

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Billericay

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114910

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Cooke

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock  
21261

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247508

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Meadoway Billeracy Essex
Postcode:	CM11 2HL
Telephone number:	(01277) 651364
Fax number:	(01277) 634209
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Rackham
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	Art and design Music Educational inclusion English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		How high are standards? 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?
13060	Peter Browning	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Science Geography Religious education Special educational needs	
10808	Alan Britton	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology History	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sunnymede Junior School caters for pupils aged seven to 11. There are 335 pupils on roll. It is bigger than other primary schools. A full range of ability is present in pupils entering school in Year 3 but most pupils are below average in English and mathematics. A majority are of British white origin. A small number, representing approximately seven per cent of all pupils, is of minority ethnic origin. A very small number (around 1.5 per cent) has English as an additional language. There is a similar proportion of Traveller pupils. Around 0.5 per cent of pupils is at an early stage of English language acquisition. These and some Traveller pupils are funded for extra help through minority ethnic achievement grants and Section 488 respectively. Arabic, Bengali and Thai are the main languages spoken other than English. About eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, below the national average. Fourteen per cent have special educational needs, with 0.6 per cent having a statement of special need. Both figures are below national averages. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties but some have emotional and behavioural problems and other difficulties linked to speech and communication. Around nine per cent of pupils joined the school outside the usual time in the last school year. Almost three per cent left. The school has grown a lot in the past two years, a continuing trend. Until recently, staffing levels were very unstable. The school gained 'Investor in People' status and an intermediate 'Healthy Schools' award this term.

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

Sunnymede makes satisfactory educational provision for its pupils, with strengths seen in its pastoral care and its positive ethos whereby pupils feel secure and valued. The headteacher is a good leader, working in close partnership with her deputy and senior managers. She welcomes diversity, celebrating every individual's contribution to school, pupil and adult. Teamwork is valued by all staff and governors, who speak warmly of working as a team towards shared goals. Teaching is another strength, with most good or better, affecting standards positively. Standards are rising, notably in English but also in mathematics. Governors fully support school aims and its vision of helping all pupils reach their potential, having equal access to every part of school life. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- It teaches pupils very well in ways that frequently engage their interest, motivating them fully in lessons.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and form very good relationships with one another and with adults. They show initiative and take on responsibilities happily.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is really well supported by personal, social, health and citizenship education.
- The headteacher gives a good steer to the school, guided by her own educational vision for its development. Good financial management is geared effectively to planned priorities.
- The school's excellent relationships with other schools, especially its neighbouring Infants' school and the Secondary school where most pupils transfer at 11, benefit all in the school community.
- There is very good provision for activities outside lessons, which are popular and well attended.
- There are very good procedures for inducting new staff into school life.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of teaching, to bring it consistently in line with the best practice seen.
- Time allocated to some subjects and the further development of the role of subject co-ordinators.
- How pupils receiving additional support for their learning are withdrawn from lessons.
- Ensuring all statutory requirements are met.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 is satisfactory. Substantial changes in staffing since then have hampered progress. However, in collaboration with staff and governors, the headteacher has ensured staffing stability, improved teaching and pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour, all matters seen as

needing urgent attention when she arrived three years ago. Also, as recommended at the last inspection, good procedures are in place for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics, especially, but also in science, with other subjects planned for. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is better. Standards in information and communication technology have risen. Curricular provision for some subjects is 'squeezed' and the school still finds it hard to cover all non-core subjects (such as geography and design and technology), and religious education properly.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Strengths are seen in results for English. In fact, results in mathematics, particularly, and in science are better than the average points scores in the table suggest, since pupils were broadly in line with national expectations (Level 4 and above) in both subjects. Results are depressed because too many pupils worked below expectations and not enough did better in either subject. Over time, trends in results when pupils' scores for all subjects are added together and averaged out, are below the national trend. The school exceeded a target set in English in 2002 but did not achieve the very challenging target set for mathematics. In a bid to raise standards, setting arrangements in Year 6 now include English in addition to mathematics, with booster sets in both subjects for most of the year. It is too early to say what impact this arrangement has had on results in this year's statutory tests, but lessons in both subjects in Year 6 were at least good, spurring pupils on to achieve well. Inspection findings show these oldest pupils reach satisfactory standards overall in English, with good standards in reading and speaking and listening. Pupils are average in mathematics, although a few very able pupils do better than might be expected. Most pupils achieve in line with expectations in science but too few do better than this, resulting in below-average standards overall. Pupils have had too little chance to do practical, experimental and investigative work, and this has affected standards adversely.

Pupils across the school apply their speaking and listening, reading and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. They compose and draft a planned piece of writing matched to different purposes, punctuating satisfactorily. Handwriting and presentation skills, however, are frequently unsatisfactory. Care with spelling is also often lacking. Generally, writing skills are not sufficiently developed through subjects other than English. For example, little work in geography and religious education is recorded. Indeed, standards by Year 6 in these subjects are unsatisfactory. In discussion, pupils' recall and understanding of work done are insecure. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Related skills are applied suitably to other subjects. However, a growing number of pupils with good skills are insufficiently challenged by work set. In design and technology, history and the strands of music and physical education seen, pupils reach average standards. Although Year 6 pupils were not observed swimming, indications are they reach at least satisfactory standards, building successfully on skills learned earlier and doing very well in competitive events. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on art and design but paintings in Year 6 show variable outcomes. Many pupils do not properly understand colour mixing and applying water-based paint. Pupils do better in other year groups, reaching good skills in Years 3 and 5, for example. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need, make good progress and frequently do better than expected. This is due to their good support, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress. Those with proficient English language skills achieve at least in line with their peers.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and most enjoy school very much.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. It is often better in lessons, exemplary in some assemblies and when pupils go out of school, for instance, to swim or for a study visit.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show initiative and like to take on responsibility, such as representing their class on the School Council. They like to help one another.
Attendance	Good. Pupils mostly arrive punctually at the start of school.

This is an area with considerable strengths. On a very few occasions, the behaviour of a few pupils disrupts a lesson's progress and others' learning, or is seen to produce disharmony in the playground. While these pupils do not always respond promptly to adults' interventions at such times, they do understand school rules, and can reflect on their behaviour to good effect when procedures are employed. For example, they spend time in the "consequences room" discussing with the duty teacher what they have done and making a record of this as well as thinking about how other people felt and how they might make amends.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

No teaching was found to be less than satisfactory and a substantial amount was judged good or better in classes across the year groups. Particular strengths are seen in Year 5, and especially in Year 6. Indeed, some excellent teaching was seen in the latter in English and mathematics lessons. These subjects are often well taught throughout the school, with a good impact on pupils' learning. Basic literacy and numeracy are also taught well, although there is inconsistency in some classes with regard to pupils attending to their handwriting and spelling and general presentation of work. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, making sure pupils take a full part in all activities. At times, ongoing classroom work is disrupted because pupils are taken out for additional literacy help. For example, a Year 3 pupil at a relatively early stage of learning English left an art and design lesson although she had understood a teacher's good discussion about a drawing task and looked forward to attempting this. The school knows teachers' marking is also inconsistent so it is not always clear how subsequent planning is informed. At times, tasks do not challenge more able pupils enough. For example, over-prescriptive worksheets are used in science. Subject expertise is to the fore in lessons taken by a part-time music specialist, benefiting pupils' learning. Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to their work are infectious and have a marked impact on pupils' positive attitudes.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Planning suitably covers all subjects as required, with good provision made for English, mathematics and science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Planning takes account of these pupils' identified needs in line with targets set in their individual education plans. They get good quality support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The very small number of pupils at a relatively early stage of learning English are planned for appropriately across all subjects of the curriculum. At times, though, they are taken out of classrooms in ways disrupting ongoing tasks.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall, with strengths in provision for moral, social and personal development. A very good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education promotes such development effectively. Spiritual development is also good, with opportunities for quiet reflection in assemblies and some lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To very good effect. Strengths are seen in pastoral care and in good procedures for child protection.

The school has a good partnership with parents. The curriculum is suitably broad but lacks balance. Some subjects are adversely affected by the amount of time allocated to them, notably religious education, geography, art and design, design and technology and music. At times, it is not evident whether planned work is actually done. Statutory requirements are not met regarding the daily act of collective worship. While the school strives to ensure all pupils' learning needs are properly catered for, the extent to which some pupils leave classrooms for additional support is a concern. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has a clear educational vision. The complementary expertise of the headteacher and her deputy aids the leadership and management of the school. They work well with other senior managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily overall. Governors have a good understanding of the school's daily life through regular visits. They are committed to further school improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher and senior managers monitor the school's work systematically but the roles of others with responsibilities are underdeveloped.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Grants are used for their specified purpose. Financial planning is sound. Governors' good expertise helps monitor spending wisely.

There is a good number of teachers and well-trained learning support assistants to meet curricular demands. One teacher has overseas qualifications and one has recently gained qualified status through the school's very good support. Good expertise is evident at all levels. Accommodation is good and well maintained. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in some subjects but unsatisfactory in English, where book provision is not sufficiently wide-ranging, although good resources support guided reading. Governors do not fully meet statutory requirements with regard to monitoring the school's work. For example, they do not monitor the impact of a recently adopted race equality policy and inform parents about

this. The headteacher and governors apply principles of best value satisfactorily. Decisions are taken only when all options have been carefully considered.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like coming to school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of children's work and behaviour.</li> <li>• Children make good progress in becoming mature and responsible young people.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable talking to teachers and value the headteacher's ready availability.</li> <li>• There is a good variety of activities out of lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework provision.</li> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• Closer links with parents and carers.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Although the setting of homework is judged to be satisfactory, the school does not, in fact, have a homework policy. Nor does it communicate its expectations of homework to parents regularly to remind them of these. Clarifying expectations more regularly than the reminder given each year would help parents understand the school's approach, perhaps moderating their views on the work set. Inspectors do not agree that parents are insufficiently well informed about their children's progress. Parents have many opportunities, formal and informal, to discuss this. They also gain very good information about English, mathematics and science in annual reports on children's progress, although progress in other subjects is not so consistently well reported. The school works hard at forging close links with parents. However, the response to two family workshops was poor, which those attending thought a pity because these were judged potentially very useful in helping parents realise how their children learn in school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The full range of ability is present in children entering Year 3, with marked differences year-on-year. Overall, standards are below those expected in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is because, although most pupils reach expected levels (Level 2 and above) in statutory tests and teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 prior to transfer, a significant number fall below this level. As well, not enough achieve in the higher range of Level 2 or at Level 3. So overall standards are adversely affected. A scrutiny of work in Year 3 and observation of lessons support this picture. Evidence shows most Year 3 pupils reach standards broadly in line with those expected relative to their age and ability in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing are not as secure as in the other areas of learning while those in science are below average. The number of pupils achieving below levels expected for their age in science, as recorded in workbooks, is higher than in other subjects. Evidence shows pupils now in Year 6 achieved well below expectations when they entered the school. There has also been a significant movement of pupils into and out of school in the present Year 6 cohort other than at the normal time of starting, even as late as Year 5 and during Year 6.
2. Pupils make good progress in the main, including those with special educational needs or with a statement of special need. Pupils learning English as an additional language, too, make good progress<sup>1</sup>. Those with proficient English language skills succeed at least in line with their peers. Pupils with identified learning needs do well because quality support is deployed to good effect, especially in English and mathematics lessons. No marked differences in achievement were found between boys and girls.
3. When average points scores are calculated, results in statutory tests in 2002 for 11-year-olds were above the average for all and similar schools in English and below the average in mathematics and science. Average points scores are calculated by adding together all pupils' scores in each test and averaging them out to give an overall score. Solely in terms of Level 4, pupils' performance in mathematics especially, but also in science, was above the national average. Pupils did not do well enough at Level 5 in either subject. The fact that too many performed below expected levels also affected results adversely. The trend in results over time is below the national trend when the average of all test scores is calculated. Early indications for the latest test results in science (2003) show pupils' performance at Level 5 has improved, but national or similar schools' comparisons cannot yet be made to see whether this improvement alters the overall picture.
4. Inspection findings generally reflect test findings. By Year 6, pupils' good speaking and listening and reading skills are better than might be expected. Their broadly average writing skills are not so strong, however. Their skills are also roughly in line with expectations in mathematics and science, with relatively few pupils doing better. In mathematics, though, a few very able pupils do well, much better than expected. Targets for English in 2002 were slightly exceeded but very ambitious targets for mathematics were not met. These have been readjusted in light of assessment information. They remain realistic for English. Nevertheless they are still ambitious for mathematics and the school knows they will be hard to achieve. The school has looked carefully at its strategies for improving pupils' performance in English and mathematics and has organised setting for all classes in mathematics and in English for Year 6. It is too early to say how setting will affect standards in statutory tests, but lessons seen in both subjects in Year 6 were at least good and often better.
5. By Year 6, pupils can explain their thinking. They listen well to other's points of view, adult and peer, as seen in two Year 6 literacy lessons when pupils discussed two stories they had studied, exploring the feelings of the main character in each. Pupils can write for different kinds of readers. For

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<sup>1</sup> Pupils learning English as an additional language will sometimes be referred to as 'bilingual' pupils or learners for ease of reference. It is recognised these pupils may be proficient in more than one language other than English and may have literacy skills in their other language/s.

example, in Year 6 they write as journalists, producing articles for a newspaper. They compose and draft their planned piece, punctuating satisfactorily with a reasonable knowledge of Standard English. In a high-ability mathematics set, they calculate value added tax at 17.5 per cent on various products, explaining their methods with good understanding. Pupils in a low-ability set achieve well when working with two number operations. Some use calculators for problem solving, others make up their own problems from a shopping list of priced items, involving multiplication. In science, Year 6 pupils of all abilities seem to grasp a lesson's content well during an introductory discussion. They show understanding of the interdependence of plants and animals and how altering habitats affect this balance. They have a good knowledge of food chains. Yet, when working in groups, pupils of average and below-average ability struggle to record their ideas. A scrutiny of completed work shows these oldest pupils have had few opportunities for experimental and investigative work in science, affecting their grasp of important scientific principles. Related skills develop more obviously in other years (for example, Year 3 pupils consider whether light affects the germination of broad beans and work out how to set up a fair test).

6. Pupils across the school use literacy skills linked to speaking and listening and reading for many purposes, across the curriculum, to good effect. In many classes, though, handwriting and presentation skills are often unsatisfactory. Pupils pay too little attention to correctness in spelling, even when they are reminded about this and can refer to words written on a board or flip chart. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 religious education lesson when pupils made notes on a worksheet, following a thorough discussion of ideas to be recorded. At times, pupils' recording skills are underdeveloped, as in science where pre-designed worksheets limit their ability to use their own words and offer very little challenge. Pupils apply their numeracy skills with good understanding to different subjects. For example, in science, they count how many times they breathe when seated during one minute and compare results with the number counted after walking for two. Overall, pupils have satisfactory basic skills in information and communication technology, applying them to ever more challenging tasks. A good example was seen in Year 6 when work in the computer suite designing multi-media pages was linked to a study visit to the emergency services earlier in the day. However, tasks set in lessons in the suite do not generally challenge an increasing number of highly skilled pupils in ways matched to their needs.
7. Pupils reach satisfactory standards by Year 6 in design and technology, history, information and communication technology and in gymnastics and games in physical education. Although Year 6 pupils were not seen swimming, standards in this are at least satisfactory since all pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres by the end of Year 5. They go on to develop skills in swimming for one term in Year 6. Some do very well in competitive events. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement about singing in music but Year 6 pupils reach satisfactory standards when composing, performing and critically appraising their compositions with a view to making improvements. Pupils develop a good grasp of musical terminology. For example, Year 5 pupils recall the correct terms for musical elements such as "timbre", "texture" and "pulse" and explain these. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards achieved in art and design by Year 6 but pupils' work reveals very varied standards in painting. For example, water-based paint is not well controlled by a substantial number of pupils and colour mixing is underdeveloped. A few examples of close observational charcoal studies of objects such as seed heads and logs are very well done. By contrast, Year 3 pupils have a good ability to mix colours and apply paint confidently. One class reached a really high standard in painting after studying a book used for literacy featuring a village surrounding a harbour. Standards in geography and religious education are judged unsatisfactory overall. Very little recorded work was available for scrutiny and pupils in Year 6 found it hard to recall work they had covered. Their knowledge and understanding of both subjects were insecure, relative to expectations set out in the National Curriculum (for geography) and the locally agreed syllabus (for religious education).
8. This picture generally accords with that of the previous inspection report. Then, as now, 11-year-olds achieved broadly in line with national expectations (Level 4) in English, mathematics and science but did not do as well as their peers at higher levels. Since then, standards reached in information and communication technology have risen, as have standards gained by all pupils with special educational needs. Standards in music have also risen to some extent. They are now more consistently in line with expectations given pupils' age and ability. Standards in geography and religious education have fallen. Indications are that this is also true of painting in art and design by

Year 6. The school accepts non-core subjects such as geography and art and design have suffered since the last inspection because English and mathematics have been emphasised, in line with government guidance.

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

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They come in happily in the mornings and settle quickly to their work. Many take part enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. For example, pupils enjoyed logical puzzles and mathematics games during a weekly "Cranium Club" lunchtime session while on another occasion a small orchestra rehearsed for an open day performance later in the term. Pupils generally take a full part in lessons, listening attentively to teachers and answering questions keenly in whole-class sessions. When they work on follow-up tasks, levels of concentration are sometimes very high both for individual work and while co-operating with a partner or small group. Such motivation was observed in a Year 5 music lesson when pupils worked on group compositions, agreeing who should notate the piece and the form it would take.
10. Overall, behaviour is good inside and outside the building (for example, when pupils socialise together and with adults while eating their lunch in the dining room). In lessons, behaviour is frequently very good and exemplary behaviour was observed during whole-school assemblies. Pupils move around the school sensibly and abide by school rules. When they are off-site they behave very well, as seen when Year 6 pupils spent a morning with police, fire and ambulance personnel, learning about matters concerning personal, social, health and citizenship education. The school is justly proud of letters from people in the locality, praising pupils' behaviour at such times. In lessons, the vast majority of pupils are very well behaved, although one or two boys sometimes challenge adults in ways that impede the learning of others, because of the time a teacher needs to take to deal with the problem. This can happen even in good lessons. For example, in a Year 3 art and design lesson a boy was quite rude to a teacher and it took time to calm him down and make sure he got on with the task in hand. Nearly all parents who replied to the questionnaire believe behaviour to be good. At the meeting prior to inspection, and in some written comments, parents said it had improved dramatically during the past two to three years. Pupils feel safe in school and think there is very little bad behaviour. They confidently expect teachers to deal with any inappropriate incidents swiftly and effectively. In the last year there have been eight fixed-term and one permanent exclusions.
11. Attendance and punctuality are good and for many pupils they are very good. Medical reasons account for most authorised absence, although holidays in term time account for some.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and discharge them conscientiously (for example, as school councillors representing their class, arranging the school hall in readiness for assembly and manning the telephones at lunchtime). Pupils show a great deal of independence. One boy initiated the setting up of a school newspaper. At the end of an assembly during the inspection, he signalled to the headteacher that he had a message to give out and reminded everyone that the deadline for contributions to the newspaper was fast approaching. School councillors are keen to be involved with a peer mediation programme about to start, whereby pupils will play a key role in listening to the reasons for disputes between peers and helping to resolve these. Minutes of a discussion about this at a School Council meeting reveal pupils well able to discuss at what age they might be trained as mediators. Everyone agreed that older pupils should take on this responsibility.
13. Relationships within the school community are very good. Pupils genuinely care for one another and are more than happy to help each other. In a Year 5 history lesson, for example, two "buddies" showed a good understanding of the school's "Buddy system" in the support they gave to peers. They made sure a pupil learning English as an additional language understood the task facing her and generally helped her to take a full part in planned activities.

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

14. Teaching is a strength. It is never less than satisfactory. In 49 per cent of lessons it is good and very

good in a further 13 per cent. It is excellent in 3 per cent. This signifies a good improvement since the previous inspection when unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The improved quality of teaching is particularly creditable given that many teachers are relatively new to the school, a substantial proportion being new to the profession. Good and better teaching is seen across the school. There are particular strengths in Year 5, and especially in Year 6.

15. In the best lessons, teachers keep a brisk pace and a sharp focus on a lesson's purpose. For example, in a very good Year 6 lower-ability literacy set, discernible gains in learning were made because a teacher's questioning meant all pupils took part in a discussion on how to improve their writing. She kept good eye contact with individuals, fostering a generally positive atmosphere by taking real interest in what they had to say. Two learning support assistants worked with small groups very well. By checking a lesson plan, they knew precisely what the teacher expected. They helped each pupil take a full part in activities. Similarly, low-ability pupils in a very good Year 3 mathematics lesson concentrated hard on counting, recognising their teacher's high expectations of their work and behaviour. They talked about their calculations with some assurance. For example, a girl explained "I know 2 is half of 4 and I added in 2s because this is easier" (that is, when counting on in fours from 29 to 41). In a very good Year 4 music lesson, a teacher's subject expertise again helped pupils realise learning gains. The teacher's quiet manner ensured pupils listened intently and worked hard to copy a line of a song she sang for them. Pupils enjoyed inventing nonsense words to fit the song's rhythm and pulse. Yet again, in a very good Year 5 science lesson, a teacher explored pupils' knowledge of seed germination and how to set up a fair test so they could see why their results were credible.
16. Where teaching is only satisfactory, there is sometimes a loss of pace because too much time is spent on an initial discussion before practical work is started. This was seen, for example, in a Year 4 art and design lesson. A number of pupils wanted to ask more questions after everyone appeared to have agreed (in response to a teacher's courteous checking) that they knew what they had to do and the instruction was given to get on with the task set. It soon became apparent that most questioners were simply trying to extend discussion to get further personal contact with the teacher who, in turn, listened patiently even though her responses meant repeating what had already been made clear. On another occasion, in a Year 5 religious education lesson, a very small number of boys behaved poorly. This was dealt with in line with school rules and in ways well understood by all. A red card, taken by a pupil to the headteacher, meant she promptly appeared to take away the main miscreant. Nevertheless, learning was disrupted for a time, and it was hard to regain the initial impetus, although pupils were interested in learning about Hindu customs and practice at prayer time and did make gains by the lesson's end.
17. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are generally well taught, although the school knows the teaching of handwriting, which is inconsistent, needs attention. All pupils acquire good skills in tackling unfamiliar words when reading. Teachers extend the use of literacy texts to other subjects so that well-known writings form a basis for different ways of looking at the world. So links are made between the study of "Myths, Legends and Fables" in literacy lessons and Aboriginal 'dreamtime' paintings in Year 5. Pupils have good opportunities to apply their mathematics to other subjects, such as geography and science, displaying data in graphical form and measuring in centimetres for design and technology. Information and communication technology skills are also well taught. Displays of work show teachers plan suitably in some lessons for the application of skills learned to other subjects. For example, Year 5 pupils created pictures of animals on computers from geometric shapes such as circles, squares and rhomboids, setting them in a background reminiscent of illustrations for a story. At times, however, tasks are insufficiently challenging, especially (although not solely) for more able pupils. This is pronounced in lessons where worksheets prevail, as in science and religious education.
18. The teaching of English, mathematics, art and design, information and communication technology and music is good. Some excellent teaching was seen as well as the very good teaching already discussed. For example, excellent teaching featured in English and a mathematics lessons, in Year 6, having a consequent effect on pupils' ability to articulate their thinking and make progress in acquiring new concepts (about value added tax in mathematics, for instance). Good teaching was seen in half the physical education lessons observed. It was satisfactory overall in religious education. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on teaching in design and

technology, geography and history, but the few lessons observed in each of these were of good quality. In the main, teachers use resources well to aid learning.

19. Teachers most frequently plan well for pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need. They take good account of targets set in pupils' individual education plans. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively, as noted above in the Year 6 low-ability literacy set. Teaching pupils in small groups or individually (especially in literacy and numeracy lessons) gives them full access to all planned activities. Assistants know pupils' learning targets. They make useful, ongoing notes to help assess progress towards these and liaise regularly with teachers so information is shared. Year 3 pupils known to need extra help when reading are taught well outside a classroom, for specified periods, by a senior learning support assistant, although withdrawal from lessons can be disruptive to ongoing classroom learning.
20. Teachers also plan well to include pupils learning English as an additional language in all aspects of a lesson. They consistently check whether pupils know what is expected. In fact, most of these pupils are proficient in English and manage well without help, but a very small number are at a relatively early stage of English language acquisition. Often, these pupils are taken from lessons for extra support, together with some Traveller pupils assessed as benefiting similarly. At times this strategy is inappropriate. For example, in a Year 3 art and design lesson, a bilingual pupil was fully involved with a whole-class discussion. The discussion was extremely well focused, as the teacher used visual information skilfully. She involved pupils through questioning and eye contact, together with repetition of key vocabulary in ways particularly helpful to a beginner bilingual. The pupil subsequently revealed very good understanding of the task set, rushing to secure a magnifying glass for her work. Later, on checking what she had managed to do, it was apparent she had been taken from the lesson for help with reading and had not started drawing. The class teacher reported she had been reluctant to go but, since this was planned provision, the teacher did not feel able to do anything about the matter.
21. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. In a few classes (notably in Year 6), it clarifies helpfully for pupils what has worked and what needs to be improved. More generally, teachers' evaluative comments are perfunctory, showing how work has been marked. In many instances, it is unclear how such ongoing assessment informs planning. There is a draft policy on assessing pupils' work but its implementation, involving discussion and agreement of the final form, has been delayed to later this term. Teachers set homework in line with the school's approach, stressing reading. In some lessons, homework links well to ongoing studies, as when in Year 6 history, pupils were asked to talk to their parents about their memories of John Lennon.

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

22. Although the school offers a satisfactorily broad curriculum, this lacks sufficient balance. Some subjects are adversely affected by the amount of time allocated to them, notably religious education, geography, art and design, design and technology and music. In fact, time allocated to some of these subjects makes it difficult for the school to meet statutory requirements. Nevertheless, the school is fully aware of the problem and plans in hand should, for instance, ensure that religious education is better served from next September when the new locally agreed syllabus is introduced.
23. Further, curricular issues about equality of access to ongoing classroom activities are raised by the high incidence of pupils leaving lessons for additional help with literacy. Admittedly, the school strives hard through this means to cater for some pupils' learning needs. The substantial time allocated to swimming for Years 4, 5 and 6 introduces a number of additional questions. At times, because of circumstances beyond the school's control, pupils arrive back in school late. For example, one Year 5 class arrived back in school late during the inspection and planned guided reading had to be cancelled. The two remaining classes also arrived back late and had a shortened lunch hour, which affected not only their play time but also the time a class teacher had for lunch and to prepare for the afternoon sessions. All three classes missed a weekly assembly because of swimming. Statutory requirements with regard to the Act of Collective Worship were not met consistently during the inspection period and the school admits the deficit is not made up for classes who do not attend (for example, for those who go swimming).

24. The above situation differs from that given in the previous inspection in a number of ways. For example, provision for information and communication technology is considerably improved but curricular balance does not appear as strong as it then was. In the interim, the school has responded to government-initiated Numeracy and Literacy Strategies at the expense of subjects such as geography and design and technology. It is now seeking to redress this balance and sees a need to improve provision in the creative arts, for instance, as a priority.
25. Curricular planning is managed collaboratively by teachers across and within year groups. It is overseen by senior managers who help identify and suggest remedies for problems in weekly meetings. Also, teachers spend a lot of time in professional 'chat' in ways benefiting their planning. These twin approaches ensure consistency of content in lessons for pupils of the same age. So teachers gain a good grasp of what is happening across classes or (as in the case of mathematics and some English lessons) sets in their year group. A good illustration occurred during the inspection. In a Year 3 art and design lesson, a teacher realised, when discussing learning outcomes, that it would have been useful for pupils to use a viewfinder to study details in flowers. The suggestion was passed on to colleagues working on the same lesson theme and pupils in their classes benefited from the timely 'tip'. Good strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are in place and appropriate emphasis is given to basic skills so as to facilitate learning in all subjects. At times, though, pupils are hampered in exercising their writing skills during some lessons because of a prevalence of worksheets. These are often prescriptive and limit pupils' capacity to record their own ideas. Teachers frequently use good strategies for developing pupils' information and communication technology skills. All classes have good access to a well-resourced computer suite although there was little evidence during the inspection of pupils applying and developing computer skills, within other lessons (some work of this kind was evident in displays). Pupils have good access to technology such as tape recorders, overhead projectors, digital cameras and dictaphones to aid learning, as seen in a number of lessons. Year 4 pupils made visual and oral records of a walk in the local area in connection with their geography studies.
26. All subjects of the National Curriculum are planned for in line with latest guidance. Yet the allocation of time remains a problem. Some subjects are taught alternately for half-term periods but are still 'squeezed' because the actual time they have is barely sufficient to meet curricular demands. This happens with art and design alternating with design and technology and geography alternating with history. It is to teachers' credit that they can organise lessons to best advantage and make really good use of time available. Some subjects, such as geography and music, suffer more than others. Scientific enquiry is also under-emphasised in the science curriculum, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Sex and relationships education accords with the governors' policy, and drug awareness is part of a very well planned personal, social, health and citizenship programme. Wherever possible, teachers make links with other subjects, so pupils can experience the curriculum as a whole. For example, some good work in information and communication technology linked to literacy was observed in a Year 6 lesson after a visit to a "Crucial Crew" session (that is, with the emergency services) for all Year 6 pupils. Curriculum focus weeks also promote cross-curricular work. A mathematics and science week included opportunities for pupils to explore three-dimensional shape, colour and sound through links to art and design and music.
27. There is good provision for English and mathematics. Both subjects are given a prominent place in the curriculum and allocated time is mostly used well. As well as literacy lessons, pupils have daily guided reading. Pupils are set according to ability throughout the school in mathematics and at Year 6 in English. Booster sessions in both subjects for Year 6 operate during the school day, making sets smaller for a major part of the school year. There are good examples of literacy linking to subjects across the curriculum in all year groups. For example, in a Year 4 art and design lesson, work on exploring pattern was put in the context of a story set in Africa that pupils knew well from their literacy learning. Teachers plan in detail and mostly give proper weight to each element. Daily lesson plans seen during the inspection were of good quality, suitably set out to show how pupils' different learning needs were to be met. Planning otherwise is not usually so detailed, although the structure to help teachers plan throughout the year is very clear.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, which is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. It supports the learning targets in pupils' individual education plans. Targets are mostly specific and easily achievable. Class teachers and support staff work well together in giving



good support to pupils. For example, many support assistants actively ensure their 'focus' pupils participate in whole-class discussions. They then help pupils to succeed with tasks. Class teachers also often work with pupils having identified needs, thereby including these pupils in lessons alongside their peers. However, pupils are often taken out of classrooms for extra intensive support. This is sometimes quite disruptive to lessons as well as affecting these pupils' participation in ongoing work. While the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs taken out of lessons is not in question (it effectively meets the goals set), there are times when substantial parts of lessons are missed regularly. Other pupils with identified needs are similarly affected. For example, pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition routinely leave some lessons together with others getting specific support, such as Traveller pupils. On more than one occasion, a bilingual pupil and a Traveller pupil were collected from adjacent classrooms. In one Year 3 music lesson, there were four interruptions to the lesson's progress in quick succession as groups of pupils arrived back from additional literacy support at different times and others were fetched by an adult just after they had settled for group work. Some of these pupils had missed the start of the music lesson and the end of the previous art and design lesson.

29. In addition to pupils leaving classrooms for support, four Year 6 pupils set up the hall for assembly during 'Early Bird' curriculum time each day, which amounts to a considerable loss of time over a school year. Evidence also indicates that some 'Early Bird' sessions are not used to best effect. For example, in a Year 4 class a significant number of pupils of all abilities found a geography task quite difficult. Many could not distinguish between towns and countries when searching for places in an atlas. While most applied themselves willingly, pupils of lower ability did not progress because they lacked necessary reading skills and adult support was not given to them. Indeed, some more able pupils did not complete the task correctly because they misunderstood instructions and these were not clarified.
30. There are excellent links with the feeder Infants' school and the local Secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. These links are very beneficial to teachers and pupils. For example, the secondary school supports mathematics through teaching expertise. Students from another secondary school also worked with pupils on activities during their visit to the "Crucial Crew" emergency services in connection with personal, social, health and citizenship studies.
31. The provision for activities outside lessons is very good. Pupils have many opportunities for further learning. Clubs operate at lunchtimes and after school and are led by teachers and some parents. They are well attended.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with strengths evident in provision for moral and social development. These are similar conclusions to those reached at the last inspection. An ethos of mutual respect and concern for others, combined with a framework of moral values, makes a good impact on pupils' learning.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is related well to school assemblies and times when pupils engage in personal reflection. Talks in assemblies make good links to quiet thought and prayer, as in the assembly taken by a local vicar on the importance of belonging to a family. Such themes help foster a sense of community and shared values. The spiritual dimension of religious education and other subjects such as art, physical education, music and science is explored in some lessons. For example, in a Year 3 religious education lesson a teacher talked about her sense of wonder when she saw a herd of elephants on a trip to South Africa: "Do you ever feel like that about something? You know, you just go 'Ahhh...'" The pupils were quite silent as they visualised the possibility.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are taught values that separate right from wrong, in and out of classrooms. Due attention is given to the reinforcement of codes of behaviour and the sharing of values having to do with respect for persons, which the school promotes as a central aim. Pupils respond positively, enjoy their work and show care for the school and its resources. Pupils are mostly well disciplined and understand what makes an orderly school. Moral values are well taught through stories and discussions. Pupils are rewarded for best work and good actions in a weekly 'celebration assembly'. They receive their awards with evident pride. Both teaching and support staff are very good role models, encouraging pupils to relate well to each other

and behave courteously. Pupils actively support charities and so learn something about those in great need. Lessons linked to personal, social, health and citizenship education reinforce important principles linked to high expectations with regard to pupils' personal conduct.

35. Very good provision is made for pupils' social development through the school's daily life. Pupils carry out responsibilities they undertake with self-assurance. For example, Year 6 pupils have responsibilities for different duties at break times, tidying up books or looking after younger pupils. Pupils take responsibility for their classroom environment and areas around the building. Class representatives eagerly contribute to the School Council where they have very good opportunities to learn negotiation and debating skills, putting forward ideas and arguing their points. The very good range of after-school clubs offers good opportunities for pupils to develop socially, as when a small orchestra practises for a concert they are to give.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils understand their own cultural traditions and practices. This is evident in assemblies and in displays of work linked to study visits to different places such as the Year 6 visit to York. An understanding of other cultures is promoted through topics in religious education: pupils learn about festivals such as the Hindu Divali, and through art and design when pupils create 'dreamtime' paintings after studying Aboriginal images. A range of stories reflecting different cultural influences is used for literacy purposes, and some music also reflects different musical traditions. In the main, though, pupils have limited opportunities for such study. Almost all reproductions of famous artists' work displayed around the school are of Western European artists. There is potential to involve parents and visitors from the local faith communities, with a stress on developing social and cultural links to further enhance provision and prepare pupils effectively for life in a diverse society.

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

37. The school provides a very high level of care for its pupils, and related procedures, including child protection, are very good. Staff members know their pupils really well and treat them with respect and fairness at all times - during lessons as well as more informally (for example, when pupils and adults converse together during play at lunchtime). Pupils therefore confidently expect teachers to help them with any problems they may have, personal and academic. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Staff know whom to contact and what they should do if they have any concerns.
38. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic performance are satisfactory overall, while procedures for monitoring English and mathematics are very good. Indeed, although they are already thorough, they are in the process of being refined further. The school enters assessment information from statutory tests at seven and 11, optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 and annual reading tests across all year groups onto a 'target tracker' computer program, monitoring each pupil's progress closely relative to National Curriculum criteria. Targets are set in light of assessment information and pupils know and understand these. For example, a Year 6 boy explained "I'm not that good at reading and my target is to think about how to break words down and look for 'words within words' to help me". He could apply this strategy when reading aloud at a level appropriate to his age and ability. Two assessment co-ordinators work in close partnership on the program and can now extract information to see how particular groups perform compared to others. For example, they study the progress made by pupils identified as very able or those learning English as an additional language. All teachers have access to assessment information through their laptop computers. A planned development is for them to amend information in light of regular assessments undertaken in the course of the school year, as when pupils write, unaided, for a timed task. Statutory test information in science is also entered into the program and 'mini statutory tests' are in place with results similarly recorded. However, teachers' understanding of pupils' progress in science is not as secure as in the other two subjects. It is hampered by insufficient attention being paid to ongoing assessments during lessons and by the way pupils' work is marked.
39. Formal assessments in other subjects are at an early stage of development. Procedures are being built into teachers' planning in line with the latest National Curriculum guidance for each subject. With the advent of the new locally agreed syllabus, the assessment of religious education will also be reviewed to meet requirements. Currently, teachers base their knowledge and understanding of pupils'

progress in, for example, art and design, history and physical education, largely on informal assessments of pupils' learning outcomes regarding teaching and learning objectives set out in a lesson's plan. But the use of such approaches is not always evident, and neither is it always clear how the information gathered informs planning. This situation is similar to that found in the previous inspection. The assessment co-ordinators' action plan includes the formalising of procedures to ensure a better match with those for the core subjects.

40. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need are well provided for. Good links are established with outside agencies, with relevant personnel visiting the school regularly, as required. Procedures for the identification of learning needs are effective. For example, routine assessment information as outlined above is used systematically to pick up any lack of progress. A number of useful procedures combine information gathered from different sources such as literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. Where there are individual education plans, these are regarded helpfully as working documents and are regularly reviewed. Realistic targets are achievable. In addition to her work as co-ordinator for special needs, the deputy head has taken on responsibility for pupils with English as an additional language. She has a good grasp of the issues involved. She knows to act sensitively when assessing whether a pupil's learning needs are confined to language learning or whether other factors might be involved (such as difficulties with learning beyond language acquisition). The school accepts it must look hard at how best to meet bilingual pupils' learning needs, critically examining, for instance, the way pupils are taken out of lessons for additional support. Indeed, it is aware of the need to consider such issues in relation to *all* learners receiving help.
41. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance and behaviour are very good and effective. Parents and pupils know these and all pupils spoken to know that "choices have consequences". For example, poor behaviour at playtime or in lessons means that those involved will have to spend time in the "consequences room" during breaks, reflecting on their actions and making a record of these as well as talking to the teacher on duty about the matter. The talk and written records include reasons for the behaviour, the sequence of events and what those involved felt about them (that is, taking on the point of view of perpetrator as well as victim). It also includes agreeing how the matter will be resolved (as well as losing playtime). When a pupil is absent, the school contacts parents on the first morning of absence if there has been no earlier communication. Where appropriate, the school works closely with the educational welfare officer on how to tackle problems of attendance and punctuality. It maintains a log of all behavioural incidents, including any name-calling. Its record shows that incidents are dealt with seriously, with suitable action taken to make sure all concerned are informed, including parents when necessary. On the playground, pupils were adamant that name-calling, as with other behaviour matters, is dealt with promptly.
42. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory, with good procedures for the dispensing of medicines during the school day. Currently, governors do not actively monitor the health and safety of the school site, relying instead on reports from the headteacher. The school has adopted the local education authority's health and safety and race equality policies. To date, governors have not reviewed these in light of the school's own circumstances and needs. The school knows it must assess how the race equality policy affects provision and inform parents of its findings. It also acknowledges governors have no formal input into health and safety matters. There is no Internet safety policy although there is a screening mechanism. Pupils do not have access to the Internet unless in the company of an adult.
43. The picture with regard to some aspects of provision for the care and welfare of pupils is similar to that given in the previous report (for example, concerning the quality of relationships across the school). Overall, however, there has been good improvement in this aspect of school life, especially in monitoring pupils' academic progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and, to a lesser extent, science, and in providing for pupils with special educational needs.

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

44. The school has a good partnership with its parents, supported by good information about its daily life and pupils' progress. This finding is similar to that at the previous inspection, although parents maintain that approaches to behaviour matters have improved since, influencing pupils' behaviour

across the school.

45. Parents are positive about the school. They feel that teaching is good, that teachers have high expectations of children's work and behaviour and that, consequently, children make good progress in becoming mature and responsible young people. Parents say they feel comfortable talking to teachers and value the headteacher's ready availability. They believe there is a good range of activities out of lessons. The inspection team agrees with these positive views. A significant minority would like to see homework improved, although a wide range of views was expressed on this matter at the parents' meeting prior to inspection. For example, while one parent thought homework to be inappropriate for children in the age range, several were quite satisfied with the school's approach. In the main, though, parents agreed that homework practices are inconsistent, and written comments reinforced this judgement. Although the setting of homework is judged by inspectors to be satisfactory, the school does not, in fact, have a homework policy. Clarifying expectations more regularly than the reminder given each year would help parents understand the school's approach, perhaps moderating their views on the work set.
46. The school informs parents about their children's progress through consultation evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms and an annual report on progress at the end of the school year. There is a more informal open day in the Summer term. At meetings and in the annual report on progress, parents are told about strengths in learning and targets set for children in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Very good information is given about what pupils know and can do in these subjects. Reports also give results of statutory tests at 11 and national optional tests in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents said they liked the way children record their own comments about their targets and reviewed their progress. Reporting about other subjects is less thorough. Some are grouped together rather than being written up individually. For example, geography and history come under the heading 'humanities', while music, art and design, drama and design and technology share a box headed 'creative arts'. Brief sentences are sometimes written to cover each subject area but this practice is not consistent. In addition, many comments simply state what pupils have done and make no evaluative comments about what has been learned and what might be improved. Parents might have no information about, for instance, drama or design and technology for that school year. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting seemed well informed about the school's target-tracking program in the core subjects and were satisfied with information given in reports. The school brochure is informative and a booklet for parents explains the school's behaviour policy in very plain language. The headteacher keeps parents abreast of events and achievements through regular newsletters.
47. The co-ordinator for special educational needs makes sure parents with children on the Code of Practice register of special needs are kept informed about their child's progress. Parents know the targets set and are encouraged to attend meetings when these are reviewed. At the meeting prior to inspection, parents praised the school's work with children identified as needing additional support. All were agreed there has been notable improvement in such work since the previous inspection.
48. The school works hard to involve parents and encourages them to support their children's learning in a number of ways. For example, two family workshops were organised and parents attending sessions found them very useful. They thought it a shame the workshops were not better supported by more parents as everybody would have got something out of the experience. A reading mentor programme in Years 5 and 6 (whereby a parent or friend of the school comes in to listen to a pupil read regularly) is particularly successful in helping pupils develop reading skills. The school wants to extend the scheme to other year groups in light of its success. Parents accompany pupils on various study visits. During the inspection, two parents went with the Year 5 classes to the swimming pool and several accompanied Year 6 pupils to the "Crucial Crew" experience (when pupils worked with members of the emergency services). The school consulted parents about the school uniform. When working towards an intermediate "Healthy Schools" award, it also sought parents' views about its review of the behaviour policy. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting spoke highly of their involvement with the latter and are impressed by their copy of the policy, mentioning its easily accessible language, explaining approaches to behaviour in ways both children and parents can understand.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher, together with her deputy and senior managers, gives good leadership to the school; they are well supported by staff and governors. All share values based on ensuring each pupil takes part in all aspects of school life to the best of their ability. All are committed to school improvement and rising standards. Together, senior managers, staff and governors have succeeded in a number of ways. They have developed teaching so as to improve pupils' attitudes and quality of learning, raising standards of behaviour in and out of classrooms. They have provided a very good programme for pupils' social and moral development, well linked to their personal, social, health and citizenship education, and have further developed relations with the school's partner institutions. The headteachers' vision encompasses every pupil's right to realise his or her best potential, giving equality of access to every aspect of school provision. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, too, are strengths because the school's ethos reflects its care for and attention to the needs of all learners, pupils and adults. The school's recent success in achieving Investor in People status and its intermediate level in the Healthy Schools' Award programme illustrate its ethos and concerns.
50. A clear judgement on the leadership and management of the school was not made in the previous inspection report. In any case, direct comparisons between then and now are difficult because of substantial changes in staffing in the interim, not least at senior management level. For example, on taking up her post three years ago, the headteacher was the fourth postholder in as many years. All issues highlighted for action during the last inspection have been dealt with. However, the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators continue to be developed, as do systems for systematically assessing pupils' progress and achievement in *all* subjects. The headteacher took immediate action in two crucial areas at the start of her work in school: firstly, seeking to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school and secondly (just as important) seeking to achieve stability in staffing. A difficult period with a considerable number of staff changes and the recruitment of younger, inexperienced personnel, required a period where working relationships could develop alongside the management of and responsibility for nearly all curriculum areas and related posts (for example, the co-ordination of assessment).
51. The headteacher is very well supported by her deputy headteacher, in post since last September. In a short time, they have developed a good working partnership, with complementary skills well deployed in school management. They pursue common goals of improving pastoral care and catering better for pupils' academic needs. Correspondingly, test results show better 'value added' in pupils' learning outcomes from entry into school in Year 3, while rising standards are beginning to show in English, especially, and in mathematics across the school. Priority areas for development include: raising levels of achievement in line with predicted targets in English, mathematics and science and developing a broader, more balanced curriculum with greater emphasis on the creative arts.
52. The headteacher sees professional development as key to raising standards. A programme of school-based: in-service training, complementing professional advice from local education authority advisers, aids teachers' professional development to good effect. The school is also a member of a local Education Consortium, serving schools across the age-range three to 18. Related work is imaginative, and senior managers find it exciting and full of potential in their bid to improve provision. For example, an emphasis on staff working with peers from local schools through a structured programme should mean further easing of pupil transfer from Year 2 in the Infants' school to Year 6 and from there to Year 7 in the secondary school where most pupils go. Teachers will also have really good opportunities to share teaching and learning practices in their specialist subjects across phases, with planning and action for mathematics and information and communication technology already well in hand. Mathematics teachers from the secondary school have worked in classrooms alongside their junior school colleagues to augment teaching and learning in ways agreed between the schools. The school is set to gain, too, from plans to introduce modern foreign languages via support from secondary School colleagues. It is aware of the need to look at these developments carefully, however, so they do not conflict with the need for curricular balance generally. Learning support assistants are also well trained. For example, for supporting lower-ability pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. An assistant is currently undertaking a training programme provided by the local education authority for supporting pupils with English as an additional language.

53. School management is satisfactory overall, with strengths seen in the lead given by the headteacher and her deputy, who are in daily contact to make sure the school runs smoothly. They also have formal, twice-weekly meetings. The deputy head co-ordinates special educational needs (including pupils identified as gifted, able and talented) and is responsible for pupils learning English as an additional language. She has a shared responsibility with the headteacher for overseeing curricular matters, teaching and learning and the analysis of assessment data. Two other senior managers oversee and co-ordinate teachers' work in the lower school (Years 3 and 4) and upper school (Years 5 and 6) respectively, and collaborate to co-ordinate assessment information. This management structure means senior managers keep a good informal eye on ongoing classroom work through professional 'chat' with teachers within their remit as well as monitoring work more formally through regular planning meetings. The headteacher and deputy head also systematically check teaching and learning through classroom observation, as part of newly established performance management strategies. All senior managers are skilled classroom practitioners. For example, two have classroom responsibilities in addition to their management roles and, to facilitate the setting of mathematics in Year 6, the deputy head currently teaches numeracy as well as literacy to a Year 6 'booster' class each day.
54. While co-ordinators for English and mathematics have also undertaken classroom observations in conjunction with local education authority advisers, the gathering of information by managers, through a planned programme of monitoring classroom teaching and learning, is relatively under-developed. So most subject co-ordinators do not have first-hand knowledge of how their subjects are taught and how provision might be improved. This is especially true for science and all non-core subjects (such as art and design, physical education, geography) and religious education. The school gives such development priority in its action planning. Although most teachers are relatively inexperienced and have held their posts of responsibility for only a short time, they are enthusiastic and already have a good grasp of their roles and management responsibilities. A real strength of the school is the energy of teachers and their team spirit, with all staff members working together to improve pupils' learning opportunities.
55. Provision for special educational needs is very well managed by the deputy head, with the support of the previous post-holder and a part-time teacher who works with pupils on the Code of Practice register of special need. The work of support staff and its day-to-day monitoring are well organised, with funding targeted for its designated purpose. Class teachers take responsibility for writing individual education plans, overseen by the co-ordinator. Teachers and support staff receive appropriate training to enable them to understand pupils' needs and how best to provide for and support these. The co-ordinator gives effective support to colleagues, pupils and their parents. Her work is informed by action planning linked to priorities identified for school development.
56. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They are well informed about all aspects of the school's work through detailed reports from the headteacher as well as from senior staff and co-ordinators with subject or other responsibilities. The chairman and vice-chair of the governing body keep in touch with each other and the headteacher regularly, and support her work well. They have a good understanding of daily school life. However, not all statutory requirements concerned with monitoring the work of the school are fully met (as already outlined) and governors do not really have 'ownership' of some recently introduced policies. Governors have a mix of experience, with some being well established and others being recent recruits. Committees facilitate the governing body's work and individual members take responsibility for a curriculum area or for some other aspect of school life. Some have visited school during this academic year and observed lessons in their area, discussing findings with the relevant curriculum co-ordinator. In a very short time, governors have blended as a team. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas needing attention, are committed to the school and determined to work hard on its behalf.
57. Priorities identified for development and actions taken are good. Planning covers key aspects of the school's daily work as well as matters such as improving accommodation. Costs involved are set out suitably. The views of governors, staff and parents are taken into account before plans are finalised (as in the introduction of a new school uniform). Financial planning is sound, focusing on raising standards through further staff professional development and by gaining staff stability. Goals are set realistically in light of developments to date. The governing body spends carefully. It keeps a firm hold of finances, to ensure the learning opportunities for all pupils' benefit. For example, it made sure

the recent addition of a new classroom, considerably improving provision, was properly financed. The finance committee monitors spending closely so that the school uses additional funds quickly. This is why extra funding for mathematics and information and communication technology has recently been allocated.

58. The headteacher and governors apply principles of best value satisfactorily, especially concerning the professional development of all staff and the recent employment of the deputy headteacher. Decisions are taken only when all options have been carefully considered and governors consulted – as with the recent sale of land and transfer of catering rights for school meals to another company. Day-to-day financial administration is carried out well using new technology. The local authority has not conducted a recent audit but a responsible officer makes regular financial checks. Minor weaknesses in the school's administrative systems stated in the existing report have all been satisfactorily resolved.
59. Staffing is now much more stable. A good number of appropriately qualified teachers meet curricular demands. They are ably helped by well trained learning support staff. There is one overseas qualified teacher and one with newly qualified status. Good expertise is evident at all levels of teaching. There is a very good induction programme for all teachers new to the school, with high quality support for the newly qualified. New members speak warmly of support from mentors and from colleagues generally. The school successfully inducts teachers through a graduate teacher programme and also persuades non-teaching staff to become qualified teachers.
60. Good accommodation is well maintained by a very committed site manager. The school is fortunate to share a large field with a neighbouring Infants' school, used at lunchtime and for physical education lessons. Pond and wildlife areas make a good contribution to resources (for example, for science and art and design). Sufficient classrooms meet curricular demands with extra areas used for art and design activities and for small group or individual work. There is a good computer suite and a library.
61. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in information and communication technology, mathematics, music, art and design, physical education and religious education. However, they are unsatisfactory in English. Book provision is unsatisfactory overall, which marks a decline from the previous inspection. The library is up-to-date but the range of books (non-fiction and fiction) is limited. Many pupils bring books from home or from the local town library because there is insufficient material of interest to them in school. Teachers supplement class libraries with books of their own in order to extend the range. There are, though, good resources to support guided reading. Use of the library for research activities was not seen during the inspection. Currently, it is used for teaching purposes, which clearly restricts access in relation to its main function.
62. In view of improved teaching and learning, the marked improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour noted by parents, the very good provision for pupils' moral and social development under-pinning a positive school ethos and the good educational direction given by the headteacher, her deputy and senior managers, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- I. The quality of teaching is improved, to bring it consistently in line with the best practice seen, so that teachers:
  - improve their subject knowledge and understanding in areas where weaknesses are seen to affect learning;
  - maintain the pace of lessons and make sure activities are given sufficient time;
  - improve their assessment of pupils' ongoing work in ways ensuring planning for the next step in learning is properly informed;
  - help improve pupils' writing in all subjects, giving pupils more opportunities to put ideas into their own words; and
  - make sure pupils' literacy skills inform their presentation of work across subjects.

*(Paragraphs: 6, 16, 17, 21, 25, 38, 39, 67, 69, 77, 80, 82, 83, 96, 97, 107, 111, 118, 122, 124 and 126)*

- II. Sufficient time is allocated to subjects, and subject leaders develop their roles in line with school improvement planning, so that curricular demands are met and standards raised in their subjects by:
  - monitoring classroom teaching and learning to gain better views of where strengths lie and improvements can be made; and
  - emphasising the development of skills, knowledge and understanding in art and design, design and technology, geography, music and religious education.

*(Paragraphs: 5 - 7, 17, 22-26, 29, 36, 39, 50-52, 54, 61, 63, 67, 69, 62, 72, 73, 76, 78 - 81, 83 - 85, 88 - 90, 92, 95 - 98, 100, 104 - 106, 108 - 110, 112 - 115, 117, 119 - 123 and 125 - 127)*

- III. Review the practice whereby pupils:

- are withdrawn from important parts of lessons for group or individual work outside the classroom.

*(Paragraphs: 19, 20, 23, 28, 29 and 40)*

- IV. All statutory requirements are fully met.

*(Paragraphs: 22, 23, 42, 56 and 127)*

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

- Informing parents about the school's approach to homework.
- Annual reports on pupils' progress.

*(Paragraphs: 45 - 46)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

63

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	8	31	22	0	0	0
Percentage	3	13	49	35	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	335
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

#### Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	46

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	43	39	82

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	27	35
	Girls	36	33	35
	Total	70	60	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (77)	73 (65)	85 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	29	31
	Girls	36	32	33
	Total	67	61	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (67)	75 (80)	79 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
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***

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
302	8	1
5	1	0
3	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
5	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
9	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)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	738,097
Total expenditure	780,196
Expenditure per pupil	2,446
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,470
Balance carried forward to next year	16,371

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.6

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	335
Number of questionnaires returned	127

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	50	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	54	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	61	8	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	38	31	11	6
The teaching is good.	42	52	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	15	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	39	7	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	42	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	29	52	13	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	37	54	4	4	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	54	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	46	5	2	2

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

### **ENGLISH**

64. Standards in speaking and listening and reading in Year 6 exceed the national expectation (Level 4) for this age. In writing, pupils are broadly in line with this expectation, although there are significant weaknesses in the way they present work. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. They have improved in reading. Judgements on standards and on the quality of work are made by analysing pupils' work, observing lessons, and by talking to adults and pupils.
65. Throughout the school, learning support is well focused. Staff help during most lessons, in order to influence standards, especially with lower-ability pupils (including those with special educational needs and those with a statement of special need), who receive the bulk of support. Consequently, these pupils make good progress and achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. At times they do better than expected. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress and those with proficient English language skills achieve at least on a par with their peers.
66. Standards in speaking and listening are good overall and at times better. Pupils listen attentively to adults' questions and reply thoughtfully. They work well together in pairs or small groups and contribute to whole-class discussions (for example, when they report on their group's ideas). They listen readily to one another's views. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson, small groups co-operated well while studying photographs and discussing features, matching these to a map of the local area. In Year 6, some high quality role-play occurred in one very good and one excellent literacy lesson covering the same content. Pupils in average and above-average ability sets explored ideas about the main character in two quite different stories, firstly through a 'hot-seating' role-play strategy involving whole-class work and then through replicating this strategy in small groups. Pupils had very detailed knowledge of the stories and a well-above-average ability to empathise with 'hot seat' characters. This was evident both in the questions posed by the audience and in responses from the 'hot seat' incumbent. Across the ability range, pupils explained key points in a story and reasons for a character's actions and feelings very articulately.
67. Standards in reading are good. Able readers use many strategies to read unknown words. For example, an above-average Year 6 girl had difficulty with "scintillating" but arrived at a correct pronunciation by trying out possible sounds made by the first two letters and then making a very good stab at explaining the meaning, using the context to suggest "sparkling". Pupils enjoy reading. Many develop tastes and preferences for books they like to read and can talk about these. For example, a below-average Year 6 boy explained he is reading all the books he can find by an author who writes "little stories that I can read; some go back in ancient times and have magic and I kind of like that." Pupils across the age range have a working knowledge of letter sounds either singly or combined, and work out unfamiliar words with reasonable competence, considering their age and ability. Lower-ability pupils occasionally choose books too difficult for them. For example, a below-average Year 4 pupil stumbled over unknown words in a storybook she had chosen. She could not easily explain what she read, so it was difficult to decide how much she really understood. Pupils have appropriate skills to read for information. There are daily guided reading sessions, when teachers work with a different group each day. In a good Year 4 session, a teacher used open-ended questioning very effectively to help pupils focus on a text. Such work is occasionally well supported by information and communication technology. Adult reading mentors in Year 6 lift standards, letting pupils read one-to-one with an adult.
68. Standards in writing are satisfactory in the main. Pupils' planning shows a reasonable grasp of the different purposes for writing and what needs to be thought about (for example, for imaginary writing, giving factual information or writing a formal letter). They compose and draft their planned piece, punctuating satisfactorily with a reasonable knowledge of Standard English. Pupils also become able to write for different kinds of readers. For example, Year 3 pupils retell a traditional story, while in Year 6 they write as journalists, producing articles for a newspaper. Pupils' handwriting and presentation skills in literacy workbooks as well as in subjects across the curriculum are frequently

unsatisfactory. Work can be hard to read because of a lack of care in producing it as well as a lack of thought about correct spellings, even when these are known or can easily be found. For example, in a Year 3 religious education lesson, few pupils bothered to look up key words for their recording even though the teacher drew attention to those listed on a board and a flip chart during the earlier discussion.

69. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. It is good overall, with a significant number of lessons that are better. Teaching strengths are in Year 5, and especially in Year 6. Teachers' planning tracks the National Literacy Strategy closely. Its clear objectives are routinely shared with pupils at the start of lessons. Year 6 pupils are set according to ability, with lower-ability pupils benefiting from smaller groups. This helps teachers pitch lesson content to suit learners' needs quite well. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson for a lower-ability set, pupils were helped with the key features of a reading journal so they could match their own writing to a reader's needs. The teacher usefully modelled writing on the board, discussing pertinent features and keeping a sharp focus on points raised throughout the writing process. Such modelling occurs in many lessons. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, a teacher investigated how words and phrases could signal a sequence of events. She used words such as 'then' and 'until' to connect sentences. Pupils made significant learning gains as they grasped related ideas, then suggested other 'time' words to add to the list. Indeed, the teaching of writing has notable strengths. All teachers make very good use of large books to stimulate pupils' writing. Texts are explored in depth through a number of strategies, as in the Year 6 role-play sessions. Teachers' secure subject knowledge supports learning effectively. In a very good Year 5 lesson on performance poetry, a teacher's questioning implied a very thorough knowledge of a poem's structure. Pupils realised how they might compose their own poems in a similar vein. Subsequently, they worked hard and creatively at building up excitement through their writing.
70. A scrutiny of work shows teachers mostly set targets for writing, pasted in the front of pupils' books. However, these are not generally dated and it does not seem that targets are reviewed in light of work done, with adjustments made accordingly. Presentation of work is variable and there is no clear policy on the development of handwriting skills, the use of ink and general structure and layout of work. Spelling errors are not often dealt with, even in common or relatively simple words.
71. Although computers were not seen in use during literacy lessons, examples of work on display show pupils can apply information and communication technology skills appropriately (for word-processing stories and poems, for example). In the lower school, pupils also listen to taped stories on headphones. Displays of work show good literacy skills in all subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote independent accounts of their study visit to York, linked to work in geography, history and religious education. Accounts were not only well written but well presented, in contrast to much work seen in books.
72. In celebration of books and to promote reading as fun, the school has held 'book weeks'. Pupils keep 'reading diaries' and evaluate what they read but many entries are limited to one-word responses, which tend to be uninformative. Pupils who read to inspectors spoke with pleasure about reading; a number were members of a local library. They could explain how to use index and contents pages in non-fiction texts. A very able Year 6 pupil gave a full account of the school library catalogue and shelving systems but other pupils said they had no knowledge of these.
73. The management of English is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The co-ordinator has been in post two years and knows where strengths lie and improvement is needed. She is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. She checks planning carefully to make sure all aspects of the curriculum are covered. She has conducted some exemplar levelling of work with colleagues so teachers can better understand what standards are expected at different ages. Raising standards in writing, especially, is rightly seen as a priority, with more consistent attention needing to be paid to spelling and handwriting and the presentation of work. The school is aware it has to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms which is underdeveloped. To date, the co-ordinator has done a little, while training for such work. She works closely with the school librarian, and the further development of the library together with resources for literacy throughout the school is another priority area.



## MATHEMATICS

74. Overall, standards in Year 6 are in line with those expected for this age group, but a few higher-ability pupils succeed better than expected. This concurs with findings of the previous inspection report. Pupils' work builds well on prior learning, becoming more demanding as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities gradually increase their knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of the subject, a result of good classroom support and work planned to match their abilities. Their ability to use their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills for problem solving and investigation is well developed. But their ability to explain their mathematical thinking and methods of working is generally under-developed, especially in Years 4 and 5.
75. Year 3 pupils understand the addition and subtraction of multiples of 20 mentally, and can order numbers to 100. By using addition and subtraction skills they investigate and solve problems involving money. They measure accurately in centimetres and metres and construct and use block graphs to illustrate data gained by throwing dice. A few pupils have a good grasp of 'lines' of symmetry and the reflective symmetry of two-dimensional shapes. By Year 4, most pupils estimate lengths during measuring activities. They add and subtract two-and three-digit numbers and calculate perimeters and areas of rectangles. Most distinguish between right, obtuse and acute angles. A few can make up their own mathematical problems using their knowledge of number. They add money decimals with 'carrying' and have a good grasp of the decomposition method of subtraction. Year 5 pupils order decimal fractions to two places, have a sound understanding of ratio and proportion and use percentages to solve simple everyday problems of discounts. A few pupils in this age group relate fractions and decimals together, solving more difficult numeracy problems with a calculator. Most use all four operations - addition, subtraction, multiplication and division - to solve everyday problems concerned with profit and loss. They estimate the size of angles before measuring them with protractors. They construct and interpret various graphs and use information and communication technology for spreadsheet modelling. Pupils of high ability order fractions by converting them to decimals. They calculate the amount of value added tax involved in a shopping transaction.
76. Pupils with special educational needs progress well because they are set appropriate work and, when it is available, have additional support from learning support assistants. Pupils of minority ethnic origin and those with English as an additional language perform in line with their peers. A number were observed in higher-ability groups throughout the school.
77. Pupils in Year 6 are organised into four ability-related groups of relatively small numbers. A group of approximately 20 form a 'booster' group taught by the deputy headteacher. All other year groups are organised into three ability-related groups for numeracy and other mathematical areas, taught every day of the week. Class teachers plan lessons of appropriate difficulty for the more able. In addition, they strive to promote pupils' investigation and problem-solving skills in all year group classes.
78. In the eleven mathematics lessons observed, teaching and learning were good overall. Teaching was excellent in one lesson and very good in another two. Support assistants helped less able pupils in classes with a relatively high number of pupils with identified learning needs. In the better lessons, a wide range of resources relevant to pupils' everyday life and experiences was used. For example, references to 'Del Boy' from a popular television programme in a 'profit and loss' activity for an average set in Year 6 sparked imaginations, and higher-ability pupils (also in Year 6) enjoyed pretending to be accountants in a value added tax exercise. Teachers in these lessons had very high expectations of pupils' performance and considerable pace and challenge were incorporated into lessons. Pupils in nearly all classes are managed very well by teachers. They arrange relevant, interesting activities to keep pupils alert and on task. Day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress are effective, especially in the upper school. For example, teachers of Years 5 and 6 encourage all pupils to explain their methods of working, although this does not happen so much in the lower school. A stress on using and applying elements of mathematics to investigate and solve problems is starting to lift standards in all year groups. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but only a few comment helpfully on where pupils succeed and what should improve. Pupils' work in several classes is untidy and poorly presented and this has implications for pupils' attitudes. However, the overall picture represents a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
79. The mathematics co-ordinator is relatively inexperienced but gives good leadership and educational

direction to the subject. He is enthusiastic and well supported by the headteacher, whose specialism is mathematics. He only acquired responsibility for the subject at the start of the Autumn term. He has monitored teaching and learning in most classrooms by accompanying a local authority advisor on teaching observations. An audit of subject resources has been completed and a resource list compiled for every teacher so they can plan using an appropriate, wide range of apparatus for practical activities, improving the learning skills of all pupils. Good resources are well used by all staff. Although appropriate work is not always provided for pupils seen as gifted and able in mathematics, there is an extra-curricular lunchtime 'Cranium Club' where pupils of higher ability play games of logic and reasoning to extend their learning. The Numeracy Strategy has been introduced and pupils apply numeracy skills well to subjects like geography, science and information and communication technology. For example, they collect data and display this in various forms of graphical representation. The co-ordinator initiated work on the curriculum week earlier in the term when a very good focus was given to mathematics combined with science, which involved a stimulating range of cross-curricular activities and visits out of school.

## SCIENCE

80. Overall, standards are below expectations for pupils of 11 years of age. This is because, although most reach standards broadly in line with the nationally expected Level 4, a significant minority do not, while not enough reach Level 5. These factors lower overall standards. Findings are broadly in line with those in the previous inspection when most pupils reached expectations, while a few did better.
81. An analysis of pupils' work shows that across the age range, they generally do well and make satisfactory progress in developing their ideas and scientific skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, maintaining good standards of achievement as a result of well-organised support matched to their abilities. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress and those with proficient English language skills succeed at least in line with their peers. Pupils enjoy science, especially investigative work. In most lessons, they are well motivated and engage in activities with good interest. For example, pupils in Year 3 develop a test to investigate whether broad beans need light to germinate, and decide whether the test is fair. In another lesson, pupils in Year 5 make sensible predictions for three types of seeds and plan a fair test to consider different factors affecting germination. Pupils are excited by science. They ask questions and make suggestions. However, their recording skills are generally underdeveloped. Pre-designed worksheets limit their ability to answer in their own words and offer very little challenge. Also, in preparation for statutory tests, pupils in Year 6 concentrate on revising factual information with relatively few opportunities for them to investigate work in practical ways in the course of the year. Consequently, pupils show limited understanding of the need for accuracy and precision to produce meaningful results when conducting fair tests and making predictions.
82. In discussion at the start of a lesson, Year 6 pupils explain the terms "interdependence" and "adaptation". They name ways in which animals and plants depend on each other and most demonstrate a good knowledge of food chains. They appreciate the interdependent feeding relationships between plants and animals in a particular habitat and how adaptation is necessary for survival. However, pupils of average and below-average ability struggle to record their ideas, especially when extending these beyond earlier discussion. Pupils in Year 4 carry out investigations to reinforce the idea of forces exerted by magnets and springs and how 'push', 'pull' and 'twist' are connected to force. They make progress in understanding that such forces can be seen in everyday actions. They represent their ideas carefully in drawings and use arrows accurately to show the direction of force on an object. Learning is somewhat hampered, though, when the terms 'repel' and 'attract' are not introduced at an opportune moment by the teacher. Year 5 and 6 pupils carry out investigations in relation to solids, gases, and liquids and use terms such as 'evaporation' and 'condensation' correctly. However, very few use the correct language and demonstrate secure understanding of changes in substances (for example, which ones are reversible and which irreversible).
83. Pupils apply their numeracy skills to science to good effect. They measure plant growth in centimetres and the number of breaths taken when sitting for one minute or walking for two minutes. They make graphs and tables to illustrate their findings. Little evidence of the use of computers for

such purposes was found. The use of worksheets (noted above) limits opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills to science. A good link with literacy was seen in a Year 3 lesson, when a teacher read a short story about a bean. The story helped exercise vocabulary about germination in ways pupils could understand and enjoy.

84. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in one lesson and very good in another. In the best lessons, teachers use probing and open-ended questions to elicit fuller responses and make sure pupils understand concepts being taught. This was seen in a very good Year 5 lesson when pupils' understanding of factors affecting the germination of seeds was explored. Teachers' subject knowledge and scientific understanding are satisfactory in the main and better than this in some lessons. New ideas are introduced well. Teachers use a correct technical vocabulary and record this to reinforce understanding. Lessons are carefully planned with an appropriate sequence of activities and specific learning intentions shared with pupils. However, tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to differing levels of ability in all classes. They frequently lack challenge for more able pupils. Teachers' marking of ongoing work is also generally uninformative, with few teachers indicating how pupils might improve their work.
85. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Two co-ordinators sharing subject responsibility took up their roles last September. They bring enthusiasm and confidence to their work. They have undertaken training in identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils and further work on this is targeted in school action planning. They helped to organise a highly successful curriculum week combining mathematics and science earlier in the Summer term, raising the subject's profile via a stimulating range of activities involving all classes. For example, pupils visited the Science Museum in London. Currently, co-ordinators do not monitor classroom teaching and learning to help them discover where strengths lie and improvements can be made. The school analyses national test results in order to raise standards by targeting specific areas identified as weak. 'Mini SATs' at the end of each unit of work monitor pupils' progress through the school year. As yet, however, these assessments are not used to best effect (for example, to set individual targets and to plan future work). The curriculum is covered satisfactorily in line with latest guidance but insufficient emphasis is given to experimental and investigative science, especially, although not solely, in Year 6. An after-school science club enhances provision and is well attended by pupils from Years 3 and 4.

## ART AND DESIGN

86. No lessons were seen in Year 6 because the subject alternates with design and technology. There was an insufficient range of work to make a firm judgement on standards reached by 11. A scrutiny of recently completed work by the oldest pupils based on studies of Paul Klee's paintings shows standards to be very variable. A few reach good, better than expected standards, but most do not know well enough how to use media such as water-based paints and oil pastels, indicating below-average standards in the main. For example, brush work in paintings is generally not well controlled, with somewhat 'muddy' colours often seen, suggesting pupils have not paid attention to keeping brushes clean or have found this hard to do. By contrast, pupils succeed better when they make images on the computer either reproducing pictures like the artist's, or developing their own ideas of how to use line to create shape and form in a small picture space. Some outcomes are very pleasing, reflecting a close study of Paul Klee's use of colour to fill spaces created, and an interest in the way titles illustrate his work. Findings suggest standards in Year 6 have fallen since the previous inspection. However, consistently better work was seen in other year groups, showing that pupils make at least satisfactory progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
87. A study of Paul Klee formed the basis of lessons across the school earlier in the year. That done by pupils in all Year 3 classes was usually good. Pupils handled media such as water paint, oil pastels, wax crayons on a painted surface and materials and papers for collage effects, competently. They chose and applied colours with great care, reflecting the spirit of the artist's work. In a lesson on close observational drawings of flowers, pupils across these classes applied themselves intently to the tasks set. They liked the idea of drawing from the point of view of an insect. In one lesson, a boy pointed out "the flower would appear *humungous* to an insect's eye." Most pupils are quick to grasp how to focus ever more sharply on a flower, drawing the chosen details on a larger scale as

confidence grows. They use tools such as magnifying glasses and viewfinders and handle drawing pencils knowledgeably. In Year 5, pupils enjoy using a wide range of drawing pencils to experiment with different densities of tone on strips of paper. They go on to experiment with creating three-dimensional effects on the flat surface of the paper. For example, they shade a circle to make it look like a sphere. They reveal a good understanding of media when talking about their work.

88. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to good but was most frequently good in lessons seen in Years 3, 4 and 5. Teachers plan and prepare lessons meticulously. They explain learning intentions carefully and give pupils good opportunities to contribute to discussion at a lesson's start. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on colour and pattern, pupils had a lot to say when looking at pictures of how pattern is used in traditional clothes in an African country and the form it takes in a piece of African cloth. In Year 3 classes, images of flowers helped preparation for the subsequent drawing task. Pupils looked, for instance, at a botanical painting of a plant, William Morris wallpaper design, a Japanese print, and flower paintings from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With some delight, they recognised van Gogh's "Sunflowers". They were helped to consider the differences between these images by teachers' skilled questioning. Such a thorough approach to setting up a lesson facilitated learning in all classes, as seen in the assured way pupils set about tasks. Teachers effectively demonstrate skills to be developed. For example, a Year 5 teacher showed pupils how differing amounts of pressure with his chalk on the board affected the quality of shading. Elsewhere in Year 5, a teacher stopped work briefly to remind pupils how shading is most effective if it is done with care in one direction.
89. It is evident teachers are very aware of time constraints. They strive hard to balance decisions about whether to move on to the next step or allow more time for experimenting with techniques. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, a teacher decided pupils should begin making their pattern grids not long after they had begun trying out ideas of pattern and colour with sets of pencil crayons. Later, she realised this had created difficulties for pupils who needed more help sorting out their grids and combinations of patterns. Discussions with teachers find most planned work takes several weeks to complete. For example, Year 3 teachers had envisaged pupils would start using acrylic paints in the lessons seen, focusing on large-scale paintings of the flower details as a main activity. Each realised this was impractical. Starting to paint so soon would impair the quality of pupils' preparatory drawings. Their realisation raises questions about whether enough of the art curriculum can be covered over a school year in the time currently allocated.
90. The school acknowledges the creative arts have suffered since the previous inspection in a bid to raise standards in English and mathematics and comply with government guidance. So school development planning includes improving provision for art and design, to raise its profile, as a priority. An in-service session for staff some time ago served to highlight what teachers might expect in terms of standards, with an emphasis on developing skills through close observational work. A few samples of Year 6 work done earlier in the year illustrate the impact of such training. For example, charcoal studies of flowers, logs and seed heads are carefully executed with good attention to detail and a feeling for the qualities of the medium, and one or two pupils have achieved creditable success in exploring the possibilities of water colour paints. Art and design activities have been emphasised during curriculum focus weeks, as in the one on mathematics and science, when a Japanese expert on origami was invited in to school to run workshops. Teachers generally make good links with other subjects for art and design purposes. Year 4 pattern work made very good use of a story studied in literacy lessons while Year 3 work on flowers linked to science studies. Pupils have good opportunities to explore possibilities of creating and manipulating images using computer programs.
91. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Two co-ordinators sharing responsibility bring enthusiasm to their work and are committed to raising standards. Neither, though, has been in the post long. Yet they have already begun to move things forward. For example, visits have been made to the neighbouring Infants' school to see what pupils do before transfer to Year 3. Resources have been thoroughly audited, with old, outdated materials discarded and new materials bought. These are of good quality, as noted in lessons observed. Through good links with the community, a local sculptor has agreed to come in to school next term to help develop approaches to three-dimensional themes through workshops with pupils. A co-ordinator sees the need to look critically at the latest subject guidance and adapt this as necessary to the school's own needs. She rightly points out that teachers' planning must take proper account of building on pupils' skills, knowledge and

understanding incrementally. At the moment, non-contact time for management duties is difficult to organise although in principle a small amount is allocated each half-term. Co-ordinators have not monitored teaching and learning in classrooms or pupils' work.

92. A weekly art club during lunchtime enhances provision for those pupils with a special interest in the subject. It provides very good opportunities for developing relevant skills in a range of art and design activities through a teacher's personal enthusiasm and expert guidance.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. The picture is similar to that given in the previous inspection. From inspecting pupils' work, studying classroom displays and talking to teachers, along with observing one Year 6 lesson, standards by the end of Year 6 are judged to be average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress generally. However, progress in all year groups is hindered by time constraints in curricular planning.

94. In Year 3, pupils discussed what makes a good sandwich before designing and making their own. They considered appearance, smell, taste and texture in an assortment of commercial sandwiches. The tasting and evaluating of various types of bread were also considered before they chose their own sandwich. Using their mathematical knowledge of how to construct three-dimensional shapes, based on 'nets', they designed and made containers for their sandwiches and, later, for holding Easter eggs. Year 4 pupils made their own pencil cases, evaluating existing products. They designed their own by drawing and labelling. Various fabrics were tested and they decorated the finished articles with many decorative techniques. This year group also made glove puppets in conjunction with the school's 'book week'. A good link with science informed their use of an electrical circuit when designing and making torches. Continuing the food aspect of design and technology, Year 5 pupils made a biscuit as a gift for a festival. They worked on a Christmas theme of stained glass windows for designing and making their own biscuits, after evaluating a range of commercial products and their packaging. In the one Year 6 lesson observed, pupils were designing their own slippers by modelling with card and fabric a 'mock up' product, before constructing the real thing. When discussing their work, pupils speak enthusiastically about design and show sound knowledge of processes involved in designing and making their articles.

95. From the one lesson observed and the inspection of pupils' work, the teaching of design and technology is judged as satisfactory. In the lesson observed the teacher had a very good rapport with the class when introducing the 'slipper' project: "What did you buy Dad on Fathers' Day?" he asked. Co-operative but quiet work was encouraged, as were opportunities for pupils to talk to one another about any problems faced, in order to overcome them. Observations of pupils' completed work and displays indicate that teachers plan soundly, focusing on basic skills, emphasising both the designing and making aspects of the subject.

96. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Its co-ordination is shared by two teachers who work well together. They are enthusiastic and committed but agree they need training in relevant expertise, having only recently taken on the responsibility. They are also responsible for art and design. There is a subject policy and a scheme of work loosely linked to national guidance. Assessment and record keeping are at a very early stage of development and most recording of pupils' progress is carried out by individual teachers for their own purposes. Satisfactory resources are of good quality and there are sufficient tools for curriculum demands. There is no food technology area, but teachers successfully carry out projects about food within their classrooms, making other arrangements to cook where necessary. Co-ordinators have not yet been able to see what takes place in design and technology in order to improve teaching and learning further and therefore raise standards, but they have one afternoon per term to scrutinise pupils' work. Design and technology alternates with art and design for a period of half a term each, but the time actually given to teaching the subject is below that recommended nationally, affecting the depth and range of study and standards reached. Pupils cannot build on skills, knowledge and understanding successively in ways they otherwise might.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. Standards in geography are below national expectations for 11-year-olds. This conclusion represents a decline in the satisfactory standards noted at the last inspection. During this inspection, lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 only because the subject alternates with history. Additional evidence was obtained through discussions with teachers and pupils and the examination of pupils' completed work in books and on display. Teachers' planning was also analysed. There is very little recorded work in pupils' books throughout the school, and what is there is poorly presented. Teachers' planning takes insufficient account of the differing abilities present in each class and all pupils are often given the same work to complete. Evidence shows work does not always build on what pupils already know and understand.
98. Most pupils make insufficient gains in geographical skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through school. This is explained by the school's decision to focus strongly on English and mathematics in line with government priorities, with a view to improving standards in these subjects, while giving less emphasis to non-core subjects such as geography. This approach has resulted in significant weaknesses in pupils' geographical knowledge and skills. In addition, valuable opportunities to extend pupils' thinking, and to develop their writing skills through subjects other than English, have been missed.
99. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to develop some understanding of the local area and the use of land. They learn to express views on their own locality through a study of the immediate environment and nearby town. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, pupils picked out features such as the snooker club, a swimming pool and their own school on aerial photographs of the locality. More able pupils locate the position of these features on a large map of the area. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils walked around the local area armed with a route map to highlight use of land around the school. Most pupils have limited experience of map-work and preparing simple plans but, in this case, could follow their map and mark it accurately to show features they passed. One group took digital photographs to make a visual record of the walk and another used a dictaphone to record work orally. Year 6 pupils learn about the life of a river and name some salient features, such as waterfalls, tributaries and estuaries. Pupils demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of the use of keys and symbols when using atlases and maps. A discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed their very limited knowledge of, for instance, the countries of the United Kingdom, the oceans and continents of the world and how and why places change over time. This indicates that work is not planned continuously in ways building fruitfully on previous learning, and that topics are not studied in sufficient depth.
100. There is insufficient evidence to judge the overall quality of teaching but the two lessons seen were good. They were planned well and based on clear teaching and learning objectives. There is limited evidence of the use of computers to promote pupils' research skills although, as noted above, other technology was well used in one lesson. Indeed, teachers' use of varied resources helped to maintain pupils' interest and keep them focused on the task in hand in both the lessons observed, adding positively to the quality of their learning. Using study visits also provides a secure basis for learning and is a strength. For example, Year 6 pupils visited 'Water World' and Scarborough 'Sea Life Centre' as part of an extended visit to York earlier in the school year. A range of work on display illustrates Year 5 pupils' visit to a Field Reservoir where they learnt about water treatment.
101. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator knows what needs to be done to raise the subject's profile. For example, plans are in hand to make better use of the time available to make sure the curriculum is properly covered. In part, a geography 'focus' week supports subject coverage. However, long-term curricular planning has units of work alternating with history with, often, long breaks between them. In the main, planning shows pupils study only one geography topic each year. Available evidence does not make it entirely clear whether all planned topics are, in fact, taught. An over-reliance on links with different subjects exacerbates the problem since it limits pupils' opportunities to engage with tasks geared to the demands of the geography curriculum. Currently, there is no formal assessment of pupils' progress, which affects teachers' ability to take account of the appropriate 'next step' in learning for planning purposes. The subject co-ordinator has opportunities to examine pupils' work but the monitoring of teachers' planning and teaching and learning in classrooms through focused lesson observations is not yet developed.

## HISTORY

102. Only two lessons were seen owing to an alternate timetable with geography during the half-term of the inspection period. These, together with an analysis of pupils' work, classroom displays and teachers' planning, indicate that pupils in Year 6 reach average standards. This judgement is like that of the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school.
103. Workbooks and classroom displays reveal how pupils in Year 6 use factual knowledge and understanding of British history to inform their awareness of life in Victorian times. These sources also suggest that pupils develop a sound understanding of the reasons for the outbreak of the Second World War and the everyday life of families at that time. Most select and link information from sources such as books, pictures and artefacts to support their work and use research skills well in information and communication technology (for example, in their topic on the life of John Lennon, after he left the Beatles. This topic also related well to pupils' spiritual and moral development as they developed an understanding of his pacifist role).
104. Indications are that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory throughout the school. Indeed, in the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, teaching and learning were good. Pupils' work shows that teachers have secure subject knowledge and use many appropriate strategies, including outside visits, to improve pupils' historical knowledge as well as their enquiry skills. In a Year 5 lesson, a teacher began by asking pupils to give reasons why explorers set out to sea in Tudor times. Discussion led to an understanding of the difficulties of such journeys into an unknown world when ships were quite small and sailors might be away for a long time. Her knowledge and understanding of the subject matter positively affected all pupils' learning. Tasks were planned well to match different levels of ability. For example, pupils worked in groups to decide what they would take on such a long voyage, presenting information in ways that interested them. So, more able pupils had to justify the items on their list. A good awareness of the needs of a pupil at a relatively early stage of learning English meant the pupil understood the task and joined in activities productively. The pupil was also assisted by two of her 'buddy' classmates who helped her without being prompted. In a Year 6 lesson, two teachers collaborated in a 'team teaching' approach, enhancing the presentation of content to pupils' benefit. In introducing ideas about music and poetry as sources of historical evidence, very good use was made of information and communication technology, including an overhead projector, CD player and the Internet, to research the life of John Lennon. As a research task for part of their homework, pupils were asked to question their parents about their memories of him. During the lesson, music and words from the song 'Imagine' was played, which linked well with music and literacy, also supporting pupils' spiritual and moral development.
105. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post only a short time. He is a part time teacher, with an enthusiastic, very strong personal interest in the subject. He is heavily involved with local history groups. Currently, monitoring includes looking at teachers' planning, classroom displays and pupils' work and does not cover the observation of teaching and learning. There is a subject policy and a scheme of work, suitably informed by national guidelines with the addition of appropriate topics linked to other subjects (for example, the local area study of the town). Resources are satisfactory and there are useful small exhibitions and displays in some classrooms. All year groups visit places of historical interest to extend their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils visited the local town museum to supplement their studies on the Second World War. Visitors such as grandparents and local senior citizens visit the school to share with pupils their first-hand knowledge of this time in history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

106. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection where standards were found to be unsatisfactory. The school has committed considerable funds to improving the computer suite and training staff. Teachers show good levels of confidence and expertise. Overall, all pupils make satisfactory progress in learning basic skills and applying them to ever more challenging tasks. Yet the growing number of pupils with high levels of skill are not generally challenged by tasks set in lessons in ways matched to their needs.
107. In Years 3 and 4, pupils begin to see how databases work. They design simple questionnaires, enter data and print it out in tabular and graphical form. In Year 3, they word-process with increasing

confidence and import pictures, taken with the school digital camera, to illustrate their posters for a geography topic on the local area. Pupils in Year 4 drew up plans for a wildlife area and used a computer drawing package to modify and redesign their initial ideas. Year 5 pupils continue to use databases. They have begun to use newly acquired hand-held loggers to design and collect information for a simple data-logging investigation (for example, to register temperatures in different parts of the school and to find different light levels through the school). Pupils then transfer information from the loggers to the computers. Year 6 pupils design multimedia pages using text, pictures and sound to put together a story for younger pupils. They produce images after the work of the artist Paul Klee, showing a good ability to control a line to create shapes and to fill these with carefully chosen colours. Discussions with more able Year 6 pupils show that they have good knowledge of some basic computer programs but are slightly less secure when cutting and pasting work to rearrange what they have done. Some Year 6 pupils edit a school newspaper for circulation every half term. The Internet has been a source of pictures and information, as when Year 6 pupils investigated the life and works of John Lennon for their history studies. By the time they leave school pupils can use information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. However, skills associated with control technology and monitoring, and exchanging information by electronic mail, are underdeveloped.

108. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good but is mostly good. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the developing subject expertise of their teachers. Teachers set clear learning objectives at the start of lessons. In one good Year 6 lesson, this fact, combined with thorough preparation and a working knowledge of software, meant that teaching was sharply focused on the design of a poster for work on the emergency services connected to a study visit that morning. This link and the teacher's clear exposition led to good learning outcomes, as pupils acquired new skills through exploring possibilities with text and pictures for a purpose they found meaningful. In a satisfactory Year 4 lesson on the use of a program for making wrapping paper, a teacher's explanation and careful instructions made sure pupils knew exactly what they were to do and gave a good focus to work. However, this took rather a long time so pupils had little time left for practice on computers. In addition, they were consolidating skills learned previously rather than extending these by, for example, designing their own wrapping paper. Teachers very often use overhead projectors to introduce lessons in subjects across the curriculum to very good effect. Other technology, such as CD and tape machines, is also used regularly.
109. The school policy and scheme of work is based suitably on national guidance. Since September, the deputy head has supported a newly qualified teacher in the management of the subject. This works well, since the deputy brings good management experience to this work and the teacher has very good subject expertise. These qualities, together with shared enthusiasm, means the subject is well led, although further developments are acknowledged to be necessary. For example, procedures for assessing pupils' progress are not yet in place. Neither is the monitoring of teachers' planning or of teaching and learning practices in the computer suite and use of computers in classrooms. Co-ordinators' discussions with staff reveal gains in teachers' confidence in the use of computers and technology more generally (such as the use of 'Power point' in Year 6). Resources are good and the network system works well, giving teachers confidence in using machines. Work with a secondary school (where most pupils transfer from Year 6) through a local Education Consortium means the school will benefit from technical support for information and communication technology from next September.

## **MUSIC**

110. One lesson was seen in each year group and a session of 'song time' involving pupils from Years 3 to 5. Year 6 pupils were out of school on a study visit at this time. Standards of composing and performing, and appraising work in order to improve its performance, are broadly in line with those expected by Year 6. This finding is much the same as at the previous inspection. However, weaknesses in provision were identified then, affecting the quality of work generally. These weaknesses are not now evident. Pupils across the school achieve in line with expectation in a range of musical activities, given their ages and abilities. Within the limitation of time available, all make satisfactory progress because of good teaching. In some lessons, progress is better because of a teacher's subject expertise.



111. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils show good recall of earlier learning. They remember that they worked on sounds around the school. A boy said they used the pentatonic scale. A teacher praises this good recall before saying that, today, they will think about sounds heard in the town. With little prompting, pupils are quick to suggest sounds made by “cars”, “people walking”, “a baby crying” and “crowds singing and cheering at a football match.” Soon, they copy body rhythms demonstrated by the teacher to evoke some of these. They go on to develop ideas with instruments, working in groups. They show good understanding of how to play these correctly. Year 4 pupils keep the tempo set by a piece of music on a CD as they pass a beanbag round the circle. They keep very good time as the tempo rises. They can sing in tune unaccompanied with good expression. In Year 5, pupils know the meaning of “dynamics” and “duration” when a teacher checks previous work. A girl also offers “texture” and someone explains this is “layered sound”. They quickly put themselves into their composing groups, making sure they have the correct instruments. They play purposefully, listening with care to each other and negotiating the order of playing for their ‘sound picture’. Volunteers in each group have a good grasp of how to notate compositions, following a teacher’s instructions. In Year 6, pupils learn “Row, row, row the boat” and sing unaccompanied if rather flat. They can sing in two rounds but find it hard to progress beyond this, since some groups cannot keep the right tempo. Singing gets better when pupils keep time by clapping. Further improvement is seen when pupils improvise accompaniments to the song on tuned and untuned instruments in groups. All want to demonstrate their efforts. Listeners have a good capacity for making constructive remarks about improving a piece of work. For example, someone suggests more practise to help a glockenspiel player come in at the correct time. By now, pupils are singing the simple song much better but still do not modulate their voices. They thoroughly enjoy being a class ‘orchestra’ under the teacher’s baton, with groups playing and singing together really successfully. They surprise themselves with their good result.
112. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. A teacher’s subject expertise was to the fore in the weekly ‘song time’. A brisk pace was established with a clear explanation of a lesson’s purpose, reinforced by consistent use of relevant vocabulary and a check on pupils’ understanding of, for instance, the importance of ‘warming up’ the voice before singing. Demonstration and practice also supported learning. For example, pupils were introduced to the correct term “staccato” after someone suggested the teacher’s demonstration of a rhythm was “short and snappy.” Pupils learned the chorus of “Little Brown Jug”, singing tunefully with clear diction and showing they knew how to modulate their voices. These good teaching strategies were seen in class lessons, as noted when teachers explain learning intentions and explore pupils’ recall of previous work. Pupils’ knowledge of musical terminology stems from teachers’ consistency in this matter. Teachers also insist that instruments be treated with respect, explaining why this is important and making sure the instruction is followed. Mostly, lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. A very good example of this was seen in the Year 6 lesson when a teacher kept to planned activities, insisting everyone pay attention. Her own focus and evident pleasure stopped some potentially silly behaviour. This ensured there was time for groups to perform their compositions with some audience feedback. Where teaching was only satisfactory, time was lost at the start of an already brief lesson in Year 5 because instruments had to be fetched to the classroom and pupils did not have a sufficient sense of urgency.
113. The weekly whole-school session in the hall is meant to ensure all pupils receive their full entitlement to the music curriculum. However, it is questionable whether this objective is achieved. On the one hand, pupils learn a body of songs over time, collectively, which is undoubtedly an important whole-school activity that might be expected as routine. In addition, the lead teacher provides an excellent exemplar for colleagues. On the other hand, it was clear that not all pupils engaged in work in ways seen consistently in lessons. Neither was it possible for the teacher or an observer to judge how much most pupils understood of main teaching points. The hall is a difficult space for such work and ‘noises off’ were intrusive at times. The school rightly identifies the need to raise the profile of music as part of its aim to improve provision in the creative arts. Currently, time constraints are a real problem.
114. Music on the CD player gives a pleasant start to assemblies as pupils sit very quietly while everyone gathers. Yet no reference was made to pieces played (during the inspection that is), and pupils generally ignore instructions to leave the hall listening quietly again. Nor do they sing in assembly, except for the lesson outlined above. A lunchtime music club allows pupils to practise instrumental skills and play together as a small orchestra under the direction of the music specialist. Quite often,

a school governor with musical expertise lends support. Recorder players, a cellist, a violinist and a keyboard player worked on "An English Country Garden" with enjoyment. They played well. They perform at school concerts but not, generally, for assemblies, which is a pity. Over time, the number of pupils engaged in this activity has diminished. A very small number of pupils profit from the instrumental teaching of visiting specialists. String players were congratulated in the 'celebration assembly' for their very good playing in the local schools' music festival where a cellist had done particularly well. The school music specialist takes choir during the Autumn and Spring terms after school each week, but interest 'tails off' in the warm summer weather, although pupils practise for the end-of-year open day in July. Again, the choir does not sing in assembly, routinely.

115. Planning follows the latest guidance and all strands are covered, although there is not always sufficient time for pupils to think about their learning outcomes and how these might be improved. The subject is well managed, especially so given that the music specialist is part-time. She has a very good insight into how improvements can be made although this is not, yet, informed by monitoring teaching and learning practices in classrooms. For example, she is aware that not all teachers have secure subject knowledge and hold back from letting pupils "have a go" because it is a noisy activity and they are uncertain about how to manage this. Some time ago, good quality in-service work through the local education authority's advisory service involved all teachers beneficially via a practical approach they felt able to build on, but there have been staff changes since then.
116. As the use of workbooks is not consistent throughout the school, the co-ordinator undertook a pupil-survey. This entailed sampling pupils' views across the ability range in each class through discussion linked to a questionnaire. It revealed pupils enjoy their learning but think they do not do enough music (one pupil said there is "not enough time to compose", which summed up many other responses). The co-ordinator has audited resources and improved these, with access made better through the use of trolleys. There is a reasonable range of good resources, with sufficient choice to make sure all pupils play an instrument in class lessons. The co-ordinator sees room for improving provision with regard to range (for example, to give better representation of different musical traditions). She organises special events, such as the Harvest Festival and Christmas concert and also supports the Christmas production by helping with music when necessary. She makes sure pupils learn pieces selected for the local schools' annual music festival.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. Lessons in gymnastics (Years 3 and 6) and games' skills (Years 4 and 5) were observed since these were strands covered during the inspection period. Year 5 pupils were also observed for part of their weekly swimming lesson in a local pool. By Year 6, pupils reach average standards in gymnastics, meaning that standards since the previous inspection, when they were judged good, have not been maintained. However, all Year 5 pupils can already swim at least the 25 metres required by 11 years of age, suggesting better standards in swimming. More able pupils have good co-ordination of their movements and in the development of relevant skills in the gymnastic and games' lessons observed but are generally not challenged sufficiently by tasks. No significant gender differences were seen in pupils' learning in any lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make sound progress in line with their peers.
118. Year 3 pupils enjoyed a brisk warm-up at the start of a lesson, with everyone taking part enthusiastically. For the main task, they worked successfully on a sequence of different ways of walking and running around the hall, showing satisfactory control of body movements. Year 4 pupils tried out different ways of throwing using a variety of apparatus, such as tennis balls. Pupils throw competently and catch correctly (practising with small equipment such as balls and beanbags). In one good lesson, pupils reached better standards than might be expected because they were encouraged to reflect on their learning and suggest ways of improving their techniques. This helped develop their co-ordination skills when throwing. Year 5 pupils worked on hitting and bowling with varying success. Mostly, they could hit the ball with a bat but the development of this good skill was impeded for many by the inaccuracy of much bowling. In one good lesson, though, a teacher's demonstration helped pupils to learn how to use shoulder and body movements to throw a ball further while concentrating on keeping an accurate line. Year 6 pupils travel around the hall using many pathways that take them over and through small apparatus, such as benches. They work competently and confidently at floor level and on apparatus. However, a significant number do not

explore working at different heights or changing direction and speed for their sequence. This affects overall standards. Pupils worked with a partner or in groups of three with very good co-operation. Pupils gained good understanding of health and safety issues through being taught how to move equipment and to take warm up exercises before more strenuous activity and warm-down exercises at the end of lessons. The calm nature of this teaching encouraged reflection on the work done.

119. No teaching was less than satisfactory and it was good in half the lessons seen. In a satisfactory Year 3 lesson, a teacher worked hard to challenge pupils to improve their activity, for instance, by thinking about the direction of their movements around the field. Yet opportunities to extend pupils' learning further were missed when pupils did not evaluate their work to decide how it might be improved. In the best lessons, teachers show secure subject knowledge and an understanding of how to take learning forward. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson, a teacher kept asking "Why?" to challenge pupils to think about what impact body actions had on their throwing and batting and what happened when different equipment was used. In these lessons, teachers model relevant skills well. They also make good use of pupil-models to illustrate key teaching points. In all lessons, teachers dress appropriately and insist pupils wear correct kit. Where pupils have forgotten this, they are usually given tasks connected with peers' efforts so that they sit and watch purposefully and will be able to join in the next lesson more profitably. Teachers are very careful over health and safety. They teach important routines for setting out and returning equipment. Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to their physical education, with good behaviour and concentration. Some teachers use the good play of encouraging their pupils to change very quickly for a lesson by timing them. This ensures a minimal waste of time.
120. Overall, a good range of experiences throughout the school year ensures all strands of the curriculum are covered. However, the outdoor 'adventurous activities' strand is underdeveloped, although a good deal of time is given to swimming. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 attend swimming lessons for a term each year. These are held at a local pool, a fact which entails travelling by coach and takes almost a whole morning out of school each week. The school is justly proud of Year 6 pupils' swimming achievements both in lessons and in competitions, since they build on skills learned in previous years and go beyond the required 25 metres achieved in Year 5. This year, these oldest pupils won the district swimming gala involving all local primary schools. Of course, the length of time given to the activity affects the organisation of physical education as well as other subjects.
121. An experienced co-ordinator gives good direction to the subject, ensuring statutory requirements are met. She shares the work with a recently appointed teacher. She takes personal responsibility for organising local competitive sports and her enthusiasm and support for these helps the school gain local recognition. She has observed a small number of lessons, but this practice is not fully developed. There are suitable procedures for monitoring lesson planning but procedures for tracking pupils' skills and progress through the school are unsatisfactory. The school has been granted lottery funding from "Awards for All" as a result of a bid made for the development of basketball. The quality and range of resources are good and the hall provides a good space for pupils' physical development, as does the playing field. The many after-school club activities are of good quality, providing a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning in physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are below standards expected as set out in the locally agreed syllabus for 11-year-olds. Standards reported at the last inspection have not been maintained. In lessons seen, across the school, pupils made progress in learning the content taught and gained pleasure from some lessons. However, a scrutiny of recorded work and discussions with Year 6 pupils reveal that progress for most, including for those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, is unsatisfactory over their full time in school. Currently, religious education is not taught for a consistent amount of time or planned to ensure pupils build on necessary skills, knowledge and understanding successively.
123. Throughout the school, pupils are taught mainly about the major world religions of Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They develop positive attitudes towards these, and consider important aspects through comparing similarities and differences. However, time constraints have an impact on the depth of study possible. Some knowledge of the distinctive features of each faith is gained

through learning about the symbols associated with them. Good examples of this were seen in lessons in Years 3 and 5 when pupils studied aspects of symbols connected with Hinduism. Visits to the local church for work on Christianity are organised for these year groups and the vicar takes assemblies each term. But insufficient use is made of stories from the Bible (for example, to teach about the life of Jesus Christ and his teachings). In part, this has to do with teachers' lack of subject confidence. Discussion with Year 6 pupils revealed they have very little knowledge of the festivals of different religions, places of worship, key people and holy books identified with each, and have little insight into how different faith traditions affect peoples daily lives.

124. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils explored qualities conveyed through images of Ganesha, the Hindu God of good luck, by discussing the qualities of elephants – the creature he is associated with. For example, they thought Ganesha might be gentle and friendly in the way elephants are seen to behave. They enjoyed the story of how he acquired his elephant head. Many did not really understand the significance of the symbols depicted on the pictures they studied or the deeper meaning of the religious stories, although they are beginning to grasp the special nature of deities such as Ganesha to Hindus. They are also beginning to realise how symbols can have great significance for believers of a faith. In Year 4, pupils learned about the special nature of the Shema in Judaism and its central importance to prayers said each day. They worked at writing their own special words, mostly thinking hard to produce a thoughtful piece linked to the ideas they had talked about. Yet most were uncertain about aspects of the Jewish faith discussed in previous lessons (such as Sabbath, the day of worship), revealing insecurity in their learning.
125. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. Teachers make good use of artefacts and visual materials at times. In the lesson on Ganesha, a teacher used varying images of the god to provoke pupils into looking closely at how he is represented pictorially and in stone carvings. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 classes enjoyed looking at items on a puja tray, used by Hindus at prayer. Teachers in these lessons recapped usefully on previous learning. Pupils recalled, for example, that Hindus worship at a temple called a “mandir” and that lamps (or “divas”) on the puja tray are lit for prayers. In one lesson, they demonstrated a good understanding of what it means to meditate and a pupil recalled, with some accuracy, the special sound a person makes to help meditation, associated with one of the symbols on the tray. Teachers planned carefully for the lessons seen and deployed some good strategies to maintain pupils' interest at times. In one Year 5 lesson, pupils were given brief periods to 'brainstorm' ideas about the meaning of objects on the puja tray with a partner. At times, though, a lesson's pace slowed because of some pupils' fidgeting and attempts to distract others. This was seen in Years 4 and 5, having a detrimental effect on tasks in the lessons concerned.
126. Effective learning was noted in a Year 6 lesson, which was led by a visitor from a local Christian organisation. The lesson was one of a series for all Year 6 classes based on the first six books of the Old Testament, covering the Creation story and the history of Israel. During these lessons, pupils retold stories using hand signs to illustrate the major events. They showed good recall of the signing they had learned and listened attentively to the next episode. These lessons help to redress imbalances in the coverage of the subject. But in light of discussions with Year 6 pupils and an analysis of their work, it is not altogether clear what was gained simply in terms of developing their knowledge and understanding of issues in religious education.
127. Lessons make little contribution to supporting pupils' writing skills since little recorded work is, in fact, done. When pupils do write, it is mostly to complete worksheets. They have few opportunities to record their ideas in their own words, such as seen in the Year 4 lesson on special prayers. However, pupils generally express their ideas orally and listen carefully to others and, as noted above, Year 6 pupils extend their understanding of language through signing. School assemblies support religious education appropriately and help extend pupils' knowledge of Christianity and the other major faiths.
128. Currently, the statutory requirements for the subject are barely met. However, the school is to introduce the local authority's new agreed syllabus in September although an accompanying scheme of work to support this will not be in place in the foreseeable future. Also, time for lessons across all classes is to be increased to match recommendations. Recently, good quality in-service work led by a local education authority adviser boosted teachers' subject confidence. The management of the

subject is satisfactory. A new co-ordinator (sharing responsibility with a previous post-holder) has been on training for the new syllabus in readiness for the planned changes. She realises the need to raise the profile of the subject further. There has been some opportunity to monitor work in pupils' books and highlight what should improve its quality in light of such deficiencies. To date, a consistent approach to recording and assessing pupils' progress is lacking, hindering teachers' ability to plan lessons on what pupils already know and understand. The school has an adequate range of books about the major religions of the world and a few artefacts to support learning. Although pupils visit local places of worship in connection with learning about Christianity, opportunities to visit other places such as a Hindu temple or a synagogue, or to invite visitors from other faiths into school, are very limited.