

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILLOW BANK JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Woodley, Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109890

Headteacher: Mr G Forster

Reporting inspector: Mr B Barkway  
11635

Dates of inspection: 16 – 20 June 2003

Inspection number: 246948

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Duffield Road Woodley Reading
Postcode:	RG5 4RW
Telephone number:	0118 969 1556
Fax number:	0118 969 7816
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Smith
Date of previous inspection:	19 January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11635	Brian Barkway	Registered inspector	Music Religious education Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9009	Valerie Bradley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17893	John Warren	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21816	Beryl Thomas	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language	
27292	Jeff Calvert	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education	How well are pupils taught?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Willow Bank Junior School is a large junior school with 299 pupils on roll. It is situated in Woodley, a residential area about four miles east of Reading. Over 90% of the school's population is of white, U.K. heritage. Nine per cent of pupils come from a diverse range of cultural background but with no other group being larger than six out of the 299 pupils. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Less than 3% of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals, a figure much lower than the national average. Thirty-four pupils (11%) are on the school's special needs register, a figure considerably lower than the national figure of 22%. Pupils with special educational needs have a range of difficulties but the majority have moderate learning difficulties whilst a few have specific difficulties such as dyslexia. Five pupils have statements of special educational need, a figure in line with the national situation. Unemployment in the area is low and about half the pupils come from high social class households. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations.

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

This is a highly effective school. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science and at the age of eleven are achieving well above national expectations in those subjects when compared to all schools nationally. Against similar schools, pupils achieve in line with expectations for English, above expectations for science and well above for mathematics. Teaching is good throughout the school with one out of four lessons observed demonstrating very good or excellent teaching. The leadership of the headteacher and governing body is outstanding and the organisation of English, music and special educational needs provision is exemplary. The school is very successful at meeting the needs of all pupils. It provides excellent equality of opportunity and very good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their school and each other, are very good and a strength of the school.
- The quality of relationships that pupils have with both other pupils and adults is a strength of the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Teaching is good overall and often very good or excellent.
- Parents view the school very favourably and are very positive about how it works with their children.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and is inspirational to the school community.
- The governing body makes a very significant impact on the work of the school. They are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and operate in a strategic manner to achieve further school improvement.
- The co-ordination of key aspects of the school's work is very effective. There is excellent practice regarding English, music and special educational needs provision.



## What could be improved

There are no key issues. The school has no major area in which either its provision, its efficiency or the standard pupils achieve are unsatisfactory.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Since then it has maintained its very high academic standards and has improved the quality of teaching, although a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching still remains. At the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were below national expectations. Standards have risen and the use of ICT within the curriculum is satisfactory. Assessment procedures have improved and help pupils make very good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' spiritual development is actively promoted and the school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship. The school has therefore made very good improvement since its last inspection.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	A*	A	C
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	A	B

**Key**

in the top 5% nationally      A\*

well above average      A

above average      B

average      C

below average      D

well below average      E

Between the last inspection and July 2002, the period for which comparative information is available, the school has improved faster than the national trend in English, mathematics and science. Pupils attain high standards in English, mathematics and science when compared to all schools nationally. Against similar schools, pupils achieved high standards in mathematics, above average standards in science and average standards in English. Pupils' work seen at the time of the inspection indicates that the 2003 attainment show an improvement in English. The school sets very high, challenging targets for English (91%) and mathematics (94%) that it just missed by 3% in 2002. Nearly half the pupils attain the higher Level 5 on leaving the school.

In other subjects, the standards attained by pupils aged eleven are above national expectations in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and in line with national expectations in geography, history and ICT. Pupils achieve above the locally agreed expected standards in religious education. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum

and satisfactory use is made of their numeracy skills. Pupils make very good progress by the age of eleven; although in Year 3 this is only satisfactory. This rate of progress increases as pupils move through the school so that by Year 6 pupils make very good or excellent progress in two out of every three lessons.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and work hard on their assignments. They are prepared to talk about their feelings and about special events in their lives as they have great trust in their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of most pupils is very good, both in and out of classrooms. Pupils know the school rules and respond well to praise and encouragement. They recognise the difference between right and wrong and appreciate the effect of their actions. No bullying or racist behaviour was observed during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	The good relationships are a strength. They make a significant contribution to the positive learning environment within the school. Pupils form constructive relationships and generally care well for each other.
Attendance	The attendance rate for the school is well above the national average. Most pupils arrive punctually at school. However, a growing number of parents are taking their children on holiday in excess of the ten school days that are legally allowed.

Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided for them to show responsibility and initiative, such as the system where older pupils help younger ones at playtime and the School Council. Pupils are fully involved in many fund raising activities and the wide range of musical concerts, performances and sporting events helps pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy their lessons and this helps them to make very good progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
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.*

Overall teaching in the school is good, with over three quarters of teaching being good or better. Four out of every ten lessons demonstrate very good or better teaching and in over one in ten lessons of teaching is excellent. Three lessons contained unsatisfactory teaching. During the inspection sixty-three lessons were observed. Teachers' planning and assessment documents and pupils' work were also examined. The quality of teaching is variable within the school. In Year 3

only one out of every five lessons is good or better but this figure increases to two thirds of lessons being good or better in Year 4, and nine out of every ten lessons being good or better by Years 5 and 6. Over half the lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 contain very good or excellent teaching. Where teaching is very good or better, teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, particularly in English, mathematics, science and music and pupils have to work hard in challenging lessons. Very good subject knowledge and understanding of how to make learning interesting and enjoyable is linked to very good planning that appropriately identifies what pupils need to learn. Teachers carefully match activities to the individual needs of pupils and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Very effective behaviour management strategies are used. These strengths are equally evident in the teaching of all subjects. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Teachers seize opportunities in all subjects to develop pupils' literacy skills but the development of numeracy skills in other subjects is more limited. The school's provision for teaching pupils with special educational needs, and those identified as gifted and talented, is of a very high quality enabling these pupils to make very good progress in their learning. Where teaching is less effective, what pupils were meant to learn was less clear and there was less of a match of challenge to ability. Behaviour management was less effective and so pupils made insufficient progress in their learning.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum. The school fully complies with the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enriches the school curriculum. The school provides excellent equality of opportunity for all pupils and its provision for pupils with special educational needs is exemplary. The English, mathematics, science, music and religious education curricula are strengths of the school. Collective worship meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Very good procedures are in place to establish and provide for individual need. Very effective assessment procedures keep staff, pupils and parents very well informed about the progress made. The special educational needs co-ordinator's contribution is a major strength and she is well supported by all staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision of this aspect of the school's work is good overall. Within that, provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The provision for spiritual development is now good and this was an issue of concern at the last inspection.

<b>Aspect (continued)</b>	<b>Comment (continued)</b>
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Relationships are very good and the school provides a very caring, supportive working environment for all. It has established clear expectations for behaviour and takes prompt and appropriate action if these are not met. Three recent cases of racist name-calling were dealt with quickly and appropriately. Procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science are very good. Assessment procedures are in place for all other subjects but in some foundation subjects these are not being implemented consistently. Appropriate measures are in place to monitor attendance. The school has active measures in place to promote race equality.

The headteacher, staff and governors work very hard to establish a positive partnership with parents and carers. The school generally provides very good information regarding the curriculum and what their children will be learning and how parents can help their children. The involvement of parents in special educational needs reviews are very good examples of this. However, the annual report to parents concerning their own child's progress fulfils the minimum statutory requirements regarding the core subjects but does not contain sufficient information regarding progress in other subjects. Parents are encouraged to work in classrooms and the School Association is very active and the funds it raises make a significant contribution.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are strengths of the school. The headteacher's contribution is outstanding and he is well supported by key members of staff. Co-ordination of some aspects of the school's work, for example English, music and special educational needs, is exemplary.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective and a strength of the school. It knows the school's strengths and weaknesses and it operates effectively in securing improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Appropriate systems help the school monitor and evaluate its performance. The outcomes of reviews are acted upon. At present the school has rightly focused the majority of this work on the core subjects but all subject co-ordinators do have some monitoring and evaluation time.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent procedures are in place for managing and targeting the budget. Resources are used very effectively to support academic achievement and the wider school aims.

The development of ICT within the school needs to be more strategic and the success criteria in all action plans are insufficiently precise. All curriculum areas are adequately resourced although at present the use of ICT resources is inconsistent. Staff are suitably qualified for their responsibilities and the accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Staff and governors are successful at attracting extra funding and make good use of the local community. The school applies the principles of best value effectively and consistently.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• The high quality of leadership and management and teaching.</li> <li>• The school's high expectations.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour.</li> <li>• How the school helps their children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The progress made by their children.</li> <li>• Feeling they can ask questions or discuss a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework children are given.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The information received concerning their child's progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed with the positive views of parents. They judged that an appropriate amount of homework was given and that the range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The team also felt that the school did work closely with parents but that it should provide better information regarding children's progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has made good improvement in raising standards since the last inspection. When pupils leave the school at the age of eleven, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average. Pupils make very good progress, including those with special educational needs. There are no significant differences between the achievement of different groups represented within the school, for example boys and girls or pupils from different backgrounds. The attainment of the current Year 6 pupils on entry to the school was generally in line with the national average but the expectation of how many pupils can achieve the national benchmark has increased over their time in the junior school. These pupils have made the necessary progress to exceed current national averages.
2. As this inspection took place in June 2003, it is important to note that national comparative data was already 12 months old. In arriving at their judgement concerning standards, inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work as shown in exercise books, subject folders as well as observing over sixty lessons and talking to pupils about their work. All of this information has been used in reaching the judgements concerning the standards that pupils attain.
3. At the time of the school's last inspection in 1998 the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science were above national expectations and as standards are now well above national expectations in all three subjects this shows a good rate of improvement by the school. Comparative data for all schools nationally indicates that the standards pupils of this school attained in 2002 were a high and similar to those achieved by pupils in the school for several years. The inspection team's judgement is that these very good standards have been maintained this year. Compared against similar schools, the attainment in mathematics is high, for science it is above average and in English it is in line with similar schools. The picture is repeated for the number of pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics, science and English both for all schools nationally and compared to similar schools. These high standards are confirmed by the work seen during the week of the inspection. The increase in attainment since the previous inspection in the numbers of pupils reaching the national expectation of Level 4 is 11% in English, 14% in mathematics and 18% in science. In 2002, nine out of ten pupils achieved at least the national expectation (Level 4) in all three subjects. Based on these tests, pupils had made well above average progress compared to when they were seven years old.
4. The figures for 2002 indicate that the school failed to achieve its targets by 3% in English and in mathematics. This represents two out of the 66 pupils in that cohort. These targets had been agreed with the local education authority and were very challenging. They were based upon teachers' assessment in Year 5 and a prediction of what pupils might achieve at the end of Year 6. Teachers' assessment and the results of the national tests show a high degree of match.

