

# INSPECTION REPORT

**POWERS HALL JUNIOR SCHOOL AND  
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT**

Witham

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114957

Headteacher: Mrs S J Bartley

Reporting inspector: Dennis Maxwell  
8798

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 247515

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spa Road Witham
Postcode:	CM8 1NA
Telephone number:	(01376) 513322
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Carlaw
Date of previous inspection:	02/02/1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14214	Gillian Smith	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23411	John Baker	Team inspector	Special educational needs and the Unit.	
20534	Nichola Perry	Team inspector	Design and technology History	
18524	Ann Shaw	Team inspector	English Art and design Music English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20063	Gerard Slamon	Team inspector	Science Geography Religious education Educational inclusion	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Powers Hall Junior is an established community school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years, and has an attached unit for pupils with speech and language needs. It serves an area of mixed private and social housing to the north of the town and overall the socio-economic circumstances of families are less favourable than usual. More pupils than usual enter or leave the school other than at the usual time, which tends to lower standards in the national tests. It is larger than most junior schools, with 321 pupils on roll. Very few pupils have English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of English acquisition. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, at 19 per cent, is broadly average but may not reflect the true picture. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties is average, and most of these have moderate learning needs. Six pupils in the main school have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is above average, and a further eight pupils with Statements are in the Unit. Overall, the children's attainment on entry to the school at Year 3 is below average. The school gained a DfES School Achievement Award in 2001.

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

Powers Hall Junior is a successful school that has excellent arrangements to promote good behaviour and get children ready to learn. It provides a good quality of education for the pupils so that they achieve better than expected. Good teaching throughout the school, with many imaginative and interesting tasks, has a clear impact on pupils' learning and enables them to make good progress. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an excellent partnership that is sharply focused on the pupils' all-round development, improving standards and continual debate about the best way forward. The headteacher and senior staff give very good leadership and management and they are continually looking for ways to improve. Many aspects of the school's life and work have good features, such as the individual care of pupils. However, there are a few areas for improvement, such as the marking of pupils' work, which the school is keen to tackle and improve. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve better than usual from Year 3 to Year 6 because good teaching promotes good learning and there are high expectations for behaviour.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to school. They have good behaviour overall which is built upon the very good relationships between all the adults and pupils.
- The curriculum is planned well to provide good experiences for the pupils. Teachers have very good arrangements to include all children in the activities.
- Provision for the pupils' moral understanding is excellent and for their personal development overall is very good.
- Arrangements to monitor pupils' behaviour and promote their good behaviour are outstanding.
- Procedures for pupils' care are very good and have a highly significant impact on pupils' learning.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good and of the governors are good, so that the school is continually improving and receives a strong sense of direction.

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

- The quality of presentation of some pupils' work is often poor and their handwriting is poorly formed.
- The approach to marking pupils' work is not consistent through the school.
- The overall level of attendance is below average.

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

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

The school was last inspected in February 1998 and it has made good improvements since then. It has tackled the weaknesses identified during the last inspection vigorously and thoroughly. Standards in mathematics have improved. The school has made good headway in setting up procedures to assess and track pupils' progress, and this is continuing. It has also ensured that new ideas are consolidated and monitored thoroughly and it is continuing in its efforts to extend the contribution of parents. The school has made substantial investments in information and communication technology (ICT) facilities which are

used to good effect for pupils' learning. In addition, the trend in standards, shown by the results of national tests, has been above the national trend over the past four years. This confirms how improved teaching and learning are having a positive impact on standards.

## 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				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	E	A	C	D	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
Mathematics	E	A	D	D	
Science	E	C	C	D	

Standards in current work, seen by the inspectors, are similar to those seen in most schools in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well through the school as a result of effective teaching and many imaginative and challenging tasks. Standards in all the other subjects meet the expectations for the age at Year 6 while in religious education standards exceed the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. The teachers' management of the pupils is very effective so that there is a good working atmosphere in which pupils learn well. Higher attaining pupils are usually challenged well to succeed. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress through the perceptive support. There are very good arrangements to include all children in the activities so that they make progress, including those with English as an additional language. In general, pupils make good gains in a wide range of skills, such as mental calculations, although a few areas such as handwriting and presentation of work are poor. The pupils mostly apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well in other subjects.

The table above shows that standards in the national tests in Year 6 were average in English and science and below average in mathematics. In comparison with schools having a similar proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, standards were below average in all subjects. However, the trend in standards since 1998 has been above the national trend as a result of the very good management of the school, good teaching and strategies for resolving behaviour difficulties. The good trend is also linked to the very good procedures for setting pupils' targets. Many pupils have not gained independent learning skills and are very dependent on adult support. The school met its targets for English and mathematics in 2002 and is likely to meet its challenging targets for 2003 through the effects of good teaching and the arrangements to re-group pupils by prior attainment into four focused groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen to learn and enjoy working with friends.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour at lunchtimes is exemplary. In lessons, nearly all pupils have good self-discipline which keeps a good working atmosphere. A few pupils present challenging behaviour which is handled fairly and with understanding.



Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils of all ages and ethnic origin mix freely. There are very good relationships amongst the children and with adults. Pupils develop into well-mannered and confident young people, supported by the adults' very good role models. Children enjoy taking responsibility around the school but are less confident in this for their work.
Attendance	The level of attendance was below the national figure for last year. Almost one third of pupils have attendance below 90 per cent; this is the equivalent of their missing one half day every single week. The pupils are usually punctual.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good through the school. A significant proportion of teaching is very good or excellent, noted where teachers' knowledge and methods were particularly strong in English, science and geography for example. Overall, teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning so that they achieve better than usual by Year 6. Teachers provide lively introductions that present new ideas in an interesting way and encourage pupils to contribute. Teachers plan well to take account of the learning needs of all groups of pupils. They usually provide interesting and worthwhile tasks so that pupils make good gains in a range of skills. The teaching of English and literacy skills is good, as is the teaching of mathematics and numeracy skills. Pupils enter the school in Year 3 with below average attainment and the very good strategies for behaviour management ensure that pupils are focused on the tasks and make good progress. There is a strong emphasis on teaching basic learning skills, although many pupils are reluctant to work independently. This adversely affects their written work when they are expected to work alone, and the presentation and writing skills of several pupils are poor. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies overall, such as questioning to help pupils explain, although teachers seldom make notes on the methods to use to help their approach. The approach to marking pupils' work is not consistent through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties are given very good support through the contribution of the teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils are generally challenged by their tasks.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Teachers plan interesting and challenging tasks that meet the needs of all the pupils. The needs of pupils from the Speech and Language Unit are understood and they integrate fully into many subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special needs co-ordinator provides very good oversight of the children's learning needs. The classroom assistants promote pupils' learning well, making valuable observations, so that they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The excellent provision for pupils' moral understanding is a particular strength since the school promotes the importance of truth, self-respect and justice. The school is successful in creating a climate in which children's spiritual awareness can flourish. Pupils' social growth is fostered very well. Cultural provision is good and pupils take part in a range of performances and visits.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. All members of staff place the care of pupils as the highest priority.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The partnership is satisfactory. Parents have a good opinion of the school and appreciate the generally good quality of information they receive. However, only a few parents choose to come into school to help.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy have an excellent partnership where they continually challenge and debate in order to make the best possible provision for the children. Leadership and management overall are very good, and decisions are clearly focused on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have good procedures to visit the school and they use their knowledge to make informed decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Continual review and evaluation form a strong part of how senior staff examine the school's performance. The headteacher and governors apply the principles of obtaining best value well in their decisions.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Teachers are deployed very effectively for English and mathematics so that pupils achieve better than expected. The mobile computer suite provides very good learning opportunities. The headteacher and governors give very careful consideration to agreeing relevant priorities. The level of staffing is very good. The accommodation is satisfactory overall but some of the classrooms are cramped. Resources are satisfactory overall.

## 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>• Most parents feel their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• They think behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• They think teaching is good and children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Most parents believe the school is helping their children to grow up and be responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>Several parents think:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they are not kept informed enough about how their children are getting on;</li> <li>• their children do not get the right amount of homework;</li> <li>• the school does not work closely with them;</li> <li>• there is not a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspectors find that the school has many good features and they agree with parents' positive views. The school has similar procedures to other schools to keep parents informed about their child's progress, and the arrangements are satisfactory. A suitable amount of homework is usually given, which increases appropriately for older pupils. The range of activities outside lessons is similar to most schools, and is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of current work seen during the inspection are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The school's assessments of children as they enter the school, and inspection evidence, indicate that attainment on entry at Year 3 is below average. Pupils make better progress than expected in Years 3 to 6 and their achievement is good. Standards in the other subjects meet the expectations by the end of Year 6, while in religious education standards exceed the expectation of the local agreed syllabus. This represents an improvement in the standards seen during the last inspection in mathematics and religious education, and maintains standards in the other subjects.
2. Standards in the 2002 national tests at Year 6 were at the national average in English and science and below in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools standards were below average in all subjects. A slightly lower percentage than in most schools exceeded the expectation in all three subjects and more pupils were below, although the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 was more than the national average. This improvement in standards by Year 6 compared with attainment on entry is the result of good teaching through the school and the clear focus on positive behaviour management. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the past three years in comparison with the boys' national average and the girls' national average.
3. In lessons, pupils usually learn well and make good progress through the impact of good teaching, which is supported by good monitoring procedures. In English standards are average overall. Pupils have good listening skills that enable them to improve their spoken and technical language. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are confident speakers. In reading, pupils attain a good phonic knowledge that equips them to read demanding texts. Pupils' handwriting and presentation is poor in Years 3 and 4 but their writing skills are consolidated in Year 4, and they write more expressively. By the end of Year 6 pupils have acquired a wide range of writing styles to suit differing audiences. There are examples of the good use of writing in subjects other than English. Pupils use ICT to a limited extent to support the development of literacy skills. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress alongside their peers. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the way the school places the pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics across the school. The lower attaining groups have very good learning support during these lessons and make good progress.
4. In mathematics, where attainment is average by Year 6, pupils make good progress through to Year 6 in numeracy, number understanding and skills, in simple geometrical work and the measures. In Year 4, for example, pupils mostly applied an early understanding of geometry correctly to make a floor turtle follow a square. By Year 5, pupils have gained number skills to work with percentages. In Year 6 pupils demonstrate broadly average standards across the mathematics curriculum. However, there is little evidence of problem-solving and investigational work and pupils' problem solving skills are under-developed. They also experience difficulty in giving explanations and reasons for how they carried out a calculation, although the higher attaining pupils usually explain their ideas clearly.
5. Standards in science are average. Pupils in Year 3 designed a fair test when studying seed dispersal, for example, understanding why only one variable should be changed at a time. Pupils in Year 5 predicted the outcomes of a test on soils and planned the experiments themselves. By the end of Year 6 most pupils make sensible predictions and decide on a suitable method to answer questions. Higher attaining pupils draw conclusions consistent with the evidence.
6. Pupils have consolidated their knowledge of landscapes and seascapes in art and share ideas about the tactile and visual qualities of the materials. As part of a project for a leaving assembly, pupils in Year 6 designed hats that may be used to express emotions. In geography, pupils in Year 3 used a range of geographical skills to discuss which pieces of 'lost' luggage were bound for Sydney, Cairo or Belem. The ICT technician supported pupils very well as they used laptop

computers productively to find information about weather conditions in Egypt, Brazil and Africa. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' use of mathematics, as when pupils in Year 5 presented data about economic activity.

