

INSPECTION REPORT

ALTON PARK JUNIOR SCHOOL

Clacton-on-Sea, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114721

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Morgan

Reporting inspector: Mr Dennis Maxwell
8798

Dates of inspection: 30 September - 3 October 2002

Inspection number: 247479

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alton Park Road Clacton-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	CO15 1DL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Bolton
Date of previous inspection:	26 January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9388	Anthony Mundy	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography History	
8696	Abul Maula	Team inspector	English as an additional language Art Mathematics	
20063	Gerald Slamon	Team inspector	Design and technology Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12764	Wendy Thomas	Team inspector	Educational inclusion English Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alton Park Junior is a large community school for pupils aged seven to 11 years. There are 444 pupils on roll. It is situated centrally within a housing estate in Clacton and serves the local community. The area includes a homeless families unit and temporary housing. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are much less favourable than nationally. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at 31 per cent, is above the national average. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none of them is at an early stage of acquiring English. The school has an unstable school roll, with around a quarter of the pupils arriving and leaving each year after the start of term. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, most having moderate learning or behavioural and emotional needs, and three pupils have a formal statement of need. Taking the year group as a whole, pupils' attainment on entry at Year 3 is below average. In common with other schools in the area, Alton Park has had a very high turnover of teachers in the last two years and has experienced significant difficulty in recruitment. There have been several changes of headteacher since the previous inspection, with the current headteacher only in post for four terms. The school is part of an Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education, overall. The school has a caring atmosphere, which reflects the staff's commitment to the pupils' welfare. Standards, overall, are below average by Year 6 although standards in English are well below average and the quality and range of pupils' writing are weak. The majority of pupils makes satisfactory progress through the school, although the higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. Very good relationships amongst the staff and pupils encourage pupils to work hard. The school prepares pupils carefully so that they are ready to learn and are fully included in the activities. The school has gained several regional sporting awards, and this success is having a positive impact on pupils' work attitudes. Most pupils enjoy school life and many have learnt to work co-operatively with their friends. Their personal development is promoted strongly in many ways; for example, in the emphasis on the needs of others and the charity collections children make. The headteacher has acted decisively to improve the working conditions and appearance of the school for children and staff, but not enough has been done to check the quality of what is going on in the school. Leadership and management are good and the school has gained an Investors in People award in 2002. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have good attitudes to their work, and their behaviour is usually good.
- Pupils' personal development is good, particularly their moral, social and cultural development.
- Relationships amongst the pupils and staff are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and so is the individual daily care for pupils.
- The headteacher inspires confidence, and is supported well by the governing body and senior management team.
- The quality and choice of activities outside lessons are excellent and include many sporting activities.

What could be improved

- Standards are low, particularly in English, mathematics, science and geography. The higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough.
- Pupils are not developing sufficiently the skills of independent learning, and the ability to communicate and present their ideas and findings.
- Teachers' assessment records in subjects other than English, mathematics and science are not kept properly and information gained from assessments is not used enough in planning. Marking of children's work is inconsistent and not sufficiently helpful.
- The school development plan is not set out well enough to help manage identified weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1998. Improvements since then have been impeded by changes in the leadership of the school and staffing instability. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection in rectifying the weaknesses identified at that time. The school has also made substantial improvements to the school building and learning environment to encourage pupils to work hard. Standards by Year 6 have improved overall in line with the nationally improving trend. The school has tackled the problems in information and communication technology (ICT) by ensuring that pupils' skills are built up year by year. National guidance is used reasonably effectively for lesson planning and the subject leaders are taking a more active role, although there is still room for improvement. Assessment procedures are developing, although the information is still not used enough in further planning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, throughout the school and is good in Year 6. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	E	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	E	E	
Science	E	E	E	E	

Standards at Year 3, as pupils enter the school, are below average. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils make satisfactory progress, overall, to Year 6 where standards in the work seen are also below average. Present standards are well below average in English and below average in mathematics and science by Year 6. The quality of children's writing is a particular concern, affecting standards in several subjects. Pupils' skills of literacy and mental arithmetic are below the expectation. Boys do not do as well as girls in English. Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough to produce work of good quality. Standards have improved steadily by Year 6 over the past four years. The school did not meet its targets for English and mathematics in 2001 and in 2002. In the work seen during the inspection, it was found that pupils have particular difficulties in writing well since many do not speak out confidently, and struggle to find the right words to express themselves.

Recent action taken by the headteacher and governors on creating a good climate for learning with good behaviour and a stable staff is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. For example, the teachers now in Year 6 form a strong team with high expectations. Several factors help to explain the below average standards seen during the inspection. Firstly, the inspection took place during the fifth week of the autumn term so that there was little evidence on the standard of work with pupils' new teachers. Secondly, during last year there was a high level of staff absence in Year 6, which caused disruption to pupils' learning and diverted attention from other issues. Moreover, most of the evidence on pupils' work in Year 6 came from the previous school year. There has been a high staff turnover recently and this, together with the large numbers of pupils joining the school at different times, has affected standards and routines. There was a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. By Year 6, standards in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, music, physical education and religious education meet the expectation. Standards in geography are below what is expected. Investigational work in science requires development, as well as research in subjects such as history and geography. The school has set challenging targets for pupils in the current Year 6, consistent with the results of internal testing.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes, which contribute to how they learn. Most become interested and involved in their work; a few do not concentrate for long.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is mainly good and helps pupils' achievement. A few pupils have challenging behaviour that is handled well in class through positive support, and by the co-ordinator for special needs and the support assistants.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, both amongst the pupils and between all staff and pupils. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, overall, since they do not take much initiative or personal responsibility. By Year 6 most have matured to become well-adjusted and responsible.
Attendance	Satisfactory for the majority of pupils. The attendance rate was below average during the 2001/2 school year.

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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and usually promotes worthwhile learning by the pupils. Strengths in teaching include the good strategies and methods so that pupils gain new skills and the positive management of pupils to focus their attention. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject content are usually good, which helps them to give clear explanations. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. However, the approach to teaching English and literacy does not give sufficient opportunity for pupils to engage in discussion nor to write at length, which results in uneven progress. Teachers give insufficient attention to the teaching of reading skills. The planning and teaching for different groups of pupils in a class is not always carefully matched to their learning needs.

There has been a modest improvement in the standard of teaching since the last inspection, demonstrating a determination to improve. Further attention is required to link literacy and numeracy across the subjects. The skills of ICT are now well established and used in other subjects. Lesson planning is satisfactory, although there are seldom notes about the approach to teaching. Overall, the school meets the needs of the pupils satisfactorily, although there are times when the higher-attaining pupils are not challenged and their progress is affected. Pupils with special educational needs are given perceptive support to enable them to learn. Daily assessment is good, since teachers are observant of the pupils but the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. As teachers mark pupils' work, they write only a few comments to help pupils improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The teachers usually plan worthwhile and interesting tasks that are relevant to the children's lives. For example, pupils enjoy the practical nature of design and technology. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The approach to literacy requires more flexibility as well as more rigour.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	A good level of thoughtful support promotes the children's learning. The co-ordinator and support assistants identify and assess pupils' learning needs carefully. There is a good programme to help pupils catch up with basic learning skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is satisfactory. Pupils are given regular support and make steady progress in their learning but are less confident in gaining fluency with English language structure.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Very positive relationships encourage most pupils to give good thought to their work and the needs of their friends. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, for example, in sports activities, but less so for their independent learning during lessons. Pupils make significant collections for charity. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced through visits and by visitors.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good care for all children's individual needs. Assessment information is not used enough to plan lessons matched to pupils' needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a good working relationship with parents. Teachers are easily available for a quick word after school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The vision and measures taken by the headteacher and senior staff to raise standards are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement. The headteacher has made significant improvements to the working atmosphere of the school in a short time. He has correctly identified priorities for improvement but the development plan is not sufficiently helpful in managing them.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body gives good direction for long-term developments. Governors have good arrangements to visit and discuss the work of the school, and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher commissioned a thorough report and evaluation of school test information. This provides good insight into the school's performance, although monitoring procedures across other areas of the school's work require further development.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses human and other resources in a satisfactory way. Much teaching focuses well on developing pupils' skills and raising standards. The emphasis on providing a secure learning environment is effective.

The senior staff have good capability to make further improvements. The finance secretary has a very good understanding of her work and ensures that decisions are based on gaining good value. There is a good level of staffing to meet the needs of the pupils. The headteacher is making remarkable improvements to the accommodation so that it is attractive for pupils to learn in. The site manager keeps the accommodation in good order.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and make progress. • The good standards of behaviour. • The quality of teaching and the good relationships with parents. • The very good activities outside lessons. • They think the school is led and managed well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information about their children's progress. • Homework arrangements. • A few parents do not feel that the school works closely with them.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views and also that homework arrangements are not consistent enough. They feel that information provided on children's progress is satisfactory and that the school makes good efforts to work closely with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards by Year 6 in the work seen during the inspection are below average, overall. In English, standards are well below average by Year 6 and in mathematics and science standards are below average. Overall, by Year 6, standards have been maintained since the last inspection in science but have declined in English and mathematics. However, the trend in results for the national tests in Year 6 indicates improvement in line with the national trend. Increasingly good provision and sharper teaching are beginning to have a positive impact.
2. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average. They make satisfactory progress to Year 6, although in the previous year some of this was uneven, particularly in English, caused by staff absence and changes of teacher. The school has commissioned an analysis of test results and the evidence from this analysis, together with internal monitoring, shows that pupils make steady progress, but some areas of weakness in English and mathematics are identified. The school's work in numeracy is beginning to have a positive effect on learning and standards. In English, the school is not adapting national guidance sufficiently to the pupils' needs, which is restricting their learning opportunities. Reading, for example, is not being taught in a sufficiently structured approach and teachers' questions are too often expressed in a closed way, which reduces opportunities for pupils to explore ideas through discussion.
3. Standards in the 2002 national tests for Year 6 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, standards were also well below average in each subject. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well below average in each subject while more pupils were at the lower Level 3. This was anticipated by the school's internal monitoring for the 2002 cohort and is partly explained by the effects of long-term staff absence and that last year's Year 6 pupils had a succession of supply teachers during their final year; also 13 pupils joined Year 6 during the year. The school set challenging targets in English and mathematics for Year 6 in 2002 but did not meet them. The commissioned report and analysis of national tests has correctly identified weaknesses that the school is now working to rectify, including strengthening the teaching in Year 6 and provision of in-service training in English. The literacy strategy within the school has not been successful in raising standards because there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' reading and independent writing skills in English itself, and in other subjects.
4. By the end of Year 6, standards in art and design, design and technology, history, ICT, music and physical education match the national expectation. Standards in religious education meet the expectation in relation to the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in geography are lower than usual. This is because of weaknesses in planning and teaching. Links between subjects provide a few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills, for example in ICT, but this is less developed for literacy and numeracy skills. There are very limited opportunities for pupils to write at length, either in English or in other subjects.
5. There is substantial evidence of the lack of development in basic skills by many pupils. This is partly due to the high mobility of pupils at the school, about 25 per cent of whom enter or leave during each year. This has been exacerbated by the high turnover of teachers over the past two years, when the school has had difficulties in recruitment. This has led to breaks in pupils' learning and a lack of consistency in the teaching of skills, particularly in literacy. As a consequence, pupils have not gained independent learning skills and many pupils throughout the school are over-dependent on support.
6. The small number of targeted pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic communication skills both in lessons and over time. They respond well to additional support. This reflects their very positive attitudes to learning, which enables them to integrate fully in the life of the school. They relate well to each other, their teachers and support staff. The progress of children with special educational needs (SEN) is satisfactory. Standards achieved by pupils with SEN, including the three pupils with formal

statements of need, are in line with their capabilities. The identified pupils are achieving well in lessons and over a longer period of time through carefully planned work. Most pupils make satisfactory progress, gaining in self-esteem and confidence. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different ethnic groups or background. However, boys attain significantly lower results than girls in English. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress and take part well in lessons. In general, the higher-attaining pupils are not making the expected progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have maintained the good attitudes to learning noted in the previous inspection report. During this inspection, pupils' responses were good or better in over two thirds of the lessons seen, were often very good, and occasionally excellent. Excellent attitudes were seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 4 higher-attaining pupils, where they listened intently to their teacher's very clear explanation of symmetry. The teacher's very good questioning skills encouraged pupils to think out loud, and one hypothesised that the number of 'corners' on a two-dimensional shape equalled the number of lines of symmetry. In the three lessons where response was unsatisfactory, teachers failed to contain pupils' restless and disruptive behaviour. Ninety-five per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire confirmed that their children like school. The inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view. Pupils' good attitudes contribute positively to their progress and attainment.
8. Most pupils come to school enthusiastically, and they enjoy lessons. Although pupils are developing skills to work independently, there are too few opportunities for them to take part in investigations and problem-solving. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers, but small numbers of pupils disengage from the lesson when the teacher is not addressing them directly or prompting them to participate. Pupils of all ages and attainments often respond to questions with brief or partial answers and do not try to answer fully. Teachers do not always give them enough encouragement to do so.
9. Pupils with SEN have good attitudes to learning. They show pleasure in activities undertaken, especially where these are well matched to their needs. Most pupils work co-operatively and help each other. Attitudes in extra-curricular activities are very good, and a remarkable variety of clubs is well supported at lunch-time and after school. In discussion with visitors, all pupils are proud of their achievements and very proud of their school.
10. Behaviour in classes and in the open areas of the school is good, and maintains the standard noted during the last inspection. Pupils are thoughtful, and mutually respectful. Brief rules for behaviour are displayed in most classrooms. Pupils cheerfully conform to the rules. Good behaviour contributes to pupils' progress because, without frequent pauses or distractions, most teachers move lessons ahead at a good pace. A few teachers have difficulty in managing the behaviour of a small number of pupils who are habitually restless and inattentive. Sometimes, where teachers' expectations are unclear, behaviour is unsatisfactory. For example, during the introduction to a Year 3 mathematics lesson, while the pupils were on the carpet, the teacher allowed pupils to fidget and gossip intermittently and at no time halted the lesson to gain the undivided attention of the class. Also, in this session, a teaching assistant supervising a pupil with special educational needs was not positioned to influence the behaviour of disruptive pupils on the fringe of the group.
11. At lunch-times, behaviour is very good in the dining-hall and in the playground. On the field, behaviour is sometimes boisterous but, during the inspection, was never spiteful. Parents and pupils confirm that serious incidents of aggression or bullying between pupils are very rare, and are managed promptly and sensitively when they do occur.
12. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are linked to the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In each of these areas, their responses are at least satisfactory, and are often good. They are reverential during assemblies, following the good examples of the headteacher and other staff when praying and singing. They are generous of spirit, fund-raising enthusiastically for local and national charities. Their autumn harvest

celebrations will include a cash collection for Action Aid. In all year groups, interest in dance and performance enables most boys and girls to work amicably together, without embarrassment. In practical music lessons, they play and sing enthusiastically.

13. Most pupils have a very good understanding of the concept of self-discipline by Year 6. They discriminate clearly between right and wrong, and understand that actions have consequences. They work well in classroom groups, readily exchanging ideas and sharing materials. The school council regularly discusses issues raised by class representatives. However, as council meetings are chaired by a teacher, pupils do not have opportunities to develop leadership and organisational skills. A limited range of duties is offered to prefects and monitors appointed from Year 6, and some Year 6 pupils provide informal social support to individuals in other year groups.
14. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and to adults, and converse with their teachers in friendly and respectful terms. Pupils are not afraid to be seen to make mistakes, and they are mutually supportive. Pupils of all ethnic groups, including the small number with English as an additional language, participate fully in all activities. Each member of the school community has equal status and receives sensitive and effective support at work and play. The school agreed a large number of exclusions last year in order to make clear the expectations for behaviour, and this has had the desired effect. One pupil was permanently excluded.

Attendance

15. Attendance is satisfactory for the majority of pupils but has not improved since the previous inspection. Although the school has a large intake of Year 3 pupils at the start of the autumn term, a significant number of pupils also join all other year groups during the year. Most settle quickly, attend regularly and arrive punctually each day. Regular attendance has a positive effect upon their attainment and progress. A small number of families acquiesce in their children's persistent absence and fail to respond to the reasonable enquiries of the school or the educational welfare officer. The attendance rate was below average during the 2001/2 school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Teaching

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and shows a modest improvement since the last inspection. In just over half of the lessons the quality of teaching observed was good, and several in each year group were very good, indicating a growing strength across the school. Most teaching observed during the inspection had a positive impact on pupils' learning. The high teacher turnover in recent years, however, has had a negative effect on teaching consistency. There are still several aspects of teaching, including planning, diagnostic assessments and teachers' expectations, that are not of a consistently high standard. The teaching in a very small number of lessons was unsatisfactory. The focus on improving the learning environment was rightly seen as a major priority by the headteacher in order to encourage worthwhile teaching and learning, and hence to raise standards. However, a parallel programme of regular monitoring and lesson observation to identify strengths and weaknesses was not given sufficient attention.
17. The teachers' very good relationships with the children and their lively, well-presented introductions usually establish good interest and attention. Overall, teachers use effective strategies that have a clear impact on pupils' learning. The school makes a positive link between promoting pupils' personal development through direct intervention and the quality of their learning in order to help raise standards. The best lessons include active participation by pupils during class discussions, having pupils work collaboratively, or helping pupils to reflect on the quality of their work. These set the tone for pupils to take a full part in lessons, with an indication of how much work should be completed. Elements of teaching which were identified as requiring development included lessons with insufficiently high expectations, particularly of the higher-attaining pupils, and the lack of opportunity for pupils to write at length or to develop

enquiry skills through posing their own questions. Many lessons ended with worthwhile class discussions to confirm and reinforce pupils' learning, although several were too brief to bring out pupils' understanding and to encourage expressive language.

18. In general, lesson planning does not set out the teaching methods and strategies that the teachers intend to use for any subject so that alternative approaches may be considered. The school is aware that the national literacy strategy is not working as well as it should be and that this is affecting standards, so is taking steps to strengthen teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils are not given enough chances to write at length, either in English or other subjects. As a result, they are not getting enough practice to help them develop their writing skills. Moreover, few direct links are identified with literacy or numeracy within planning for other subjects.
19. During most lessons, pupils listen well to teachers or friends and the classes are managed well to maintain discipline and attention. Most pupils become involved in the activities, and often sustain their concentration well so that worthwhile learning takes place. Most pupils are keen to answer in class, although many are not confident or have the language to explain their ideas fully. In a few lessons, the teachers' expectations are not made clear, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, and as a result tasks are tackled superficially and writing activities are not completed.
20. In several lessons, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to be taught. This was seen for example in ICT in Year 6, where pupils designed a presentation using a word processing program. Teachers usually explain tasks clearly and ask questions to reinforce pupils' knowledge, although questioning is frequently for factual answers rather than to promote discussion about ideas. In most lessons, the learning intentions are clear and teachers plan the activities and teaching towards these. The shared planning across each year group supports each teacher and is effective in increasing teaching confidence. Teachers often make clear how long pupils have for a task, although there are times when pupils do not produce sufficient recorded work. The good practice of sharing the learning intentions with the pupils is common, but not consistent in all classes. There are good opportunities for pupils to work in differing groups, where children are able to form new working relationships.
21. Resources are used well in most lessons and they are generally matched to pupils' needs. Learning support assistants are often deployed well and they are very effective in helping pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to engage in the tasks. Teachers adjust tasks appropriately for those pupils with SEN who have Individual Educational Plans. They organise support assistants to provide support for identified pupils in the class, either as individuals or in groups. Teachers and support assistants liaise well. On a few occasions, however, the assistants are not sufficiently directed by the class teachers for their time to be used effectively, especially during the initial part of lessons when pupils are taught together.
22. The classroom assistant funded under the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant has received relevant training, and her work with the pupils is effective. She liaises with teachers, though, strictly speaking, her role does not include 'partnership teaching'. Pupils learning English as an additional language benefit greatly from strategies such as focused questioning employed by classroom teachers and support staff. Teachers' careful explanation of learning points encourages pupils' understanding of activities whilst enhancing their participation. All of this has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
23. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and sometimes give encouraging praise and comments, but the approach to marking is unsatisfactory, overall. Some unqualified praise is given for mediocre work and marking does not give sufficient indication of the standard expected. In general, teachers' comments include a few notes to promote further learning by providing guidance on how pupils can improve their work but the approach is inconsistent. Some teachers provide suitable homework for pupils to consolidate their learning, and this is often followed up in class. Homework provision, however, is inconsistent and could make a greater contribution to pupils' learning.

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

24. The curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The main weaknesses in provision are that there are too few regularly planned opportunities for the development of writing skills, where pupils put new learning into practice in independent writing and in improving their own writing; and for the development of independent learning skills through the curriculum.
25. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time. The school uses resources from within and outside the school to enrich the curriculum. There is a detailed programme of personal, social and health education that provides well for sex education and teaches awareness of the misuse of drugs. The involvement of the local health authority, police and fire service in these programmes ensures that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues, and are given accurate facts as part of their preparation for adult life. Although pupils transfer to a number of secondary schools at the end of Year 6, the school is forging good 'bridging' curricular links with the school to which most pupils transfer. There is also a developing 'bridging' programme with the main feeder infant school, as was noted, for example, when Year 3 pupils worked with children from Year 2 making moving monsters and then wrote stories about these for them. Pupils are well prepared socially for the next stage of their education. The school does not develop their independent learning skills in subjects such as science, mathematics and geography, however, so that they are prepared academically in the best way for secondary school.
26. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in developing the curriculum to ensure that subjects are taught systematically across the school. An effective curriculum has been built around national recommendations. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects now guide planning and are helping to provide continuity in pupils' learning. Teachers plan well in year groups and useful links are increasingly being recognised. The official framework of the national strategy has strengthened provision in mathematics but this has yet to have a clear impact on pupils' standards. The school has correctly identified the need to develop pupils' problem-solving skills so that they can apply basic skills in meaningful ways. The literacy strategy within the school has not been successful in raising standards because there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' reading and independent writing skills in English itself, and in other subjects. There is a growing emphasis on investigative and experimental science; this is not sufficiently extended, however, to allow higher-attaining pupils the freedom to plan, organise and carry out their own investigations.
27. Provision for ICT has improved very significantly through the introduction of national guidance for the subject and with the development of the computer suite, where pupils learn and apply the basic skills. Pupils are being provided with an increasing number of opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 searched for places on a map, following instructions to move to different sections. Other pupils in Year 6 imported pictures to design a presentation on photosynthesis. Provision for ICT, as well as for physical education and design and technology, are strengths of the curriculum. Religious education is firmly based on the local agreed syllabus. Curriculum planning for geography does not give sufficient attention to the progressive development of pupils' knowledge and skills.
28. The school offers its pupils an excellent range of extra-curricular opportunities. Such activities as knitting, computing, recorders, drama, netball, football and choir enrich the curriculum and provide pupils with opportunities to develop their talents and interests. The school's good links with the local community also gives strong support to the curriculum. Members of the local community, for example, share their expertise with pupils in model making and gardening clubs, and when the school holds its popular design and technology days. The curriculum is further enhanced and brought alive by a range of educational visits and residential trips abroad. Parents are invited to accompany these trips and have commented on how well these opportunities enrich pupils' experiences and broaden their horizons. A major school musical and drama production is presented each year, performed by pupils in Year 6 to parents and other schools, providing a very good opportunity for pupils' personal development. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to take part in sporting events and music festivals with other school. These enrich the curriculum and pupils' sense of achievement.

29. A homework policy sets out a clear programme to support the curriculum. However, its implementation is inconsistent. Homework is not used well enough to support pupils' independent learning and research skills. This is in no small part due to the significant number of changes in the teaching staff over the past year.
30. The governing body's curriculum committee is increasingly well-informed. It has procedures in place to monitor, evaluate and review the curriculum with the senior management team and subject co-ordinators. Each governor has links with a subject and visits the school to have first-hand knowledge and understanding of how the curriculum is delivered.
31. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. All pupils are afforded full and equal access to the curriculum. The school meets successfully the needs of pupils with special educational and physical needs and those who speak English as an additional language, by providing a good level of very well trained support. Most teachers use this good quality support effectively to ensure that these pupils are fully included in lessons. The Individual Education Plans and Statements of Special Educational Needs are carefully drawn up and identify accurately new targets for pupils' development. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils. However, the needs of these pupils, and those of more able pupils, are not yet fully met because they are given too few opportunities for independent choice.
32. Curriculum provision for pupils on the SEN register is good and supports the learning targets identified in Individual Education Plans. There are good procedures in place for identifying special needs. The new comprehensive policy provides guidance for staff. Suitable support is given to teachers, to write Individual Educational Plans with targets that are specific and easily achievable to ensure a degree of success on a regular basis. Withdrawal arrangements are often applied, based on individual needs. The school is aware of the need to provide a balance of support.
33. The school aims, in policy and practice, to provide all its pupils with access to the National Curriculum and all other learning opportunities on offer. It values the cultural heritage of the pupils. They are also encouraged to use their home language in the learning process, although this leaves room for facilitating their acquisition of English through a planned approach to bilingualism. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and are committed to their well-being. The specifically funded classroom assistant has established contact with some minority ethnic families.
34. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. School assemblies, which meet statutory requirements, provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experience and that of others. In an assembly for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils were moved by a story of deprived and abused children in Africa. They were shocked to discover that the story was very recent and not from a long time ago. In religious education lessons pupils are given opportunities to explore the beliefs of others, although there is not enough emphasis on the way in which people's beliefs affect their lives. There are few opportunities in other lessons for pupils to explore feelings and emotions and how these have an impact on people. Teachers tend to ask closed questions that do not encourage pupils to reflect on issues. As at the time of the previous inspection, there are limited opportunities in music, art, science and literature for pupils to experience awe and wonder.
35. Provision for pupils' moral development is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers and other staff act as good role models for pupils. Pupils are treated courteously, fairly and are respected. As a result, pupils are helped to understand right from wrong. Pupils agree their class rules and this helps to promote good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils take care of their own property and the school's resources. The school has a system of awards for good behaviour and pupils work hard to receive these in merit assemblies. In science lessons, for example, pupils consider how to care for the environment and discuss issues of global concern.
36. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and groups, thus making good provision for their social development. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Adults help pupils to relate well to each other. As a result, pupils show caring attitudes towards one another and work well together. The school is a community

that places a high priority on ensuring that all children take a full part in its life and work, and pupils are proud to be part of it. Pupils are kind and caring. They are very welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking about their activities. In lessons, pupils work amicably together when asked. They are co-operative and helpful. Pupils regularly raise funds for charity. The knitting club has sent blankets to a charity in Romania and a range of fund-raising events is held to support charities such as Barnado's, the Red Cross and Marie Curie Cancer Care. The school's harvest festival celebrations focus on the work of the charity Action Aid, providing support for developing countries.

37. Opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when this provision was satisfactory. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to support cultural development. As part of their harvest festival celebrations, each year group focuses on a different country where projects are supported by the charity Action Aid. Pupils learn about the projects and link their work to history and geography. Music makes a good contribution to cultural development. The school's senior choir takes part in a concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London. There are also visits from music groups such as a Tudor music group, which links well with the history curriculum. The school makes satisfactory provision in preparation of pupils for life in a diverse multicultural society through topics and festival celebrations. The school also has a highly successful residential visit for pupils to Holland, which helps them appreciate the traditions and life style of another culture.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school's safe and caring environment has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Satisfactory procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare, although some elements of the summary policy are out of date. The teacher nominated as the responsible officer for child protection is conscientious and well-informed, and members of staff have received formal training. All staff, including teaching assistants and midday assistants, understand child protection issues. They have received some training in everyday procedures.
39. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during off-site visits. Good health and safety practice is supplemented by regular risk assessments. Periodic fire alarm practices ensure that the building can quickly be evacuated. The school site and buildings present no apparent risk to health and safety.
40. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are satisfactory, but informal. Although teachers have good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils, the system does not provide them with a permanent, cumulative record including the comments of staff who have recently left the school. Pupils receive good individual care and support from class teachers and from the headteacher, who is friendly, accessible and reassuring. Teaching assistants develop good relationships with pupils, and are skilled in curriculum and personal support. Pupils of all ethnic groups, and the small number with English as an additional language, are included fully in all activities. Good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playground and on the field. Midday assistants are conscientious and attentive, and they take close interest in pupils' activities. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid.
41. A good induction system helps children settle quickly into Year 3. The many pupils joining other year groups during the school year settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary education.
42. Specific rules for behaviour are displayed in most classrooms and these are followed reasonably well. Most minor disturbances in lessons are attributable to teachers' inconsistencies in behaviour management. The anti-bullying policy is not displayed, but the provisions of the policy are implemented consistently and thoroughly. Pupils and parents have few concerns about bullying. They know that discussions and a reconciliation process counter the few reported incidents effectively. Staff and governors have not yet agreed a policy on physical control by staff, or on procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils.

43. The school's system of merit points acknowledges pupils' good behaviour, good work and effort. Sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with merit certificates, presented at weekly achievement assemblies, where parents are invited to applaud their children's successes.
44. The policy for special educational needs is clear and provides a good basis for action and support. Effective links are established with the educational psychologist and other agencies such as the school health adviser, occupational therapist, speech and language therapists.
45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good, although they have had little recent effect in raising the level of attendance. Families are contacted immediately over unexplained absence and, if their response is inadequate, receive a formal letter and a visit from an educational welfare officer. The school's part-automated registration system conforms with legal requirements. Morning registration periods are efficient and lessons begin promptly.
46. The school has appropriate assessment procedures in place, although these relate mainly to English, mathematics and science. The school administers statutory and voluntary national tests, which are used to collect and analyse data on pupils' attainment and progress. These are done as well as end of year and periodic tests. Tests are also used at the beginning of Year 6 to set targets. The school has started to use a computer program to analyse pupils' attainment, so that their progress can be checked.
47. There is little evidence of any formal assessment in the foundation subjects, with the exception of design and technology and ICT. The assessment policy has been updated, but is yet to be fully implemented. Teachers do not use the information gathered from all subjects well enough when they are planning what to teach next. It is sometimes used to set individual targets for pupils, but the effectiveness of this practice has not been checked. The new co-ordinator has already identified some of these areas for further development, as well as current inconsistencies in marking.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning and they have favourable opinions of the school. Many parents want to be involved with their children's learning and help them at home. Parents confidently ask teachers for advice on general or specific issues related to their children's work. However, a significant number of families do not respond to the school's encouragement to attend consultation evenings. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents' views were positive, and were confirmed by most responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, around a fifth of parents replying indicated they did not think they were kept well-informed about how their children were getting on, and several disagreed that the school works closely with them. The inspectors looked closely at these areas, and concluded that provision in each is good. Parents regularly receive printed information and, at the close of the school day, have easy access on the school forecourt to class teachers and the headteacher. Parents have numerous opportunities to engage in school activities, including a recently established Parent-Teacher Association.
49. The school has good links with parents, and the inspection confirms good relationships and good two-way communication. A few parents and friends provide consistent, valuable help in lessons and extra-curricular activities to groups of pupils and to individuals, but the school has not recently enquired if parents have skills or interests to broaden the curriculum.
50. The quality of information for parents is good. They are well-informed about the school's routines and expectations when their children enter Year 3, or join other year groups. Teachers provide curriculum outlines each term, and regular newsletters are informative about events and important dates. At three consultation evenings each year, parents are clearly informed of their children's progress.
51. Annual written reports to parents are of satisfactory quality, showing in some detail what children know and can do in English, mathematics and science. Some teachers, however, do not conform to the school policy of setting individual targets in reports. The current report

format provides inadequate space for teachers to write fully about other subjects. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents in 2001, conform with legal requirements.

52. The school conforms with statutory requirements by inviting parents of pupils with special educational needs to discuss proposed changes to Individual Education Plans. Parents are always encouraged to be involved in all reviews and kept informed of the education plans. Good records are maintained by the special needs co-ordinator, and she is available to discuss pupils' progress. Most parents are very positive about the provision and believe that their children are well catered for. The co-ordinator liaises closely with parents at all stages. Regular contact is established for any exchange of information and this enhances the provision further.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The quality of leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff is good, overall. The headteacher provides very good pastoral leadership and, with the senior management team, is beginning to establish clear direction for the school through his determination to give the pupils a good foundation for learning. He has focused on establishing a strong teaching team in Year 6 in order to raise standards, backed up by improving the consistency of provision throughout the school. He has a perceptive understanding of people, recognising how best to motivate and support them during change. He has rightly begun a programme of refurbishment and redecoration after many years of under-funding, so that pupils and staff may feel that the school is a welcoming and attractive learning environment. He is having a positive influence on discussions and decisions about school improvement. There is a good sense of shared effort and teamwork amongst the staff that encourages support and self-evaluation as they identify and tackle areas for improvement. The aims and values of the school are expressed well through personal care for the pupils and the good climate for learning. However, demands on the headteacher's time for pupil reviews and staff absence during his first year resulted in some under-attention to formal management procedures, notably in ensuring the use of a rigorous programme of checking the quality of teaching and improving its consistency. Monitoring procedures for regular lesson observations are underdeveloped, although the headteacher has now ensured that performance management is fully in place. Routines to check teachers' lesson planning and children's work are carried out so that the school has a developing basis for improvement.
54. The headteacher's good leadership is shown, for example, through his clear direction to the senior management team in developing its role. The senior staff are keen to take on the wider role of school development and review, and are beginning to understand many of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have a growing influence on school self-evaluation and are bringing their observations together to good effect as they consider forward planning. These measures are beginning to have a positive impact on standards through the raised expectations placed on teachers and, mostly, a greater clarity on teaching to pupils' needs. For example, the school identified the need to improve standards in science and now gives an increased emphasis to the skills of scientific enquiry. The role of the subject leaders has been strengthened; for example, the recently appointed science co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and her leadership is already having an impact on teaching, learning and standards. There is an improved understanding of the need for teacher training. This, together with regular monitoring of teaching by all subject leaders, is planned to improve consistency of practice and standards.
55. The governing body understands its responsibilities well and is active in fulfilling them. Governors attend many training courses and make good use of them to improve their effectiveness. They have good arrangements to visit the school and form a good, objective view of the school's needs, and have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Their good level of commitment to the school is having a direct impact on shaping improvements and the direction of the school, for example, in the design of the ICT suite and library. The governors have a good understanding of the priorities they are planning for. They have good arrangements, for example, to meet subject co-ordinators to discuss developments and become informed about progress and issues.

56. The headteacher has, through his own evaluations, identified the main priorities for improvement, such as raising standards in English and putting effective assessment procedures in place. However, the school development plan is not a sufficiently robust management tool to provide a clear agenda for improvements focused on raising standards nor an adequate basis for concerted action. While many priorities are identified and costed appropriately, these are not linked explicitly and clearly to decisions that relate to pupils' learning. Also, being set out for just one year, the plan does not indicate likely commitments over a longer time-scale. There are suitable procedures to include members from a variety of interests, such as parents, school staff and governors, in order to form a balanced view of needs and priorities for the next year.
57. The governors have agreed a policy for performance management that is helping to identify areas for teachers' professional development. There is a good level of teachers and support staff to meet the needs for pupils' learning. The teachers have been deployed well to ensure that their experience and expertise are used in the best way, for example, by linking an experienced teacher as mentor to a teacher in training. The subject co-ordinator's role, however, is not sufficiently well-developed, particularly in relation to the checking of the quality of provision and teaching. The support staff makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Their work, as part of the team, contributes satisfactorily to pupils' learning. There are a few times when they are relatively inactive in lessons, but they provide good support for individuals and groups. Provision for SEN is well managed by the new co-ordinator, who is very experienced, has clear direction and supports pupils, colleagues and parents well. There is good team work between the co-ordinator and the key worker of 'Looked After Children', who are in the care of the local authority. The knowledge, commitment and the organisational skills of the special needs team are the foundation for the good provision for pupils with SEN, including those with statements. Procedures for the identification of needs are effective. Information gathered from national and standardised diagnostic tests is used systematically to identify any lack of progress. The governor for SEN is actively involved. There is a clear action plan for SEN as part of the school improvement plan. Suitable resources are being developed. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice.
58. The school makes good use of its resources, including specific grants and other funding. Short-term financial planning is good, but cost estimates are not provided for long-term strategic targets, as the school development plan does not extend beyond one year. The headteacher and the bursar apply best value principles when negotiating purchases of goods and services. Specific grants received for additional support for pupils with special educational needs are being used efficiently for their designated purpose. The management of the available support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory, overall. However, additional support is not available on a regular basis, and the pupils who are in the later stages of learning English do not receive it at all. As such, its impact is not as strong as it could be.
59. The governing body's finance committee has a good overview of the school's budgeting process. The school's administrative routines are very good, and the school office functions smoothly. Administrative and secretarial staff provide a very efficient service for the school and a friendly welcome to parents, pupils and visitors alike. The bursar ensures that updated financial information is available to the governors, headteacher and senior managers. Very good systems are established for checking and collating purchases, and paying creditors. All recommendations from the latest auditor's report have been implemented successfully. The school is making an increasing use of new technology.
60. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory, overall. The accommodation is fully used and the quality of facilities is satisfactory. Governors are addressing improvements to the existing accommodation appropriately. Resources are broadly satisfactory. Teachers use learning resources well within lessons on most occasions. Resources are managed well and are accessible. There are many attractive displays around the school, which show that teachers value children's work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following:

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
 - providing opportunities for speaking and listening in all subjects;
 - ensuring a structured programme for the teaching of reading;
 - planning interesting and worthwhile opportunities for pupils to draft, evaluate and improve their writing in all subjects;
 - having due regard to the skills of spelling, handwriting and presentation while writing for all subjects.
- (2) Raise standards in mathematics, science and geography, and generally, by:
 - giving particular attention to the level descriptors set out in the National Curriculum;
 - clarifying, and teaching to, a wide range of basic skills across the subjects that encourage independent learning; and include problem-solving and investigational skills in mathematics and science.
- (3) Establish sensible procedures for assessment in all subjects, having in mind the use to which the information is to be put:
 - in identifying individual pupils' needs, including those of higher-attaining pupils;
 - in grouping pupils;
 - in being used for further planning and teaching;
 - in diagnosing pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
 - and ensuring that marking pupils' work provides information on how to improve.
- (4) Prepare a robust school improvement plan that takes account of the following:
 - the need for a thorough audit and review of school needs from a balanced section of the school community;
 - that identified priorities are expressed in a carefully structured plan that is based on raising standards and relates to the school's values;
 - that rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures are included to gain insights into the quality of teaching and learning, and of standards, noting where there are differences between the performance of boys and girls;
 - the continuance of the programme of building refurbishment to create an attractive learning environment.
- (5) Raise the level of attendance.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	34	26	3	0	0
Percentage	1	15	45	35	4	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)	444
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	139

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	121

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	64
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	58	61	119

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	28	47
	Girls	35	21	37
	Total	67	49	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (60)	41 (44)	71 (74)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	34	44
	Girls	38	28	42
	Total	69	62	86
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (55)	53 (47)	72 (71)
	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
431	18	1
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	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)	19.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6 : 1
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	1,017,911
Total expenditure	1,017,912
Expenditure per pupil	2,346
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,648
Balance carried forward to next year	36,647

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	444
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	47	7	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	46	6	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	43	14	2	5
The teaching is good.	44	45	4	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	44	19	2	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	34	6	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	37	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	30	43	13	2	11
The school is well led and managed.	37	47	3	1	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	2	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	36	2	2	4

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

ENGLISH

62. Evidence from the current inspection is that pupils' attainment in English is well below the levels expected for pupils by Year 6 from observations of lessons and analysis of pupils' work from the previous Year 6 group. Pupils in last year's Year 6 made less progress than usual. This is partly explained by the high level of staff absence in Year 6 during the previous year as well as the high turnover of teachers during the previous two years. Also, the number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is above average. However, analysis of pupils' results indicates that the proportion of pupils attaining average levels and above is not significantly different between the group who have been at the school since Year 3 and the group that joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Pupils' learning and progress in the lessons seen during this inspection were satisfactory.
63. In the national tests of 2002, for pupils in Year 6, standards in English were well below average. When compared with the results of pupils in similar schools, standards in English were well below average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English was well below that attained by schools nationally.
64. Pupils enter the school with below average skills in speaking and listening. A small proportion of pupils in Year 3 speak confidently in lessons and make good guesses as to what characters in the book they are reading might say next. In a Year 3 class, pupils showed limited understanding of vocabulary. They answered questions with single words and had difficulty in expressing their opinions about the book they were reading. In suggesting a range of descriptive words for their animal poems, pupils in Year 4 could offer only a narrow range of common adjectives. Year 6 pupils found it very hard to talk about the reasons for their opinions when discussing whether particular headlines were for tabloid or broad-sheet newspapers. In several of the lessons observed, teachers spent a long time talking to pupils but did not allow enough time for pupils to talk to each other or express their ideas to the whole group. This means that pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills. At the time of the previous inspection, the school had a planned programme for drama, both in lessons and in an extra-curricular activity. This was not found in the current inspection and opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of formal and informal situations are less well-developed. The weakness in using technical vocabulary in most subjects has not been addressed and pupils' weaknesses in speaking are evident across the curriculum. Pupils continue to listen well to others in lessons and in assemblies but teachers are still making too much use of closed questions, which inhibits pupils' responses.
65. Pupils do not have well-developed reading skills. Pupils are not enthusiastic readers in Year 6. They talk about a limited range of popular children's fiction and do not have a good knowledge of books and authors. Few of them say that they read regularly at home and only a small proportion of pupils said that they were members of local libraries. Although it is quite early in the term, teachers have not yet made rigorous assessments of pupils' reading skills and, as a result, they have not adapted their lesson plans to address pupils' needs in reading. Older pupils know how libraries are organised and are developing satisfactory reference skills. However, it is not evident that they use their skills in lessons for independent research. Higher-attaining pupils use a range of strategies to establish meaning but many pupils do not have a good range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Some older pupils are not confident in using dictionaries to look up words or to help with their spelling. In a very small number of literacy lessons, pupils received guidance with reading. Pupils have some opportunities to read with an adult on an individual basis, but there are very few occasions when reading skills are taught systematically. In one of the Year 6 classes, the teacher has provided a list of words which pupils are to read to her each day but states that it is the pupils' responsibility to arrange this. This does not ensure that reluctant readers are well supported. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils find it difficult to talk about ideas and implied meanings in the books they have read. Very few pupils express their response to text confidently. Teachers do not adopt a consistent approach to supporting pupils' reading. Reading records are kept in all

classes but these usually consist of a list of books read with no evaluation of pupils' progress. Teachers' diagnosis of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading have not improved since the last inspection.

66. In all year groups, pupils' attainment in writing is well below average. The analysis of pupils' work shows that lessons cover the range of topics expected by the national literacy strategy. However, whilst there is a heavy emphasis on acquiring skills, pupils are not then given sufficient opportunities to apply the skills learned. In their writing, pupils use a very limited range of vocabulary. The work shows no evidence of higher level writing that engages the reader's interest. Work in pupils' books shows very little progression over time. There is a heavy emphasis on worksheets and comprehension exercises. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to draft, evaluate and improve their writing and as a result they make very slow progress.
67. Standards of spelling, punctuation, handwriting and presentation of work are well below average. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' writing is not lively or thoughtful. The school has focused heavily on implementing the national literacy strategy. This has had the effect of concentrating on skills without considering how to help pupils to apply the skills learned. As a result, pupils make very slow progress in developing their skills as writers.
68. Pupils' response to their English lessons is satisfactory, overall. In most lessons, pupils behave well and try hard. They have good relationships with their teachers and with each other, and when teaching is good they are engaged and attentive. They try hard and respond well to good teaching.
69. Teaching in English is satisfactory, overall. In a third of lessons teaching is good. Teachers have a secure understanding of the national literacy strategy but are not well-informed as to how the strategy should be used to improve pupils' attainment in the three aspects of English. In their lessons, teachers do not provide enough opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills. They spend a great deal of time in talking to pupils but do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to engage in debate or discussion. Pupils are not helped to develop their reading skills. No direct teaching of reading was observed. Pupils have a very limited knowledge of books and authors and do not express enthusiasm for reading. As at the time of the previous inspection, planning is not sufficiently focused on pupils' learning needs. In many of the lessons, the work was not challenging enough for higher-attaining pupils. As a result, they did not make the progress they should. The school's analysis of pupils' results over time also shows that a significant proportion of pupils does not make the expected progress over time. For example, a significant number of pupils who attained above average results in reading and writing in the tests at the end of Year 2 did not attain the higher Level 5, as expected, at the end of Year 6. A significant problem over staff absence in Year 6, which is now resolved, contributed to pupils' uneven progress.
70. Teachers regularly discuss the learning intentions with pupils, which help them to understand what they are learning. In several effective lessons, teachers referred to these during the lesson and in the review of learning at the end of the lessons. They placed a good emphasis on key vocabulary to help pupils' understanding. In a good Year 6 lesson on poetry, the teacher asked pupils to justify their opinions by referring to the text, which helped to reinforce their learning. Teachers give clear explanations and make their expectations of work and behaviour very clear to pupils. The use of ICT is developing well through linked tasks that are developed in the computer suite.
71. In many of the lessons where teaching is satisfactory, there are still occasions when teaching does not meet the needs of all pupils. In a Year 3 lesson the review of learning was dominated by the teacher. This did not allow pupils to talk about what they had learned and thus reinforce their learning. Staff have agreed that the role of the teaching assistants should be unobtrusive during whole-class discussions, so as not to distract the pupils. This does not always work well, and should be reviewed to include focused and recorded observations of pupils, as well as that quiet word to help pupils' understanding. When pupils do not respond quickly, the teachers tend to tell them the answers, instead of questioning pupils and encouraging them to find the answers for themselves.

72. Since the previous inspection the school has improved the range of measures used to assess pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' writing is assessed each term, samples are compared across each year group to help standardise judgements, and optional tests are used in Years 3, 4 and 5. However the school's marking policy is not used effectively. There are very few constructive comments in pupils' books. Much marking is vague and does not give pupils guidance as to how they can improve their work. There are some examples of setting targets for pupils but this is not done consistently. Some marking indicates that teachers have low expectations of pupils, for example, when merit awards are awarded for work of poor quality or when it should be clear that the merit is for effort. In several books, pages of work are unmarked and work of different standards is graded as excellent.
73. The management of English is not sufficiently effective and requires further development. At the time of the previous inspection there were links with the feeder infant school to improve progression of handwriting and reading. These links have resumed and been developed recently to help continuity, but there is scope for further development. The subject leader views colleagues' planning and provides suitable feedback on this. However, the priorities in the subject leader's action plan are not sufficiently linked to raising achievement.

MATHEMATICS

74. Standards in the work seen are below average by Year 6. Standards in the 2002 national tests were well below average at both expected and higher levels in comparison with schools both nationally and in similar contexts. The current inspection findings suggest that pupils' attainment is below average, overall, with potentially higher attainers performing at a level close to average. This confirms the downward trend in the school's performance in mathematics since 1999. A combination of factors help to explain these results, including the high number of pupils moving in and out of the school, the high teacher turnover and large proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Over time, there is no significant gender difference in pupils' performance in the subject.
75. Current inspection findings suggest that higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 recognise and compare equivalent fractions and change improper fractions to mixed numbers. Some of the other pupils, a significant minority, have difficulty with adding decimals, rounding to nearest tenths. Several pupils in Years 4 and 5 have started measuring the area and perimeter of shapes, with others using partitioning to solve multiplication problems. Several recognise reflective symmetry in two-dimensional shapes while others are unable to perform multiplications using a tables square. Younger pupils measure time using an analogue clock face appropriately. Pupils' mental calculation skills are not well-developed - an issue raised in the last inspection report.
76. The quality of teaching and learning was good in the lessons observed, but other evidence from pupils' work indicates that it is no more than satisfactory, overall. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and they use resources appropriately. In a few lessons, teachers used effective questioning that was often rooted in good subject knowledge. Sensitive organisation and management enhanced pupils' participation and learning in these lessons, while keeping them on task, even when they relied on individual support. Occasionally, work was adapted to match the different needs of pupils and teachers provided useful feedback. Too often, however, pupils were given the same work and feedback did not relate sufficiently to their own difficulties in understanding. The use of assessment to help teachers to plan the next stage of learning was limited. Teachers set homework, though not consistently enough. Marking is not always up-to-date or positive.
77. Higher-attaining pupils were observed to be concentrating well, working in pairs successfully and recording their work effectively. Careful listening on the part of some pupils led them to make good progress in lessons and enabled them to explain the methodology they used. Some such pupils in Year 3 were observed learning to measure time. Pupils in Year 4 learnt to recognise reflective symmetry in shapes, while those in Year 5 explored partitioning to solve multiplication problems. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about mathematical activities, especially when this involves investigative work. Many concentrate well and their behaviour, which is usually acceptable, contributes to their learning. A significant minority of pupils

throughout the school, however, lacks concentration. Disruptive behaviour, on the part of some of these pupils, affects the pace of lesson, and particularly their progress. Teachers and pupils are distracted from the focus of lessons by this inappropriate behaviour. Most pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language respond well to individual support and make satisfactory progress, overall. Pupils' lack of familiarity with subject-specific vocabulary sometimes prevents those with learning difficulties from contributing fully to lessons. There was no significant gender difference observed in pupils' learning.

78. The mathematics curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced, except that there is insufficient focus on problem-solving. The National Numeracy Strategy has been established and its use across the curriculum is satisfactory, although there is some inconsistency in approach in respect of mental arithmetic and the use of class discussion sessions. Long-term and medium-term planning supports teachers, but short-term planning does not reflect a whole-school approach to matching tasks, particularly to higher-attaining pupils within the broad ability grouping. Resources are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who is new to post, is enthusiastic and has already identified the need for monitoring of teaching and learning in order to raise standards of attainment in mathematics. She is also aware of the need to make more planned use of investigative work and information and communication technology to promote the subject.

SCIENCE

79. In the work seen, pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are below those expected. Pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory from Year 3 to Year 6. The results of the 2002 national tests were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. A much smaller proportion of pupils gained the higher Level 5 compared with the national figure. This is the reason why standards, overall, were well below average. The results for 2002 show an increase in the number of pupils attaining higher standards, although the overall results are below those of 2001 since fewer pupils, overall, attained the expected level. Inspection evidence indicates that the weakness lies in scientific enquiry and physical processes, because the skills required in these areas of pupils' learning have not been developed systematically enough. This lack of achievement is, in part, due to a significant number of staff changes over recent years and to the number of pupils who join the school after the normal time of entry at Year 3. For example, last year's Year 6 pupils had a succession of supply teachers during their final year, and 13 pupils joined the school during the year. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is higher than the national average.
80. The school has identified the need to improve standards in science and there is an increased emphasis on teaching the important skills of scientific enquiry, which are central to learning in the subject. The recently appointed, experienced co-ordinator has a clear understanding of what needs to be done and her leadership is already having an impact on teaching and learning. She quickly identified the need for teacher training to increase staff confidence, and further training is planned. This, together with rigorous monitoring of teaching, is planned to improve consistency of practice.
81. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in the most recent tests for pupils in Year 6, although they outperformed them in 2001. Although some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In several lessons, teachers were careful to encourage all pupils to answer questions. However, this is not common practice, and teachers do not have high enough expectations in this respect, as a significant number of pupils do not readily volunteer to answer.
82. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons was satisfactory, overall. The pattern of teaching shows an improvement since the last inspection, when over one-third of lessons was unsatisfactory. Teachers plan their lessons carefully in year group teams, and prepare resources well so that no time is wasted. Pupils are taught to use correct scientific vocabulary and are given an understanding of the need for fair tests. They are taught the importance of making predictions before carrying out experiments in groups. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and most use effective methods to motivate them to work carefully and with interest. Pupils in very good Year 6 lessons, for example, were highly

motivated to contribute answers when investigating feeding relationships within food chains. This high level of interest was created because teachers had planned a very interesting range of teaching strategies which challenged pupils at levels appropriate to their abilities. As a result, the learning in these lessons was very good and pupils gained a good understanding of what they had been taught.

83. Learning support assistants are used well to support the learning of pupils with SEN, and those with English as an additional language, so that these pupils make similar progress to that of others in lessons. The main weakness in teaching is that too little use is made of assessment to identify the needs of higher-attaining pupils. These pupils, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged to conduct a series of observations independently, to choose apparatus for their enquiry and to draw conclusions. In lessons which were otherwise satisfactory, there was not a good enough balance between direct teaching and independent learning. Too much time is spent in whole-class teaching and, as a result, teachers do not rigorously challenge pupils at different levels as they work on tasks appropriate to their levels of ability. In lessons where pupils are challenged by the teaching, they behave very well, concentrate on what they are doing and work hard to overcome difficulties. These good attitudes make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. In lessons where pupils spend too much time sitting listening to the teacher, rather than finding things out for themselves, many lose interest and the pace of their learning is too slow. Some lessons last most of the afternoon and in some cases they are not well enough structured through a good range of interesting, challenging strategies to ensure that the pace of pupils' learning is maintained during the whole session. In the lessons in which pupils made unsatisfactory strides in their learning, teachers spent too much time talking to the class as a whole, rather than teaching at appropriate levels as pupils worked on group or individual tasks. In these lessons, teachers did not use carefully targeted questions and there was no challenge for more able pupils.
84. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils attain standards as expected in life processes and living things, and materials and their properties, because these aspects are well taught. By the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, describing them in scientific terms such as food chains, predator and prey. In their work on materials and their properties, pupils are taught to identify various situations in which changes such as evaporation and condensation will occur. Apart from the weakness in investigational science, pupils' work shows that standards in physical process are below average because this aspect is not taught to sufficient depth. Pupils are taught to build circuits using batteries and other power supply and switches to make electrical devices function. They make good use of this knowledge to support work in design and technology. However, there is less evidence of pupils having been taught to link cause and effect or to use abstract ideas in describing known phenomena, for example, stationary objects revealing a balance of forces.
85. Most teachers expect work to be neatly presented, but the quality of marking rarely challenges pupils' scientific thinking or indicates how they can improve their work. Opportunities for pupils to record their work, and the teaching of correct scientific vocabulary, mean that the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils' numeracy skills are also developed satisfactorily, as the pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically.
86. The co-ordinator has improved assessment procedures, but these are not yet used sufficiently to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress in lessons. There is an increasing range of well-organised, readily available resources to support practical learning.
87. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and sense of citizenship as they consider how they can care for the environment. The gardening and aeroplane clubs enrich the curriculum and provide well for pupils' spiritual development and sense of achievement.

ART AND DESIGN

88. Standards of pupils' attainment in art are in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 6. This is consistent with the findings of the previous report. The majority of pupils demonstrate developing skills in different art forms.
89. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate close observational skills of shape and colour, using shading and shadowing techniques. Some higher-attaining pupils show fairly well-developed skills in drawing autumn leaves and fruits, which they reproduced in pastels. Their finished work reflects attention to detail and a touch of imagination in blending colours. Some younger pupils experiment with printing, while others show an understanding of how to use tone, colour, texture and line to produce still-life. Some pupils lack a sense of proportion in drawing and painting their picture. Pupils' skills in appreciating and evaluating their own work or that of others are not generally well-developed, although some older pupils have started using their evaluative skills to modify their work.
90. The quality of teaching observed was generally good. Most teachers have good knowledge and expertise in the subject. Their use of a wide variety of resources enhances pupils' motivation and interest. Some use effective explanations and demonstrations to highlight techniques and teaching points. This was noted in a Year 6 lesson when teacher intervention ensured pupils' understanding of the smudging technique in blending colours. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. This enhances pupils' enthusiasm in exploring ideas, with some showing imagination in the use of colour, texture and tone. They make good progress in using a wide range of resources, materials and techniques in order to increase their knowledge and skills. There is no significant gender difference in the learning or progress made by pupils. Pupils with SEN and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress over time in art and design activities.
91. Pupils are well motivated and able to sustain interest with positive support. Pupils like handling and exploring new materials, and are developing an ability to select the most appropriate to the task. Most enjoy talking about their activities.
92. The art curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced. There is a growing use of ICT to represent designs. This is enhanced by an art club, which generates a great deal of incidental art in the form of painting and collage making, and supports pupils' self-esteem. Opportunities for art, craft and design activities are usually linked to topics such as those in history, mathematics and science. The quality of display, though not representative of the whole school, provides a useful stimulus. Resources are sufficient, accessible and well maintained, although there is no evidence of any visits to an art gallery having taken place recently. There is no whole-school art portfolio in place, although many pupils use a sketch-book. Teachers' planning includes some opportunities for informal assessment. The co-ordinator, who is new to post, is fully aware of the need for his role to be developed with particular reference to monitoring and formal assessment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards in design and technology match the national expectation for pupils by Year 6. Although these standards have been well maintained since the last inspection, pupils are making better progress in learning than they were then. At that time, pupils were making satisfactory progress in the skills of designing and evaluating. There is now a greater emphasis on these areas and pupils are making good progress. The judgement on pupils' attainment is based on three lesson observations, discussions with teachers and pupils, analysis of teachers' plans as well as pupils' work, and photographs of past work.
94. All evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is good. It was very good in two of the lessons seen and good in one. Lessons are well-structured and there is a proper focus on the skills to be developed. Pupils are taught the importance of planning before making and they work from plans they have made themselves, or have been provided with. Pupils in Year 4, for example, make detailed plans of torches, identifying the materials they will need, and show an understanding of the situations in which their products will have to function. They make good

use of their knowledge of electrical circuits gained in science lessons, when considering their designs. Teachers identify these links effectively with other subjects so that design and technology can be taught in sufficient depth. Pupils in Year 5 enhance their work in history by designing and making shadufs in their work on the ancient Egyptians. Year 6 pupils increase their understanding of Britain during the Second World War by designing and making air raid shelters. The Anderson shelter, which pupils and staff planned, built and erected in the school grounds, is evidence of the good range of learning opportunities within this subject.

95. Pupils design their models in great detail, step-by-step, choosing materials, tools and techniques realistically. Tasks and resources are well planned by teachers so that no learning time is lost. In the Year 6 lessons seen, where learning was very good, resources were readily available to pupils so that all could work at a good pace. In these lessons, teachers continued to teach and challenge as pupils' worked so that the pace of learning was maintained. By the end of these lessons, pupils were well on their way to making good models of 'bouncy' cars, using their knowledge of cams. Time at the end of lessons is well used to consolidate learning as pupils are challenged, for example, to tell their partner what a *cam* is. Teachers' insistence on the correct use of vocabulary, and that pupils measure and assemble precisely, ensure that the subject is making an increasing contribution to pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. There is a developing use of ICT to support pupils' learning and to increase their interest in the subject. In a visit to Legoland, for example, Year 6 pupils were taught how to use control technology to improve the fairground rides they had previously designed and made. Such trips, extra-curricular activities and design and technology days, involving parents and members of the local community, are well used to enhance the curriculum and pupils' experiences.
96. Food technology is represented appropriately in the school's planning. Pupils in a good Year 5 lesson were observed carefully examining different types of bread and describing these in terms of texture, smell, taste, appearance and personal preference. The class teacher and teaching assistant were well-focused on the skills to be developed and, as a result, pupils' learning was good. Resources had been very carefully prepared and, in this as in all other lessons, pupils were reminded of health and safety issues. Only pupils who had returned parental permission slips were allowed to taste the bread, and hands were washed before and after activities. Pupils throughout the school design healthy diets and menus, and bake cakes and biscuits from recipes.
97. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the tasks and work hard in lessons to produce their best work. They readily discuss their work with each other and respect resources. Boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are fully included in lessons, and lower-attaining pupils are well supported by adults to achieve their best.
98. The significant improvements in provision and the very good range of learning opportunities have been achieved through the enthusiastic and well-informed leadership of the subject co-ordinator. A good range of well-organised and readily available resources supports teaching and learning. The co-ordinator gives good advice to teachers and has had opportunities to work alongside them to increase their confidence in delivering the subject. Teachers' assess the development of pupils' skills, but the use of this information to plan work for different groups of pupils is inconsistent across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Standards in geography are below national expectations by Year 6. The previous report noted satisfactory standards, although a significant minority was working below expectations. During the inspection, the lessons in geography were planned for Years 4 and 5 only. Additional evidence was obtained through discussions with teachers and pupils and examination of pupils' completed work. The few examples of recorded work in pupils' books are poorly presented. This is partly due to their weak literacy skills. When planning, teachers take insufficient account of different abilities. All pupils are often given the same work to complete. Currently, there is no formalised assessment of pupils' progress in the subject. Therefore, the work does not always build on what pupils already know and understand.

100. Most pupils make insufficient gains in acquiring geographical skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through school. Work in geography is not planned on a continuous basis. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use maps of different scales, plot routes and plans or use a compass as part of field study. The geography topics alternate with history topics, but sometimes there are long breaks between the topics over the year. For example, pupils in Year 5 study 'water and erosion' in the autumn term and link with 'Tudors', a history topic, for mapping skills. Usually pupils study one geography topic during the year. The practice of over-reliance on teaching skills as the opportunity arises in other subjects prevents the systematic development of pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding. Pupils' ability to carry out geographical enquiry, the application of questioning skills and analytical and presentational skills are also below the expectation. The subject co-ordinator has little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning through focused lesson observations or to examine pupils' work regularly to check standards.
101. There are, however, strengths in the subject, such as the emphasis on educational trips to enhance progress and form a secure basis for further development. For example, the residential trip to Holland and Belgium by Years 5 and 6 pupils last year, and Year 5's visit this term to Walton-on-the Naze to study coastal erosion, were effective in providing good first-hand experience. Year 4 pupils also made a local visit to study the environmental issues. Pupils in both Years 4 and 5 talked interestingly about their visit in the lessons. The rock samples collected at the coast were used successfully by some Year 5 pupils for the 'hardness' and the 'porous' test, and this made a good link with science.
102. In the lessons observed, the teaching is satisfactory, overall. Most teachers demonstrate sound geographical knowledge and understanding. The lessons are planned well and based on clear objectives. However, there is little evidence of the use of ICT to promote pupils' geographical skills of enquiry into the topics studied. There is a lack of challenge, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils and this affects their rate of progress. In most lessons teachers use appropriate methods and effective questioning. Praise and encouragement are used well and this supports pupils' attitudes to learning effectively. The teaching in lessons observed made satisfactory contributions to pupils' literacy skills; for example, pupils in Year 5 made suitable attempts at writing a newspaper report titled, 'The Vanishing Naze'. However, most pupils' writing skills are limited and there is little evidence of pupils' use of mathematical skills in producing graphs and tables of weather reports, for example. Most teachers use effective questioning techniques, but do not sufficiently encourage the use of appropriate terminology. In all lessons pupils were eager to answer questions. They collaborated well and worked with enthusiasm.
103. The subject leader has an appropriate action plan to raise the subject's profile. She has plans to review the geography documentation and improve resources, which are currently barely satisfactory.

HISTORY

104. During the inspection, history lessons were taught in Year 6 only. Additional evidence for judgements on standards was gathered from the analysis of pupils' work and interviews with pupils and teachers. Pupils' historical knowledge and understanding are broadly as expected by Year 6. This indicates that the average standards reported at the previous inspection have been maintained satisfactorily. The school has recently adopted the national guidance in the subject and organised suitable coverage across the school. The topics are now studied in appropriate depth and their organisation and timing enable pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding systematically. However, there is insufficient challenge for the higher-attaining pupils, as most pupils of different ability in the same class often do the same work. Most work is either copied or completed on photocopied worksheets that do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to devise their own ways of recording what they have learnt. There are no formalised procedures in assessing pupils' progress as they move through the school, and this affects the quality of teachers' planning, as it does not take enough account of what pupils can do already.

105. The analysis of pupils' completed work indicates that most pupils are developing some understanding of the past and a sense of chronology by their ability to sequence events. Their knowledge and understanding of relating events and changes into their correct time periods are less developed. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that most have some knowledge of the periods of British history, for example the 'Tudors' and the 'Victorians', although only a few place them accurately on the time-line in relation to the ancient Egyptians, they studied last year. However, Year 6 pupils' recent work on Queen Victoria's time-line entitled 'The Record Breaker' is indicative of their knowledge and understanding of people, periods and events. They readily explain why things happened, and most pupils use words and phrases that relate to the passing of time with confidence and skill. However, pupils are not sufficiently skilled in using and interpreting a wide range of historical sources and evidence. Their enquiry skills, for example, of independent research on a topic, are underdeveloped. Pupils' work shows satisfactory, but uneven, progress over their time in school. There is insufficient recorded work of good quality and presentation. Information technology is not yet used successfully to support work and extend pupils' understanding through active research and investigation in history.
106. The quality of teaching in the few lessons seen was mostly good. Pupils' learning was well enhanced by all Year 6 teachers portraying different roles of the working Victorian children. Strategies such as these, and well-chosen resources, are used effectively to extend their thinking. Good questioning by the teacher at the start of lessons provides clear links with previous learning and consolidates pupils' understanding. Pupils are excited by history involving role-play. Teaching of history makes limited contributions to the development and use of literacy skills, such as the development of writing and spelling, where pupils are encouraged to record what they know in their own words. The teaching contributes adequately to the development of pupils' knowledge of numbers through work on time-lines.
107. The new co-ordinator is well supported in her role. There is clear a plan for the future direction of the subject. The monitoring role in both teaching and learning, and regular monitoring of pupils' work, is underdeveloped. Resources such as books and artefacts are of satisfactory range and quality.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. The school has addressed the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection through well-planned action. Standards have improved and now meet the national expectation by Year 6. This has been achieved through a combination of factors. The school has installed a well-designed computer suite and ensured that all teachers are confident to use the suite. All classes are timetabled there each week and there is a planned scheme of work, which shows how pupils' skills are intended to increase from Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is planned well to give both coverage of topics each year and careful progression of skills through the school. The pupils make good progress in lessons, overall, while progress over a longer period of time is satisfactory. The higher-attaining pupils demonstrate good understanding and skills that exceed the expectation. The improvement in the subject has been promoted by the subject co-ordinator working closely with the headteacher, and by the good support of the governing body in considering the best design and equipment.
109. By Years 3 and 4, most children have developed satisfactory early mouse control. They are gaining keyboard skills but many pupils are slow to find the keys and tend to poke them rather than have a fluent key-stroke. Most pupils understand how to enter, save and retrieve their work. Pupils in Year 3 used a simulation of a geographical map to explore ideas and identify places and patterns. The teacher in one lesson provided an introduction, but when pupils were found to make little progress, she used sensible strategies to provide further explanations. Pupils then tackled the task with improved understanding. The high-attaining pupils have the skills to tackle unfamiliar tasks and most soon found their way around the map frames. In the parallel class, an extension task provided a good challenge, indicating that the class teacher had good subject knowledge to work at it with the pupils. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher had prepared a passage with many possibly incorrect spellings for pupils to check. She gave clear instructions about the cut and paste routines, and how to use the spell-checker. Most pupils clicked on the icon when they noticed a mis-spelling, choosing the correct word.

However, many pupils missed carefully chosen 'ambiguous' spellings such as grate/great. The pupils demonstrated good attitudes and behaviour, sustaining their effort and concentration well so that they made good gains in skill during the lesson. The teacher's good relationships with the children encouraged them to work hard. The good facilities of the suite, such as the screen projector and touch screen, were used effectively to teach the skills very clearly.

110. Careful preparation and good teaching in Year 5 extended pupils' knowledge of spreadsheets. Lively, clear explanations, using the touch screen well to illustrate a step, prepared pupils well for a task that required a simple summation of cells. Several pupils recalled work from a previous lesson and most applied the skills to finding the cost of a holiday, including flight, accommodation or food costs. Pupils collaborated well in pairs, working steps out together and taking turns by agreement. The pupils made good progress, several working well independently. Most pupils did not have fluent keyboard skills for entering data or using cursor keys. In the lessons for Year 6, pupils were preparing a presentation on photosynthesis. There was a good working atmosphere as pupils made choices together about the colours, font style, pictures to import and the way a word or picture should move on to the screen. The pupils worked with very good motivation, and watched in appreciation when others' work was projected on the screen as examples of style. The very good teaching, highly interactive strategies of the teachers and encouraging evaluations led to very good learning by the pupils. All pupils were included well in the tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties were supported appropriately, including where behaviour was challenging. The high-attaining pupils, about a quarter of the class, demonstrated skills in their designs and choices that were beyond the expectation. The teachers' very good relationships, subject knowledge and approach allowed the pupils freedom to experiment, so that their learning of new skills was very good.
111. Previous work from Years 3 to 6, and lesson observations, indicate that the majority of pupils have gained satisfactory skills and understanding in word processing, data handling, searching for information and early steps of control. There is a wide range of understanding and skill amongst the pupils. However, the good facilities, effective training and very good support from the co-ordinator is leading to improving standards as the work reinforces pupils' skills.
112. The quality of teaching in ICT is good. Generally, teachers manage pupils well so that they all know what is expected and behave well. They plan carefully to a good scheme, making a good choice of tasks that interest pupils. The use of the computer suite is effective in enabling teachers to develop a wide range of skills with the pupils. It is having a significant impact on the approach to ICT and is used well to raise standards. The tasks given to pupils in the suite are increasingly becoming linked to other classroom activities, thereby becoming part of the daily learning process.
113. The management of the subject, based on a carefully considered action plan, is good. Provision now meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, an improvement since the last inspection. Significantly improved resources mean that pupils have suitable opportunities to use a range of equipment, including a digital camera, tape recorders and electronic key boards to support work in other subjects. A computer club helps to extend their skills. Use of a local authority system for assessment is planned. Until then, a simple record of tasks is kept for each class. Careful financial management and thorough development planning ensure that the school is well positioned to make further improvements in order to raise standards.

MUSIC

114. Standards in music meet the expectation by Year 6 and there are several examples of good quality musical expression taking place. Several members of staff have particular gifts in music, and these are used generously to promote good learning experiences for pupils, who make good progress and achieve well as a result. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher gave a careful introduction, emphasising keywords such as tempo and pulse, leading the pupils into clapping the pulse of 'three blind mice'. In lessons in Year 4, the teacher played a rap poem to help pupils understand how the background accompaniment contributes to the intent. Several pupils contributed good ideas for accompanying a poem entitled 'Our Town' - so that a

lively effect was produced as the pupils read the poem. Most pupils enjoyed taking part and worked together to produce the outcome. A few pupils demonstrated good co-ordination and style, exceeding the expectation.

115. In Year 5, pupils responded well to the opportunity to sing a round, a little uncertain at first but growing in confidence with practice. Pupils were helped to think about the dynamics of their singing, and kept to time well in two parts. In one lesson, the teacher added a considerable challenge by forming the class into four groups. Initially they could not sing independently but with a lead the four parts of 'London's Burning' blended well together. A small minority of pupils is not confident in singing, and several do not keep well in tune. The four pupils who played the recorder demonstrated a higher level of musical appreciation and helped to keep the four parts flowing.
116. By Year 6, the level of musical demands made on the pupils is challenging, and reflects the expertise of some of the teachers. For example, in one lesson, children were given many intricate patterns of claps to repeat - most getting the rhythms correct, taking the challenge with a high level of enjoyment. When the pupils played a keyboard or other instrument most followed the musical score; a few high-attaining pupils played well with a good touch. This work involved helpful links with ICT experiences. In a further lesson in Year 6, pupils produced a graphic score of their group's composition. Most of these contained parts which could be read in order to play instruments - the children playing their score while the others listened appreciatively. Overall, the good choice of task, providing worthwhile activities with real musical experience and skills, promoted good learning and development of skills. The pupils enjoyed taking part actively and most, but not all, tried to produce a pleasant sound, indicating good attitudes to their work. The pupils know the names of familiar school musical instruments and know the different playing techniques. However, few pupils know the names of orchestral instruments.
117. The assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to sing - the younger pupils sing well and show good control of pitch and rhythm. They follow the teacher's lead well and control the intonation of the song carefully. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also sing well in assembly. For example, during a hymn practice assembly pupils took part well, following the very good lead of the teacher. While singing in two parts, children projected their voices well. The indications are that the variety of school productions helps develop pupils' confidence. Some eight children played the recorder confidently in an assembly. Most children are eager to have their turn in playing instruments.
118. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, overall. The very good subject knowledge by some teachers is a particular asset to the school, bringing very good experience to the children. Music is taught by the music co-ordinator, who is a well-qualified specialist, and by class teachers. The subject leader provides support for colleagues who are less confident. There is an appropriate balance of activities within music and the scheme of work provides for progression of skills through the school. Pupils have good opportunities to compose their own works, with a selection of instruments available. The school does not yet have suitable assessment and recording procedures to record pupils' progress. The selection of resources is satisfactory, with several representing multicultural backgrounds. The school's collection of recorded music is broad and representative of different traditions. Children have opportunities to listen to music and play instruments from different cultures. No pupils currently play musical instruments, such as the violin or flute. There is a recorder club that plays with some style, having tenor and treble recorders.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. The school has a long tradition of sporting achievement. Standards in the lessons and activities seen match the national expectations for the subject. Under the new headteacher, who is a sports specialist, this has been revived and is now a significant strength. The school has gained awards in local competitions for athletics, football, netball and swimming. A large number of children take part in after-school sporting activities - with a high level of commitment to improve their fitness and skills. The headteacher and staff are firmly of the opinion that

pupils' sporting achievements increase their self-esteem, improve their personal confidence and raise the ethos and purpose of the school. The inspectors endorse this view, noting the high levels of effort and good skills amongst many pupils.

120. During Year 3, pupils gain a wide range of early skills through a planned programme that includes ball skills, gymnastics and dance. In a well-planned lesson in Year 4, the teacher's very positive style encouraged pupils to experiment and extend their use of their bodies in making high or low bridges. They formed many shapes, working together well in pairs, and encouraged by the praise and evaluations of their friends and teacher. In a further lesson in Year 4, the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour were influential in their approach to dance, as several moved freely and expressively as 'snow', took on the character of a wolf, and then as a boy. Standards, overall, met the expectation as several pupils moved freely and fluently, entering into the ideas. The quality of their learning was good, promoted well by the teacher, for example, through her good strategy of having two groups of pupils to evaluate the work of the other two, thereby reflecting on their own and others' performance. Pupils in Year 4 were observed to have very good attitudes and behaviour during a well-managed swimming session, where their standards, overall, were in line with expectations.
121. Well-planned and structured lessons in Year 5 continue to provide good experiences and challenge for the pupils. After a warm-up session as jumping beans, for example, the teachers prepared pupils well to use a hoop or ribbon creatively. Pupils worked together well in pairs to develop sequences of moves - combining jumping, rolling, balancing and even a roll through a hoop. The pupils' good attitudes again contributed well to their learning, as did the teachers' comments - particularly by giving quality time to each pair to help them evaluate and improve their work. The high-attaining pupils demonstrated skills and moves that exceed the expectation. The pupils with special needs, after a sensitive check by the co-ordinator that all was well, took part fully and made appropriate progress. For the outdoor games sessions all the Year 5 pupils are timetabled together in a good arrangement that gives choice and social mix. The pupils displayed excellent behaviour as they moved to their choices. Those choosing hockey received clear explanations on the skills of marking and dodging, with the tasks pitched exactly right for their stage of development. The lesson included all pupils fully so that they made very good progress through the teacher's very good relationships, pace and interactions. Standards are broadly average at this stage.
122. Pupils in Year 6 also build well on the work of previous years. During a fitness training lesson, the teacher gave excellent direction, simulating both the skills expected as well as what would be a cheat. The pupils were highly motivated by her encouragement, many maintaining the standard for the full minute, although several began to take short cuts! While around half the pupils have the general fitness expected, around a quarter of them could not perform the routines and could not sustain the effort. During a similar good arrangement with a whole year games session, as for Year 5, the pupils again chose to do hockey, football, netball or games skills. The pupils had many good opportunities to learn new skills and improve their performance - stopping and striking a hockey ball, the tactics of defending in netball, the control required in passing and receiving a football. All the activities provided good opportunities to develop skills, the teachers, with support assistants, demonstrating many good features that promoted good learning. Pupils in Year 6 also have regular opportunities for swimming, where they demonstrated a range of skills from well above the expectation to below.
123. Overall, the quality of teaching in physical education is good and has a direct impact in improving pupils' standards, combining a motivating approach with a clear understanding of the skills and tactics required. The provision is fully inclusive, and teachers ensure that pupils have worthwhile experiences, adapting the tasks or expectations sensibly for differing groups of pupils. There is no significant difference in the progress of differing groups of pupils. The co-ordinator provides good support, and ensures that there is sufficient safe, good quality equipment. The co-ordinator checks planning and other administration, but has not yet observed lessons directly. There is a simple record of some physical activities but not yet a comprehensive record that enables the school to track pupils' progress formally.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

124. At the time of the last inspection, pupils attained standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It was only possible to observe a small proportion of lessons during this inspection. In half the lessons observed pupils attained satisfactory standards and in half the lessons standards were unsatisfactory. Overall, taking all available evidence into account, standards are just satisfactory.
125. At the time of the inspection pupils were studying Christianity or Judaism. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with the organisation of the Bible. They use the index to find that the Psalms are found in the Old Testament. After much discussion a small number of pupils were able to talk about simile and metaphor in the Psalms, for example, the psalmist describing God as a shepherd. They were able to make simple connections between the idea of a shepherd and examples of caring in their own lives, such as by a mother or teacher. In Year 4, pupils related the Jewish festival of Sukkot to their own experiences of harvest festival.
126. Year 3 pupils greatly enjoyed their visit to a local church. They know that babies are baptised at the font and that weddings are held in churches. They could identify different artefacts that they had learned about before their visit. They listened with interest as the lay reader told them of her work in the church and then were keen to explore the building.
127. Pupils in Year 5 understand that harvest festival is a time of giving and they can identify a range of charitable organisations. For example, they remember organising events to support charities by collecting gifts to send to children in Romania.
128. In a lesson for Year 6, after reading the story of Ruth and Naomi, pupils devised and acted short scenes about loyalty. Whilst this contributed to their moral development, the focus on the study of characters and their behaviour was not brought out sufficiently in discussion to develop pupils' knowledge and interpretation of the events. The links between the story and the festival of Shavuot were also not emphasised to improve their understanding.
129. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are satisfactory. They show respect towards different beliefs. However, they lack the speaking skills to discuss issues in religious education effectively.
130. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory. The standard of teachers' subject knowledge varies. Whilst they are confident in teaching about religion, they are less secure in developing pupils' understanding of how faith affects the lives of believers. The best teaching was seen in Year 3. Pupils had been well prepared for their visit to church and as a result they showed respect and behaved well. In other lessons there were missed opportunities to develop pupils' understanding. In some lessons, good use is made of drama, but in most of the lessons observed, pupils are asked to complete worksheets. These are undemanding and do not help pupils to learn more about religious education. Pupils are not skilled in discussing issues and teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to improve their skills or to learn through religion as well as about it.
131. The subject leader for religious education is enthusiastic about the subject, keen to develop it in the school but is understandably awaiting the new Agreed Syllabus and associated advice on assessment before proceeding further. There are good links with the local church and plans to develop links with speakers from different faiths and to arrange visits to other places of worship. The co-ordinator monitors colleagues' planning regularly and has begun to monitor pupils' work.