

INSPECTION REPORT

CIPPENHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL

Elmshott Lane, Slough

LEA area: Berkshire

Unique reference number: 110088

Headteacher: Mr Harry Duffy

Reporting inspector: David Penney
23039

Dates of inspection: 10th and 11th February 2003

Inspection number: 246964

Short 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: | Foundation |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 to 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Elmshott Lane Slough |
| Postcode: | SL1 5RB |
| Telephone number: | 01628 604665 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr M Pope |
| Date of previous inspection: | March 1998 |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cippenham Junior School is a very large junior school with 643 boys and girls on roll, aged from 7 to 11 years. It serves a residential area to the west of Slough. The school has a rich ethnic mix. About three-fifths of the pupils are from a white ethnic background. Almost a quarter of the pupils are of Asian heritage and there are smaller proportions of pupils from black, mixed or other heritages. There are comparable numbers of boys and girls in the school, overall, although there are many more boys than girls in Year 3 and many fewer in Year 6. Pupils are taught in six parallel classes in Years 3 and 6 and five parallel classes in Years 4 and 5. One hundred and twenty-seven pupils (19.75%) have English as an additional language, which is high when compared to the national average. Four are at an early stage of acquiring the language. The main languages spoken as mother tongue are Punjabi, Urdu or Hindi. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is 14.8 per cent, which is broadly average. There are 184 pupils (28.7%, and above the national average) on the school's list for special educational needs. Five pupils have statements, all for specific learning difficulties; this proportion (0.8%) is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school this year, based on the results of the Year 2 national tests, was above average. However, in previous years it has matched the national average. Recently, the school has found it difficult to recruit teachers. The school has received Achievement Awards in each of the last two years for its improved standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with a number of strong features. Standards in the national tests match the national average in English and well above it in mathematics and science. The very effective use of assessment information allows the school to set challenging targets for improvement for all pupils in all three of these subjects and, as a result, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching is good, with a quarter of lessons that are characterised by very good teaching and learning or are outstanding. The headteacher provides strong leadership and manages the school extremely well, supported by a senior management team and key staff who understand their roles very well and discharge their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. However, the high level of pupils' absence has a detrimental impact on the school's effectiveness. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and key staff with the support of the governors, which means that it has a very clear idea of its priorities and takes very effective measures to bring them to fruition.
- The school makes very good use of assessment information in English and mathematics to amend provision, to challenge pupils and teachers, and to judge how successful they have been.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and means that pupils achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment, especially in mathematics.
- Very good provision for pupils' personal development results in very good behaviour and pupils' very good attitudes towards school and each other.

What could be improved

- The rate of pupils' attendance is well below the national average.
- Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and investigation are below average.
- Pupils make insufficient use of computers in class to reinforce and extend their skills and competences in information and communication technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a very good rate since it was last inspected in March 1998. Results in the national tests have improved in recent years, particularly in mathematics and in science where high

standards have been maintained for the last three years. Crucial to this improvement have been the development of the current management structure, which allows key staff time to discharge their responsibilities effectively, and the establishment of a clear and shared vision of what the school is trying to achieve, based on a range of reliable information. Planning and assessment procedures have given a more secure structure to the work of the school and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The school is very well placed to improve still further.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

very high A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

very low E*

Standards in English in the national tests in 2002 were similar to the national average and above that for schools with a similar proportion of pupils claiming free school meals while, in mathematics, standards were well above both averages. In science, standards were well above the national average and were very high (in the top five per cent of the country) when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving at least the expected levels in all three tests was well above the average when compared with similar schools. In the past three years results have improved annually in mathematics and have been maintained in English and in science, the latter at a high level. The school's trend of improvement exceeds the national picture. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school met its targets for English and just exceeded them in mathematics. Current inspection findings are that pupils enter the school with standards that are normally broadly average, although the current Year 3 did so with standards that are above average. They make good progress and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and the potentially higher attainers, are achieving good results in relation to their prior attainment, except in developing scientific skills. As a result, standards in Year 6 this year are above average in mathematics and close to the average in English. Standards in those parts of science that deal with acquiring knowledge are average but pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and experimentation are below those expected nationally. These findings are lower than last year's test results because of an increased proportion of pupils who are either on the school's list of those with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language, or both. For these reasons, it seems unlikely that the school will achieve its challenging targets for English this year, although it is likely to do so in mathematics. Standards in Year 6 in information and communication technology match those expected and a significant proportion of pupils are working at levels above that. Because of the nature of the inspection, it is not possible to make reliable judgements on standards or achievements in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils are polite and attentive in class, and show great enthusiasm for learning, especially when they are really interested in the |

| | |
|--|---|
| | focus of the lesson. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils are very courteous to adults and, generally, to each other. They share well and collaborate effectively. There is some boisterous behaviour at lunch times. There have been no exclusions in the last year. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Relationships are very good and pupils are very respectful of each other's feelings, opinions and beliefs. They accept and discharge their duties around school conscientiously and fairly. |
| Attendance | Poor. Attendance is adversely affected by holidays, some of them for extended periods of time, taken during term time. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with a good proportion of lessons being taught very well and leading to swift learning. In a small minority of lessons, the teaching and learning are outstanding. English and mathematics are taught well, as are the skills of literacy and numeracy. The needs of all pupils are met well, especially through the system of grouping them in English and mathematics by prior attainment, which permits the teacher to plan work that meets their needs closely. Because lessons are prepared thoroughly, no time is wasted and pupils retain their concentration and sense of purposeful activity well. Very good relationships ensure that pupils are confident learners who are often willing to make suggestions even when unsure of the answer. On occasions, in the lessons judged satisfactory, teachers do not plan work that involves pupils fully and extends their learning as far as it might. This is especially the case in science, where pupils' skills of investigation and experimentation are not developed fully enough, although their scientific knowledge matches what is expected nationally. Where lessons are most effective, it is because: teachers' questioning probes pupils' understanding and forces them to justify their answers; their expectations are high, a brisk pace to the lesson retains pupils' interest and concentration; time is used very effectively; learning builds very well on what pupils have already learned, and relationships are very good so pupils respond very well, are eager to please and work very hard. The effectiveness of temporary teachers is enhanced by the thorough and detailed planning systems used by the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on the identified priority subjects of English and mathematics in order to raise attainment. The strategies for teaching literacy are effective and are very effective for numeracy. Links with the community, including partner schools and activities arranged through them, enhance pupils' learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. All available information is used to target resources to the areas of greatest need. Provision for extra learning in small groups is very effective. The targets on pupils' individual education plans are clear and appropriate. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional | Good. Specialist staff work with pupils to provide intensive support and with class teachers to devise activities that meet pupils' needs closely and |

| | |
|---|---|
| language | ensure that they achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, as is the provision for their spiritual development. Provision for their moral, social and cultural development is very good and results in a harmonious and purposeful community. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Good, overall. Procedures to monitor and improve good behaviour are very good, as is the way that the school uses assessment information to plan work and modify the curriculum. The educational support and guidance for pupils are very good. Procedures to improve the attendance rate are not fully effective and the full potential of information technology systems to support this aspect is not exploited. |

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Although the school has tried to involve parents in their children's education, there is no parent-teachers' association and few parents attend the evenings run by the school to inform them about the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher provides a strong and caring educational direction for the school and is supported very well by governors and key staff, who have a very clear idea of their roles and responsibilities. The school achieves its aims in an outstanding manner. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties very well and are vitally involved in setting the direction and life of the school. This gives them a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Very good. The school makes very good use of a wide range of information for judging how effective it is and what needs to be improved further. All appropriate staff are fully involved in development planning. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. All available resources are used very well to support the most immediate identified priorities. Financial control mechanisms are very good. The school makes good efforts to ensure it gets the best value possible for its spending decisions. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their child to work hard. • They feel comfortable coming into the school. • The teaching is good and so their child makes good progress. • Their child likes school. • The school is led and managed well. • Behaviour is good and their child is helped to become mature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their child gets at home. • The amount of information they receive about their child's progress. • The closeness of the partnership between them and the school. • The range of activities outside lessons. |

The inspection team agrees with those areas identified by parents as positive. It judges that the school has made reasonable efforts to forge a formal partnership with parents and that the amount of information parents receive about their children is satisfactory, although there is scope for the school to improve the timing of the issue of written reports in the summer term. The amount and level of homework are satisfactory, although its regularity can be affected by the need to employ some temporary or supply teachers who are not immediately familiar with the school's systems. The range of activities outside lessons, including those arranged through the cluster, is satisfactory for a school of this size and type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and key staff with the support of the governors, which means that it has a very clear idea of its priorities and takes very effective measures to bring them to fruition.

1. The previous inspection report identified the need to improve many aspects of the leadership and management of the school. This need has been addressed very well. The developments in the management structures since that time have been key factors in the very good progress the school has made. They have resulted in a clear commitment to continuing to improve, which the school is in a very good position to do.
2. The headteacher sets a very clear educational vision for the school that has as a basic tenet the right of all pupils to achieve the best results possible in the national tests at the end of Year 6, for example by focusing on the knowledge needed to do well in the science test. In addition to this, he is vitally concerned to develop their ability to interact with each other and to become contributing members of society. He cares enough for the pupils and for the members of staff to challenge them to achieve highly and to hold them to account for their performances. These stated aims are translated into practice in an outstandingly successful manner. He delegates responsibility very well, ensuring that all members of staff know what is expected of them and giving them all the support they need to fulfil their roles
3. The senior management team and other key staff support him very well. Every member of staff is very clear about what is expected of them. They work hard to fulfil their responsibilities. Members of the senior management team are responsible for key whole-school matters, such as the planning of the curriculum, the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and the effective use of assessment information. They have a suitable amount of time available outside their teaching commitment to enable them to discharge these responsibilities and to reflect on the needs of the school. The result is that the priorities identified for improvement are pertinent to the school's context and the pupils' needs. The members of the team fulfil their roles very well and are a vital component in the school's sense of purpose and success. For example, their examination of pupils' prior attainment results in the setting of challenging targets for improvement by the end of each year for every year group in the school. Their evaluations of the quality and effectiveness of teaching result in good levels of apt professional development for individuals and for the whole staff when appropriate.
4. The contributions of other key staff, year leaders and subject co-ordinators, especially for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology – give the work of the school coherence and rigour. Year leaders ensure that teachers' planning is to the same agreed general focus throughout the year group but meets the differing needs of all pupils closely. They oversee the pastoral support of all pupils. They are responsible for providing sufficient challenge to their colleagues to meet the targets for pupils' progress given to them by the senior management team, while giving personal and professional support to their colleagues.

5. Subject co-ordinators ensure that there is a secure progression in learning by monitoring teachers' planning and checking that the work planned conforms to what has been agreed and is at a suitable level for the pupils. They produce good development plans for their subjects, and these are vital parts of the overall school development plan. Through their monitoring of pupils' work, especially in English and mathematics where the co-ordinators have been in post for some time, they identify key successes and very appropriate areas for improvement. Examples of these areas include the development of pupils' skills in writing, provision for which is detailed later in this report, and the improvement of pupils' speed and security of the recall of basic numbers facts, which has been accomplished through extending the range of strategies and questioning being used by teachers as a result of whole-school training.
6. The governing body conducts its business efficiently and effectively through its structure of committees. This focus and organisation, together with the conscientiousness and enthusiasm of individual governors, allows the governing body to fulfil its statutory obligations very well. It is fully involved in influencing the work of the school, for example by examining the results of the national tests and asking for clarification about whether they represent a satisfactory level of achievement for the pupils concerned. The training they have received to enable them to do so has been very helpful. Governors are also fully involved in determining the annual development plan and they review progress towards the identified targets as an agenda item at all their meetings. Financial control, which was a matter of concern at the last inspection, is now very good. The school's Finance Officer has a very good grasp of the school's finances and the governors receive regular and full accounts from her. As much as they are able, individual governors visit the school while it is in session to give them a first-hand knowledge of how effective it is and what standards of behaviour, for example, are like. In addition, they receive reports from subject co-ordinators, for example for physical education and geography, to enable them to build up a picture of provision. This gives them a good idea of the school's strengths and areas for development.
7. The school's procedures for checking on its effectiveness are powerful and robust. The annual cycle of performance management is in place and makes a good contribution to this process. The use to which assessment data are put is dealt with in a subsequent section of this report. The information gained from these exercises passes to the senior management team very freely as a result of clear channels of professional communication. The team uses the information, together with subject development plans and consideration of such matters as changes in staffing structure and improvements to the ethos and the buildings, to establish very appropriate priorities and so to form the overall school development plan. The plan identifies an appropriate timeframe for development and, for the most immediate priorities, establishes in detail what is to be accomplished by whom and when, what training might be necessary, and how teachers are to judge the extent of their success. Where possible, these successes are judged in terms of improved attainment for pupils. All available resources are used to ensure that these most immediate identified priorities are met, including, for example, changing which age groups certain teachers work in to utilise individual strengths fully and making sure that all priorities are suitably funded to enable improvements to be effected. The development plan is a very good tool for continuing improvement.

The school makes very good use of assessment information in English and mathematics to amend provision, to challenge pupils and teachers, and to judge how successful they have been.

8. The assessment co-ordinator, who is an assistant headteacher and a member of the senior management team, has established very good assessment procedures in the core subjects of English and mathematics. These provide a thorough record of pupils' attainment at various fixed points in their school career, enabling teachers to judge the extent of overall progress and of individual achievements. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
9. On entry to the school in Year 3, pupils' results in the Year 2 national tests are compared with the results of standardised tests in English and mathematics, as well as a test of their non-verbal reasoning ability. This latter test is used well to identify pupils who might be achieving less than they could. The results of these tests are used effectively to group pupils into sets of pupils with similar needs for teaching purposes; to target support, for example learning support assistants, to the areas of greatest need, and to set challenging targets for improvement by the end of the year for individuals and for year groups in terms of the National Curriculum levels to be attained. They also provide teachers with important information when discussing pupils' performance with their parents. The pupils themselves are helped to achieve their targets by being informed exactly what they need to accomplish, for example to move from a level 3A in their work to a level 4C¹, through useful printed prompts in their English and mathematics books.
10. At the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, similar standardised tests at an appropriate level are given to every pupil. From these results, teachers work out how much progress individuals have made during the year and then interpret the results closely to identify who has attained the targets set and so which pupils are achieving the results they should and which are not. Year-band leaders use the information to see whether they and their colleagues have achieved the targets set them by the senior managers and to identify common gaps in knowledge. Following this analysis, they amend provision appropriately in their own year band and inform subsequent teachers about weaknesses in pupils' performance. Subject co-ordinators analyse the data for their subjects closely to identify areas of common weakness in pupils' and teachers' performance, for example, identifying from the most recent tests that pupils' skills of inference and deduction in reading were not high enough, and giving colleagues suitable training to address any issues arising. As a result of this, there is now an appropriate focus on developing these areas of pupils' learning, which is beginning to improve pupils' achievement.
11. At senior management level, the results are analysed thoroughly to identify strengths and weaknesses in an individual teacher's performance, and whole-school areas for development, such as the need to develop pupils' ability to interpret data in science and improving the quality of pupils' writing. As a result, since September 2002, pupils have been grouped by prior attainment in English into sets and extra

¹ These levels are sub-levels of the attainment targets that are specified for every National Curriculum subject and, in this case, represent progress from the level 3A to the level 4C.

time has been allocated each week in every class to focus specifically on identified areas for improvement in writing. Teachers have assessed samples of pupils' writing against National Curriculum levels to gauge progress and this has led to further amendments in provision. For example, an emphasis on encouraging pupils to write at length has been supported through the provision of a range of suggested formats to enable them to plan and develop their work logically. As a result, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. While it is still too soon to assess the full impact of these measures on raising attainment, there are indications that standards of the Year 6 group, overall, match the national average, even though the current Year 6 group has a larger group of lower attaining pupils than was the case last year. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment.

12. In addition, this analysis of test results is used to target resources flexibly and effectively. An example of this is the deployment of learning support assistants to provide extra and focused input over a shorter period of time into identified areas of common weaknesses, such as phonics and grammar.
13. In addition to this annual comparison of reliable information gained from similar tests, the pupils sit different tests that are based on the national planning guidance used in the school. The local education authority bases the targets for the school in Year 6 annual national tests on pupils' performance in these tests in Year 4. Although they do not test the same knowledge and skills as the tests described earlier or of the national tests in Year 6, they do give a reliable indication of how well individuals and groups of pupils are progressing. The results help teachers to give accurate information to parents about how well their children have done during the term. They also give valuable information about the attainment levels of groups and any strengths or gaps in provision. This has led, for example, to the purchase of appropriate books to improve pupils' reading comprehension and to provide homework opportunities in science data handling.
14. The school's systems for tracking pupils' achievements and progress enable it to provide convincing evidence of pupils' progress over time. They enable it, for example, to support the national data indicating that the group of pupils who were in Year 6 last year and sat the national tests in 2002 had made satisfactory progress in the four years since taking the Year 2 national tests in English but had made very good progress in mathematics. It also showed that their progress in science had been outstanding and in the top five per cent of the country.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and means that pupils achieve good results in relation to their prior attainment, especially in mathematics.

15. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. During the inspection, the team observed 31 lessons in whole or part; teaching and learning were never less than satisfactory. In ten lessons, teaching and learning were satisfactory, although in a very few strengths and weaknesses were finely balanced. In 13 lessons, teaching and learning were good and, in a further five, they were very good. Three lessons were taught in an outstanding fashion and learning was very swift. Nearly all the very good or excellent teaching and learning was observed in Years 5 and 6, although some very good teaching and learning were observed in Year 3 also.

16. Just over a quarter of the teaching of English and nearly two-fifths of the teaching of mathematics were very good or better. The teaching and learning of scientific facts and of information and communication technology was at least good. Only five lessons were seen in subjects other than these four; three were satisfactory and two were good. This high quality of teaching is an important factor in pupils' progress, attainment and achievement.
17. Where teaching is most effective and learning is at its most swift, it is because:
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good so that teachers answer questions easily and accurately and explain concepts clearly, enabling pupils to grasp them quickly and securely and to complete the tasks without appreciable loss of time. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher explained the way that tearing paper triangles could be used to prove that their internal angles total 180 degrees clearly enough so that all pupils understood both the method and the outcomes.
 - Resources are used very effectively. For example, in an excellent Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher used a clock imaginatively to show pupils how to calculate pairs of angles that added up to 90 degrees.
 - Pupils are managed very well and are given interesting and imaginative tasks. They are, therefore, very attentive to the teacher and concentrate hard on their work. A Year 5 English lesson was outstanding because, having conducted the lesson at a very good pace and used questions skilfully to ensure that all pupils were fully involved throughout the lesson, the teacher probed pupils' understanding of myths and legends very skilfully by asking them to write their own story based on "The Beast of Cippenham". This thoroughly engaged their interest and enthusiasm, provided them with a very appropriate challenge and gave them every opportunity to succeed at their own level.
 - Teachers' questioning probes pupils' understanding and forces them to justify their answers, which reinforces their learning very well. A very good information and communication technology lesson in Year 3 provided a good example of this because the teacher questioned the pupils skilfully to probe their understanding and to ensure that they built fully on their prior learning about beat boxes and chord boxes. This enabled them to become familiar with the icons necessary to extend their learning and prepared them very well for the work planned later in the term.
 - Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace that gains and retains pupils' interest and concentration, ensuring that learning is swift and secure. A good example of this was an excellent English lesson with a higher attaining group in Year 6 about recognising how to construct an effective argument. The teacher used a good range of strategies to sustain interest, for example letting pupils discuss with their neighbours before answering the question to the class, and used praise very well to give individuals confidence in their own ability. Because of this, all pupils were very responsive and responded very well to the challenges set. This also was a good example of how to motivate pupils and to help them persevere because the teacher's expectations of what the pupils should achieve and of how they should apply themselves to their work were extremely high.
18. As a result of this quality of teaching, pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve good results in relation to their prior learning. There is a very positive work ethic throughout the school; teachers expect pupils to work hard and pupils respond very well. Relationships between pupils and teachers, and between the pupils

themselves in class, are very good. Consequently, pupils are willing and confident learners who behave very well and listen politely.

19. The school has problems of recruiting teachers for a variety of reasons shared with other schools in the area, none of which reflects adversely on the school. It relies, therefore, on a variety of temporary, overseas or supply teachers in some classes. The effectiveness of such temporary staff is enhanced because of the thorough and detailed planning systems that the school adopts. What is to be taught in each year and each term is clearly specified. The system of year-band leaders being responsible for overseeing the weekly and daily planning of lessons in their teams results in coherent planning that makes sure that the work for all pupils is appropriately focused towards the same objectives in all subjects and provides meaningful activities to attain these objectives. In particular, the system of grouping pupils by prior attainment in English and mathematics ensures that the objectives for each lesson are much more closely focused on a smaller range of specific and individual needs. This means that these subjects tend to be more effectively taught than others, especially the arithmetic aspects of mathematics that do not rely on a good grasp of spoken and written English. As a result of these secure systems, all teachers have a clear grasp of what they are expected to teach and lessons are always planned thoroughly, which enables them to be conducted without loss of time or momentum and helps to retain pupils' interest, concentration and focus. In addition, a clear progression in learning is assured, which makes sure that pupils achieve well over time. This is greatly helped by the strengths in management and assessment explained in earlier sections of this report.
20. The findings of this inspection are that, because of the quality of teaching and the strengths of the planning and assessment systems, pupils are making good progress over time and are achieving good results in relation to their prior attainment. This current group of pupils in Year 6 have a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than did last year's group. In addition, there is a bigger proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, many of whom are also on the school's list of those with special educational needs. While each is achieving good results in relation to their prior attainment, as indeed are those few pupils identified as gifted and talented, the overall level of attainment is lower than last year when results were well above the national average in mathematics and science and matched it in English.
21. As an integral part of the thorough planning, assessment and target setting processes described in earlier paragraphs, the needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are met very well and those for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are met well. The teaching of pupils with SEN is always at least good in lessons, where the support given is focused and purposeful and makes a considerable contribution to learning. It is often very good when given by learning support assistants in withdrawal groups. The input for EAL pupils provided on two days a week by specialist teachers from the local education authority is valuable. They support pupils at an early stage of acquiring the language with very good quality and intensive language input and work with teachers to devise further additional material to meet pupils' individual needs closely. As a consequence of this provision, all pupils are enabled to succeed at their own levels and to experience the same pleasure at making tangible progress. This enhances their self-esteem, gives

them very good attitudes to work and makes a valuable contribution to both the maintenance of good order and to their achievements.

22. Standards currently match the national average in English and in those aspects of science that concentrate on developing knowledge of living things, materials and physical processes. In mathematics, where there is often less need for a good understanding of the more complex language specific skills, standards are above average. Pupils' scientific skills are below average and are dealt with in a later section of this report. Standards of information and communication technology in Year 6 are at least in line with those expected nationally, with a significant proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in aspects of their work, such as preparing a PowerPoint presentation and importing hyperlinks to the Internet.

Very good provision for pupils' personal development results in very good behaviour and pupils' very good attitudes towards school and each other.

23. Alongside the expectations of hard work that pervade the school for both adults and pupils is a strong ethic of care for the development of pupils' personal qualities. A complex web of support for pupils' personal development is very effective in ensuring that the school is a safe and harmonious environment in which all pupils are encouraged and challenged to learn a wide range of social and moral skills. Provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection.
24. The school provides very well for pupils' social development. An identified and selected number of Year 6 pupils are 'twinned' with Year 3 pupils, for example, to help them cope effectively with lunchtimes and to provide extra support for the playground assistants by policing the play areas and doorways into the school to stop misbehaviour. These pupils had to apply for the job and were interviewed before appointment, which gave them a good foretaste of the life of work. About 20 Year 5 pupils are currently being trained as 'mediators' to enable them to take over these duties from the current Year 6 pupils next year. All accept responsibilities willingly and carry them out diligently and effectively. Other provision for pupils' social development include a range of suitable tasks in every class and a good range of activities with pupils from other schools in the area, such as skating, netball and soccer, as well as residential trips for a few pupils from the school to France or on skiing trips. The high expectations held by all members of staff that pupils will interact with others respectfully and with good humour are successful in promoting very good attitudes to work, play and each other.
25. The school has a clear code of behaviour that is understood and implemented consistently by nearly all members of staff. Where anomalies exist, it is very often because the teacher is temporary and is new to the school. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. The pupils have cheerfully adopted the 'Golden Rules', formulated by staff, because they recognise them to be fair and reasonable and likely to promote a safe and happy environment for work and play. Reminders of what constitutes good behaviour are to be seen in classroom rules, which are always phrased positively, and commercially available posters throughout the school. Some teachers choose individual and effective ways of reinforcing good behaviour; for example, in one Year 5 class pupils complete a chart entitled " I will make (*the teacher's name*) happy when..." with statements about how to make life better for everyone. Behaviour at play times and lunchtimes

is occasionally boisterous but rarely leads to any serious misbehaviour. The Year 6 playground helpers make a strong contribution to the maintenance of good order at these times. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils' behaviour was never less than satisfactory and was very good or better in over half of them.

26. The school has a rich religious, ethnic and cultural mix of pupils. It provides for their differing beliefs and values respectfully and sensitively, and successfully expects the pupils to do the same. Adults act as good role models and treat pupils as unique and valuable individuals, irrespective of colour, class or creed. For example, assemblies deliberately and successfully invite pupils to speak to their own gods or, if they have none, to hold a respectful silence while others do. In a highly sensitive assembly taken by the headteacher, the dilemmas posed by the possible future conflict in the Middle East were dealt with in a highly balanced and personal way, with the dangers and injustice of cultural, religious or ethnic stereotyping explained lucidly. In addition, the needs of Muslim pupils were provided for very well in the run-up to the celebration of Eid al Adha. This provision made a very good contribution to pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society.
27. Further examples of very good provision being made for pupils' cultural development include the regular provision of French lessons for Year 5 and 6 pupils through the strong links with a local language technology school; instrumental music lessons in violins, woodwind, guitar and recorders and the study of artists of various schools and disciplines, such as Mondrian, Jackson Pollock and sculptors.
28. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The development of the PSHE programme is an identified priority on the current school development plan. The co-ordinator has drawn together examples of good practice that exist in the school and has begun to mould them into a consistent whole-school approach. She has produced a good development plan that clearly identifies appropriate areas for improvement. Good attention is being given to providing pupils with appropriately detailed and accurate information about the dangers of drugs misuse, and the biological and interpersonal aspects of sex education are dealt with sensitively. 'Circle time'² is timetabled for every class, and the quality of relationships is such that these times enable pupils to discuss frankly and begin to resolve matters of individual or common concern.
29. National guidance on citizenship is being adopted gradually with the intention that a suitable programme will be firmly in place by the end of this school year. As part of this process, a school council has very recently been set up. This comprises two pupils from each class, who have been elected by their peers and who will increasingly represent 'the voice of the pupils' in discussions with teachers. To date, it has met on few occasions and members are still learning their roles and responsibilities.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The rate of pupils' attendance is well below the national average.

² 'Circle time' is a time when pupils discuss in confidence with their teacher matters of individual or group concerns.

30. The rate of pupils' attendance is well below the national average and the rate of authorised absence is high. At the time of the last inspection, attendance was almost one per cent above the national average; the latest validated figures show that it is now one and a half per cent below the national average.
31. The school is well aware of the problem, which adversely affects the progress, achievement and attainment of those pupils involved. It has included the raising of attendance levels as a priority in the most recent school improvement plan, which runs for the period 2000 to 2003. In the plan's first year of operation, attendance rose by nine-tenths of one per cent.
32. An analysis of the reasons for absence shows that most are caused by pupils taking holidays in term time, some of which are extended in nature to enable them to visit their homeland. Others are caused by illness. The higher than average proportion of authorised absence is caused in large part by the governing body's practice of granting further leave of absence to pupils over and above the ten days basic entitlement.
33. The school is in regular contact with the education welfare officer, who contacts families causing concern, although less than an hour was spent in the school during the term prior to inspection. When parents have not notified the reasons for absence, the administrative assistants in the school office contact them promptly to find out the reasons, and to remind them of the need to ensure that their children attend regularly. The headteacher identifies and talks with families whose children are absent for more than a given percentage of the time. An explanation of the negative effects of absence is to be printed on the written reports of pupils' progress later this year. Overall, while the school's efforts to promote attendance are satisfactory, they are not robust enough.

Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry and investigation are below average.

34. The school's commitment to providing all its pupils with the best possible record of achievement to take with them to their next school and through life has resulted in a successful sharp focus on what was required to enable them to attain the highest possible results in the national tests at the end of Year 6. Because the national science test has, until this coming year, set out to test what knowledge pupils have learned, the school has concentrated much of its efforts on this aspect of the curriculum. Consequently, there has been less emphasis on developing pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, investigation and experimentation, which are now less good than at the time of the previous inspection.
35. Although a suitable number of lessons have focused on practical explanations of scientific phenomena, this has too often tended to be through teacher demonstration with small amounts of participation by individual pupils, rather than true experimentation by, for example, small groups of pupils. Consequently, the work in pupils' books shows a high degree of similarity, as pupils copy what the teacher has written on the board irrespective of their prior attainment. This practice fails to extend the skills of potentially higher attaining pupils and does not allow the teacher to judge the extent of any pupils' understanding of the subject. The school has already identified this as a weakness and the recently appointed science co-

ordinator has begun to give his colleagues some advice, training and support to enable them to redress this imbalance.

Pupils make insufficient use of computers in class to reinforce and extend their skills and competences in information and communication technology.

36. The teachers make good use of the well-equipped information and communication technology (ICT) suite to teach all the required elements of the subject successfully over time. When in the suite, pupils' ICT skills are used soundly to support work in other subjects, such as art and design and history, but the computers sited in classrooms are not used routinely. During the inspection, few computers were even switched on in the lessons observed. As a result, opportunities were lost to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. This is an inefficient use of resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should now:
- (1) Evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the procedures to promote attendance.
(Paragraphs 30 to 33)
 - (2) Ensure that pupils develop their investigative and experimental skills in science.
(Paragraphs 34 and 35)
 - (3) Improve the ways that teachers use the computers in classrooms to reinforce and extend pupils' learning in all appropriate subjects.
(Paragraph 36)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SCHOOL HAS ALREADY IDENTIFIED THE FIRST TWO ISSUES AS PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 31 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 24 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 3 | 5 | 13 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 10 | 16 | 42 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 643 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 95 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 5 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 184 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 127 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 24 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 19 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | 2002 | 88 | 61 | 149 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 75 | 78 | 88 |
| | Girls | 52 | 52 | 58 |
| | Total | 127 | 130 | 146 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 85 (80) | 87 (86) | 98 (99) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 64 | 80 | 86 |
| | Girls | 48 | 53 | 61 |
| | Total | 112 | 133 | 147 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 75 (70) | 89 (83) | 99 (97) |
| | 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 |
|---|
| White – British |
| White – Irish |
| White – any other White background |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean |
| Mixed – White and Black African |
| Mixed – White and Asian |
| Mixed – any other mixed background |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean |
| Black or Black British – African |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background |
| Chinese |
| Any other ethnic group |

| No of pupils on roll |
|----------------------|
| 383 |
| 2 |
| 7 |
| 28 |
| 1 |
| 1 |
| 23 |
| 84 |
| 63 |
| 3 |
| 7 |
| 13 |
| 2 |
| 7 |
| 1 |
| 6 |

| Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 |

| |
|--------------------------|
| No ethnic group recorded |
|--------------------------|

| |
|----|
| 12 |
|----|

| |
|---|
| 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) | 31 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20.7 |
| Average class size | 26.8 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 12 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 220 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2001/02 |
|----------------|---------|

| | |
|--|-----------|
| | £ |
| Total income | 1 484 202 |
| Total expenditure | 1 527 259 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2 436 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 159 464 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 116 407 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 12 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 11 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 3 |
| 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 | 644 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 123 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 41 | 52 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 33 | 63 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 28 | 63 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 21 | 48 | 27 | 3 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 36 | 59 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 23 | 50 | 24 | 1 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 40 | 53 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 51 | 43 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 19 | 57 | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 29 | 59 | 6 | 2 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 28 | 59 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 36 | 45 | 12 | 3 | 4 |