7. By Year 6 pupils have the basic ICT skills to prepare a presentation using a published package and they use their skills increasingly in other subjects. Overall pupils' skills and understanding are average and the good learning opportunities enable the majority of pupils to make good progress in lessons, although there is a general weakness in pupils' keyboard skills and style. In music, pupils in all classes consolidate their knowledge of pitch, dynamics, rhythm, tempo musical patterns and mood to a satisfactory level. In Year 6 pupils used their voices well to produce a sound sculpture which they performed by sight reading the score. In religious education, in one lesson, the class teacher made very effective use of a video to give pupils an understanding of the importance to Jewish people of the Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah initiation ceremonies. In another lesson the task was not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
8. Pupils with learning difficulties are offered a good range of learning opportunities, which are appropriately planned. Support is particularly focused on literacy and numeracy but is given in other subjects where needed. Many pupils make good progress and some are removed from the special needs register once they no longer need support.

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

9. The previous inspection found that pupils had good attitudes to school and that they behaved well during the school day. Over the intervening five years, this positive picture has improved further. Pupils are very proud of their school and they have very good attitudes towards their work. They are outgoing and very friendly towards visitors. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the great majority may be relied upon to behave sensibly during lessons and at other times. Relationships are very good and pupils collaborate well. During discussions with inspectors, pupils say there is little about the school that they would like to change and they speak highly of their teachers.
10. Pupils of all ages and ethnic origin mix freely in an environment of social and racial harmony. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. During lessons, pupils work constructively in groups and readily offer help if someone is unsure of what they should be doing. Pupils develop into well-mannered, polite and confident young people and they are very aware of each other's needs. Pupils' behaviour during lunchtime is exemplary and they thoroughly enjoy being given positions of responsibility. While those having packed lunches eat in their classrooms, pupils having a hot meal eat at mixed age group tables in the school hall. Working in pairs, pupils in Years 5 and 6 serve the food to those sitting at their tables and subsequently help to clear away. There is a very calm atmosphere and pupils say they enjoy spending this time with older and younger schoolmates.
11. During playtimes, pupils run around the playground and thoroughly enjoy being able to let off steam. There are plenty of adults around and any inappropriate or anti-social behaviour is quickly nipped in the bud. Pupils say that, although bullying does occasionally occur, once they inform a member of staff the situation is quickly and effectively resolved. Some of the pupils, however, have significant difficulties with their behaviour. Teachers and classroom assistants are exceptionally skilled when managing these pupils and the very wide range of strategies is proving to be outstandingly effective. Although there were six fixed period exclusions during the academic year preceding the inspection, these arose from the actions of two individuals and were entirely justified. The inspection took place towards the end of the following academic year and, during this period of time, there have been no exclusions at all.
12. As a result of very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' personal development is very good. Over time, pupils form their own set of values, principles and beliefs and increasingly understand the consequence of their actions. They learn to respect one another and are concerned for each other's welfare. As they get older, pupils are increasingly able to distinguish right from wrong and make reasoned and responsible moral decisions. Pupils work very successfully in groups and amicably share their views and learning resources. Pupils participate in the school and house councils and say they appreciate having a forum for discussion within which they can air their views and suggest improvements. For example, pupils have recently

discussed replacing the benches in the playground and the possibility of having more dustbins. Council members also organise the selling of fruit during the morning break and fundraising events in order to support local and national charities.

13. Attendance has been just below the national average for at least the last three years. Although the number of unauthorised absences is only one-fifth of the national average, the number of authorised absences is relatively high. Indeed, almost one third of pupils have attendance below 90 per cent; this is the equivalent of their missing one half day every single week. A small number of this group have very poor attendance and their frequent absences have a significant impact upon the overall figure for the whole school. In addition, although the school is trying to discourage parents from booking term time holidays, a significant number continue to do so. This means that their children miss out on the work that is undertaken by the rest of the class and the ensuing gaps in their knowledge place them at a disadvantage. Pupils usually arrive in plenty of time for the start of the first lesson and time keeping during the school day is good. This helps pupils to learn effectively and to make the most of their time at school.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good through the school. The teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and in lessons they often make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills. This indicates continued improvement since the last inspection. The good teaching is encouraged and promoted by many good procedures; for example the good planning and support systems to raise the expectations by teachers for behaviour and standards. The members of staff place a high priority on the children's all round development and education and ensure that all pupils are included in the activities and choices planned for them.
15. Examples of very good or excellent teaching were observed in all year groups and several subjects, notably English, science, geography and PSHE. This indicates a substantial strength to the quality of teaching. In English and mathematics the quality of teaching is good overall, giving good attention to literacy and numeracy skills. However, attention to the quality of presentation of pupils' work and of their handwriting is given less consistent attention. Teachers prepare the lessons well, applying the principles of the literacy strategy appropriately and increasingly flexibly to meet the needs of the pupils. In mathematics, there are many good features although teachers make insufficient use of the final discussion session to draw together their observations of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in understanding and skills demonstrated during the lesson. There are also occasions when teachers have not made a careful diagnostic assessment of the pupils' understanding in order to lead into a lesson with a well-judged activity. While the sessions provide pupils with many opportunities for relevant work, they are not challenged by worthwhile investigational work to bring their findings or conclusions together in a finished piece of writing about their mathematical observations. In science, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are delivered with flair and pupils are inspired to learn. All teachers excite pupils' interest through stimulating introductions to lessons and support pupils' learning through asking challenging questions. In many of the lessons seen during the week, pupils used laptop computers to support their learning in science.
16. In many lessons work is clearly planned and well structured, reinforcing pupils' skills and knowledge. Good links are often made to other subjects such as the Caribbean project that involved geography, music, English, drama and ICT. Teachers provide pupils with an interesting range of activities to motivate their interest and to challenge their thinking. In geography, for example, pupils in Year 3 were very highly motivated as they discussed which pieces of 'lost' luggage were bound for Sydney, Cairo or Belem. The pace of their learning was very high as they used a world map to identify where these places were, having decided which destination the clothes and other contents suggested. For ICT, teachers plan well, drawing on the good experience of the ICT team. Teachers have developed good strategies for using computers to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers usually demonstrate good subject knowledge and effective use of the scheme that is used to deliver the programmes of study. The management of the pupils is very good and the teaching assistants provide very good support. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and sensitively to others, for example while singing and performing. The teachers use good strategies to include all pupils so that they all learn well.
17. Teachers take account of pupils' prior learning increasingly by drawing on the target-setting procedures for pupils in writing and mathematics. However, few direct references are included in teachers' marking to pupils' targets to confirm progress or areas to improve. In many lessons,

teachers engage actively with the pupils in their learning. They work with the groups of pupils making observations about their understanding or difficulties, and asking them questions to help them improve.

18. The teachers are beginning to recognise how to raise the level of questioning and their exposition in order to anticipate higher standards but explanation is more usually pitched at an average level. Overall there is insufficient attention to building diagnostic assessments of pupils to provide sharply focused information that may be used in aiming teaching at pupils' learning needs. In general, there is varied practice in teachers' daily assessments but several are thoughtful and teachers' responses help pupils to overcome difficulties. Teachers provide suitable homework for pupils to consolidate their learning.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The support provided by the learning support assistants for pupils with learning difficulties is generally of very high quality. The pupils are cared for and valued and they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language receive the same thoughtful attention to their learning needs as other pupils.
20. The quality of teaching observed in the Unit was always good. In the English lesson the pupils first practised their individual spellings, with highly focused support, before moving on to work on writing letters. In a mathematics lesson pupils practised counting and other skills. Listening skills are very positively promoted during the lessons, enabling the pupils to attend and improve their language skills. The teaching assistant provides on-going assessment of pupils' progress and highlights any difficulties pupils may experience. Teachers' planning is always good and sets out the learning outcomes, staffing support for individual pupils and the resources needed for the lesson. The teacher and support staff communicate orally very well with the pupils but pupils would benefit from a more visual approach at times. Signing has been used in the past but it is not felt to be appropriate with the present pupils. When pupils use ICT in the learning activities this provides good support for their learning.

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

21. The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs and abilities of all its pupils. This is an improvement on the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced and imaginatively timetabled, allowing for good teaching and learning to take place. The statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are in place as is the religious education programme. The school provides very good opportunities for learning about health and safety, sex and drugs education. In Year 6 pupils experience a range of activities to consolidate their knowledge, by visiting the discovery centre of Great Notley and meeting the 'Crucial Crew', a group of experts in the health, safety and drugs field. The school curriculum is fully inclusive and caters for all ability levels. The needs of pupils from the Speech and Language Unit are recognised and they integrate fully into many subjects. French is taught successfully to all pupils in Years 4 and 5 by a visiting teacher as a part of the performing arts status of a nearby secondary school.
22. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all areas of the curriculum. The very good behaviour policy that is consistently followed throughout the school strongly reinforces learning. The recently developed marking policy is not consistently applied. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported across the school and this enables effective teaching and learning to take place.
23. The literacy and numeracy strategies are well established and basic skills are taught well. Teaching time is used very efficiently and has a significant impact on the good attitudes and behaviour, and hence of pupils' progress. Information technology is well used in many curriculum areas and is a medium for support for pupils with special needs. The time-tabled mobile suite enables lap-top computers to be used for research purposes.
24. The school meets the needs of pupils of all abilities well. The individual education plans of those with learning difficulties are clear and well-written. Pupils from the Speech and Language Unit join the school for subjects such as art, music, history and geography. They are also encouraged to take part in class assemblies and whole-school dramatic productions. The needs of those pupils

with high ability are met through the setting system in the core subjects and no pupils are currently identified as gifted and talented, although this has been the case previously.

25. Extra-curricular activities are available at lunchtime and after school but provision for music after school is limited. Clubs for a number of sports are held with the assistance of teachers, teaching assistants and professional footballers.
26. The school has fostered very good links with the feeder infant school and the local secondary schools. Teachers from both the infant and secondary schools meet the pupils before transfer. The infant pupils in Year 2 visit the school and, in a very good arrangement, have links with Year 5 pupils before joining Year 3. The pupils in Year 6 similarly have good opportunities to visit their chosen secondary school for a day in the summer.
27. Good links exist with the local community and representatives from many of the local churches have spoken in the assemblies. The police speak to pupils about road-safety and the dangers of drugs. Other visitors to the school include Indian dancers, music groups and drummers. Such visits enrich the curriculum offered to the pupils.

## **SMSC**

28. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall. A particular strength is the excellent provision made for pupils' moral development. The provision is implicit in all areas of the curriculum and is a strength of the school. Pupils are eager to help each other and many opportunities exist in and out of class to promote this aspect - for example running the library and serving at lunchtimes.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school is successful in creating a climate within which pupils can grow and flourish. This is achieved through the importance placed on respect for self and for others. This is seen in lessons and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to value each other's contributions and to applaud achievement. There are many opportunities offered within religious education and personal, social and health education lessons for pupils to explore values and beliefs and the way they impact on people's lives. They are taught to appreciate difference and to respect the integrity of the individual. Subjects such as art, history, religious education, science and music, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and help them consider their responses and feelings on observing works of art, listening to the works of famous composers, and considering the wonders of nature. The school is aware of how regular singing in assemblies would add a further valuable dimension to pupils' spiritual development.
30. The school provides its pupils with a very strong moral code as a basis for behaviour. The strong behaviour policy is promoted consistently in classes and all aspects of the school. The school has a high commitment to educational and social inclusions and successfully promotes racial and religious tolerance. The importance of truth, self-respect, justice and equality of opportunity are communicated through the school's evident concern for these values. Breaches of moral codes are discussed when pupils study news items, such as war and violence throughout the world. The outstanding example set by all adults who work in the school and the very good relationships between all members of the school community support pupils' moral development. Pupils are very appropriately rewarded for their good behaviour and are made aware of the school's sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. They are made to feel that they are important members of the school community and, as a result, they respect and care for school property. Involvement of police and the fire and ambulance services in the 'Crucial Crew' initiative further supports pupils' moral development.
31. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. It is fostered within a community which shares common, inclusive values. The school is very effectively organised into three houses: Earth, Water and Air, the initial letters of which form the basis of the mission statement - 'Each Works for All' - which effectively supports this area of pupils' development. A common feature in all lessons is the way boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are encouraged to work together harmoniously and enjoy each other's company. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to respond to the needs of their peers in a thoughtful and empathetic way. School council members, for example, search for ways to make the school a better place. As they grow older, pupils are



provided with an increasing range of responsibilities in the school community which develop leadership qualities. Year 6 pupils, for example, are constantly made aware that their principal duty is to set a good example to younger pupils, and they fulfil their responsibilities such as table supervisors during dinner with care, courtesy and consideration. Older pupils visit the infant school to make themselves known to the Year 2 pupils so that they can relate to them when they join the school, making the transition to junior school easier for them. Pupils are given many opportunities to engage in positive corporate experiences, through assemblies, extra-curricular activities, musical performances and dramatic performances as well as class trips. These occasions enrich pupils' experiences and allow them to develop as members of the school community. Pupils are made aware of the need to contribute to the wider community through collecting for a wide range of charities such as Children In Need, the NSPCC and the Royal National Life Boat Institution. Many of these activities are organised by the school council or by individual pupils.

32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in cultural events in school and with pupils from other schools. Events - such as music and drama performances, visits to places of cultural interest and working with visiting artists such as an Indian dance teacher, a steel band, a Caribbean poet, Christian clergy, a rabbi and a local historian - do much to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. The religious education programme gives pupils a good insight into the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures, and successfully promotes their understanding of the need for racial equality. Art and music from other cultures are well represented to help pupils explore the cultural traditions of a range of people across the world. The very popular Caribbean Day and provision for learning French strongly support pupils' understanding of other cultures and the school plans to increase this provision.

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

33. The school provides very good care and guidance for pupils and this helps them to develop as responsible citizens. All members of staff share a wholehearted and sincere commitment to pupils' well being and they work as a very good team. This high level of care helps to ensure that the time that pupils spend at school is happy and enjoyable. Procedures for health and safety are good and local authority requirements are met. Procedures to promote and monitor behaviour are exceptionally effective and attendance is also very closely monitored. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very thorough. Child protection procedures are very good and members of staff are very clear about their responsibilities. The school has a very successful policy of social and racial inclusion. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are very well integrated and racial harmony is very good.
34. Some pupils with communication difficulties from the main school join the pupils in the Speech and Language Unit for specific language sessions, by negotiation with the speech and language therapist and the teacher in charge of the unit. The special needs co-ordinator meets her colleague from the partner infant school regularly. There are also good links with local secondary schools and a special school. Individual education plans (IEPs) for pupils with special needs include information on current level of ability, short-term objectives, strategies to be used and progress against the targets. These are of very high quality. Very good use is made of group IEPs. The annual review documents have very clear links with pupils' statements and the termly IEPs. These also are of very high quality. As a consequence, the quality of the annual reviews in the main school is excellent. Parents always attend their child's annual review meeting.
35. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Relationships between pupils and members of staff are close and teachers are very sensitive to pupils' 'ups and downs'. This helps to ensure that teachers are very well placed to spot any emerging personal or academic problems and deal with them at an early stage. In addition, pupils set their own personal target each week and each half term and review them to see whether or not they have been met. Teachers make written comments in pupils' personal assessment files and, over the years, these form a comprehensive and cumulative picture of how each pupil is developing.
36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are exceptionally effective. The school has devised a clear set of school rules and this very clear code of conduct forms the cornerstone of school life. In addition, each class, then each year group, discusses the particular issues that

pupils think are relevant to them and pupils agree on a set of rules which the children understand to apply to all groupings within that year. This detailed debate ensures that pupils fully reflect upon the impact of their actions upon others; this high level of understanding is reflected in the good standard of behaviour seen during the inspection. Teachers are very consistent in their expectations of behaviour and pupils know exactly what they can and cannot do. There is always someone available who can see pupils on a one-to-one basis and pupils who cannot control their behaviour are not allowed to disturb the learning of their classmates.

37. The school is very keen to recognise and celebrate pupils' personal and academic successes. Pupils are delighted to have their efforts recognised and value their various stickers and certificates. An especially important element the way in which behaviour is managed is the role of the learning support assistants. They are central to the way in which behaviour is managed and offer behaviour and anger management counselling to individual pupils who cannot control themselves. Each assistant oversees a number of pupils and they keep detailed notes of their behaviour and the actions taken. For example, pupils who misbehave may spend some of their lunchtime in a designated classroom and spend time reflecting on what they have done. They will discuss their behaviour with an adult and often with the individual they have hurt or offended. The emphasis is very much on peaceful resolution of conflict and pupils think this system works well and is very fair. The procedures for eliminating bullying are very effective and pupils say that members of staff deal with such situations very promptly.
38. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Teachers complete the registers carefully and monitor them closely in order to track the attendance of individual pupils. The school contacts parents or guardians on the first day of any unexplained absence and regularly reminds them of the importance of regular attendance. Although it strongly discourages them from booking holidays during term time, some parents continue to do so. This means that their children miss out on the work that is undertaken by the rest of the class and this could put them at a disadvantage in the future.

## **ASSESSMENT**

39. The last inspection report identified assessment as a key issue for improvement. The school has worked hard to improve assessment procedures and these are now good, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school uses a wide range of assessment information to track the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics. Results of various tests, including those taken by pupils before they join the school, are closely analysed to mark the performance of different groups and individuals. Teachers identify the progress that groups and individuals have made and use this information to set specific targets for future improvements. Pupils are appropriately involved in setting and monitoring their own targets. This system also identifies pupils to be targeted for extra help or those who need to be moved to another ability set; for example, those with potential to achieve better levels of attainment. The assessment information in English, mathematics and science is used consistently to guide both teachers' planning and pupils' progress. There are already some useful assessment procedures in physical education, religious education, history, geography and design and technology which are linked to national guidance. The school has identified assessment procedures in art and music as the next areas for development.

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

40. A key issue from the previous inspection required the school to seek additional ways in which it could increase parents' involvement in their children's education. The school has worked very hard over the intervening five years to do so and these efforts are continuing. The school is doing everything it reasonably can to make parents feel welcome and to encourage them to play a more active part in their children's learning. While they appreciate initiatives such as the newly introduced parents' forum meetings and the Tuesday afternoon drop in sessions, parents have not responded to many of the school's efforts. The overall involvement of parents, therefore, remains unsatisfactory.
41. While many parents are reluctant to become more involved, their views of the school are nevertheless positive. Parents feel that members of staff are very approachable and they appreciate all the work that the school does to support their children. They say that the school always listens to what they have to say and are especially pleased with the improvements in the standard of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

42. There are only three areas of concern. Ironically, one of these relates to the closeness of the partnership between home and school. Inspectors feel that this school is working very hard to include parents and that there is little more that it could reasonably be expected to do. Around one in five is also dissatisfied with about the amount of homework set and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors think that arrangements for homework are similar to other schools and consider the leadership and management of the school to be very good.
43. The school keeps parents well informed through fortnightly newsletters and members of staff always make themselves available to speak with parents, should they just turn up. Parents receive advance notice of the work that is to be undertaken and teachers provide hints and tips as to how they can help at home. Pupils' annual reports give parents a good picture as to what their children can and cannot do but do not comment on how they may improve more consistently. Parents of pupils of the school would have a clearer picture of the provision offered by the Speech and Language Unit if the governors' annual report to parents had a separate section on this aspect of the school's provision.

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

44. The headteacher and deputy have an excellent partnership and perceptive understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school. They provide very strong leadership for the all-round welfare and education of the pupils. They have created a tangible team spirit amongst all staff, who are highly committed to the pupils. The headteacher and senior staff give very good direction for the development of the school which results in a determination by all staff to make the best possible provision for the pupils. The overall leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff are very good. They have achieved significant success in ensuring that the school is an orderly and purposeful community. The children are open and form very good relationships within the positive ethos that the good management has created. The good behaviour observed during the inspection follows on the whole school focus on positive behaviour management as fundamental in the push towards raising standards. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.
45. The senior staff provide a good mix of practical support and longer-term exercises of monitoring and evaluation to make planned improvements. There is a healthy approach towards identifying the strengths and weaknesses in the school through good procedures. They have rightly identified staff professional development, supported by a well-structured curriculum and attractive learning conditions for the children, as priorities that promote standards. They place a high priority on identifying relevant forms of support and meeting the professional development needs of all staff. The very good performance management arrangements contribute strongly to this so that all members of staff are clear about their own and the school's targets for improvement. The arrangements also include the non-teaching staff, several of whom have taken relevant further qualifications that are valuable for their work in school. There is a clear, shared vision for the development of the school.
46. The headteacher is particularly gifted with understanding for the immediate priorities combined with interpersonal skills and drive to effect change in professional practice. She has established clear expectations and made decisions that are having a clear, positive impact on standards. The focus on good procedures for monitoring and evaluation teaching is having a good effect on the quality of provision. The headteacher's good approach ensures that all members of staff and the governors are included in discussions about forward planning so that the expectations placed upon them and their commitment are clear. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, in consultation with the governing body, have prepared a school improvement plan for the current year which relates well to identified areas of weakness and consolidates and builds upon previous work. The planned improvements are set out clearly and reflect the staff's and governors' good analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The senior staff have established a good level of effectiveness through sustained effort over a considerable period which is evident throughout the life and work of the school. The school places a clear emphasis on the need to have evaluation as an integral part of school development.
47. The school recognises the need to develop further the effectiveness of curriculum co-ordinators, particularly in relation to lesson observation. Subject leaders provide good support overall to

colleagues and monitor planning and samples of pupils' work. So far, few subject leaders have observed lessons for their subjects to form a view about overall provision. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress. They analyse assessment data thoroughly to help inform further teaching and plans for improvements.

48. The governing body takes an active role in shaping the direction of the school and it fulfils its responsibilities and statutory duties well. The governors have established good procedures to visit the school and form an independent view of its needs and progress. The governing body has a disability access plan and special needs is on the agenda of every pupil-related committee. The governors are very keen on the integration into the main school classes of pupils who attend the Unit and the school is successful in this. Providing support for pupils with special needs is a high priority for governors. This policy is clearly reflected in the way pupils with special needs are supported in the school and is a strong feature of its work. The governors make good use of training opportunities to help understand their responsibilities. They are well informed about the school's needs, strengths and weaknesses.
49. The governors have a clear understanding of financial priorities and fund the additional staffing necessary for the group work in English and mathematics in order to raise standards. This has been effective to a significant degree. The financial planning is very good in support of the identified priorities. The headteacher and governors have established good oversight of the finances and the budget, and employ a Finance Consortium manager who provides a highly skilled service. She is supported well in this by the school's finance secretary. Specific grants are used well for their designated purposes. Comparisons with local financial benchmarks are used effectively in their decisions. They apply well the principles of obtaining best value by making comparisons and obtaining competitive tendering when considering improvements and efficiency, with standards and quality of experience for the pupils in mind. The financial control is good and the higher than usual carry-forward figure relates to earmarked funds and structural repairs. Funding for special educational needs is prudently and very well used.
50. The special needs (SEN) co-ordinator manages her responsibilities very well. She provides particularly good administration and ensures that all correct procedures are followed so that pupils receive support according to their needs. There is an excellent SEN evaluation and development plan for 2002/03. It includes a detailed overview of developments in 2001/02 and of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in the National Curriculum tests. This document is an extremely valuable management tool and enables the school to establish priorities and make provision for pupils with special educational needs in the main part of the school. The co-ordinator contributes to the pupils' support, both in classes and individually and she demonstrates considerable understanding and care with the pupils she works with. The headteacher and deputy are planning to adjust areas of responsibility amongst the senior staff to provide management oversight across all areas of special need in the school.
51. There is a very good level of teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. Teachers have been deployed well to ensure that their expertise is used well. The classroom assistants make a good contribution in supporting pupils' learning, particularly of those pupils with behavioural or learning difficulties. The administrative staff are efficient and friendly, and ensure the school runs smoothly. The accommodation is satisfactory and provides an attractive environment. Children's work is valued and displayed attractively in classrooms and around the school. The level of resources is satisfactory overall, and is good for ICT.

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

52. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following issues, which link closely with those already identified in the school's self-review:
  1. Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work and of their handwriting, by:
    - a) providing good role models in all staff;
    - b) organising specific sessions as appropriate;

- c) withholding praise for poorly presented work;
  - d) ensuring expectations are consistent through the school.
- (Paragraphs 3, 15, 63, 64, 66, 104, 110)*

2. Improve the quality of marking, by:
  - a) reviewing current practice;
  - b) setting out realistic arrangements for daily and on-going marking;
  - c) helping pupils to understand how they may improve;
  - d) arranging for regular monitoring and review;
  - e) linking marking with pupils' identified targets;
  - f) looking at and sharing good practice.

*(Paragraphs 17, 22, 77, 94, 104)*

3. Take appropriate steps to improve the level of attendance.
 

*(Paragraphs 13, 38)*

#### Minor issues

1. The school has identified assessment procedures in art and music as the next areas for development and should ensure this is followed through. *(Paragraphs 39, 91, 116)*
2. The school recognises the need to develop further the effectiveness of curriculum co-ordinators, particularly in relation to lesson observation. *(Paragraphs 47, 91, 96, 105)*

