 2. The performance of a minority of pupils on musical instruments, particularly those who receive extra tuition in school, or at home, is above the expectations for their age. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be above national expectations and these were successfully maintained until more recently. A new, enthusiastic and capable coordinator has created a strong platform to raise standards to their previous levels.
117. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop an enjoyment of singing by learning and performing traditional and international songs. They follow a rhythm or maintain a steady beat by, for example, clapping, clicking their fingers, slapping body parts, or shaking and striking untuned instruments. They make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in combining playing and singing to perform a variety of songs and are developing a growing awareness of the need to follow instructions and play their part. As they grow older, this awareness sharpens still further, as pupils in Years 5 and 6 play and sing songs and chants, either in rounds or more complex parts. By the end of Year 6, most pupils sing tunefully, sustain notes and respond to changes in pitch and rhythm, whilst a small minority find it hard to combine singing and playing successfully. Most pupils recognise and use musical symbols or pictures to compose or perform simple pieces on tuned or untuned instruments as part of a group. Some more able pupils at this stage, particularly those in the school choir and orchestra, sing and play with clarity, expression and an awareness of the mood of the piece they are performing, reflecting standards above expectations for their age.
118. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Teaching is strongest when it is lively and imaginative and pupils are given maximum opportunity to practise, develop and perform new skills during the time available. A clear example of this was seen in a good lesson in Year 5, where the teacher's enthusiasm and pace of teaching had a positive impact on pupils' response and attitude to music. She provided maximum opportunity for them to get 'hands on' experience of rehearsing and playing on musical instruments and following instructions from a conductor, so that their performance skills improved appreciably by the end of the lesson. Teaching is only occasionally less effective when teachers lack the confidence to allow pupils to spend more time practising on instruments, or when the organisation and management of groups in the music room sometimes leads to a lack of effort from a small minority. This slows the pace of teaching and reduces its impact.
119. The subject coordinator provides very good leadership and has had an immediate and positive impact on achievement in music since her appointment. For example, the school choir and orchestra are flourishing, and perform regularly in concerts in the community. These make a substantial contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils of all abilities sing enthusiastically in assemblies and hymn practices and enjoy taking part in whole-school performances. The coordinator has introduced a portfolio containing high-quality audio and video recordings of pupils playing and singing. This has the potential to provide a good basis for assessment. As yet, there is little evidence of the contribution of information communication technology to music. With very good support from the headteacher and governors, the coordinator has established a specialist music room and is improving the quality and range of resources. She is now taking the subject into the second phase of its special focus in the school development plan and is well placed to continue her positive impact on achievement. In order to raise standards further, the main area for future development is to continue to work alongside colleagues in order to raise confidence in the use of the scheme of work and the organisation and management of lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. The school has maintained the high standards reported in the last inspection and, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards well above those expected for their age. Teaching provides

opportunities for pupils to develop skills in all aspects of physical education, including adventurous and outdoor activities, and makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim, and some achieve high standards. The school ensures that all pupils can swim a distance of at least 25 metres by the time they leave school.

121. During the inspection, gymnastics lessons were seen in Years 3, 4 and 5, and games in Year 6. In Years 3 and 4, pupils of all abilities make good progress in the development of gymnastics skills on floor and apparatus. They have good awareness of the space around them and use it imaginatively and safely. They are beginning to appreciate the need for incorporating poise and style in all of their work and, with very few exceptions, successfully complete a short sequence of movements, working on their own or with a partner. The rate of progress accelerates in Year 5, as pupils become increasingly conscious of their own learning and seek ways of improving and developing their performance. The quality of balance and control is consistently above the expectations for their age, and a significant minority set high personal standards for themselves. These are also evident in games lessons in Year 6, where the vast majority demonstrate good hand-to-hand passing and receiving skills using a basketball. Many of the more able pupils demonstrate a very well developed sense of tactical play, resulting in exciting and competitive games. By this stage, all pupils have a good sense of fair play, understand the need to follow rules and have very good attitudes to the subject. Similarly, they display commonsense and maturity, when setting out or storing equipment.
122. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is consistently good throughout the school and is often very good. This is because the coordinator has provided excellent support for her colleagues, working alongside them in lessons and increasing overall confidence in using the scheme of work. The main strength of teaching lies in the planning and organisation of lessons. This ensures, for example, that pupils are able to develop their gymnastic routines step-by-step and has a positive effect on achievement. Most have developed strategies for assessing and improving pupils' performance, for instance, by using the best performers as exemplars for others to follow and by insisting that pupils are always conscious of their posture and style. This approach has a significant impact on pupils' progress, as they get older. Teaching is only occasionally less effective when pupils are kept seated for too long, using up time which could be better used for developing skills and techniques through activity.
123. The subject coordinator has worked very hard and successfully to maintain high standards, provides very good leadership and has ensured good improvement since the last inspection. She has produced a detailed and wide-ranging scheme of work, considerably enriched by a variety of extra-curricular sports, which provide further opportunities for pupils to improve and to compete against other schools. Dance includes a range of opportunities to discover traditional and modern dance from different countries. The subject contributes positively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The coordinator has created good links with partner schools, by enlisting the help of their sixth-form students for these activities. The main area for future development is to continue to promote the system of assessment that has recently been introduced.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. Standards have been successfully maintained since the last inspection and continue to exceed the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils are provided with good opportunities to examine and compare the beliefs, origins and characteristics of five major religions. They make good progress in appreciating the similarities and differences between the various faiths and their learning makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One lesson was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching in that lesson was good. Judgements are based on that observation, as well as a study of samples of pupils' previous work, and discussions with pupils and teachers.
125. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn from their study of Christian, Jewish and Hindu beliefs the importance of special places and journeys. In addition, they appreciate, for instance, that the notion of reliability and friendship is a common feature of most religions. Consequently, pupils in Year 3 write clearly, and in detail, about the qualities that constitute a good friend. In Year 5, pupils study the Holy Bible in greater depth and begin to appreciate more fully the impact of the New Testament and Christianity on their own lives. In the good lesson seen in Year 5, for example, pupils made good progress in relating the significance of stories, such as 'The Good Samaritan', to

their day-to-day behaviour and the effect that it has on others. They are also given the opportunity to reflect on people in their own lives who set good examples to others. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding that individuals, such as Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa, have been prepared to suffer for their beliefs and that Muslims make long and difficult pilgrimages as a demonstration of their faith.

126. The subject coordinator has continued to provide very good leadership since the last inspection. She has also introduced a useful and detailed portfolio of pieces of work, supported by a good assessment system. There are strong links with other areas of the curriculum. In personal, social and health education lessons, for example, there are further opportunities to discuss issues such as responsibility and friendship. Teaching also makes a good contribution to the development of speaking and listening and extended writing skills, because pupils are regularly invited to discuss, and then write at length, about what they have learned. Teachers make appropriate use of information and communication technology in the form of computer software and videotapes to support teaching and learning. There is a good range of artefacts from the various religions to enrich teaching and these are widely used. Pupils are also given opportunities to visit a local church, a representative of which visits school regularly. An area for future development is to strengthen pupils' awareness of the rich cultural diversity within their school and beyond by creating similar links with places of worship or representatives from one or more of the other religions covered by the locally agreed syllabus. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection.