

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110478

Headteacher: Mr J Carroll

Reporting inspector: Mrs A M Grainger
20782

Dates of inspection: 6th - 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 247011

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hazell Avenue Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP21 7JF
Telephone number:	(01296) 424544
Fax number:	(01296) 381509
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M G Lowry
Date of previous inspection:	9 th - 12 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20782	Mrs A M Grainger	Registered inspector	Art and design	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19664	Mr J Bayliss	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?
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	
27773	Mrs F MacKenzie	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12116	Mrs C Morgan	Team inspector	English Music Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edward's Catholic Junior School is situated on the eastern side of Aylesbury. It serves principally the parishes of St Joseph's, Our Lady of Lourdes and Guardian Angels. Pupils travel from most parts of Aylesbury to attend the school. Most have previously attended the adjacent St Joseph's Catholic Infant School. With 140 boys and 119 girls on roll, the school is average in size compared with other junior schools nationally. Most pupils are white, although just over 10 per cent are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils have English as an additional language, and only one is at an early stage of learning English. Nineteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. Most of the pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties. Three per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Taking the intake as a whole, pupils' attainment on entry to the school in most years is above average. However, the present Year 6 entered with average attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Edward's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It achieves good standards in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average in the present Year 6, representing satisfactory progress in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Within English, there are strengths in reading, speaking and listening. In other subjects, except in art and design and music, standards are as expected nationally in Year 6. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school are good overall, and focused on bringing about improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in reading, speaking and listening in Year 6.
- Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their attitudes and behaviour. They get on very well with each other and with the adults in school.
- The headteacher and governors work effectively together to improve the quality of education and raise standards.
- There is good care for pupils' personal wellbeing.
- The partnership with parents is strong.

What could be improved

- Not enough attention is given to pupils' creative development. Standards in art and design and music are below those expected nationally in Year 6.
- There are weaknesses in teaching in particular classes.
- The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Although the provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, there are too few planned opportunities for it through subjects.
- Not enough use is made of computers to support pupils' learning across the subjects.
- The use of assessment information is at an early stage. There are no whole-school assessment procedures for subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

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 made satisfactory progress overall since its last inspection in February 1998. The school went through an unsettled period from shortly after the last inspection until September 2001 when the present headteacher was appointed. For much of this time, there was no permanent full-time headteacher. Although the pace of development was slowed during this time, it has picked up well over the last five terms.

Several areas were identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. Better opportunities are provided now for pupils to develop independence in learning through investigation and research. Satisfactory action has been taken to involve co-ordinators in checking the quality of provision in their subjects and in spreading good practice. Long-term plans of work have been put in place for all subjects, although these

require further improvement in art and design and music. Assessment procedures to ensure pupils' progress are a recent development. They are not yet contributing sufficiently to curriculum planning and there are no procedures in place for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Further work is needed to ensure that this is rectified. Further action is also required to increase the opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of the life and traditions of other cultures.

The standards achieved by pupils in the National Curriculum tests have been satisfactorily maintained. The 2002 results largely matched those of 1998, although they were lower in English than they had been at the last inspection. The strengths in pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been sustained, as has the above-average attendance. The care for pupils at a personal level continues to be good. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is not as good as it was, there remains much effective teaching and the school is targeting the areas of weakness.

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*	B	B	C
mathematics	C	C	B	D
science	A	C	B	C

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

The above table shows that pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was average in English and science but below average in mathematics. Although boys did better than girls in the mathematics and science tests in 2002, this is not an ongoing trend. Both boys and girls achieve satisfactorily in English.

The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work is that standards at this point in the present Year 6 are average in all three subjects. The lower standards seen in pupils' work this year, compared with those shown by the 2002 national test results, simply reflect natural variations in year groups of pupils. The overall rate of progress of pupils now in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. When all three subjects are taken together, the picture is of stronger progress in Years 5 and 6 and slower progress in Years 3 and 4. The variations in pupils' rate of progress are directly linked to differences in the quality of teaching.

In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. The standards in these subjects are as expected nationally when pupils reach Year 6. In art and design and music, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected nationally in Year 6.

Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Their progress is good when they receive intensive teaching in small groups. The very few with English as an additional language progress satisfactorily overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy school, readily settle to work, and are keen to learn. Older pupils are particularly responsive to teachers' instructions and positive in their attitudes to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well in lessons and when moving about the school. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Older pupils in particular behave maturely and sensibly.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with the adults in school. Boys and girls and pupils of all backgrounds mix very well. Pupils readily grasp opportunities for initiative and personal responsibility, although these are largely routine.
Attendance	Good. Attendance during the last school year was above the national average. Punctuality in the mornings is good.

Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and attendance, together with their very good relationships, help to create an atmosphere supportive of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning varied from very good to unsatisfactory. The overall picture is of stronger teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, and weaker teaching in Years 3 and 4 where there are newly qualified teachers or others identified as requiring support. In all cases, the school is taking well-focused action to rectify the weaknesses. Where teaching is strongest, teachers have high expectations of standards of work and presentation. Where it is least effective, expectations are not high enough.

The overall quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics, including the basics of literacy and numeracy, is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are also satisfactory overall in science. However, there is variation across the year groups and in the different classes within year groups. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, they are unsatisfactory in art and design and music because essential skills in these subjects are not developed as pupils move up through the school.

Most teachers have secure subject knowledge, organise pupils and activities well and explain and demonstrate clearly. Teachers often emphasise the correct language of a subject, such as science or information and communication technology. Expectations of behaviour are usually clear. All these aspects of teaching support the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding and help to create a well organised setting for learning. In most cases, support staff are well deployed and this helps the learning of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers respond sensitively to the needs of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language.

Throughout the school, marking is inconsistent. There are examples of teachers providing pupils with clear and helpful feedback so that they know how well they are doing and what they should improve. However, this is not the case in all classes and subjects. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, not only are expectations too

low but there are occasions when time is wasted. Very occasionally there are weaknesses in the management of pupils and activities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. All the required subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. However, not enough attention is given to pupils' creative development. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good and good provision is made for personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils' progress is checked well and support staff often give good assistance to small groups and those who have statements of special educational needs. During the inspection, not all pupils received the support they needed because of a temporary reorganisation of staffing.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils are fully included in all activities. Where relevant, they are given additional support, for example, to help with their written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Satisfactory overall. There is good attention to pupils' moral and social development. While prayers and acts of collective worship make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development, there are too few planned opportunities through subjects. The provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There is not enough attention to it in art and design and music. Too little is done to develop pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of modern multi-cultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. There is effective provision for pupils' personal wellbeing. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn without fear. However, procedures for checking pupils' attainment and progress are not well enough established. Many subjects have no assessment procedures.

The school works well in partnership with parents. It receives good support from parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a good and clear educational direction for the school. However, the school does not have a securely established senior management team to give him the necessary support.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors play a strong role in shaping and maintaining the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The evaluation of teaching is strong, with effective systems in place to deal with identified weaknesses. The school is developing its self-evaluation procedures well.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is effective in ensuring that financial resources are targeted on priorities for pupils' education and also on action to raise standards. Specific grants are spent on the purposes for which they are intended. There is satisfactory consideration of whether the school provides best value for pupils and their parents.

The school has sufficient teachers and support staff. The accommodation and resources to support pupils' learning are good.

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 attitudes and values the school promotes.• The quality of care for their children.• Their children are expected to work hard and to do their best.• The leadership and management.• Their children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework.• How closely the school works with them and the information they receive on their children's progress.

The inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. Inspectors judge the amount of homework to be satisfactory. They also consider that the partnership with parents is good, including the information provided for parents on their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance was average in English and science but below average in mathematics. The mathematics and science results in 2002 were much the same as when the school was last inspected. In English they were a little lower in 2002 than they had been in 1998. However, the trend in the school's results since the last inspection for all three subjects together has been broadly in line with that found nationally. Although boys did better than girls in the mathematics and science tests in 2002 this is not an ongoing trend. Both boys and girls achieve satisfactorily in English.
2. The school sets realistic targets for improvement in the National Curriculum test results and is making satisfactory progress towards them. Even though the standards seen in the school work of the present Year 6 are lower than the standards attained in the 2002 national tests and are average overall in English, mathematics and science, the progress made by pupils is satisfactory. These lower standards are simply a result of the natural variations found in year groups of pupils. Within English, standards are presently above average in reading, speaking and listening, but average in writing. The relatively weaker writing standards reduce the overall standards of pupils' attainment in this key subject.
3. Although the rate of progress of pupils now in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science, it is uneven, particularly in English and science. In both these subjects progress is good in Year 6, unsatisfactory overall in Year 4, and satisfactory overall in Year 3. While progress in science is consistently good in Year 5, there is considerable variation in English, with the rate of progress varying from good to unsatisfactory across the three classes. In English, this inconsistent progress most significantly affects the standards pupils attain in writing. In mathematics, progress is more consistently satisfactory, although there is clear evidence of relatively stronger progress in Years 5 and 6 and unsatisfactory progress in the 'upper ability' class in Year 4. The variations in pupils' rate of progress in different year groups and classes are directly linked to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, which the school is working to rectify.
4. Pupils in Year 6 listen attentively to their teachers and to their classmates. Many are confident and articulate speakers who understand how to participate in discussion and who use a wide vocabulary for their age. Most read a range of texts fluently and accurately and are starting to use inference and deduction to draw out meaning. Even lower-attaining pupils have a good range of strategies to support their reading, for example, by breaking down unfamiliar words into smaller sections. Pupils write at length and for a good range of purposes, for instance, to produce diary entries or reports. Higher-attaining pupils successfully organise their writing in paragraphs but quite a few pupils have difficulty in doing so. Most pupils have the expected competence for their age in spelling and punctuation, although even some higher-attaining pupils' spelling can be erratic. Although there are examples of higher-attaining pupils selecting vocabulary imaginatively to fit the purpose of the writing, average and lower-attaining pupils are less adventurous and ideas are not always well enough extended. Most pupils have neat and joined handwriting.
5. Although standards are average overall in mathematics, there are strengths in pupils' work with number and measures. In these specific areas most pupils are working at the level expected for their age, with higher-attaining pupils working beyond this. For example, higher-attaining pupils apply their understanding of place value when working with three places of decimals and average-attaining pupils convert fractions to equivalent percentages. However, pupils' confidence and expertise are less well developed in mathematical problem solving. This is particularly evident in the work of lower-attaining pupils who have difficulty in solving word problems. Work in data handling is at the level expected at this age.

6. Literacy and numeracy standards in other subjects are at the level expected for pupils of this age. For example, pupils successfully write about the blitz in history in Year 6 and use reference books to find information about the Ancient Egyptians in Year 3. Mathematics skills are used in subjects such as science and geography.
7. Most pupils have the knowledge and understanding expected for their age across all the areas of study required by the National Curriculum for science. This is evident, for example, in work on life processes and living things, such as pupils' knowledge of plant growth, food chains and the skeleton. Higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge for their age and use correct scientific vocabulary well, for instance, when describing investigations. Their recording of scientific investigations in particular is more detailed and shows better observational skills than that of most pupils. Lower-attaining pupils have a more rudimentary understanding than that normally found although they cover all the same topics as other pupils. Their recording is much simpler. When carrying out investigations, pupils show a secure awareness of what makes a test fair. They are reaching the level of independence expected for their age in selecting equipment and devising investigations for themselves.
8. Standards in information and communication technology are as expected nationally in Year 6 and similar to those described in the last inspection report. Pupils' progress in this subject is satisfactory as they move up through the school. However, very few pupils are working at a higher level than expected for their age in any aspect of this subject, including in word processing. Most pupils have basic competence in word processing and in procedures such as inserting pictures into text. They have an adequate awareness of spreadsheets, the use of computers for control of devices, and successfully assess the content of CD ROM. A weakness is that pupils do not sufficiently apply their skills in information and communication technology in their work in other subjects. This is because there are too few opportunities for them to do so. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6 because of generally satisfactory teaching in lessons in the computer room.
9. In design and technology, geography, history and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6. However, in design and technology, progress is inconsistent, as it is in English, mathematics and science. The standards in all these subjects in the present Year 6 are as expected nationally. This maintains the situation found at the last inspection, except in geography in which standards are not as high now.
10. In art and design and music, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected nationally, which is a decline since the last inspection. This is because the teaching and learning opportunities in these subjects are not as good as they were. However, standards in singing are as expected for pupils of this age.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are given the support they need in most class lessons and when taken out to work in small groups. The very few pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress along with other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Since the last inspection the school has successfully maintained good standards in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, together with attendance levels above the national average. This has been achieved despite considerable changes in school organisation. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults have improved and are now very good.
13. Pupils' good attitudes create an atmosphere supportive of learning. Most pupils are keen to come to school in the mornings. They readily take out their books and settle to work while waiting for registration. In most lessons, pupils show an interest in what they are doing and readily involve themselves in whatever activity is presented to them. They enjoy taking part in question-and-answer sessions, during which they are happy to take turns without inappropriate shouting out. This is an improvement since the last inspection when several instances were noted of pupils not responding as they should at such times. The response to teachers' instructions is almost always good. It is frequently very good in the upper part of the school, particularly in Year 6. Pupils of all ages and abilities concentrate and apply themselves well even when, occasionally, the lesson is less stimulating than it should be.

14. Pupils' behaviour is good in classrooms and when moving about the school. There is an ethos of good behaviour, with almost all pupils responding well to the high standards expected. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. Pupils behave very well in the dining hall and sensibly when at play. Almost all have a clear understanding of the effect of their actions on others. They respect and understand the school rules, which they see as fair. There is no history of poor behaviour and no pupils have been excluded, for either a fixed term or permanently, in the last school year.
15. All pupils get on very well together and this is seen as they work and play. Nothing was seen to suggest that when the very occasional incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others. Boys and girls and pupils of all ages and backgrounds mix very well. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated. They readily help each other and other pupils support them as well. In lessons and at other times, very good relationships are evident between pupils and adults. Almost all pupils are courteous and polite, yet also friendly with adults.
16. Pupils readily grasp the opportunities provided for them to show initiative and personal responsibility. Although largely routine in nature, these opportunities steadily increase as pupils move up through the school. Pupils are diligent in fulfilling their classroom and school responsibilities, which they undertake with enthusiasm. Throughout the school, pupils mature as individuals. They become increasingly socially aware, developing views and opinions that are soundly based, and expressing them sensibly. This was seen, for example, as Year 6 pupils talked about the importance of health and safety during a personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils discuss potential hazards in a variety of situations, identifying areas for improvement, and showing sensible attitudes and growing maturity. Pupils readily involve themselves in charitable activities, recognising the need to help those less fortunate than themselves. The inspection evidence supports the view of most parents that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.
17. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. There is negligible unauthorised absence and no evidence of truancy. Punctuality in the mornings is good. When instances of lateness occur they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but not as good as when the school was last inspected. There is variation in different year groups and within classes in year groups. During the inspection 50 lessons were observed. Teaching and learning were at least good in almost three-fifths of these lessons, including several instances of very good teaching and learning. However, they were unsatisfactory in just over an eighth of lessons. All the lessons in which teaching and learning were very good took place in Years 5 and 6, as did most of the lessons involving good teaching and learning. Most of the lessons in which teaching and learning were unsatisfactory were located in Years 3 and 4. A scrutiny of pupils' work supports the picture of stronger teaching overall in Years 5 and 6 and weaknesses in Years 3 and 4, particularly in Year 4. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, the school is taking very focused and determined action to rectify them. In particular, it is giving strong support to newly qualified teachers who joined the school in September.
19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in English and mathematics, including in the basics of literacy and numeracy. It is also satisfactory in science. However, in all three of these essential subjects the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent, particularly in English and science. Both subjects are taught well in Year 6 and science is also taught effectively in Year 5. In English, there is variation in teaching quality across the three classes in Year 5, particularly in writing, ranging from good in one class to unsatisfactory in another. In both English and science, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall in Year 4, with more significant weaknesses in one class than the other, and satisfactory overall in Year 3. While the picture is more consistently satisfactory in mathematics, teaching and learning are relatively stronger in Years 5 and 6 and unsatisfactory in the 'upper class' in Year 4.
20. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In art and design and music, teaching and

learning are unsatisfactory. However, singing is taught satisfactorily. In both of these subjects, which have not been priorities for the school since the last inspection, teaching and learning are less effective than they were. This is also the case in design and technology in Years 3 and 4.

21. Where teaching and learning are most effective, each lesson has a clear objective which builds on pupils' prior learning. The lesson purpose is explained clearly to the pupils, which supports learning by helping them to understand the reason for the activities and what they are trying to achieve. Teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining. In many such lessons, activities proceed at a brisk pace and a good amount of work is covered. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson with the 'upper class' when the teacher very effectively developed pupils' awareness of calculation with decimals. In a Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's lively and focused approach captured pupils' interest as they looked at the organisation of a non-chronological text. Activities are well organised and effectively paced within lessons. For example, in very good teaching in information and communication technology, also in Year 6, the introductions to lessons are sharp and focused. This means that pupils can get down to practical work quickly to improve their skills and reinforce their understanding.
22. Most teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum. This is reflected in their use of correct subject-specific language, which aids pupils' understanding, as was also the case at the last inspection. This is a particular feature of work in mathematics and science. Most teachers manage pupils and activities well. As a result, lessons proceed smoothly, particularly where there is practical exploration, such as in art and design. This is also an important factor in pupils' good behaviour and in the achievement of a calm and productive working atmosphere. Normally support staff are well deployed, in particular to help lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Because this helps the pupils concerned to access the same work as others or to complete work matched more specifically to their needs, the pupils respond well and show a good level of interest. Teachers and support staff also respond sensitively to the needs of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language. In most classes there are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and this helps pupils to learn without pressure. Praise is used well to motivate pupils.
23. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, particularly in Year 4 in English and science, and also in one class in each of Years 3 and 5 in English, teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough. Not enough is expected in terms of pupils' academic attainment and also in standards of presentation. Presentation is poor in science in one Year 3 class even though the overall quality of teaching of science is adequate in this particular class. In Year 4 in English, teaching does not sustain pupils' interest. In one class, the work in pupils' books shows deterioration in quality and presentation over time. Even though support staff are often deployed well in lessons, the work in English is not always matched well enough to pupils' differing needs. Where this is so, lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs struggle to complete tasks. This was a particular problem at the time of the inspection because the special educational needs support assistant was temporarily redeployed to teach a class. This also adversely affected some 'lower classes' in mathematics when the usual additional adult support was not available.
24. In one Year 4 class in which several unsatisfactory lessons were seen, the teacher does not give enough attention to what pupils are learning. Rather, there is an emphasis on keeping them occupied. In an information and communication technology lesson, too little work was covered and time was poorly used. The start to the lesson was very slow. In a mathematics lesson with the 'upper' Year 4 class, activities were also poorly timed and the relevance of the work was unclear. This resulted in pupils losing interest and lacking motivation. In an English lesson in the same class pupils completed work that they might as well have done as homework as the teacher gave little focused support. Similarly, in a Year 3 English lesson in which teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, pupils achieved very little. Too much time was spent on time-filling activities rather than on developing pupils' understanding. There were also occasional instances of weak management of pupils in classes that resulted in too little learning taking place. This was seen in a Year 3 music lesson and in a Year 5 physical education lesson.
25. In art and design and music, in which teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, teaching is not systematically developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This is seen in the lack of

development of basic skills such as drawing. In music, a number of teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge. As a result, they are not giving the required attention to composition and performance in lessons.

26. Marking is inconsistent throughout the school. This was also the case at the last inspection and this situation has not been rectified. There are some examples of good marking, with teachers providing pupils with good feedback on their work, such as in most classes in history. In science, also, there are some encouraging comments linked to information on standards, with higher-attaining pupils challenged where this is done most effectively. However, there are examples of marking communicating low expectations to pupils, such as in science in Years 3 and 4. In one Year 4 class there is almost no marking at all. In the 'upper' Year 4 mathematics class, pupils are not given adequate feedback to help them to progress satisfactorily.
27. Although most teachers are effective in developing pupils' skills in using computers in lessons taken in the computer room, they do not make enough use of computers to support pupils' learning at other times. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in mathematics and science, but the teaching of practical and investigative work requires improvement in some classes. In science in Years 3 and 4 there is not enough attention to developing pupils' independence in devising investigations. The development of pupils' competence in problem solving is a relative weakness in mathematics.

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

28. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, as it did at the last inspection. An appropriate emphasis is given to English and mathematics. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met, except in music where not all classes have opportunities for composition and performance. There are weaknesses in the provision for pupils' creative and expressive development in art and design and music. The curriculum for art and design does not provide for the consistent development of pupils' skills in key areas such as drawing, or help them to understand the work of famous artists sufficiently. In music, there is a lack of attention to composition and performance. The result of these shortcomings is that standards are below those expected nationally in art and design and music when pupils reach Year 6.
29. Since the last inspection, the school has taken satisfactory steps to rectify the weaknesses found at that time and to implement new curricular requirements. Adequate long-term plans of work have been developed for most subjects, most recently in history and geography. To take greater account of the needs of higher-attaining pupils, arrangements have been put in place to teach pupils in classes based on their prior attainment in mathematics. This has been successful and the school recognises the need to develop its provision for higher-attaining pupils further. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are properly implemented and support pupils' learning satisfactorily. In English the development of pupils' writing is a relatively weaker area, but the school is taking effective steps to rectify this.
30. Information and communication technology is taught satisfactorily as a specific subject. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in this area through other subjects. The result is that very few pupils are working at a level above that expected for their age. When computers in classrooms are in use, it is often for one or two pupils to work on a subject area different from that being covered by the class in the lesson. This prevents the pupils involved from having full access to the learning opportunities in the lesson concerned, and is unsatisfactory.
31. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are fully integrated into class activities. They normally receive good support from learning support assistants so that they can access the same range of learning opportunities as other pupils. This is managed well so that pupils are also allowed to work without adult supervision whenever this is beneficial for them. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are also fully involved in all activities. Satisfactory attention overall is given to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the learning opportunities provided.

32. The range of activities outside lessons is very good and has continued to develop since the last inspection. Lunchtime and after-school activities include, for example, clubs in football, hockey, computers, dance, drama and French. The school participates in many sporting competitions with considerable success. Pupils also have opportunities to perform at local musical events, and to have instrumental music lessons. The local environment and places further afield are used to enhance the learning opportunities in lessons. There are some good examples of the environment being used well to promote learning, such as a residential visit by Year 6 pupils to support work in history, geography and science, and local studies in Aylesbury.
33. Provision for personal, social and health education is now good, guided by a specific policy and scheme of work. Pupils learn about growing up, healthy living and the dangers of drugs and smoking. The school nurse is involved in some of this teaching and the police liaison officer helps teach pupils how to live safely. Pupils learn about citizenship largely through the unit 'Me as a Citizen'. There is a structured policy for sex education, which specifies suitable coverage of this topic depending on the age of the pupils.
34. There are satisfactory links with the community to support pupils' learning. A number of local people come into school to contribute to the curriculum, for example, older people who have experienced living during World War II. The school has made contact with a number of local organisations and groups to form religious, sporting and cultural links. The school's many charity links, for instance, Zoe's Collection, which raises funds for a hospice for young children, enhance pupils' knowledge and awareness of the outside world. Links with the neighbouring infant school are constructive. Teaching staff from the two schools meet to ensure that work in the junior school builds on that which pupils have already undertaken. Satisfactory links are also in place with a number of the secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the age of 11.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual development. Although spiritual development is satisfactory overall, largely because of the strong contribution made by prayers and assemblies, there are not enough opportunities for this important area in lessons. This is a weakness that reduces otherwise good provision to a satisfactory level overall. The provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. As at the last inspection, it is a main issue for improvement arising from this inspection. Too little has been done to develop this area.
36. Whole-school assemblies and class prayers support pupils' spiritual development well. The inclusion in assemblies of fine-quality music, plus the restful and respectful atmosphere enhance the spiritual quality of assemblies. This is supported by displays within the school, for instance, about 'The Holy Spirit'. Pupils are helped to gain insights into Christian beliefs through the school's links with the Catholic Church and the celebrations of Christian festivals in the annual religious calendar. 'Circle time' activities, in which pupils sit together in a circle to discuss matters of importance to them, sensitively develop pupils' awareness of realities in life, such as birth and rites of passage and how they affect us. Some opportunities for reflection arise in lessons, for example, through stories, the class prayer books, and through geography and history. However, these are seldom specifically planned learning opportunities and they tend to occur incidentally. Opportunities to develop spirituality through art and design or music are underdeveloped and unsatisfactory. There is little attention to developing a sense of wonder at the beauties of the natural world in science lessons.
37. Adults working in school are good role models for pupils' moral development, which is based on Christian principles. There are regular and effective opportunities for pupils to think about difficult situations and how they might be put right. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are guided to think about moral issues in the wider world. A particular strength of moral teaching is the development of pupils' understanding of the school rules and why they are necessary. The school ethos fosters respect for others well, and this is evident in pupils' relationships in classrooms and at playtimes. Visitors to the school, such as religious community leaders, policemen and the local nurse, also provide very good opportunities for pupils to consider and discuss moral issues.
38. As part of their social development, pupils are encouraged to think about their responsibilities as well as their rights. Older pupils are expected to care for younger ones, and take their duties seriously.

They are also encouraged to consider and meet other pupils' needs. For example, Year 5 pupils create imaginative stories to read to infant pupils. Assemblies celebrate and encourage social development through recognition and rewards for socially positive behaviour. The very good number and range of cultural, academic and sports activities additional to lessons enhance the development of social skills such as reliability, collaboration and team spirit. The residential visit for Year 6 pupils contributes much to their social development, giving an opportunity for them to learn to live together away from their home situation. Work in pairs, teams and groups, particularly in information and communication technology and physical education lessons, also contributes significantly to social development on a daily basis. The school has appropriate provision, in policy and practice, to promote racial equality. Many fund-raising opportunities develop pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves, including the elderly and children in need.

39. Pupils learn about English culture mainly through literacy and history lessons. A satisfactory range of out-of-school visits supports this learning. Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' cultural development, to some extent. Through dance and singing, for instance, pupils gain an insight into different times, cultures and places. Pupils gain some understanding of different major world faiths, which increases their awareness of the different customs of people who live in this country as well as abroad. This teaching also gives pupils opportunities to reflect on the similarities and differences of cultural traditions. However, this provision is not comprehensive, nor supported well by books in the school library reflecting other cultures and the fact that Britain is today a multi-cultural society. As a result pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural character of today's society is under-developed. Art and design and music are not used well enough to develop pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. These weaknesses result in the overall provision for pupils' cultural development being judged unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. As at the last inspection, the school gives good attention to pupils' personal wellbeing. Staff and governors are successful in ensuring that the school provides an environment that supports learning effectively. Because there is sensitive and effective support for their welfare, pupils feel secure and happy in their school surroundings. This contributes well to the standards of pupils' attitudes and behaviour and also to safety.
41. Child protection arrangements are excellent and have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and the designated person responsible for this area have extensive experience. There is also very good support from governors. Class teachers and support staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. They are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge.
42. School staff and governors undertake regular risk assessments and have proper regard for the health and safety of the school community. Playground supervision is good. Teachers and lunchtime supervisory staff, who relate well to pupils, ensure that there is effective care during periods of outdoor activity. Arrangements for dealing with sickness or the very occasional accident are well organised and appropriate records are maintained. There are good procedures for liaising with parents when necessary, for example, in the case of a pupil having an accident. Fire safety arrangements are secure. There is good attention to the safety of pupils travelling by bus. Provision for pupils with physical disabilities is also good. There is a robust policy for the protection of pupils using the Internet and e-mail facilities.
43. Procedures for maintaining good attendance are satisfactory. Registration is undertaken efficiently and there are very good arrangements to deal effectively with any unexpected absence. Records of attendance are properly completed and checked.
44. The way in which the school works to achieve positive behaviour and eliminate oppressive behaviour is good. Policy and practice are well focused on the promotion of positive behaviour, and there are clearly defined rewards and sanctions. The successful whole-school approach to the development of good attitudes and self-discipline is underpinned by the Christian ethos that permeates much of the school's work. There are good strategies for dealing with the occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour, which are generally implemented consistently. As a result, there is little disruption to lessons.

45. As at the last inspection, there is effective use of outside agencies to support pupils with special educational needs. The educational psychologist and advisers on hearing and visual impairment provide regular additional support and advice to teachers. The special educational needs co-ordinator carefully checks pupils' progress and oversees the support that is provided in classrooms. Teachers take proper account of the specific needs of the few pupils with English as an additional language. Their progress is checked in relevant areas, for example, in the development of their written English.
46. Arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Formal monitoring of this area, including teachers' records and summaries in pupils' annual reports, is satisfactory. This is supplemented by good informal checking by means of teachers' personal knowledge of their pupils.
47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their academic progress are satisfactory overall. Secure arrangements are in place in English, mathematics and science. In addition to recording results in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, pupils' progress is checked through optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. The use of individual assessment books ensures that the attainment of each child is effectively recorded in these subjects. However, even though the school policy provides a good basis for the development of assessment in other subjects, it is not yet taking place. This is unsatisfactory. It was also identified as an issue at the last inspection and too little progress has been made in this specific area. In information and communication technology only, procedures are being trialled in three classes. The school is beginning to make use of recently acquired computer software that should support the analysis of assessment information both for individuals and groups of pupils. This is an important step forward.
48. The use of assessment information is not consistent across the school and this requires improvement. Information from assessment is used satisfactorily to guide planning in mathematics, for example, to modify lesson plans in the light of pupils' current progress. But in English, particularly in writing, and also in science, teachers are not making consistent use of the assessment information available to them to guide their planning. This limits the extent to which teachers can match work to pupils' differing needs in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school's partnership with parents is good. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire, attended the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors or who talked to inspectors during the inspection have positive views about most aspects of the school's provision for their children. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school and are expected to work hard and do their best. There is much support for the Christian ethos of the school, the care provided, and the attitudes and values that the school promotes. Many feel that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views.
50. A few parents have concerns about some aspects of the school's provision for their children. In particular these relate to homework arrangements, the information they receive about their children's progress and how well the school works with them. The use of homework seen during the inspection was satisfactory. The policy is well explained so that parents can understand what is being done and how they can help. There is no reason for any parent to feel a lack of information, or to feel distanced from the school, if they take advantage of the opportunities provided by the school.
51. As at the last inspection, parents are provided with good information about what is happening in school and how their children are getting on. There is an 'open door' policy that encourages parents to communicate with the school. The headteacher is happy to meet with parents at any time, as are teachers although an appointment may be necessary because of teaching commitments. Meetings are held when parents are invited into school to view their children's work and discuss their progress. Annual written reports on their children's progress and targets for improvement are discussed with parents. The annual reports, together with interim reports on attainment and effort for English, mathematics and science, provide parents with good information about how well their children are doing. There is good use of the personal development section of the annual reports. The well focused and objective comments, and indications of areas for development both academically and personally, are clearly the result of most teachers taking time and trouble to make reports truly individual. There

is close liaison with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, who are properly involved in reviews of their children's progress.

52. Some good use of home-school diaries provides opportunities for exchange of information between home and school. Valuable curriculum information is provided termly, and regular newsletters give wider information on school events. The governors' annual report to parents covers the essential topics for discussion with parents at the annual meeting but does not properly report on pupils' attendance. The school prospectus is a very attractive document that provides good illustrations of school life. It gives parents much useful information about school activities and the part that they can play in supporting their children. However, like the governors' annual report, the required attendance information is not provided.
53. Links between home and school are good. They are supported by the home-school agreement that provides for commitment by all involved to the improvement of standards. Many parents give good support to their children's learning, for example, by hearing them read regularly at home. This contributes to the above-average reading standards.
54. The school successfully encourages parents and other helpers to participate in its work by supporting fund-raising events and helping directly in school. Parents are welcomed to attend the school's weekly Mass and other celebrations. The school appreciates the contribution of parents who are able to give active support and help, including as governors. There is a supportive Parent Teacher Association that fosters relationships between home and school. Its activities provide opportunities for parents, staff and pupils to socialise and raise funds that give much-welcomed additional financial support to the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The school went through an unsettled period from shortly after the last inspection until the appointment of the present headteacher in September 2001. For much of this time it was without a permanent full-time headteacher. Inevitably, this slowed the pace of development, which has only picked up again over the last five terms. Over the last two years there has also been a quite high turnover of teachers. A third of the teaching staff were appointed at the start of this school year as newly qualified teachers. The relative inexperience of so many of the teachers has been a further factor that has restricted steady and consistent progress.
56. The headteacher gives a good and clear educational direction for the school. He is firmly focused on improving the quality of education, principally the effectiveness of teaching. He recognises that this is the most significant factor in raising standards and improving pupils' achievement. To this end, he introduced thorough and systematic procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning shortly after arrival in the school. Linked to these procedures are systems for supporting staff who are not performing as well as they should in teaching or in other aspects of their responsibilities. The headteacher has shown that he is willing, in the interests of the pupils, to take further action if a member of staff does not respond to the support provided. He has the support of governors in this.
57. The focus on checking and improving teaching this school year has proved vital as less experienced teachers have taken up posts. Associated with this there are good arrangements for the induction and support of teachers new to the school. The inspection revealed considerable variation in the teaching quality throughout the school, with particularly significant weaknesses in one Year 4 class. The school was already aware of this and working hard to rectify the situation through a combination of target setting and support. A particularly strong feature of the action taken by the school is the sharing of good practice. In one case, a teacher whose classroom management is strong has helped another whose practice has been less effective. The numeracy co-ordinator has also shared her expertise to try to improve the teaching of mathematics in the 'upper' Year 4 mathematics class.
58. The school does not have a securely established senior management team. At the time of the inspection, the deputy head was absent from school. A third member of the senior management team, who shares the headteacher's vision and determination to move the school on, has been in post for five terms. She has key responsibilities in the co-ordination of English and in overseeing the

arrangements for induction and support of newly qualified teachers. She fulfils these particular roles well and also gives satisfactory support to the headteacher on a day-to-day basis. The deputy has been responsible for assessment for several years and this is an area that has been too slow to develop. Action on this has been fairly recent even though this was a key issue for improvement arising from the last inspection.

59. Most teachers responsible for subjects fulfil their responsibilities at least satisfactorily. They are all involved in checking the quality of teaching in their areas and in reporting to the whole staff team and to individuals as appropriate. There is good leadership and management of English, mathematics and special educational needs. However, in art and design and music, neither of which have been priorities for the school, the leadership and management are unsatisfactory. This needs to be rectified to help pupils to develop not only academically but also to have at least adequate opportunities for creative and imaginative expression.
60. The governors play a strong role in the leadership and management of the school and give effective support to the headteacher, working well in partnership with him. They too are focused on improving the school and working to achieve the best for the pupils. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are involved well in shaping the direction of the school. There are effective arrangements in place for governors to check the school's progress on identified priorities. These support them in putting into practice a questioning and thoughtful approach to governance. Governors, particularly the chair, deserve recognition for their stalwart approach to ensuring the smooth running of the school during the period it was without a substantive headteacher.
61. The school has good procedures for ensuring that the available financial resources are used to support pupils' learning efficiently. Members of the governors' finance committee, working closely with the headteacher, have a secure grasp of the school's financial situation. The financial planning process is well organised, with a clear cycle of planning and review linked directly to the school improvement plan. With good support from the school's bursar, the headteacher and governors manage the budget effectively.
62. The amount of money that the school has carried forward from one year to the next has varied in recent years. It was low at the end of the most recent year for which confirmed figures are available. More recently it has been brought in line with recommended practice for primary schools. The decisions made about the use of reserves are consistent with the school's prudent contingency planning. These ensure that the school is able to respond to changing circumstances with minimal disruption to its planned spending. There is a focus on raising pupils' attainment and progress by maintaining staffing levels, and improving learning resources and the quality of the physical environment. Financial planning is solidly based on ensuring that the school's educational provision is sustainable and that, as far as is possible, its educational targets are met. The specific funds element of the school's finances is properly used. Where necessary, it is supplemented from the school's own funds.
63. The governing body, supported by the headteacher, gives satisfactory consideration to whether the school provides best value for pupils and parents. Good procedures are in place for ensuring that best financial value is obtained when purchasing products or services. Governors use information from parents, staff and the pupils to consider the effectiveness of what the school provides. Steps are being taken to analyse the school's performance more critically by examining pupils' progress over time and not only the standards they attain.
64. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are good. Administrative staff are conscientious and undertake their duties efficiently. The school office works smoothly and effectively. Recommendations of the school's most recent audit have been properly addressed. There is satisfactory use of new technology to support the efficient running of the school.
65. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory, as at the last inspection. The school places a high priority on the provision of teaching and support staff but has recently faced some difficulties as a result of staff absence and the balance between experienced teachers and those new to the profession. At the time of the inspection, the support of pupils with special educational needs was adversely affected by the redeployment of the special needs support assistant to teach a class temporarily.

66. The accommodation is good and supports the teaching of the National Curriculum well. Internally the school provides a spacious, welcoming environment. Disabled access is generally good although there are some narrow corridor areas that are less than satisfactory. The school caretaker works hard to keep the building clean, tidy and as well maintained as possible. A number of specialist areas such as the dining and assembly halls, an oratory, a medical room and a well-equipped computer room and library complement the classrooms. There is sufficient playground space for the size of the school. It is of good quality with provision for pupils to sit and talk quietly. Well-maintained grounds, including extensive grassed areas with a profusion of trees and shrubs, enhance the appearance of the school and its educational provision.
67. Expenditure on resources to support pupils' learning has been well directed. All subjects have the necessary resources. There is good provision for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. In relation to the school's use of all its resources and the quality of the education provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. To rectify the weaknesses so that standards are raised and the quality of education is improved, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- (i) Give more attention to pupils' creative development. In particular, raise standards in art and design and music and ensure that all aspects of these subjects, as set out in the National Curriculum, are covered.
(Paragraphs 10, 20, 25, 28, 100 - 102 and 135 - 137)
 - (ii) Rectify the weaknesses in teaching in particular classes. In particular, raise teachers' expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining and of the quality of pupils' presentation.
(Paragraphs 18, 19, 23, 24, 70, 74, 78, 79, 86, 94, 96, 110, 129 and 131)
 - (iii) Improve the provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly to increase their awareness and understanding of the rich diversity of modern multi-cultural Britain. Give more attention to planning opportunities for pupils' spiritual development through subjects.
(Paragraphs 35, 36, 39, 80, 99, 105 and 139)
 - (iv) Increase the use of computers and other new technology to support pupils' learning across the subjects.
(Paragraphs 8, 27, 30, 88, 97, 105, 110, 122, 128, 132 and 139)
 - (v) Make more effective use of the assessment information available to plan learning opportunities to meet pupils' differing needs. Develop and fully implement whole-school procedures for assessment in subjects that do not have them.
(Paragraphs 47, 48, 80, 99, 105, 111, 117, 125, 133, 140 and 146)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Marking is inconsistent.
(Paragraphs 26, 78, 88, 96, 117 and 123)
- Attendance is not properly reported in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

(Paragraph 52)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

50

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	0	8	21	14	7	0	0
Percentage	0	16	42	28	14	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	259
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
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Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	24	34	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	22	23
	Girls	28	28	32
	Total	48	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (85)	86 (72)	95 (88)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	21	23
	Girls	25	28	24
	Total	44	49	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (79)	84 (81)	81 (81)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
208	0	0
8	0	0
14	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
3	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	28.7

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	499,893
Total expenditure	521,169
Expenditure per pupil	2,012
Balance brought forward from previous year	29,817
Balance carried forward to next year	8,541

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
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

47%

Number of questionnaires sent out

259

Number of questionnaires returned

121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	50	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	26	60	7	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	60	6	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	45	30	7	2
The teaching is good.	34	55	5	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	51	17	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	45	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	56	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	28	47	19	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	43	46	2	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	6	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	54	7	2	2

Other issues raised by parents

Parents attending the meeting with inspectors were particularly pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and the quality of care for their children. Several parents recognise that the school has been through a period of instability without a full-time permanent headteacher. They see the school as having moved on since the appointment of the present headteacher.

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

ENGLISH

69. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average. They were broadly average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The 2002 results are a little lower than at the last inspection. However, the results have been maintained at a level above the national average in all years since the school was last inspected. Both boys and girls achieve satisfactorily.
70. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work is that standards at this point in the present Year 6 are average overall. The lower standards seen in pupils' school work this year, compared with last year's above-the-national-average test results, simply reflect the natural variations found in year groups of pupils. They represent satisfactory progress since entry to the school for this particular year group. Standards in reading, speaking and listening in Year 6 are above average, although writing standards are not as strong and are only average. The reading, speaking and listening standards seen during the inspection are much the same as when the school was last inspected, although writing standards are not as high now. While the overall rate of progress for pupils in Years 3 to 6 now is satisfactory, it is not consistent. It varies in different year groups and classes, particularly in writing, as a result of variations in the quality of teaching.
71. Standards of speaking and listening are above average in Year 6. Many pupils are articulate speakers and understand the conventions of discussion. They listen carefully to each other as well as to their teachers. Most use a wide vocabulary for their age, developing and communicating complex arguments. They successfully explain and justify their views from their own experiences.
72. Reading standards are above average in Year 6. Most pupils are fluent and accurate readers who confidently tackle a range of texts. They are beginning to use a range of skills, such as inference and deduction, to identify deeper levels of meaning. They offer well-thought-through opinions about the books they read, making comparisons between books and using evidence from the text to justify their viewpoints. Lower-attaining pupils use a wide range of skills to support their reading, for example, to work out unfamiliar words. They too approach reading confidently.
73. Writing standards are average in Year 6, and are lower than the good standards pupils attain in reading, speaking and listening. Most pupils successfully write at length for a variety of different purposes, for example, to produce reports or diary entries, both in English lessons and as part of their work in other subjects. Higher-attaining pupils competently organise their ideas into paragraphs and use a wide vocabulary, but others are less successful in these aspects of writing. Most pupils have the competence expected at this age in spelling and punctuation, although even some higher-attaining pupils' spelling is erratic. In most cases, handwriting is neat and joined.
74. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory and much the same as at the last inspection. It is consistently good in Year 6. In other year groups and classes it ranges from good to unsatisfactory, with the weakest teaching located in Year 4. Within Year 5, teaching and learning vary from good to unsatisfactory in the three classes. While satisfactory overall in Year 3, teaching and learning are better in one class than in the other. The teaching of reading is better than that of writing.
75. In lessons in which teaching is most effective, teachers explain the purpose of activities so that pupils understand what it is that they are aiming to achieve. New work builds well on previous learning and tasks are relevant to each lesson's purpose. Good use is made of support staff in these lessons to work with groups of pupils and a calm and productive working atmosphere prevails. In Year 6, the teachers' lively approach captures pupils' interest and motivates them well. Good relationships and management of pupils ensure that pupils work independently and collaboratively without direct supervision. Year 6 teachers have high expectations of the standards that all pupils are capable of attaining.

76. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge is generally satisfactory. This is seen in the effective development of pupils' enthusiasm for reading. The recent introduction of guided reading sessions across the school is stimulating pupils' interest in a wide range of authors. The use of reading journals is helping pupils to develop a critical awareness of the books to which they are introduced. Recent writing initiatives are also having a positive effect on pupils' learning where they are being implemented correctly. In most classes, pupils are given sufficient opportunities to apply and reinforce understanding developed in grammatical exercises through extended pieces of writing which they undertake on their own. However, in a few classes writing tasks are narrowly focused and fail to develop pupils' skills sufficiently.
77. Teachers plan work carefully with close adherence to the National Literacy Strategy. In some classes, particularly in Year 6, planning is evaluated and modified in the light of ongoing assessment. This helps teachers to match work to pupils' differing needs. However, in most classes the same work is planned for all pupils. As a result, there are occasions when lower-attaining pupils struggle to complete tasks which are poorly matched to their needs. Normally there is sufficient additional adult support in classes to help pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum and good assistance is given to pupils with statements of educational needs. However, because of staff absence and the subsequent temporary redeployment of the special educational needs support assistant, pupils with special educational needs did not all receive the specialist help they needed during the inspection.
78. Expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining, including in the presentation of their work, are low in some classes, particularly in one Year 3 class and one Year 4 class. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and often lacks a clear focus. This is a decline since the last inspection. Although there are individual targets in pupils' books these are seldom referred to in the marking. In some classes it is not made clear to pupils what they should do to improve and mistakes are repeated in subsequent pieces of work. In one class in Year 4, very little work is marked at all.
79. In two lessons seen in which teaching was unsatisfactory, the teachers did not focus enough on promoting pupils' learning. In a lesson in one Year 3 class, activities filled the time but did not develop pupils' understanding adequately. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher supervised pupils without giving sufficient direct guidance and support. The result was that the activity might just as well have been undertaken as homework without the presence of a teacher. There was minimal direct teaching to guide pupils and to challenge them to do better.
80. The co-ordination of English is good. Although the present quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent, with weaknesses in some classes, action is being taken to rectify these and improve provision more generally. The co-ordinator observes teaching in all classes, provides good support for colleagues, and has brought in additional help from the local education authority. There has been considerable investment in training in order to increase teachers' confidence and skills in teaching literacy. There is a continuing emphasis on developing teachers' understanding of how to teach writing skills. Resources to support pupils' learning have improved considerably. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the areas requiring further development, including increasing the use of computers to support pupils' learning. Good procedures are now in place for assessing pupils' progress and the results of national tests are analysed to identify areas for further development. However, the use of information from assessment is inconsistent across classes. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the study of literature, although the subject contributes well to pupils' moral and social development.

MATHEMATICS

81. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above the national average. However, they were below average when compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. These results were similar to those achieved in 1998, when the school was last inspected. Currently, standards as seen in pupils' school work are average in Year 6. The school is taking significant steps to improve pupils' attainment particularly in the areas in which it is relatively weaker, and to develop problem-solving and investigative strategies. Pupils now in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language. The lower overall standards in

the present Year 6, compared with the 2002 test results, simply reflect the natural variation found in year groups of pupils.

82. Most pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age across all aspects of mathematics required by the National Curriculum. Work with number and measurement are relative strengths. This is seen, for example, as higher-attaining pupils competently use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide numbers up to three places of decimals, by 10,100 and 1000. They successfully arrange numbers with three decimal places in ascending and descending order. Pupils of average attainment convert fractional equivalents to percentages. Lower-attaining pupils work with calculations with numbers up to two decimal places. They have more difficulty with conversions to percentages or fractions. Most pupils show good understanding as they select correct units of measurement and calculate perimeters and areas. Pupils' confidence and expertise in practical problem solving are less well developed. Most have some strategies for problem solving, particularly those who are higher attaining. However others, particularly those who are lower attaining, have more difficulty, especially in understanding words or questions. Work in handling data and pupils' understanding of probability are at the level expected at this age. Pupils are starting to use and interpret spreadsheets, with the aid of computer-assisted technology.
83. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and is much the same as at the last inspection. Teaching and learning are stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Instances of good and very good teaching were seen in lessons during the inspection in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons, pupils' learning moved at a brisk pace and a very good amount of work was covered. In a Year 6 lesson, with an 'upper mathematics class', the teacher developed pupils' awareness of calculation strategies with decimals very effectively. In a Year 5 lesson, in which the pace and timing were very good, the teacher provided opportunities for self-assessment by pupils. This helped them to recognise what they had learnt. In most lessons, the sound planning structure allows teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. In most lessons, in which teachers plan work suitably matched to the range of pupils' needs, pupils respond with high levels of interest and motivation. This is because the work challenges them at the right level.
84. The most effective aspects of teaching of mathematics throughout the school are the good planning, aligned to the National Numeracy Strategy and the long-term plan of work, the organisation of lessons, and the emphasis given to teaching pupils a range of strategies for calculation. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge, including an understanding of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is also a clear emphasis on developing pupils' understanding and use of mathematical language. There is generally effective use of the time at the end of lessons to allow pupils to demonstrate what they have done, and for teachers to assess pupils' learning. The information gained is used to plan the next lessons.
85. The lowest-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in most classes. Teachers are also sensitive to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Teachers are successful in communicating the purpose of each lesson. This means that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and know what they are aiming to achieve. All these aspects of teaching support pupils' learning well.
86. As well as the good features of teaching, there are areas requiring improvement. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, in the 'upper class' for mathematics in Year 4, there was a lack of variation in the tasks set. Not enough account was taken of pupils' differing needs. Pupils were not given enough opportunities to apply calculations or to understand the relevance of their work. This resulted in pupils losing interest and lacking motivation. In this Year 4 class, the marking of pupils' work is haphazard. The teacher provides too little feedback for pupils to assist them to make satisfactory progress.
87. There are also features in otherwise satisfactory lessons that restrict pupils' learning. In a Year 3 'lower class' lesson, for example, the planning indicated suitably varied learning opportunities to match pupils' needs. However, the lack of a learning support assistant meant that groups of pupils received inadequate support. As a consequence, many pupils underachieved in the lesson and lost motivation. This weakness was largely a result of a temporary staffing situation at the time of the inspection that had resulted in the redeployment of the special educational needs support assistant.

88. Most work throughout the school is well presented and regularly marked and teachers make comments to help pupils identify how they can improve. However, there are some inconsistencies in the marking and target-setting procedures. Computers are used on occasions to support work in numeracy, particularly in lessons in the computer room. However, there is not enough use of computers and new technology in mathematics overall. During the inspection there was little use of computers in classrooms. The school recognises that this is an area requiring development. Regular homework activities are set. These reinforce and consolidate work undertaken in class. There is some use of mathematics in subjects such as geography and history, for instance, time lines and graphical investigations.
89. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. There is a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of provision. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has steered the staff well through the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There has been good use of in-service training and involvement of the local education authority. The co-ordinator undertakes satisfactory checking of teaching and learning, including scrutiny of teachers' planning and lesson observations with newly qualified staff. She has fed back to teachers on where developments are needed. In particular, she has supported a less experienced teacher to try to rectify the weaknesses in the teaching of the 'upper class' for mathematics in Year 4. The checking of provision is rightly focused on any areas of concern and has, for example, influenced the way in which pupils are organised in classes for mathematics lessons. These monitoring procedures represent an improvement in provision from the last inspection.
90. The co-ordinator ensures that the subject is adequately resourced, with readily accessible equipment and textbooks and other supplementary worksheets. Teachers generally make good use of the range of available resources, with the exception of class-based computer resources, the use of which is inconsistent. The school has recently introduced a tracking system, which, once established, should assist teachers in checking the progress of pupils and analysing the effectiveness of teaching. The organisation of pupils into classes based on prior attainment for mathematics is supporting pupils' learning in both the 'upper' and 'lower' classes, providing there is adequate support staffing in the lower groups where there are more pupils with special educational needs.

SCIENCE

91. In 2002, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were above the national average, and close to the average for similar schools. This maintains the situation at the last inspection. Boys' performance in the 2002 tests was better than that of girls, although in most years boys' and girls' results are very similar. The evidence from the inspection of pupils' school work is that the standards in the present Year 6 are average. The lower standards this year compared with the 2002 test results reflect the natural variation found in year groups of pupils. While the overall rate of progress of pupils now in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, it is not consistent. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress as a result of effective teaching. However, in Years 3 and 4 - especially Year 4 - many pupils are presently under-achieving because their recording of practical science work is incomplete and poorly presented. The result is that their understanding is not developing as well as it should.
92. Most pupils in Year 6 have the knowledge expected for their age across all the areas of study required by the National Curriculum for science. This is evident in their understanding of life processes and living things, and their knowledge about plant growth and the plant life cycle. Pupils know how the food chain works and how animals adapt to their habitats. They also have a sound knowledge of the human skeleton and of bone joints and muscles. In their study of physical processes, pupils show the understanding expected at this age of electricity and electrical circuits, and of light, reflections and shadows. They understand such scientific terms as 'rate' or 'condition'. Higher-attaining pupils in particular use these terms in answering questions and describing experiments and have a good knowledge for their age.
93. Pupils in Year 6 have a secure understanding of the importance of a fair test. Most know that in designing an experiment they need to alter one aspect at a time in order to investigate the effects of that change. Higher-attaining pupils record scientific investigations well, reflecting their good

observational skills. The recording of lower-attaining pupils is much simpler and shows a more superficial level of understanding than is normally found at this age. Most pupils are reaching the expected degree of independence for their age in designing investigations and asking scientific questions.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, as at the last inspection. However, the inspection of pupils' written work reveals that the quality of teaching is not consistent across classes and year groups. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning varied from very good in one Year 6 class to satisfactory in one Year 3 lesson. Teachers have generally good subject knowledge. They select language carefully and precisely and employ scientific vocabulary appropriately. This helps pupils to learn the meaning and use of such terminology. They regularly check that pupils understand the vocabulary of the topics of science lessons. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, are learning to express their understanding of science in ways which are precise and which enable them to make valid generalisations. Teachers generally have high expectations of behaviour and pupils' participation, manage pupils well, and organise science activities effectively. As a result, pupils pay close attention, show good levels of interest and motivation, and co-operate in their work. In the most effective teaching, there is strong trust and mutual respect between teacher and pupils, leading to high-quality classroom work.
95. Most teachers provide at least satisfactory coverage of the science curriculum. Most treat science topics in sufficient depth and detail, but this is not the case with all Year 3 and 4 classes, where the recording of learning is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teachers' planning for lessons is satisfactory. They normally deploy classroom support staff well. This helps pupils with special educational needs to access the same work as others and to make progress at the same rate as their classmates. For the most part, lesson time is well used, but sometimes too much time is taken in introducing the work before practical activities begin, as was seen, for example, in one Year 3 lesson.
96. The standard of presentation of pupils' written work is not consistent. Most pupils produce well-presented work that demonstrates their secure understanding of science. Teachers' marking is also inconsistent. In classes where it is most effectively undertaken it both encourages pupils and tells them about their standards. It also challenges the higher attaining pupils through the communication of more demanding expectations. However, there are also instances in Years 3 and 4 where the teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation, quality of handwriting and layout of work are too low. In one class in Year 4 there is virtually no marking, with the result that pupils produce incomplete, careless and illegible work.
97. There was little evidence during the inspection of computers and other new technology being used in support of science teaching and learning. In those classrooms where a pupil did use the computer during science lessons, it was most frequently to undertake work in another subject. This resulted in the pupils concerned missing part of their science lessons. Furthermore, there is little evidence in pupils' exercise books that computers are being used to enhance learning in science.
98. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the co-ordinator was absent from the school, and co-ordination was being temporarily undertaken by the headteacher, assisted by another teacher. There is satisfactory checking of the quality of teaching and learning, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' planning for lessons is checked and samples of pupils' work are analysed. Feedback to teachers is given. This checking has identified the weaknesses in marking in some classes, particularly in Year 4, and action is being taken to bring about improvement. However, the role of the co-ordinator does not yet extend to visiting classrooms when science teaching is taking place. This prevents a more thorough review of teaching and learning.
99. A key issue arising from the last inspection was to increase opportunities for pupils to develop independence through investigations and research. The school has given priority to the development of practical and investigative approaches to learning science. This has improved pupils' scientific experience and learning of science. However, not all teachers give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop independence in carrying out investigations, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The school is aware that the science policy needs to be re-written, and this is now a priority. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress are satisfactory but fairly new. They are not

yet used fully to support teachers in matching work to pupils' differing needs. Although the subject makes a satisfactory contribution overall to pupils' personal development, not enough opportunities are planned for pupils' spiritual development.

ART AND DESIGN

100. The standard of pupils' work in art and design is below that expected nationally in Year 6, which is a decline since the last inspection. The progress of all groups of pupils as they move up through the school is unsatisfactory. This is because teaching does not adequately develop pupils' key skills, such as in observational drawing, nor does it sufficiently increase their knowledge and understanding of art and design. Work in one year does not build on that undertaken in the previous year to support consistent progress.
101. Year 6 pupils have some basic drawing skills but these are not as well developed as they should be. While many pupils are able to show distance by how they position objects in a sketch of a landscape, even the highest-attaining pupils have little awareness of perspective. Skills in shading are underdeveloped and pupils do not demonstrate the understanding normally found at this age in using a variety of techniques. Observational drawings are fairly simple and pupils do not give enough attention to detail, for example, through careful study and enlargement of specific features of an object. Awareness of pattern is at a more simple level than normally found. Pupils have not developed the expected control of a variety of materials in order to use them for the expression of feelings and ideas. Pupils do not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the work of famous artists in their own experimental work because there are too few opportunities for them to do so.
102. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and is not as good as at the last inspection. This is because teaching is not systematically developing pupils' skills and confidence such as in drawing or in using a range of materials. Although pupils are sometimes shown the work of famous artists in lessons, teachers do not do enough to help them to understand the style and techniques of these artists. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to explore their own ideas and feelings through art and design.
103. Even though there are significant shortcomings in how teaching supports pupils' progress over time, there were instances of good and even very good teaching and learning in the lessons seen during the inspection. The reason for this is that there are some interesting projects that most teachers present well and that are linked to work in other subjects. However, each of these projects stands alone rather than being part of a cohesive programme for art and design. Collectively, they do not provide an adequate programme to support pupils' learning, including their development of skills.
104. In the lessons seen, most teachers managed pupils and activities effectively. Most taught specific skills accurately through careful explanation and demonstration. This was seen, for example, in Year 5, where the skills of cross-stitch and sewing sequins were developed. In one of the two Year 6 classes the teacher very effectively introduced pupils to methods through which movement might be shown in drawing, and developed their awareness of proportion in figure drawing. This work was undertaken satisfactorily in the other Year 6 class. In almost all of the lessons seen, relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils were very good.
105. Support staff are effectively deployed to ensure that pupils with special educational needs complete the same work as others. Staff also respond sensitively to the few pupils learning English as an additional language to ensure that they are fully included. As a result of all these features of teaching, pupils show good attitudes and behave well. However, there are still no assessment procedures for art and design. This makes it difficult for teachers to match work to pupils' differing needs. In particular, teachers do not identify how pupils with potential for higher attainment might be challenged. There is no specific provision for pupils who may be talented. Because insufficient attention is given to investigating ideas and feelings through art and design and to learning about famous artists and designers, the subject's contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is unsatisfactory. At the time of the inspection, there were few displays of pupils' art and design work in classrooms or corridors. The result is that there are missed opportunities to celebrate pupils' successes, to promote learning and to give emphasis to the subject. There is not enough use of computers to support pupils' learning in art and design.

106. The overall leadership and management of art and design are unsatisfactory, although there is satisfactory day-to-day management. The provision in art and design has declined since the last inspection. The subject has not been a priority for the school. The co-ordinator is also responsible for English and has had to give the greatest amount of her attention to developing the English provision. The co-ordinator gives helpful support to colleagues who lack confidence in teaching art and design. She has introduced some interesting projects which both staff and pupils have found enjoyable. She checks teaching and learning through scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and gives feedback to staff. However, this has not been effective in identifying the extent of the shortcomings in provision and how they affect pupils' progress. Hence, the school has not taken adequate action to rectify them.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. The standard of pupils' work in design and technology is as expected nationally in Year 6, as at the last inspection. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6. However, while pupils' progress is securely satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, it is inconsistent in Years 3 and 4. The timetabling of design and technology alternates with art and design. Because art and design was the timetabled subject at the time of the inspection, it was not possible to inspect any lessons in design and technology. A scrutiny of a small number of samples of pupils' products from design and technology lessons, and of their associated written work, was undertaken. Evidence was also gained by examining photographic records of some of the products made by pupils of different ages.
108. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of how to design and make a small decorated Christmas stocking from felt. In the examples of work seen, there is satisfactory evidence of careful design and manufacture by pupils, and some good features to the work. Written work shows pupils' good insight into the design process. This includes development of their first ideas, and a successful subsequent evaluation of the final product and process.
109. The standard of work of Year 3 and 4 pupils is inconsistent. Some pupils have well-presented exercise books which contain good information and commentaries. There are examples of good design work, for example, of the net for a box to be made from card. Also included are some satisfactory evaluations of the process of designing and making these boxes. However, in the small sample of products seen, the quality of pupils' skills in manufacturing the boxes is unsatisfactory. Although the artefacts are satisfactorily decorated, it is clear that insufficient care was taken in their production. The work of some other Year 3 and 4 pupils is poor. In the small sample of pop-up story books seen, the quality of the work is crude. The stories in the books are incomplete, the writing carelessly presented, and the pop-up parts in the books poorly made. The exercise books of these pupils are also poor, with very little evidence of design and technology work having been undertaken. The little that is included is poorly presented. Overall standards in Years 3 and 4 are not as good as they were at the last inspection.
110. The scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' products shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but are inconsistent across year groups. It is evident that the older pupils are satisfactorily taught. As a result, they understand the process of designing, making and evaluating a product. Some Year 3 and 4 pupils have also had a positive experience of most aspects of the design process. However, the standard of the exercise books of other Year 3 and 4 pupils, and the quality of their products, indicate that there are some significant shortcomings in teaching. The quality of these pupils' learning has been very superficial. The attitudes underlying pupils' work are similarly inconsistent. Where teaching is securely satisfactory, pupils' work shows evidence of care and effort. Where teaching is weaker, pupils show little interest and apply little effort. The quality of teaching is much the same as at the last inspection in Years 5 and 6, but it is not as good as it was in Years 3 and 4. Throughout the school, there is little use of computers to support pupils' learning in design and technology.
111. The day-to-day management of design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has ensured that the planning of the subject across the four years pays satisfactory attention to the different aspects required by the National Curriculum. It focuses at different points on food technology,

textiles, mechanical and electrical control devices, and work on structures. However, the evaluative comments on this year's long-term plans are not sufficiently detailed to guide next year's curriculum planning. Like art and design and music, design and technology has not been a priority for the school since the last inspection. Hence, the checking of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough to identify the extent of the weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4. Teaching is checked through a review of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, but does not extend to visiting teachers in classrooms. More formal assessment of pupils' work and progress is not yet taking place. This also makes it more difficult for teachers to identify when pupils' work is not up to the expected standard for their age.

GEOGRAPHY

112. The standard of pupils' work in geography is as expected nationally in Year 6, but it is not as high as when the school was last inspected. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Those with special educational needs are given the help they need in lessons to progress at the same rate as other pupils. Teachers are also careful to ensure that the few who have English as an additional language are given support if necessary so that they too make satisfactory progress.
113. Most Year 6 pupils have the expected understanding for their age of land features, notably water systems in Britain. They successfully identify rivers on a map of Britain. Most have a satisfactory awareness of how rivers are formed. They also have the expected knowledge for their age of the water cycle, river features and river management. Through their work lower down the school, pupils have gained the expected competency in interpreting maps and in identifying similarities and differences in the human and physical features of places.
114. Pupils successfully use correct geographical terminology. They are starting to use geographical skills and evidence to communicate findings, and skills in geographical enquiry are being developed well. For instance, in Year 6 pupils successfully use a range of literary and computer-based resources for research. Pupils have not yet developed sufficient awareness of how views held by people about environmental change may differ. Another area that is a relative weakness is their awareness of some of the connections and relationships that make places inter-dependent.
115. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. An example of very good teaching and learning was seen during the inspection in one Year 5 class. Planning is good and has improved since the last inspection, supported by a sound long-term plan of work. Satisfactory attention is paid to methods of recording used by pupils and support for those with special educational needs. Secure subject knowledge helps teachers to plan lessons building on pupils' previous learning. Pupils are generally managed well, so that behaviour is good and they willingly share resources. They show interest and enjoyment in the subject.
116. In most classes teachers give pupils a satisfactory variety of geographical experiences, for instance, the study of maps or researching from topic-based textbooks or photographs. An example of this is the comparison of the environment and land use over time, through the study of old and new maps of the local area. The good use of the environment is exemplified in the Year 3 Mop End Field Study experience, and in the local study of Aylesbury. Older pupils studying water have the opportunity to undertake a local river study, and Year 6 pupils have the experience of a residential visit. These opportunities make a good contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly their social and cultural development.
117. Teachers give praise for success, which encourages concentration and perseverance. They often make helpful comments in marking pupils' work but, as at the last inspection, this is not a consistent practice in all classes. Some teachers use assessments at the end of topics to ascertain what pupils have learned. However, the use of this practice is also inconsistent. There are still no whole-school assessment procedures for geography to help teachers to match work more effectively to pupils' differing needs as they move up through the school. As a result, they are unable to identify higher-attaining pupils who might be capable of more demanding work.
118. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has overseen the successful introduction of a new long-term scheme of work, linked to the

study of history. The school has also ensured, since the last inspection, that the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is an integral part of the teaching. Some resources have improved, but computer-based learning opportunities in the classroom are not well enough established. The Internet is being developed to support pupils' learning but this is not fully in place. The school has identified a need to update some atlases. The checking of teaching and learning is being developed. Currently the co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and scrutinises pupils' books. However, she is not involved in checking teaching through lesson observations to ensure consistency of teaching and standards.

HISTORY

119. The standard of pupils' work in history is as expected nationally in Year 6, as at the last inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress throughout Years 3 to 6. Those with special educational needs are given the support necessary in lessons for them to progress at the same rate as other pupils.
120. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different periods of history, such as World War II, and Victorian and Tudor times. They competently use a time line. Pupils successfully identify changes across different periods of time, for example, comparing Victorian lifestyles with those of today. They demonstrate a good knowledge of past societies, such as daily life among the rich and the poor. For instance, they have good awareness of the lives and treatment of Victorian children in different social strata. However, they are only just beginning to link characteristics of different periods and societies.
121. Most pupils successfully research topics to produce imaginative and factual accounts, illustrating their work well. An example of this is pupils' imaginative letter writing, from the perspective of children experiencing the blitz in cities across Britain. However, pupils are at an early stage in understanding that there are different interpretations of past events, depending on different people's standpoints. Lower-attaining pupils cover the same topics as other pupils, but their recording methods are at a simpler level.
122. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, maintaining the situation found at the last inspection. There are examples of good and even very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and successfully use a range of strategies to develop pupils' historical knowledge and understanding as well as their skills of enquiry. Research opportunities are provided through the use of visits, photographs, and computer work. There is not a great deal of evidence of the use of historical artefacts to support pupils' learning, but the library reference books are an effective resource. In general, the learning opportunities are interesting and varied, although the use of computers is not well established across all year groups and classes.
123. Regular marking takes place, but is inconsistent in quality. Most teachers give useful feedback to pupils to help them to improve but a few do not. Praise is given during lessons to encourage pupils and motivate them to try hard. In a lesson observed in Year 3, the teacher's use of resources provided a satisfactory basis for investigating how information about the past can be acquired. The activity, which involved finding out about the significance of the Scarab pendant in Egyptian culture, successfully caught pupils' interest and they concentrated well on the tasks set. In whole-class teaching at the start of lessons, teachers use pupils' previous knowledge as a basis for further learning and the setting of new challenges. In the lessons seen, work was adapted to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs to help them achieve satisfactorily.
124. The leadership and management of history are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has drawn up a new long-term plan of work. This plan meets the revised national requirements for history, and provides a good basis for the development of pupils' skills. There are good links with literacy and many examples of writing and reading skills being developed through history. There are now some good opportunities for research work, rectifying a weakness identified at the last inspection. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and provides opportunities for them to develop socially as they work together and share ideas.

125. There is satisfactory checking of the teaching and learning throughout the school. The co-ordinator checks teachers' plans and scrutinises pupils' work. Some teachers undertake end-of-unit assessments. The information gained from these assessments indicates how well pupils have learned. However, the use of this information is inconsistent across the school and there are still no consistent whole-school procedures for assessment in history. In particular, this prevents teachers from clearly identifying pupils capable of more demanding work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards in information and communication technology in Year 6 are as expected nationally and similar to those described in the last inspection report. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall as they move up from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6.
127. Pupils in Year 6 have basic competence in word processing. They successfully develop their work by altering fonts and font sizes and inserting pictures into text. They know how to use a spreadsheet, and to insert a formula in order to calculate the perimeter or the area of a rectangle. Pupils also interpret spreadsheet data that they have entered themselves. For example, having measured the height of individual pupils and the length of a jump they have performed, they input these data. They then answer questions about the relationships between height and jump length. Most pupils know how to construct the basic elements of a control program to light a bulb for a set period of time. They competently produce a flowchart to control the light and the foghorn of a lighthouse. Pupils develop skills in evaluating the quality of multi-media pages by assessing the content of CD ROM. Higher-attaining pupils generally complete spreadsheet and flowchart work to a better standard than others. However, there is little evidence of pupils working beyond the level expected for their age or of pupils using more advanced word-processing and editing skills.
128. It is because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their developing skills in word processing in other subjects that standards are not higher. For instance, Year 5 and 6 pupils have few opportunities to practise more extended writing using computers to draft and re-draft material in subjects such as English, history and geography. Similarly, they are not practising the more flexible use of the keyboard associated with the production of more extended material on the word processor. In addition, there are some weaknesses in the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 that prevent better achievement by the time pupils reach Year 6. For example, many Year 4 pupils are less secure than normally found in entering instructions into a drawing program to produce capital letters. There are weaknesses in their understanding of the overall purpose of such work, and they cannot predict the outcome before it appears on the screen. This is a direct consequence of shortcomings in teaching in this particular year.
129. Across Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, as at the last inspection. However, teaching quality is not consistent across all year groups. Most teachers display good teaching skills in information and communication technology lessons. They have good knowledge and understanding of the particular programs used. They clarify the purpose of lessons well for pupils and explain the nature of the work that they will undertake. Their good use of language encourages well-thought-through responses from pupils when they answer questions or explain their findings.
130. In lessons in which teaching is most effective in Year 6, teachers work briskly, yet also provide opportunities for pupils to make useful contributions to the lesson. There are high expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining and the pace of work. Teachers use time well by ensuring that the introduction does not intrude on the remainder of the lesson. As a result, pupils have sufficient opportunities to complete their tasks. Pupils are well focused and attentive in the computer room, and often there is a real 'buzz' as they set about their tasks.
131. Where teaching is less effective in Year 4, time is poorly used. In a lesson seen in which teaching and learning were unsatisfactory, the time available for information and communication technology activities was cut short by a slow start to the lesson. Pupils' rate of work was not checked sufficiently with the result that they did not complete the planned work. In particular, the more demanding activities that should have developed from the early work in the lesson did not take place. In these

circumstances, pupils, and especially those capable of higher attainment, are not sufficiently challenged.

132. Not enough use is made of the computers in classrooms to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Very often when classroom computers are in use by one or more pupils, the program does not relate to the subject of the lesson. This means that opportunities are missed to extend and develop the learning of other subjects through computers and other new technology. This issue was identified at the last inspection. Insufficient progress has been made since then in rectifying this weakness.
133. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are satisfactory overall. The process for checking the quality of teaching and learning includes analysing samples of pupils' work and teachers' lesson plans, and providing feedback. It does not extend to visiting lessons. However, this checking ensures that lessons have the right content to develop skills as pupils move up through the school. The local education authority has produced a grid for assessing and recording pupils' standards of work in the subject. The school is trialling its use in Year 6 and also in the Year 5 class where the co-ordinator is based. However, there remains too little use of assessment to guide planning.
134. The information and communication technology room represents a considerable improvement in the quality of facilities since the last inspection. The support of a part-time technician shared with other schools ensures that the computers are in good working order. The school has recently purchased some portable computing equipment for use in classrooms. The subject policy and development plan are satisfactory. However, they do not deal sufficiently with the development of the use of computers and other new technology in other subjects.

MUSIC

135. At the time of the last inspection, standards in music were judged to be in line with those expected nationally. This remains true in singing but in all other areas of the music curriculum standards are now lower than they should be in Year 6 and across the school. Teachers' lack of confidence and subject knowledge results in aspects of the music not being taught in all classes or not being taught at the right level. For example, in Year 6, there are inadequate opportunities for pupils to participate in composition and performance. All groups of pupils are making unsatisfactory progress as they move up from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6.
136. Across the school, most pupils sing tunefully, both in lessons and in assemblies. They are aware of different ways of conveying the mood of the music. In most classes pupils successfully sing in up to four parts. Pupils are given limited opportunities to accompany their singing with un-tuned percussion instruments. They occasionally do so with one note with a chime bar. In this respect there is little significant difference between the attainment of pupils in Year 3 and in Year 6. When they reach Year 6, pupils do not have the expected understanding of relationships between sounds or of how music reflects different intentions. They do not have the skills normally found at this age in improvising and performing. Their knowledge of correct musical terminology and conventional notation is weak.
137. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, primarily because of teachers' inadequate subject knowledge. This results in significant gaps in the coverage of the National Curriculum for music. However, during the inspection there were some examples of satisfactory teaching and learning. Good teaching and learning were evident in one lesson in Year 6. During lessons, most teachers manage pupils and activities effectively, even though the activities lack variety. Some useful games are used, for example, to help pupils to develop an understanding of following a conductor in one Year 3 class. In the Year 6 lesson in which teaching and learning were effective, the teacher explained the lesson purpose clearly. She also helped pupils to see links with their work in history. Resources were well prepared. Pupils responded well and showed interest.
138. In one lesson in Year 3, despite the teacher's good subject knowledge and the exciting range of activities planned, the atmosphere of the lesson was undermined by the unsatisfactory behaviour of almost a quarter of the class. This was not dealt with effectively.

139. The curriculum is enhanced by tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers for a few pupils in brass, woodwind and string instruments. Music and drama performances also give some pupils opportunities to perform. There is also an opportunity for participation in the Aylesbury music festival for those pupils who can rehearse after school. There is no school choir or recorder group. The talents of those pupils who do learn instruments have little opportunity to flourish in lessons. There are no activities in lessons to provide additional challenge for higher-attaining pupils. No use is made of computers or other new technology, such as electronic keyboards, to support or extend pupils' learning. The work in music does not make sufficient contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
140. The co-ordination of music is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator lacks the necessary expertise to advise and support colleagues. The long-term plan of work is based on national guidelines and two published schemes. However, it is followed only to the extent that individual teachers feel comfortable in interpreting it. There is no checking of the implementation of the plan to assess how far it is being put into practice, and the wider checking of teaching and learning in music is unsatisfactory. There are no assessment procedures to identify how pupils are performing in relation to the standards expected for their age or to support teachers in planning suitable work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Standards of pupils' work in physical education in Year 6 are as expected nationally, as was also the case in the last inspection. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress across Years 3 to 6.
142. Pupils in Year 6 reach the standards normally found at this age as they practise hockey skills. They successfully use a hockey stick to pass a ball to a partner some distance away and to dribble a ball slowly past other players. However, a few pupils lose control of the ball when dribbling at greater speed. They understand the idea of intercepting the ball, but in practice many find difficulty in trapping it successfully before passing it on. Most Year 3 pupils accurately throw a ball underarm to a partner, and with a bat hit a softball when it is rolled towards them. But only a few succeed in hitting a thrown ball with a bat or catching a ball that has been hit. Pupils in Year 3 perform a range of different jumping activities showing satisfactory balance and co-ordination as they do so.
143. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but not as good as when the school was last inspected. Most pupils change clothes without wasting time in preparation for physical education lessons. However, in one Year 5 lesson pupils took an unnecessarily long time and were excessively noisy in the process, delaying the start of the lesson. The beginning of physical education lessons is generally well handled, with proper emphasis on a gradual and gentle initial warm-up. Teachers regularly review work from previous lessons and introduce new work to build on pupils' prior learning.
144. In lessons in which teaching and learning are most effective, the skills to be practised are first demonstrated by teachers or pupils. Teachers accompany such demonstration with clear explanations of what is involved. Pupils are normally attentive and listen well to instruction. In lessons such as these, the pace of work is brisk, and the effective management of pupils and organisation of activities lead to the efficient use of time. Expectations and routines are well established, and pupils respond well. Where teaching is good, planning provides for continuous skill development, so that the demands on pupils increase as the lesson proceeds. Teachers take opportunities to use the correct vocabulary for the activity. This helps to develop the understanding of the pupils who then use the terms themselves. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke of 'intercepting', and 'tackling' as they practised their basic hockey skills. Where the teaching approach and style are positive, with praise and encouragement provided, pupils' responses are also good.
145. In a lesson in which teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in Year 5, the warm-up did not involve sufficient activity. The teacher did not ensure that the pupils paid attention at the beginning of the lesson. This, together with a lack of demonstration, resulted in some pupils failing to comply with instructions, raising issues of safety. Although there were opportunities to discuss rules and safety, they were not taken.
146. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator includes checking teachers' lesson planning and providing feedback to them. Some lessons are also

visited, and feedback similarly provided for teachers. The co-ordinator also maintains resources at a satisfactory level. There are still no whole-school assessment procedures in place for physical education. This prevents teachers from being more effective in planning activities to meet pupils' differing needs.

147. The long-term plan shows that pupils gain varied kinds of physical education experience over time including, for example, athletics, dance, gymnastics and invasion games. In addition, a range of extra-curricular opportunities is available which includes football, rugby, athletics, cricket and cross-country running. Local sports clubs support many of these additional activities. On two recent occasions, different boys have gained first prize in local cross-country events. The physical education programme makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Religious education is subject to separate inspection according to Section 23 of the School Inspections Act.