5. In English by the age of eleven, reading attainment is high and pupils have the necessary higher order reading skills to tackle difficult texts. They show their understanding by explaining the deductions and inferences that they make. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils use Standard English appropriately and they can articulate ideas and ask interesting questions in class discussions and respond to the comments of their teacher or peers. Narrative writing is a strength and pupils construct effective simple and complex sentences. They can also write short plays and construct effective letters. Pupils love reading and writing poetry. Year 4 pupils have written lively animal poems and pupils in Year 6 write their own poetry anthologies. Spelling standards have improved since the last inspection and now pupils can use a range of appropriate strategies to help them. In a number of lessons observed pupils were using dictionaries to improve their work. Hand writing is the weakest area in terms of standards achieved but this is now in line with national expectations.
6. In mathematics pupils show a high level of attainment by the age of eleven. Year 6 pupils have a very good knowledge of the four operations of number and a secure understanding of place value. They can use a wide range of strategies to solve mental mathematics problems. All pupils know how to use a calculator accurately and are aware that they always need to check the mathematical reasonableness of the answer. Pupils can also check their answers by using the inverse operation if appropriate. Pupils are confident of their mathematical understanding and are able to not only give mathematically correct answers but also explain how they gained that answer.
7. In science by the age of eleven, pupils demonstrate good understanding of the science work they have studied. They are knowledgeable of the concepts concerned with investigative science. They are able to explain how investigations are conducted, how variables need to be controlled and the need for measures to ensure 'fairness'. The school's recent emphasis on investigative science is evident in pupils' understanding throughout the school. The youngest pupils in the school demonstrate good understanding of all areas of the science curriculum. They classify plants and animals and conduct investigations to discover the importance of the leaf in a plant's growth cycle. They conduct investigations to find out which material is most resistant to wear and tear and which paper is most absorbent. When learning about forces they test elastic bands to see the effect stretching has upon them. Science concepts become more challenging as the pupils grow older, for example, having studied electricity in Year 4 and made simple circuits, Year 6 pupils later make more complex circuits and draw them with technical symbols.
8. In other subjects, the standards attained by pupils by the age of eleven are above average in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education and in line with national expectations in, geography, history and ICT. Standards in religious education are above the expectations contained in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for that subject. Satisfactory use is made of literacy and numeracy across all curriculum subjects.
9. The school has very good procedures in place to analyse pupils' performance in English and mathematics and satisfactory procedures for this in science. Trends are identified and strategies are put into place to address any weaknesses identified. The rise in attainment in

writing this year is a good example of this. The assessment procedures in place for English, mathematics and science have been a major contributory factor to this rise in attainment as they have enabled teachers to emphasise particular areas of the curriculum in which pupils were under achieving. Detailed assessment procedures have not been developed in other subjects that help to raise attainment in a similar way.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. This is due to the excellent provision made by the school and the detailed, individual targets identified in their individual education programmes. The school has identified specific activities to raise the attainment of gifted and talented pupils and these are effective and enable these pupils to make good progress. All other groups of pupils in school make at least good progress and there are some outstanding examples of success, for instance a pupil who has made four years progress in spelling in a matter of months.

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

11. Relationships within the school are good, successfully encouraging very good attitudes, values and personal development. Ninety-nine per cent of parents who replied to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children are happy to be at school. Pupils are keen to learn, and approach their assignments in an enthusiastic manner. Older pupils pay good attention to the teachers, and because of the good relationships established with the teachers and each other, readily talk about their work or their feelings without fear or embarrassment, knowing their contributions will be listened to and valued. In religious education lessons observed, pupils responded sensitively and thoughtfully when discussing and considering their own 'special things', and those of others. The youngest pupils are confident in their exchanges with adults, but do not always listen carefully to instructions.
12. The good relationships are a strength of the school, and contribute towards a very positive learning environment.
13. Pupils' behaviour is nearly always good in the classrooms. In nearly half of the lessons seen, attitudes and behaviour were very good or excellent. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and are keen to contribute to them. In music lessons observed, pupils were very well motivated and sustained concentration very well, working co-operatively and collaboratively singing and performing clapping rhythms. In the small number of lessons observed where behaviour was unsatisfactory, the youngest pupils had not listened to the instructions given, and were therefore unsure what their tasks were.
14. Pupils know the school rules, and respond well to the praise and encouragement freely given. They recognise the difference between right and wrong and most appreciate the effect of their actions on others and the environment. However, there are a minority of pupils who do not always consider the consequence of their actions. The school recognises the need to consider further ways of ensuring that pupils move around the school sensibly, and take more care of their own property and that of others. Pupils generally feel safe and secure in school, but observe that they do encounter some boisterous behaviour and name-calling when in the



playground and recreation areas. No bullying or racist behaviour was observed during the inspection, but there have been a few instances of racist name-calling during the past year. When these incidents have been reported, the school has taken appropriate action.

15. The school works hard to avoid exclusions, and effectively discusses inappropriate behaviour and ways to improve that behaviour with both pupils and their parents. Pupils excluded from their previous schools have successfully transferred to this school. There have been no exclusions for at least fifteen years.
16. The good relationships contribute significantly to the school's positive ethos. Pupils form constructive friendships, and generally care well for each other. Recently pupils from Year 6 have been playing regularly with younger pupils, organising and explaining playground games and activities with them. Pupils are courteous and polite to visitors. Pupils in the classrooms collaborate well, work well together in pairs, share resources and help one another. In several physical education lessons, pupils were observed collaborating very well when they were enthusiastically taking part in group activities.
17. When opportunities for responsibility are offered, pupils respond very well. Older pupils are responsible for collecting and reporting the number of pupils planning to have school lunches each day. Younger pupils are appropriately involved in helping within the classroom. Pupils are fully involved in the organisation of the wide range of charity fundraising activities undertaken by the school. Older pupils organise activities during school Fun Days, and operate the stalls and activities they have themselves prepared. Pupils' personal development is effectively supported through the wide range of sporting activities, in matches against other schools and in tournaments. The personal development of pupils is very effectively encouraged when they perform in the numerous musical concerts and performances both within the school and the wider community.
18. Pupils have a good understanding of responsibility and citizenship when representatives from all classes, including the youngest pupils, contribute to the work of the recently established School Council. Pupils recognise that their views and requests are now listened to, valued and, where appropriate, acted upon. The School Council is currently considering the school rules, and has previously discussed ways to address and eliminate bullying, including the possible establishment of a 'buddy' system. The initiative whereby Year 6 pupils are playing with younger pupils came as a result of these discussions.
19. A large number of older pupils are enjoying taking part in, and responding well to, the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. Mainly older pupils enjoy these extra-curricular activities, but younger pupils are able to take part in the choir, and perform with the school orchestra.
20. The attendance rate at the school in the last academic year of 96.4% is well above the average nationally. Although official figures show that there is no unauthorised absence, because of the instruction to 'round figures down', there is an increasing number of parents who take their children on holidays in excess of the ten school days that are legally allowed. The school is meticulous in advising parents that these extra days must be, and will be,

considered unauthorised absence, but this has not been effective in deterring parents from taking these holidays.

21. Most pupils arrive punctually at school, ensuring a prompt and effective start to the school day. A few pupils regularly arrive late at school, but appropriate procedures are in place to monitor and address these late arrivals.

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

22. Willow Bank Junior School has ten classes; three classes in both Years 3 and 4 and two classes in Years 5 and 6. For part of the school day, pupils are arranged in groups according to their age and ability for mathematics, English and in Years 5 and 6 for science. All but four class teachers work full time at the school. The school does provide some specialist teaching in music and special educational needs.
23. The overall quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching at Willow Bank Junior School is good. However, the percentage of very good and excellent teaching has increased significantly since the last inspection. As a result of very good teaching, particularly in Year 6, pupils make very good gains in their learning and achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is very good and the very good level of resources overall, impact upon the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. In total, sixty-three lessons were observed during the inspection week. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory but in nineteen out of twenty lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. Three out of four lessons contain good teaching and one in four lessons contains teaching that is very good or excellent. These are very high percentages for the quality of teaching. Only three lessons were unsatisfactory and all were in Year 3, but overall teaching in Year 3 is satisfactory. The teaching of all subjects is at least satisfactory with teaching in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, physical education and religious education being good. The teaching of music was a particular strength and was very good.
24. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is good in both English and mathematics, an improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be satisfactory. Teaching of mathematics, English and science is a particular strength in Year 6 where it is judged to be very good. This enables older pupils to leave the school having achieved very well. The teaching of English in Year 6, for example, is excellent. Strategies for the teaching of mathematics and English are very effective, resources to support both teaching and learning are very good and very good relationships are evident between pupils and staff. The strengths of the teaching of English include the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject and their skill in being able to match the work to the differing abilities and needs whilst preparing thoroughly for the different stages of the lesson. In science, as in mathematics, there is a positive emphasis on the teaching of the subject through a practical approach so that pupils learn through investigation, exploration and experimentation. Consistently positive marking is more evident in English than in mathematics or science. In some of the ICT lessons seen, teachers

demonstrate a lack of confidence and understanding of the new technology. Teaching in music and special educational needs is very good and consequently standards have improved. The teaching of art and design in Year 6 is excellent as the teacher involves pupils throughout in their own learning, drawing upon prior experiences and introducing a number of dynamic stimuli to capture pupils' interest. Clear understanding of pupils' needs and ability, coupled with excellent communication skills and respectful rapport with the class, enables the vast majority of pupils to develop sketching skills and incorporate new techniques with confidence and patience.

25. The good quality teaching results in learning that is more effective and because of the contribution made by very good or excellent teaching within Year 4, Year 5 and particularly Year 6, the vast majority of pupils achieve high standards by the end of Year 6. Good support is offered by subject co-ordinators and in addition teaching assistants are used very effectively, usually supporting those pupils with special educational needs, and their good work enables these pupils to make very good progress. This is generally in line with that of their peers.
26. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a major strength. The headteacher and staff have a clear vision for creating an environment for positive learning, one in which pupils work sensibly together, co-operating to support each other. Pupils are encouraged to respond to the learning opportunities teachers provide. These promote independence and pupils learn to work hard, offer their own views, and not to be afraid to be wrong. The school believes mistakes are to be seen as a learning opportunity. Most pupils show pride in their work and respond enthusiastically to the tasks given them. However, evidence during the inspection indicates a lack of consistency in pupils' presentation, for example in mathematics where targets for learning are not shared by pupils in their books and often work is not dated. Marking across the school is also inconsistent. In many examples of marking of English work shows how teachers' comments do inform and challenge pupils' thinking and help to move them to the next stage of learning. This is very infrequent in some other subject areas such as mathematics and science. Teachers have begun to look more closely at their practice and to consider which method will best suit their pupils and to introduce some aspects of accelerated learning, such as the availability of drinking water. Although at an early stage, where these are used appropriately, they have a positive impact upon pupils' concentration spans as well as serving to make the learning environment more relaxed.
27. The best lessons are characterized by teachers carefully identifying what pupils are to learn and sharing this with the pupils so that they understand exactly what they are to learn and what is expected of them; teachers' high expectations, and at least good knowledge and understanding of the subject being taught. Management of pupils and the use of time, support staff and resources are very good overall.
28. Where teaching is excellent the teachers' confidence with the subject knowledge is evident and they communicate extremely well to pupils. Lessons are particularly well prepared and organised to create a positive atmosphere for learning, which is sustained with a purposeful pace. Lessons are challenging, yet matched carefully to the needs of pupils in the group and

because the teachers use a very good range of teaching strategies, it results in most impressive learning by the majority of the pupils. For example, in English lessons in Year 6, pupils make tremendous gains in their knowledge and understanding of the work of Shakespeare and the characters in an extract from *Macbeth*. In music Year 4 pupils make excellent progress during their lesson, all pupils are able to access the lesson, take part fully and remain motivated throughout the task to compose their own clapping rhythm. In the only music lesson not taught by the specialist teacher, the enthusiastic class teacher's excellent use of praise coupled with clear musical expertise was a major contributing factor to the pupils' high quality learning.

29. In some less effective lessons the learning objectives were unclear and therefore not the focus of the lesson and there was limited or no evidence of the challenge of pupils' tasks being matched to their abilities, for example, a lack of appropriate challenge for most able pupils in the lower school. Planning in an unsatisfactory lesson does not show how prior learning will be accounted for, which results in a lack of focus and attention by a significant minority, because some had already done a similar task in the infants. Opportunities for pupils to develop their own learning are lacking. Insufficient preparation is a key feature where teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils neither become sufficiently involved in their own learning nor have meaningful opportunities to sufficiently celebrate their own or work of others.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The main emphasis is on helping pupils achieve in English and the specialist teaching in this subject is very good. Teachers know their pupils' special needs well and plan thoroughly so that the challenge set is high but appropriate. Special support arrangements are frequently made to assist these pupils in their learning and support staff make a valuable contribution in this.
31. Overall teachers use homework very effectively to support learning. The evidence in pupils' homework books and folders and in teachers' planning indicates homework set is relevant to the learning that has taken place, or is to take place in lessons.

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

32. The school provides a broad and generally balanced curriculum, which is effectively contributing to the very high quality of education the school provides. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are very good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are planned for appropriately and pupils are provided with sufficient coverage of personal, social and health education. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they receive good levels of support, particularly in literacy lessons.
33. The school curriculum for religious education is excellent. It is broad and balanced and fully meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils from all groups and backgrounds and contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development.

34. The school has up to date policies for all subjects. All these policies provide good guidance to teachers and comply fully with the requirements of the National Curriculum. All schemes of work are in place and teachers' planning is carefully based on these schemes. The school has examined all timetables and has ensured that the proportion of time spent on each subject is generally appropriate. This ensures that pupils' receive a wide-ranging curriculum and contributes to the continuity and progression of their learning.
35. There is insufficient use of ICT to support other subjects. The school is aware of this and subject leaders plan to address this issue.
36. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good. The strategy of setting for core subject lessons contributes to the high standards pupils attain and to the very good progress pupils make. The school manages this arrangement very effectively. Pupils in all sets benefit from well-planned teaching based upon the consistently implemented National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and consequently make very good progress.
37. The specialist music teacher has prepared a detailed scheme of work and lessons are carefully planned and carried out. This combined with the teacher's considerable subject expertise and a very good range of musical activities, contributes significantly to the high standards pupils attain in music.
38. The very good range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils considerably enriches the school curriculum. Various visits to places of interest, such as museums, are organised to support learning and a residential visit to Wales provides many benefits to the academic curriculum and also to the social development of pupils. There are many after school activities, the majority of which are open to all pupils with the exception of those in Year 3. Year 3 pupils do have access to a smaller range of activities. Many pupils avail themselves of these opportunities and they contribute to their learning notably in music and sports. Boys and girls take part in football, netball, rugby, cricket and athletics tournaments. The school orchestra performs throughout the year, supporting various school activities.
39. The school provides excellent equality of opportunity for its pupils. All pupils take a full part in school activities and teachers go to great lengths to ensure all pupils are offered a wide range of different activities in which they are encouraged to take part.
40. The provision for all pupils with special educational needs is very good. Plans are carefully drawn up with the support of the very good specialist teacher that ensure all pupils, including those with statements of special educational need, receive very good support, enabling them to make very good progress. For example the specialist scheme, skilfully used to support pupils reading and spelling, results in pupils making large learning gains, in some instances, the equivalent of four years progress within a school year.
41. The school is very aware of the possible adverse effects of withdrawing pupils for support and takes great care to minimise these effects. The benefits of the additional learning support given to pupils with special educational needs are many and outweigh the disadvantages. The school is however already investigating alternative methods of supporting these pupils.

Support given to pupils is too weighted in favour of literacy support but again the school is aware of this and is making plans to address the balance.

42. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school has a clear policy covering a wide range of issues and teachers implement it through dedicated lessons and through other subjects and activities. The school has an agreed policy for sex and relationships education but the provision for drugs education is under developed.
43. The school has established reasonable relationships with the attached infant school and the nearby secondary school. Pupils who transfer to Year 3 from the infant school, visit in their new school in the summer term. Pupils in Year 6 visit the local secondary school to familiarise themselves with the school and to benefit from their facilities such as computer suites. The co-ordinator for special educational needs from the secondary school visits Willow Bank Juniors to attend the annual review of pupils in Year 6 who have special educational needs.
44. The school is very popular in the local community and maintains good links through such activities as harvest festivals and raising money for charities. A parent from the local computer company provides advice to the school on the nature and use of its computer hardware.
45. The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At the last inspection it was judged that pupils' spiritual development was under emphasised. Provision has now improved and is good. Assemblies provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on issues in life and to appreciate the joys and beauty of music as performed by the school choir and orchestra. They develop the ability to understand important concepts such as peace and harmony. This work is continued into the classrooms, for example, in a literacy lesson where the teacher, through her stimulating and emotive reading, encouraged an awareness and awe of the creative and inspirational nature of Shakespeare's play writing.
46. The school now meets the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. It provides excellent examples of the school's increased provision for spirituality. During the inspection week assemblies were used to good effect to make pupils reconsider their own actions and reflect on major issues such as 'Racism' and 'Peace'.
47. The school provides very good guidance for pupils to develop their moral and social awareness. Pupils are clearly taught the concept of right and wrong. Consistent role models and use of curricular opportunities reinforce this concept. The pupils' work on the school council helps to reinforce their social development by ensuring they contribute to the life of the school and develop their role as citizens. Their sense of 'citizenship' is partly developed by the work the school does fund raising for charities. Pupils' responsibilities and independence are developed through such means as organising their own sports teams and stalls on school Fun Days. On a day-to-day basis they are encouraged to take responsibility for calculating lunchtime numbers.
48. The school incorporates a good range of cultural experiences for its pupils. Pupils are taken to visit the British Museum and a visiting theatre company visits the school to support the

science curriculum. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is developed in various ways. Some pupils study the different lifestyles of grandparents from differing cultures. Others study 'Aboriginal' art style as part of their art and design curriculum. Pupils gain information about other countries and cultures through their geography work, where they use the Internet for research purposes.

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

49. The school continues to provide good support, advice and guidance for its pupils, and these are a strength of the school. Relationships within the school are very good. The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants provide very caring and thoughtful support to pupils; staff are accessible and responsive to pupils' pastoral needs. The good relationships throughout the school create a very good learning environment and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Parents consulted confirm that they are happy with the support and guidance offered to their children, and feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
50. The school has clear expectations of good behaviour; the school rules are defined and understood by all. Pupils respond very well to the praise and encouragement from all members of staff. Regular weekly assemblies provide good opportunities for celebrating pupils' individual work, effort and good behaviour.
51. When inappropriate behaviour does occur, the school has good procedures in place for consulting with both pupils and their parents on ways to improve that behaviour. The school has successfully integrated pupils excluded from their previous schools.
52. The school has systematic and effective policies and procedures in place for responding to any incidents of sexual or racial harassment or bullying. The school is excellent in promoting equality of opportunity. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour or bullying during the inspection. Pupils confirm that they generally feel safe and secure within the school. The school has recognised the need to consider further ways to ensure that movement around the school is calm and orderly. Both staff members and pupils confirm that the school's actions in providing an incentive system to ensure that cloakroom areas are kept tidier have been effective. Each week being able to eat their lunch outside or to leave assembly first rewards the year group whose cloakroom area has been the tidiest. Pupils still need to be encouraged to look after their own personal property, and that of others.
53. The procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science are very good, good in ICT, music, physical education and design and technology and satisfactory in art and design, geography, history, and religious education. These procedures include tests, regular marking of pupils' work, and self-assessments undertaken by pupils. In English and mathematics these are focussed on the literacy and numeracy strategies, the optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 and the national tests at the end of Year 6. In literacy, the wide range of assessment data available to staff is very effectively used and older pupils are given excellent guidance as to how to improve their work further, with appropriate individual targets being set. In addition they have the opportunity to evaluate

their own work and discuss how it might be improved. The school is developing procedures for regularly assessing pupils' progress in other subject areas. In all subjects guidance now exists for teachers to ensure that assessments can be both effective and consistent. Not all teachers are implementing this guidance consistently but the subject co-ordinators are aware of this and they have plans in place to ensure consistency. This means that at present in some foundation subjects, whilst individual teachers generally match the challenge within any task to reflect pupils' prior learning and attainment, there is not always a system to ensure that standards within a whole year group are known and recorded.

54. At the beginning of Year 3, teachers use a range of assessment information to make predictions and set end of year targets. The information is also used to place pupils into higher and lower ability sets for English and mathematics and to adjust future lessons to address the need in science. Target setting and assessment continues as pupils move through the school. All the pupils are formally assessed each year, the results of which are carefully used to inform the teachers' curriculum planning and to identify training needs for teachers. The pupils' progress and attainment are tracked and recorded very effectively using computer based programs to track individual progress. This gives information in a more helpful form. There are clear and detailed skills assessment sheets in use for ICT, which cover all aspects of this subject.
55. Assessment procedures in the core subjects have rightly been the school's priorities with regard to assessment procedures. These procedures have made a significant contribution to the well above average standards achieved in those subjects. Some foundation subject co-ordinators are now being given more time to develop further monitoring and recording systems. This means that whilst they do not have a clear view of attainment and progress throughout the school at present, the school is making progress in achieving this. The school has a clear marking policy which teachers follow. Training took place on effective marking and analysis of marking in English and this has been effective in helping teachers to use assessment to inform their planning and involve pupils more fully in the assessment process. Marking of English in the upper classes is exemplary.
56. Monitoring of pupils' social development is informal but effective. Despite the large number of pupils in the school, teachers mostly know their pupils well, and are aware of individual problems and concerns. Some parents have expressed their concern regarding their child's progress because personal circumstances have resulted in one class having had a large number of supply teachers during this academic year. A full time teacher has now been appointed for the rest of this term.
57. School procedures for recording and reporting pupils' attendance meet statutory requirements. Parents know what to do when their child is absent, and most advise the school of the reason for their child's absence. There are, however, inconsistencies in the completion of totals in registers, making monitoring of attendance over time more difficult than it should be. In addition, not all registers are always returned to the central collection point, to be available in case of an emergency evacuation.



58. The school actively discourages parents from taking holidays in termtime. However, a growing number of parents take such holidays, sometimes in excess of the ten days officially permitted. The school makes it quite clear to these parents that any days in excess of the ten permitted are considered as unauthorised absence, and expresses its disapproval. However, this has not deterred these parents from taking the holidays. The education welfare officer visits termly, and after consultation with the school, has intervened appropriately when necessary.
59. The school takes very good care of pupils with special educational needs. Early and accurate identification of need linked to carefully planned interventions and focussed teaching ensures that they have excellent opportunities to play a full part in school life. The school assesses and tracks their progress very carefully and ensures that suitable targets are set.
60. The school is effective at providing sufficient challenge for its gifted and talented pupils, especially in English and mathematics. The setting of pupils for these subjects is a major contributory factor in how the school effectively targets these pupils. In other subjects the needs of these pupils are well provided for, for example, in the range of musical and sporting activities offered.
61. There is very good liaison with the teachers who regularly support visually impaired and hearing impaired pupils in school. They provide very good levels of advice to teachers, teaching assistants and parents.
62. Child protection procedures are good, well-established and meet statutory requirements. The headteacher is the person designated as having responsibility for child protection. All staff are made aware of the importance of being vigilant and of the procedures to be followed if there is concern. Child protection procedures are not currently included in training given to lunchtime supervisors.
63. The health, wellbeing and safety of pupils are given an appropriately high priority. The school has proper procedures in place to ensure safe use of the Internet. The school is working towards a 'Healthy School' award. Pupils have access to drinking water at all times. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme contains appropriate attention to pupils' personal safety, but further consideration is necessary to ensure that the school is providing a more satisfactory level of drugs education. The building and premises committee carry out regular safety checks of the school premises. Fire drills are carried out regularly, and electrical and other equipment safety checked regularly. Risk assessments are carried out.
64. Overall, the school provides good support, advice and guidance for its pupils.

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

65. Parents have a very positive view of the school. Information from questionnaires and from the parents' meeting before the inspection confirms that pupils enjoy coming to school. Parents feel welcome in school, and able to approach the headteacher and all staff. They appreciate the support and guidance given. Parents value the school's emphasis high expectations with

regard to encouraging their children to work hard, do their best and behave well. They feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They regard as very high the quality of the leadership and management of the school and its teaching. A number of parents felt that the amount of homework was inappropriate and that the school could keep parents better informed of the progress their children make. Some also felt that the range of extra-curricular activities was too limited. The inspection team judged that homework and extra-curricular provision were at least satisfactory but that better information could be provided for parents, especially in the annual report on their own child's progress.

66. Although annual reports fulfil the minimum statutory requirements, such as the record of attendance and National Curriculum levels attained in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the level of additional information contained in them is unsatisfactory. Reports give barely satisfactory information regarding the core subjects. However, there is not sufficient information in other subject areas regarding what the child knows and can do. Reports do not give parents sufficient information about how their child has progressed, and rarely tell parents how they can help their child progress further. In the annual reports seen, pupils had not made a contribution, although there is an opportunity for parents and pupils to contribute and discuss their annual reports during the summer consultation evening.
67. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging parents to be involved in the education of their children. Parents are welcome in school and they have informal access to staff at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents are encouraged throughout the school to hear their child read on a regular basis, and parents respond positively to this encouragement although several pupils in Year 3 said that no-one listened to them read at home. Attendance at the termly consultation evenings is high, and follow-up appointments are offered to those parents who do not attend. Parents are now given a good level of information at the start of each term concerning the areas their children will be studying and the homework that will be set. Parents are involved in many of the extra-curricular activities available, and support from parents and wider family members for the concerts and performances, for example by the choir and the orchestra, is very high.
68. The school has recognised the need to continue to improve parents' knowledge of the curriculum. Last term the school organised an evening to explain the mathematics and numeracy curriculum, and has introduced information sessions as part of the evening when governors present their Annual Report to parents.
69. The school prospectus gives a good range of useful information, as does the governors' Annual Report to parents, although there are minor omissions in both documents. Newsletters give parents a good range of useful information about school.
70. A large number of parents regularly provide very effective support in classrooms. A still larger number of parents provide valuable support to extra-curricular activities, and support educational visits. The school's parent, teacher and friends' association (The Willow Bank School Association) very successfully organises a wide range of social and fundraising events, regularly raising substantial funds to support the school and its work. In addition parents and

staff have undertaken projects to help the school, such as investigating 'Safer Routes to School'. The help provided by parents is very much valued and appreciated by the school.

71. The school works hard to continually improve further its relationship with parents and is successful in encouraging an increasingly close partnership with parents and carers. Nearly all parents respond well and are very supportive of the school. However, although attendance levels are very good, many absences are for holidays taken in termtime. An increasing number of parents take holidays in excess of the maximum ten school days allowed. The school correctly classifies these absences as unauthorised.
72. The school has a very good partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Frequent meetings ensures that parents are kept up to date with their child's problems and progress and are able to contribute to their learning.

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

73. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The leadership of the headteacher is a major strength of the school and is quite outstanding. He is well respected by staff, parents, pupils and governors and his contribution to this very effective school is recognised by the whole school community. He is well supported by some key senior managers and a very effective governing body. The strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and the new challenges and requirements facing schools today have been met.
74. Through effective leadership, staff and governors have a shared educational vision and a strong commitment to school improvement. A very strong team spirit has been engendered. The agreed school aims are central to the work of the school and its decision-making procedures. This clear view as to how to maintain high standards and gain further improvements has led to the creation of efficient management procedures by which the suitable and agreed school priorities are effectively implemented.
75. The headteacher, and governing body, are very well aware of their school's strengths and weaknesses and they work together to maintain the former and address the latter. Action plans have been agreed and implemented and these are regularly reviewed. These action plans prioritise literacy, numeracy, ICT, special educational needs provision, and the development and maintenance of the school premises. In all these areas there has been very good improvement since the last inspection except in ICT where there has only been satisfactory improvement. This is partly due to several changes in the co-ordination of this aspect of the school's work but as it was the first key issue from the previous inspection, more improvement in the provision of this subject was to be expected. Some key developments in this subject have been made too recently for the staff to be successfully implementing required changes. At present the success criteria within the school's action plans are not specific enough to identify exact, measurable improvement in either learning or teaching.

76. There is excellent co-ordination of special educational needs provision in school. The co-ordinator is a skilled teacher of pupils with special educational needs and provides exemplary support and advice for colleagues. This is an area of considerable improvement and recent initiatives have all been very effective.
77. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are areas in which the school has greatly improved since the last inspection. The school has correctly focused its attention on the effectiveness of its teaching in English and mathematics. There are good examples within these subjects of effective monitoring and evaluation procedures that have led to realistic and systematic improvement. The school has correctly identified that this practice needs to be developed to include all staff with responsibilities. The co-ordination of literacy, special educational needs and music are all excellent and strengths of the school. Performance management requirements have been implemented and the agreed objectives are linked with the school improvement plan.
78. The governing body is a strength of the school. It fulfils its statutory requirements and provides a high level of challenge and support for senior staff. An appropriate action plan following the previous inspection was formulated and governors have ensured that all key issues have been addressed. Governors are aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they fully play their part in attaining school improvement. Different areas of the school's work are assigned to lead governors and committees, who then work closely with identified staff. An efficient reporting back procedure is in operation so that all governors receive the level of information that they require. The governing body has a clear understanding of its strategic role. Whilst being very active it does not constrain senior managers in the day-to-day running of the school. School self-evaluation is seen by governors to be very important. The governing body asks searching questions of its headteacher and effectively applies key criteria, such as the principles of best value, when making decisions.
79. New staff and governors are effectively supported when they join the school. Very good induction systems are in place and the school can provide effective initial teacher training. The chair of the Governors' Personnel Committee always visits new teachers in the teaching situation not only to provide support but also to ensure that the appointments procedure has been effective. This is excellent practice.
80. Financial planning and control are a strength of the school. Senior staff and governors agree and adopt a budget that is focussed on achieving the priorities identified in the improvement plans. A balanced budget has been set for the current year. Each budget holder has to undertake an audit in order to identify resource needs. Senior staff and governors then consider this before the final budget is set. The main area of curriculum investment in the past year has been the purchase of ICT equipment. This is still too new for the school or the inspection to measure its impact although improvement in this area has been made as standards in ICT now meet national expectations.
81. Financial control is excellent with the most recent auditor's report being acted upon. The school is successful at attracting additional funding and using specific grants and additional funding to support its agreed aims and planned improvement. Information of very high quality

is always available and is regularly presented to, and discussed by, senior staff and governors. This information has allowed the headteacher to ensure that the school is effectively using any specific grants to achieve their designated outcomes. Administrative support within the school is very effective. It operates very efficiently and in a way that allows teaching staff to concentrate on their teaching and curriculum responsibilities. Very good use is made of new technologies to support this aspect of the school's work.

82. The school is very well staffed and the appointment procedure has ensured that in the team there is the full range of specialisms and strengths to allow the school to operate efficiently. Due to an on-going personnel issue, the school has increased its staffing levels so as to provide continuity for pupils. This has been possible due to the excellent financial arrangements referred to earlier. Learning resources across the whole curriculum are at least adequate and very good in relation to English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. The accommodation is very well cared for and clean. Support staff with this responsibility do an excellent job in keeping the school as attractive as possible for pupils and staff. The school has access to extensive, attractive grounds.

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

83. There are no weaknesses for the school and the governors to address but they may wish to consider the following areas which are less well developed in order to enhance standards further:
- i To address the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.
  - ii To ensure that Annual Reports to parents give appropriate information to parents regarding the progress their children are making in all subjects.
  - iii To support staff better in the teaching of ICT by ensuring that the school's resources are reliable and 'user-friendly'. Linked to this development there needs to be a reassessment of how well ICT is used across the curriculum especially in relation to the modelling and control elements of the National Curriculum for ICT.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
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	7	17	19	17	3	0	0
Percentage	11	27	30	27	5	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	299
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	32	34	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	30	32
	Girls	31	30	33
	Total	58	60	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (97)	91 (84)	98 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	29	32
	Girls	25	30	31
	Total	51	59	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (92)	89 (90)	95 (90)
	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	187	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	6	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	91	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8:1
Average class size	29.9

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	684007
Total expenditure	684007
Expenditure per pupil	2288
Balance brought forward from previous year	2244



***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.25
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	299
Number of questionnaires returned	135

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	44	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	60	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	14	1	1
The teaching is good.	62	30	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	52	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	39	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	53	11	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	54	43	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	47	7	4	4

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

### **ENGLISH**

84. There has been very good improvement in English since the previous inspection report. The overall standard of attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is well above national averages. Within this overall standard, attainment in speaking and listening, writing and reading for the present eleven year olds are very high. English is a strength of the school. The school failed to meet its English target for 2002 by 3%. The rate of improvement in English standards has been higher than the national average over the past five years and the gap between the national average and the school's higher standards has consequently increased.
85. The previous inspection in 1999 identified that standards in English by the age of eleven were above national expectations for reading and writing and well above expectations in speaking and listening. In 2002, results were well above the national average. In comparison to similar schools standards were in line with the average. Inspection findings indicate that the school has taken action to identify the reason for this. The very comprehensive literacy action plan seeks ways in which the school will maintain or increase the current standards in order to achieve well above average for schools in a similar context. Whilst there were differences in the performances of boys and girls in 2002, this was in line with the national pattern. Both performed better than their gender group nationally.
86. The samples of pupils' work in English analysed and seen during the week of the inspection, indicated that each year group has a wide range of ability. Overall, all pupils including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their ability and make very good progress. Information and communication learning aids are effectively used to support pupils with specific special needs, for example visual impairment. The standards of the higher attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are well above expectations for their age group. The school has introduced support programmes, additional helpers to hear readers and booster classes for those who are experiencing difficulty in the younger classes, to develop their literacy skills.
87. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has helped considerably to ensure a consistent approach to planning and teaching. This is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. A strong focus on teaching basic skills and the emphasis on guided reading and shared text work has improved fluency and expression in reading and writing.
88. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of fiction and non-fiction texts have been considerably extended, thanks especially to the National Literacy Strategy and the love of books that the English co-ordinator and teachers share. Pupils, particularly in the older classes, are self-motivated, enjoy reading and many are reading demanding texts. Reading attainment is high because the skills needed to read with deeper understanding are being taught very well. These pupils show understanding of a range of texts, can select essential points and use inference and deduction appropriately. Many of them were eagerly awaiting the latest J K

Rowling book and were predicting what might happen in it. This is due to the quality of work covered in preparing structured book reviews, particularly the very good reasons given why one should read books by outstanding authors. For pupils of average ability, the reading skills and the skills needed to reach a deeper understanding of texts are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most passages. However, the pupils in Year 3 had a limited knowledge of authors other than Dick King Smith, could not talk about their work and were only making satisfactory progress. Many of those spoken to said they did not read to parents at home. Pupils with special educational needs receive support individually or in groups and achieve well.

89. The library has developed well since the previous inspection. It is very welcoming, owing to the colourful displays and the pupils' models that act as a visual stimulus. Pupils make good use of this well-stocked library, which contains many high quality and attractive books. There is very good support from a teaching assistant who completes the administrative role, runs *Book Week* and looks after the library very efficiently. However, there is little opportunity for pupils to act as librarians, look after, or run the library to develop their independent skills. The use of the library contributes effectively to meeting the National Literacy Strategy objectives and is well used in other subjects for research.
90. Speaking and listening skills are well developed by the end of Year 6 across all subjects. This is because teachers guide learning sensitively and encourage the use of Standard English. In addition, they provide opportunities for pupils to use speaking skills well in lessons. As a consequence, the majority of pupils speak with fluency and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 can articulate ideas and can phrase questions very well in whole class and group discussions. Very good questioning by teachers in the older classes ensures that all pupils are drawn into the subject being studied and all are given many very good opportunities to contribute their own ideas. Each class has to plan and present a class assembly each term. This gives the pupils a real sense of performance and improves their formal speaking abilities. In discussions with pupils they were able to put forward their own point of view with clarity and conviction. The school productions and services in the local church also provide opportunities for more formal sustained talk to a wider audience than the class.
91. Two excellent lessons seen in Year 6 were based on pupils becoming familiar with the work of Shakespeare. They understood the background to *Macbeth*, written in 1606 to please the new King James the First. At one point, when the teacher was reading the different roles, she built up the atmosphere very dramatically providing excellent role modelling of reading. With such a performance it is no wonder that the pupils were able to read their parts so well. Pupils also began to understand and identify expressions and words that are not in ordinary use today. In an excellent lesson seen in Year 5 pupils did not understand that a poem could be interpreted in different ways. Initially their first thoughts about the poem, *Snake* by John Mbiti, was that they did not like it. However, after working in groups and performing the poem very well indeed they changed their mind, liked it and understood why these poems are called 'Performance' poems.
92. The scrutiny of work showed that each aspect of writing is covered and understood well by pupils in Year 6. Narrative writing in Year 6 shows a very good variety of sentence lengths

and structures with a good range of connectives, for example, ‘*a tingle of excitement,*’ ‘*a shudder of horror enveloped her*’. The teachers are encouraging the pupils to become authors. In the Year 6 ‘*Amazing Anthology of Engaging Short Stories,*’ one story begins ‘*thud ... thud... thud...thud, the monstrous beast fought its way through the tall grasses of Africa’s main jungle.*’ There are many examples of wonderful images, ‘*the fields are like a patchwork quilt with a farm in the centre*’. Pupils work hard to produce interesting text, for example, ‘*The shadow was as faint as a torch light dying out.*’

93. Pupils are given many opportunities to write from different points of view and to consider issues and dilemmas. In Year 4 they have written stories about greed, bullying, jealousy and one wrote, ‘*Is revenge sweet, or can they forgive and forget?*’ Year 6 pupils effectively organise their work, express clear arguments, and use emotive language to make the arguments more powerful, for instance, ‘*Do circuses still need animal acts?*’ Very good teaching in Year 5 helps pupils to write play scripts and to structure letters well. As a result by Year 6 pupils are able to write letters in a formal style or informal style with accurate information and write instructions using simple and complex sentences. It is within writing that teachers make the best use of ICT.
94. This is a school that loves poetry, teaches every form successfully and invites a poet to talk about his work. Year 4 recognise simple forms of poetry and write very good Animal Poems, ‘*The lion growls fiercely and ferociously while hunting for its prey*’. Pupils in Year 6 have each written their own Book of Poems. One new verse written for, *The Highwayman* began ‘*The moon was a shining diamond reflecting on the sea, The moor was a sleeping cat purring more and more*’.
95. There was evidence of good writing in other subjects, for example, in history, accounts and booklets based on life in Ancient Egypt, a biography of Mary the First, letters to ‘*Dear Hercules*’ and from *a rigger* on the Mary Rose, poignant writing on the life of an evacuee and reading fiction books related to the period. In geography, story settings spell out the weather, ‘*...a hot summer’s day in the middle of the morning and the wind was completely still*’. Other examples of writing include letters written to a local supermarket regarding Fair Trade, leaflets on why we should save energy, recipes, and a wide range of instructions, plus good moving picture books that Year 4 had developed through art and design and design and technology based on the story of, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.
96. The whole school action to improve pupils’ spelling highlighted in the last inspection report is successfully raising standards. The very comprehensive pupils’ *Spelling Journals* explain spelling strategies very well. The weekly spellings rules were explained well to the higher attaining Year 3 pupils. Pupils know that a prefix is a string of letters that go in front of a word and learnt the meaning of the prefix *anti, co, bi, sub, mis, non,* and *ex*, before copying the words in their spelling books to learn.
97. Grammar is well taught across the school. The understanding the pupils have enhances both their reading and writing skills; it supports effective communication. In a number of lessons

seen pupils were using dictionaries to improve their work. Punctuation is understood and used well.

98. The analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicated that the teaching of handwriting is improving. In some books in Year 3 handwriting is just beginning to reach the standard expected. In Year 6 handwriting is fluent, joined and legible.
99. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in the fourteen lessons observed was very good. Within this four lessons were excellent and four were very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. This represents a marked improvement from the time of the last inspection when teaching was mainly satisfactory. The teachers' enthusiasm and very secure knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy have in part been responsible for this high standard. Teachers have high expectations; their lessons are well planned and structured with clear learning outcomes that are shared with the pupils. They use a wide range of effective strategies to improve learning for all pupils in school. Relationships are very good. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the purpose of the work set is unclear and expectations are not high enough. Teachers had made good use of homework opportunities throughout the year.
100. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are well motivated and eager to learn. During the literacy lessons observed, pupils' behaviour was good in the lower school and very good in the upper school. Here pupils retain concentration well during the lessons and follow instructions diligently. They participate fully in discussions and work well together in pairs and groups. On the one occasion younger pupils did misbehave it was because they were unsure of the task because of many interruptions during the lesson.
101. Pupils' progress in reading, writing and spelling is tracked well using Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) annual tests. There is very good monitoring, analysing and evaluation of results. This information guides future planning very well. Consequently, pupils are taught in set ability groups. Marking is good overall and in Years 5 and 6 it is exemplary. This shows how very secure the teachers' knowledge of English is. Not only are the assessed pieces of work marked comprehensively but also every other piece of English work the pupil does. Each pupil's work is personally commented on. As a result the pupils have very good attitudes to their work, appreciate the teachers' efforts, take notice of criticism, evaluate their work, redraft and correct.
102. Co-ordination of the subject is excellent. The co-ordinator is very secure in her knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. She is fully aware of the standards required to achieve the highest grades and seeks to ensure that all pupils meet their potential. The quality of her monitoring and evaluation of lessons, including feedback to each individual teacher, is a credit to her. There is a thorough and incisive action plan in place to maintain and raise attainment in English. The targets within this plan are achievable as already half of the Year 5 pupils are working well above the national expectations for their age. Resources required to promote the introduction of the literacy hour are of a very good quality and have been chosen well.

## MATHEMATICS

103. The improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection is good. Attainment was judged to be above national expectation in the previous report. Overall, teaching in mathematics is good.
104. Standards achieved by pupils are well above average at the end of Year 6 in the work seen during the inspection. The results for the 2002 National Curriculum tests show attainment was well above average in comparison to all schools nationally and to similar schools. This accurately reflected the teachers' own assessment of their pupils. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level was much larger than the average and the proportion exceeding expectations was also much larger than average, including two pupils who also achieved the next level. Since 1998 there has been a steady improvement, resulting in the school maintaining high standards for the three-year period prior to 2002. The school has always considered striving for higher standards in mathematics to be an important aim. To raise standards further the school has set its own targets and continues to analyse results and review its plans to set the long-term goal of improving standards further. In the period since the previous inspection the school has improved a number of aspects of its mathematics curriculum, which had a positive impact upon pupils' learning and have raised standards. Weaknesses were identified and teachers used the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to address these, whilst adapting it well to meet the needs of the pupils in the school, particularly in Year 6. The school failed to meet its mathematics target for 2002 by 3%.
105. Overall, pupils overall make good progress in their first three years in the juniors but where teaching is seen to be very effective pupils of all abilities achieve very well, including those higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, who are well supported in lessons. In those lessons where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations, plan work to match differing abilities, organise and manage their classes well and communicate their good subject knowledge to pupils. They use effective questioning in order to challenge pupils' mathematical thinking. Resources are very well used to impact upon pupils' learning. In the one lesson judged to be unsatisfactory, the planning is inappropriate and insufficient to match the needs of the young pupils and did not show how earlier learning would be accounted for. The purpose of the lesson is not made clear to pupils, therefore although enjoyable, the relevance of the activity was unclear and pupils did not have the opportunity to control or develop their learning. The school's commitment to raising standards is reflected in lessons where pupils are mainly working at levels that match their ability. In Year 6, pupils achieve very well overall where the teaching during the inspection was seen to be consistently very good.
106. By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils have a very good knowledge of all four operations of number and a secure understanding of place value. Because there is a strong emphasis on mental mathematics pupils can use a wide range of strategies to solve mathematical problems. The majority of pupils within the lower attaining group are able to identify and use appropriate operations to solve word problems, such as they know that if four balls cost £2.96, one ball costs  $£2.96 \div 4$  which is 74 pence. All pupils can use a calculator confidently to aid the

problem solving process and know it is important to check reasonableness and units of measure appropriate for problem solving. They learn very well and as a consequence almost all are now on course to attain the expected national level by the end of the year. Higher attaining pupils are actively encouraged to work towards higher than average levels. This group of pupils is secure in solving problems by identifying and using necessary information. They check their results by using the inverse operation and are both confident and capable as they accurately describe complex problems using mathematical vocabulary. In turn they can provide reasons, when the teacher probes their understanding with a number of challenging questions. They are able to use the memory key on a calculator to calculate answers to questions such as  $(456.7 \times 321) - (761 - 402) = ?$ . Very good teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and subsequently, pupils' self confidence grows more and more as they extend their mathematical understanding. They learn very well and are now on course to attain a higher than expected national level by the end of the school year. At present not enough use is made of mathematics in other subjects.

107. The arrangement for grouping by attainment and the use of additional staff reduces the size of teaching groups. When combined with high quality teaching it allows work to be closely matched to pupils' ability, particularly to stretch the higher attaining pupils and ensure that lower attaining pupils keep up with or exceed expectation. As the level of challenge for pupils in Year 6 is consistently more appropriate than in, for example, some of the other junior classes, pupils are very well motivated and interested in their work and make better progress. This impacts immediately upon pupils' learning. Where teaching is very good, teachers use on going assessment to adapt their planning in order to continually meet the needs of each group of pupils in the lessons. The school arranges booster classes for Year 5 and 6 pupils to raise standards further in the subject, by targeting pupils whose attainment does not currently reflect their mathematical ability. Tasks are not always based upon clear assessment of prior learning or understanding of what pupils already know, understand and can do, and because of this, work is not always suitably matched to learning needs. Overall, throughout the school pupils have a very good attitude towards the subject.
108. A very good and well-balanced range of learning opportunities is provided within the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils enjoy increasing opportunities for learning through investigative and practical activities. Although currently, some teachers are developing the use of computer technology to support teaching and learning, there is limited evidence that ICT is being used extensively in the subject. The school has identified within the subject's action plan that opportunities for the use of ICT as an integral part of lessons needs to be further developed and acknowledges further software is needed. The detailed action plan for raising standards still higher includes a rigorous analysis, monitoring and evaluation programme, the results and review of which are promptly acted upon. Homework is well used to support pupils' learning in school.
109. The subject is well led and managed by a very proactive capable co-ordinator. Resources are now very good and are well used by teachers to support pupils' learning and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study. An effective system of assessment and recording has been instigated and the co-ordinator looks forward to fully implementing this for all mathematics topics. The school acknowledges the particular



importance of teachers' questioning to assess pupils' degree of understanding. Other areas for further development include: to extend opportunities to celebrate pupils' achievement within mathematics work through display in school and to extend all pupils' self knowledge of their learning so that they know how they can improve and are aware of their own targets in mathematics. Although the extensive evidence during the inspection indicates most of the pupils' work is well organised and presented, a policy for marking and presentation in mathematics would serve to consistently raise standards across the school.

## **SCIENCE**

110. The school has made good improvement in science since the last inspection. During the inspection, six lessons were seen, books from all year groups were scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils, teachers and the science subject leader.
111. Overall standards as measured in tests in 2002 were well above average when compared to all schools and above average when compared to schools in similar circumstances. More pupils achieved higher levels than in other schools and fewer pupils achieved lower levels. Based on those tests, pupils had made well above average progress compared to when they were seven years old. This is an improvement in standards since the time of the last inspection.
112. Standards seen during the week of inspection were well above average with evidence of pupils making very good progress, especially in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in science.
113. The youngest pupils in the school demonstrate good understanding of all areas of the science curriculum. They classify plants and animals and conduct investigations to discover the importance of the leaf in a plant's growth cycle. They conduct investigations to find out which material is most resistant to wear and tear and which paper is most absorbent. When learning about forces they test elastic bands to see the effect stretching has upon them.
114. As they move up the school the work builds upon earlier learning and becomes more challenging. For example, having studied electricity in Year 4 and made simple circuits, pupils later have to make more complex circuits and draw them with technical symbols in Year 6. Simple plant studies conducted in Year 3 are developed in Year 5 when the investigations into plants' needs are increasingly complex, involving the consideration and manipulation of a range of variables.
115. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils demonstrate good understanding of the science work they have studied. They show particularly good understanding of the concepts concerned with investigative science. They are able to explain how investigations are conducted, how variables need to be controlled and the need for measures to ensure 'fairness'. They know how to record investigations and measurements in a variety of forms, using ICT when appropriate. For example, pupils talked enthusiastically about using an electronic microscope. The school's recent emphasis on investigative science is evident in pupils' understanding

throughout the school.

116. Teaching of science is good overall; this is an improvement on the teaching at the time of the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is evident in the clear objectives they set for pupils. The best teaching is lively, with focussed questioning that challenges pupils to extend and to use their knowledge. Teachers drive lessons on with sustained pace so that progress is quick. Clear expectations of outcomes are shared with the pupils so that they know what they must achieve and by when. An example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson about plant growth; the teacher explained precisely what tasks the pupils were expected to complete by the end of the lesson and what good work would look like.
117. Teachers plan a full range of activities with a particularly strong emphasis on investigative science. This is very good practice. This important area of the science curriculum is well planned for and generally well taught.
118. Teachers make good use of science to develop pupils' writing skills and skills of numeracy. Detailed reports are written in a variety of forms and a full range of standard measures is used in investigative work.
119. Teachers' assessment of science, and the use subsequently made of it, is good. Regular tests chart progress in each year group. As a result extra support is timetabled for those pupils not making enough progress. Year 6 teachers in particular use assessments of investigative science work to adjust future lessons to address identified needs. This is very good practice, which might usefully be shared throughout the school. Teachers make very good use of homework to support and consolidate learning.
120. Where teaching is less effective, the work planned is not based on knowledge of different pupils' achievements or previous understanding. The task given is the same for all pupils and this results in lack of challenge, particularly for the more able. Too often teachers' have decided on the investigation and this prevents pupils from using and applying their scientific knowledge and understanding to devise their own investigations.
121. Teaching of science allows all pupils full access to the whole curriculum. This is particularly notable for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are included in all activities, challenged to complete and achieve them well, but given very good support to achieve outcomes. Girls and boys benefit equally from the teaching and achieve appropriately. Teachers support all groups of pupils well, including gifted and talented pupils, and ensure an accurate match of challenge to ability.
122. The school's science curriculum offers very good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They have frequent opportunities to reflect on the wonders of nature through their work on plant growth. Teachers seize spontaneous opportunities to extend understanding, for example when a hedgehog appeared in the playground and immediate discussion was held about it with the whole class. Visits are arranged which support this aspect of pupils' development, and there are visits to the school

by a science theatre and the Planetarium.

123. The school co-ordinator for science is committed and enthusiastic. She has worked hard to support colleagues through her review of school policies and schemes of work and by preparing a large bank of ideas for lessons. Her work in monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers is unsatisfactory and she does not have a secure view of the provision in Year 6. As this area of the school has many strengths, which might usefully be shared, this is disappointing. However, the co-ordinator is aware of this and is planning to address this need.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

124. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are above those expected for their age, which represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Because the quality of teaching overall has improved and there is a good level of appropriate resources to support teaching, pupils of all abilities achieve well including pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented. They enjoy the subject and generally are very keen to respond to the wide range of opportunities, which enable them to demonstrate creativity.
125. A strength of the subject that reflects the very good pupil attitude towards art and design and high standards achieved, is the high quality and range of work on display. This consistently highlights the extent to which the staff have increased awareness of the subject's requirements and forged noticeable links with other subjects. For example in religious education where Year 3 pupils followed up a church visit with their choice of drawings important to Christians. There are many links with history and geography throughout the school. A display of very good quality by Year 4 pupils demonstrates a range of their work based upon their visit to the National Museum. It included papier-mâché Greek Olympic plates and 'Goggle Head' drawings inspired by the sculptor Elisabeth Frink. Year 5 pupils illustrated booklets, which recount their own *Adventures of Odysseus* within their literacy studies. Older pupils have additional opportunities to develop skills within Art Club. Art enjoys a high profile within school and is clearly a developing subject.
126. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a broad range of skills, which they use well on a number of occasions. For example when painting water, pupils provide detailed annotation of the skills used and the process, which demonstrates its clear and purposeful link with literacy. A pupil describes how *'I used my finger, going up and down to make a ripple effect'* or *'the technique to draw a simple shape, fill it in with water by dropping water colours on to it and then filling the space.'* Pupils in Year 6 regularly make evaluative comments about their work. Within the one Year 6 lesson observed, pupils show how they develop their sketching skills well, learn from others by discussing how they used the technique of shadowing with charcoal or chalk in order to create the effect of movement. Although art and design is studied as a separate subject it contributes well not only to other subjects but to aspects such as spiritual, social and cultural development. Year 3 explore fabric patterns and look to compare these from across countries around the world. In all year groups pupils co-operate well and support each other's learning. Year 4 pupils produce a delightful display about Aboriginal art where they draw boomerangs and didgeridoos.

127. The quality of teaching and learning overall in the four lessons seen is good with an example of very good and excellent teaching. Planning is detailed and what the next stages of learning are identified and appropriate. Therefore pupils know what exactly what they are to learn in the lesson and so make good progress. Lessons are at least well resourced and managed. Teachers are confident and communicate very good subject knowledge to the pupils. Where teaching was seen to be excellent the teacher involves the pupils fully in their own learning, gave very clear guidance and used a range of dynamic and exciting stimuli which had an immediate impact upon pupils' motivation, sustained interest and excellent learning. Teachers have high expectations for the quality of pupils' work and all pupils respond very well. Pupils enjoy art and design and demonstrate a consistently good attitude towards their learning. Relationships in lessons are very good. Pupils are generally encouraged to choose the resources, medium or technique necessary to meet the requirements of the task. Pupils appreciate they may choose to adapt or modify their ideas or design and where teaching is good or better assessment is part of the conclusion of the lesson and pupils are able to discuss their work and that of others so that it might be improved further.
128. At the time of the inspection the use of ICT in art and design is in its early stages of development in having an impact upon pupils' learning. The digital camera is used by staff and pupils in some study units, such as Form and Space where details of the school building can be made into a *PowerPoint* presentation. Web sites are used as a research tool.
129. The school has yet to invite an 'artist in residence' to make a contribution to the development of the subject or to extend opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. A formal assessment system is now in place ready for full implementation in the autumn term. It is intended to provide information to teachers, which they can use to inform future curriculum planning. The co-ordinator has raised the profile of the sketchbook and now is intending to develop a consistent use throughout each class, as the school continues to improve drawing skills. The co-ordinator has no opportunities to formally monitor teaching and learning, although some photographic evidence is kept as a record, with a view to establish a portfolio of pupils' work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

130. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are above those expected for their age and represent good improvement since the previous inspection. Key features in the standards pupils achieve are embraced within the positive contributions design and technology makes to the whole curriculum and its raised profile since the previous inspection. The subject is well lead by the co-ordinator who organises in-service training sessions to guide and support colleagues. There is much evidence to show the good links with other subjects. Resources are improved and well chosen to meet the needs of each study unit. The programme of teaching and learning is much more developed and contains a variety of opportunities for all pupils, each one providing the experience of the complete design and making process. Good teachers' planning encourages and expects pupils to naturally evaluate their work and suggest ways to improve their finished product. Given the obvious enthusiasm and good attitudes towards design and technology pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those with special

educational needs who have full access to the subject's curriculum. There was insufficient evidence available during the week of inspection to be able to grade the overall quality of teaching.

131. Owing to timetabling, no design and technology lessons were observed; judgements are based upon discussions with teachers and pupils, analysis of pupils' work, photographic evidence and examination of teachers' planning.
132. Overall the good quality of pupils' work in folders and booklets along with the many varied examples on display demonstrates the good learning opportunities pupils experience throughout the school. Work examples of the younger pupils show and explain clearly how they make such things as windmills in Year 3 and money containers in Year 4. There are good links with their work on materials in their science study, as pupils choose which fabrics they use and how best they use it to practise fastening and joining skills. They also explain why and how they pick a paper pattern to help cut out the fabric as part of the planning of their own ideas.
133. Year 6 pupils demonstrate their keenness for the subject and good understanding of the range of elements within the complete designing and making process, as they initially draft their design and ideas and are responsible for selecting and listing the materials appropriate for making their slippers. They clearly show their appreciation of the purpose and intention of their work posing questions about appearance, function and cost and how they could improve its comfort, safety and warmth. Similarly within their 'Buggies' project, pupils produce impressive models and individual booklets of a high quality, incorporating detailed and well-labelled drawings to support their evaluations. Written explanations provide quality links with literacy skills. Work throughout the school shows how pupils use their previously acquired skills to good effect.
134. The monitoring of teaching and learning is currently informal. Based upon National Guidance useful assessments are carried out at the end of each unit of study and pupils' achievements are recorded. The assessment and marking system has yet to be fully developed so as to reflect how information can be used further by teachers, to inform curriculum planning. Pupils benefit from the support of many parents and grandparents in the classroom. The co-ordinator identifies a number of areas for further development including establishing links with commerce and industry. There is insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning in design and technology, especially in relation to the modelling and control elements of the ICT curriculum.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

135. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The last time the school was inspected there was insufficient evidence on which to make a judgement on standards attained. It was not possible to see any lessons in Year 6 on this inspection. Judgement of pupils' attainment is based on evidence that was collected from teachers' plans, examining books and displays of pupils' work around the school and discussion with teachers and pupils. On this basis, by the end of Year 6, standards in geography are average. Pupils make

satisfactory progress including those with special educational needs who are well supported to access information and to understand and use the geographical terms being used appropriately. The teaching of geography is good overall.

136. Year 3 pupils are enjoying finding out about where our foods come from and learning about how the weather varies in different places around the world. After finding out about the water cycle, pupils explore and begin to identify the different types of clouds. Work on improving the environment in Year 4 is going well. The pupils have experimented and been successful in recycling paper. They were astounded to learn the facts about how much it costs to clean our streets and the amount of rubbish there is collected each year. In a good lesson seen the teacher explained a graph showing rubbish in Ghana and through good discussion the pupils began to realise the differences and why we throw away more paper than they do. Fieldwork skills are developed well on the residential to Wales. Pupils in Year 5 watched the video, *Sea Empress Oil Spill*, and *Follow the River*, as stimuli to begin to think about what causes river pollution and the effect of pollution on our waterways.
137. By the time the pupils are eleven years of age they have some understanding of what Agenda 21 is about. Their work has covered many issues including Fair Trade, how to save energy, clean water, and that of the plight of poor countries. Pupils have used maps to locate two villages in Pakistan. They have compared houses, fields, factories, and roads in Woodley with that of the village of Miandam. They know the relative size of Great Britain and Pakistan compared to the USA.
138. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has reviewed the curriculum, developed new policies to inform teachers' planning and updated the schemes of work to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Although there is an assessment outlined for the end of each unit taught, this does not address the use of day-to-day assessment to ensure a clear progression in knowledge, concepts and skills. ICT is used in geography mainly within the retrieval and presentation of information.

## **HISTORY**

139. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6. All pupils make sound progress including those with special educational needs. The latter pupils are supported well to access texts and put into context the meaning of the historical language being used. This matches the judgement made at the previous inspection. The improvement made to the schemes of work, adapting some of the more recent National Curriculum guidance and the teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the units being taught is having a good effect on teaching. Teaching is good overall based upon the limited number of lesson observations and the detailed scrutiny of pupils' work that took place during the inspection week. Teachers and pupils enjoy history. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was mainly satisfactory. Visitors, and visits to different places of historical interest all help to enrich the curriculum and enhance the knowledge of the periods being studied. These give pupils opportunities to develop skills in speaking and listening, note taking and sketching.

140. Pupils in Year 3 had studied the Romans, Anglo Saxons and Vikings this term. Work in their books showed some low level tasks of cutting and pasting and filling in a number of worksheets. History came alive for pupils in Year 4 when they visited the British Museum and saw the Egyptian exhibition. One boy told me that it was rather creepy and another said he was not sure what it would be like but he had enjoyed it and would like to visit again. There were good links with literacy as some pupils researched information to write detailed accounts of Tutankhamun, and all wrote booklets containing information on The Rosetta Stone, the development of a pyramid, the tombs, the mummification process as well as finding out about the discovery of Tutankhamun in 1922. Pupils celebrate history and geography successfully as they study settlements and learn about Woodley, (Meadow of the Wood in 1500). Good use is made of local knowledge and local sources to find out about this area in the past. The limited amount of work seen on the Tudors in Year 5 shows pupils had focused on the life of Drake, the Armada, a Tudor child and some household items. Pupils had enjoyed writing the newspaper with the headlines, '*The Sinking of the Mary Rose*'. Enquiry skills are developing well in the study of Life since 1930 in Year 6 as pupils prepare for a presentation at the end of term on their chosen topic between 1930 and 1970.
141. There are good links with geography. Pupils use maps to identify the different places in Britain where people invaded and settled, and world maps to identify the position of Greece, Egypt and the River Nile. Displays celebrate the good links with art and design technology and show how Ancient Greek buildings were built with great precision and accuracy.
142. The co-ordinator keeps a watchful eye on what is being taught. He has kept abreast of recent changes occurring nationally and is secure in his knowledge and understanding of the local area but also of the National Curriculum. He is aware that assessment is in its early stages of development and that there needs to be further challenge in the tasks set to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils. At present, the use made of ICT in history is mainly limited to the retrieval and presentation of information. However, the subject co-ordinator's action plan includes the development of this aspect as well as greater consistency in the use of the current assessment procedures.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

143. The provision of ICT was an issue at the time of the last inspection and standards achieved were judged to be unsatisfactory. Since then there have been changes in leadership, staff, and resources. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and standards achieved by the age of eleven are in line with those expected for these pupils.
144. Four lessons were seen during the inspection week and use of ICT to support other lessons was noted. Pupils' books were scrutinised and conversations held with pupils in each year group during lessons. In addition a conversation was held with a group of Year 6 pupils. Conversations were held with staff and two interviews took place with the temporary subject co-ordinator, the headteacher.
145. Most pupils make satisfactory progress and the majority are now in line with standards expected of them. Many pupils have good ICT facilities at home that enable them to extend

and consolidate their learning. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Pupils generally have satisfactory attitudes to ICT but can be intolerant of others when sharing equipment, when equipment is not efficient, or when the teacher too heavily directs lessons. These factors inhibit the progress of all pupils but particularly the more able who are not challenged sufficiently.

146. Teachers try hard to ensure that ICT is used in and supported by other subjects. Notable examples of this are where pupils have used the Internet to research information about other countries and use word processing to develop their English work. Some pupils talk enthusiastically about using the electronic microscope in their science lessons. The music subject leader has prepared a very good file of ideas and information to support the use of ICT within the music curriculum.
147. Most pupils can start up their machines and negotiate a variety of programs, saving their work as appropriate. The older pupils can confidently use computers to access many forms of work. They plan *PowerPoint* presentations, carefully designing slides in their books before executing the program. This is also good support for their writing and thinking skills. Pupils in Year 5 construct simple spreadsheets to illustrate family spending patterns. Many pupils in the school can access the Internet to research information, for example when they are seeking information about lifestyle of people in Britain since the 1930s. Some pupils use graphics packages to simulate work of famous artists or to design Christmas cards.
148. Pupils' understanding of the modelling and control elements of the National Curriculum for ICT are underdeveloped, but the school is currently developing this area in terms of resources and emphasis. This aspect of ICT was a cause for concern at the last inspection so there has been unsatisfactory progress in this area. Too few pupils have used their understanding of new technology such as e-mails to exchange information and ideas with others.
149. Teaching seen during the inspection week was satisfactory overall. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the ICT curriculum and plan lessons carefully. A strength was their management of pupils when they became frustrated with the significant restraints caused by the school's ICT resources.
150. Time was sometimes wasted due to newer teachers' unfamiliarity with the school system of wireless laptops and the unreliability of the system. This was part of an issue at the last inspection and is mainly the consequence of recent staff changes. Carefully planned lessons are spoiled by the inconsistent efficiency of the system. Teachers are forced to spend too long setting up the system, often forfeiting their lunch break in order to do so. Even then the system sometimes fails to operate properly. In one instance of this, the teacher had thoughtfully prepared pupils by bringing books to carry on their research in case of failure. This proved to be a wise decision.
151. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from carefully planned use of ICT by their teachers. Programs are chosen carefully and sometimes adjusted to address an individual's very specific need. The school uses appropriate communication technology to support pupils



with physical impairments.

152. Teachers have recently started a system of recording and assessment to track the progress of pupils and ensure coverage of skills and knowledge. This is a very useful initiative, which has opportunities for pupils to practise some self-assessment techniques. It also has the benefit of helping teachers recognise areas of underachievement or omission. There are clear and detailed skills assessment sheets in use for ICT, which cover all aspects of this subject.
153. The leadership and management of ICT have suffered due to several personnel changes since the last inspection. The headteacher is currently leading the subject pending the appointment in September of a new member of staff. As a result of this instability there has been a lack of shared vision in the school to guide the development of the subject. Successive action plans have shown little evidence of guiding the school forward. The school has invested considerable resources into a new system of computers but the benefits of the system and its reliability are yet to be proven to staff so they see the system as time consuming and unreliable. However, there is a shared recognition of the value of ICT and a commitment to improve the quality of provision and raise standards.

## **MUSIC**

154. The school has made good improvement in this subject and maintained the high standards already being achieved at the time of the last inspection. The provision for music throughout the school is of a very good quality. The key strengths in the subject are the leadership and contribution of the subject co-ordinator, the range and breadth of the curriculum, the very high quality of the teaching and the range of extra curricular opportunities provided. The key area for development, that the school has already begun to address, is the over reliance on music specialists, especially the subject co-ordinator herself.
155. During the inspection four music lessons were observed but further evidence was gained from talking to the subject co-ordinator, looking at pupils' written work in music, talking to pupils and watching them perform, both in rehearsal and performance, and scrutinising subject documentation such as the scheme of work and the assessment files.
156. The standards achieved by pupils are higher than the national expectations for pupils of a similar age. Year 6 pupils are confident in talking about the difference the pitch and tempo make to the feelings that music can inspire. They can perform simple tunes using tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments, reading the musical notation very accurately. They can repeat musical patterns and improvise alternatives. A particular strength now present in the school is the pupils' ability to reflect upon their own and others' performance and make constructive suggestions as to how to improve. These proposals often relate to playing the music with more expression and how that might be achieved so increasing the impact of the music on the audience. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for in music and make full use of the extracurricular opportunities. Pupils with special educational needs are always well provided for so that they can play a full and active part in lessons alongside their peers.

157. Pupils make good progress in their music lessons and all groups enjoy their lessons and make a full contribution. Girls do make more use of musical opportunities at the school, such as the choir and the orchestra, but boys are better represented than at the time of the last inspection and they make a full contribution in lessons and in the singing during assemblies. Pupils behave well. Teachers trust the pupils to respond positively and provide many opportunities for pupils to create their own musical ideas using a wide range of musical instruments. The music curriculum provides many occasions to support the personal development of pupils. This is especially within the aspects of spiritual, social and cultural education. Pupils use this musical knowledge in other contexts, for instance describing the feelings that religious music can generate during a religious education lesson.
158. All the teaching observed was judged to be at least very good with half the teaching being judged as excellent. The major strengths in teaching are the subject knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers linked to an excellent understanding of how to present new learning to pupils in an interesting and stimulating way. Teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and how they should behave. Lessons move at great pace and no time is lost. This means that pupils have greater time to learn new musical skills and concepts and this in turn helps them progress.
159. The co-ordination of music is excellent. The co-ordinator works extremely hard and has produced a scheme of work that goes well beyond the expectations of the National Curriculum for music. She has continued to build-up a very good range of musical resources and has recently worked very hard to produce a detailed curriculum that non-music specialists can teach. This is partly in response to the school's own concern that its current provision is too reliant upon a small number of teachers able and willing to teach music. The curriculum involves the use of ICT in a range of appropriate ways. There are very good assessment procedures in place that are being used to help teachers modify their teaching plans in order to better match the specific needs of pupils. The recent acquisition of a music base has been effective in supporting the development of this subject in the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

160. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are above those expected for their age, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs. Teachers ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum and be successful in their learning. Pupils enjoy being active and make good use of the wide range of opportunities they are given to use their ideas and skills in physical activity. Pupils, particularly those who enthusiastically take advantage of the very good programme of after school sports clubs for Years 5 and 6, learn new skills and develop them in a number of different sports and games. The school creates a positive attitude towards physical education, which is reflected in the huge response of older pupils to the extra-curricular activities. They have opportunities to play a variety of sports and represent the school in competitive matches and tournaments, a feature the school seeks to develop further next year. Pupils are sensible and have due respect for equipment and safety.

161. Overall, throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning in physical education is good. High standards are evident in games. Teachers have suitably high expectations of their pupils in this aspect of the subject and pupils respond well to them. Teachers provide pupils with very good role models. Because lessons are well resourced, planned and structured for skill development pupils are actively engaged throughout, cooperate and support each other in their actions. Lessons are well managed and relationships are very good. Pupils therefore are confident to comment upon their work, share ideas with a view to improving their own, others' or the team's performance. They benefit from the extensive outdoor facilities, which provide more than ample space for pupils to organise their group activities.
162. All pupils, including those with physical disabilities have full access to the physical education curriculum and the school and its committed staff proudly practises its 'PE for all' policy. The scheme of work, which is regularly revised and updated to meet the pupils' needs, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum because of its full range of learning opportunities it provides for the pupils. Although Year 6 is in the group scheduled not to swim, it is the school's expectation that all pupils swim by the end of their four years in school. The statutory requirements of the physical education National Curriculum are fully met. Pupils in Year 5 also experience outdoor adventure activities including archery, rock climbing and team building as part of their annual residential visit to Pendine in Wales.
163. Resources are very good and consistently very well used. The subject is well led by an energetic and committed co-ordinator, who has within the last eighteen months instigated and promoted additional activities and opportunities for the school's involvement in competitions such as Tag Rugby. The older pupils actively and regularly represent the school in cricket tournaments due to the headteacher's commitment and interest and a number of other teachers share their expertise with pupils in the clubs they organise and run. As yet the school has been unable to fully extend extra-curricular opportunities to younger pupils in Years 3 and 4.
164. Currently assessment takes place only at the end of each year, where, based upon National Guidance, pupils' achievement is recorded and reported to parents. The school plans to introduce and implement a formal assessment system to monitor individual pupils' progress against a brief description of attainment at the end of each unit of study. This is intended to enable the school to monitor progress and use the information more fully to further inform future curriculum planning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

165. The school has maintained the high standards recorded at the time of the last inspection and has also made satisfactory improvement in other areas since that time. A religious education subject co-ordinator is now in place and the daily act of collective worship meets statutory requirements. The key strengths are the establishment of an excellent curriculum that fully reflects the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education and the significant amount of work undertaken by the co-ordinator in preparing and checking teachers' lesson plans that supports pupils' learning in all lessons. The standards achieved by pupils are above expectations outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

The main area for improvement is to ensure that the very good assessment procedures are used consistently so that teachers have accurate assessment information to inform their planning. Overall, teaching of religious education is good.

166. Pupils demonstrate their knowledge of both key aspects of the curriculum – Learning about Religions and Learning from Religions. Pupils of all age groups talk knowledgeably about similarities and differences of world faiths, including the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim religions. They relate key features and main beliefs of these faiths. They have a good understanding of the place of celebration in religions and are knowledgeable of the major Christian celebrations of Christmas and Easter. Pupils discuss issues regarding morality and how religion has an impact on individuals. They relate aspects of their own lives to religious concepts and can discuss difficult, abstract concepts such as ‘the Hand of God’ and ‘the Light of the World’. One Year 3 pupil drew a poster showing that Jesus’ crucifixion was a ‘pathway’ for ordinary people to reach God.
167. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and concentrate with enthusiasm on their work. They behave well and are eager to participate in discussions. When one teacher was exploring the idea of ‘special items’ the pupils’ were prepared to share unique experiences and all the class treated these sensitively. Pupils of all groups make good progress and pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and this helps them make very good progress.
168. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils’ spiritual, moral and cultural development. During the inspection week links were made in assemblies to the pupils’ learning in religious education. These links were used to good effect to make pupils reconsider their own actions and reflect on major issues such as ‘Racism’ and ‘Peace’ especially in relation to common themes in world religions.
169. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has worked very hard in a short space of time to monitor teachers’ planning and the work of pupils but the school’s improvement plan has not provided opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe lessons as yet as this was not the agreed priority. Time has been given to allow the co-ordinator to work with the local religious education advisory staff and this has been very effective both in ensuring that the locally Agreed Syllabus is fully addressed and that appropriate assessment procedures have been agreed and are now in place.