### **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT**

53. The Speech and Language Unit, which is housed in a temporary building in the school grounds, is an integral part of Powers Hall Junior School and has provision for ten pupils with speech and language difficulties. At the time of the inspection there were eight pupils on the roll of the unit, from Years 3 to 6, and all these pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. Although all the pupils have speech and language difficulties, most pupils have additional difficulties as well. The teacher in charge of the unit, the special educational needs co-ordinator, other support staff from the unit and the main school and the headteacher and deputy headteacher meet informally to ensure issues surrounding the provision for pupils within the unit and in the school are addressed. The adjoining infant school also has a Speech and Language Unit and the headteachers of both schools, the teachers in charge of the Units and senior staff, together with officers and advisory staff from the local education authority, meet regularly to discuss possible referrals and other related matters.
54. Due to their communication difficulties, many pupils, when they join the unit, are performing below the levels of their year groups in some subject areas, although the attainments in mathematics of a small number of pupils compares favourably with other children of a similar age. All pupils in the unit have detailed IEPs drawn up by the teacher in charge, setting out clearly educational and personal targets in all the important areas of a pupil's development. These targets are linked to the individual pupil's statement and to the improvements recorded at the special annual meeting when the Statement of Special Educational Need is reviewed. Pupils also have separate targets set by the speech and language therapist. All targets are formally reviewed termly and new targets agreed. The annual review documents, the IEPs and the speech and language therapy targets are of good quality and enable effective teaching and learning to take place and, as a consequence, pupils achieve well and make good progress. Because of the success of the work of the Unit, two pupils are on transition programmes to enable them to join their local primary schools.
55. The quality of teaching is good. In the English lesson the pupils first practised their individual spellings, with good, highly focused support provided by the teacher, speech and language therapist and the teaching assistant, before moving onto the main part of the lesson on letters. In a mathematics lesson pupils practised counting back in tens from 194 or 93, according to ability, and counted in tens from a given number. A small group of pupils learnt about the main bones in our body in a science lesson involving Year 5 and 6 pupils. They made a simple skeleton using pins to manipulate the limbs. Listening skills were very positively promoted during the lessons, enabling the pupils to attend and stay on task. The teaching assistant provides on-going assessment of pupils' progress and highlights any difficulties pupils may experience. Teachers' planning is always good and sets out the learning outcomes, staffing support for individual pupils and the resources needed for the lesson. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons were good overall, enabling all pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. The teacher and support staff communicate orally

very well with the pupils and relationships are good, but pupils would benefit from a more visual approach at times to augment and reinforce the teaching and learning experiences offered to the pupils. Signing has been used in the past but it is not felt to be appropriate with the present pupils. When pupils use ICT in the learning activities this provides good support for their learning.

56. Pupils in the Unit register in the main body of the school with pupils of their own year group and are included, where appropriate, in the lessons and activities of that class, ensuring they experience a broad range of subjects. As all the pupils in the school have English and mathematics in ability groups; the pupils from the unit are part of the ability group which best meets their needs. The teacher in charge, the speech and language therapist and the learning support staff from the Unit and school provide very good individual support for those pupils in these lessons. This well-supported and inclusive aspect of the Unit's provision and organisation is very good and enables pupils to feel part of the school, developing friendships from outside the unit and raising their self-esteem.
57. The teacher in charge of the Unit was appointed at the beginning of the current academic year, following two years teaching in the main school. She has recently undertaken special training in teaching pupils with speech and language difficulties. She has prepared a detailed evaluation and development plan of the work of the Unit, together with an improvement plan for 2002/03. Two extremely capable part-time teaching assistants provide high quality support for the pupils. The speech and language therapist, who works for the health authority, is at the school for one and a half days per week and works very closely and effectively with the teacher-in-charge. She supports individual and small groups of pupils in a planned way, and advises the school on issues surrounding speech and language therapy.
58. Aspects for development, identified by the school and the speech and language therapist, include increasing the use of ICT in lessons and extending the use of visual and speech strategies to support communication and learning within the Unit and across the school. A more structured arrangement for senior staff and others from the Unit and the school to meet and discuss matters affecting the provision for the pupils with speech and language difficulties would improve the co-ordination of special needs across the school generally and the work of the Unit in particular. The way pupils' needs are being met in an inclusive, whole-school setting, together with the teaching and learning support provided for the pupils by the Unit staff are both areas of strength. P-Scales, which are performance levels which lead up to Level 1 of the National Curriculum, are gradually being used to assess pupils' attainments. The use of these scales, the monitoring of pupils' progress through their IEPs and the other systems the school uses for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are good. The Speech and Language Unit is well led and managed by the teacher in charge, under the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, and the overall quality of provision, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, is now good.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	36	19	0	0	0
Percentage	6	16	51	27	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)	321
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.2	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.4	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	47	44	91

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	32	39
	Girls	38	36	39
	Total	69	68	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (88)	75 (88)	86 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	31	36
	Girls	38	36	38
	Total	66	67	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (n/a)	74 (n/a)	81 (n/a)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
303	6	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	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)	16.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	26

#### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
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	£
Total income	921179
Total expenditure	837219
Expenditure per pupil	2371
Balance brought forward from previous year	104937
Balance carried forward to next year	83959

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11.67
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11.4

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	321
Number of questionnaires returned	82

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	63	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	54	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	60	7	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	61	17	4	4
The teaching is good.	27	70	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	45	28	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	30	55	10	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	51	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	13	54	21	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	20	55	15	4	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	52	6	4	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	51	18	5	7

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

### **ENGLISH**

59. Standards in English are average at the end of Year 6 and the pupils make good progress. There is evidence that a greater number of pupils are achieving the higher level and this is an improvement upon the last inspection. The standards of speaking are average overall but about 20 per cent of pupils achieve standards at the level above those expected. The standards of listening are good and reflect the very good behaviour policy that is consistently applied across the school. Standards in reading and writing are in line with those found nationally. This was the finding at the last inspection.
60. Across the school pupils display good listening skills that enable them to learn an increasing vocabulary of spoken and technical language. By the end of Year 6 pupils are confident speakers, taking part in class debates and in dramatic productions. Poetry is taught well and is used throughout the school as a vehicle to promote a love of language.
61. Pupils enter Year 3 with attainment in reading above the national average, although several pupils lack confidence and skills. Further reading skills are taught well. Pupils attain a good knowledge of sounds that enables them to move on to more demanding texts. Their comprehension skills are extended in the lessons and in whole-school displays. At the end of Year 6 pupils interpret the mood and nuances of the text, enjoying the humour and style of the author, as in the 'Just William' books by Richmal Crompton. A reading trail proved to be a very successful way of promoting reading and gauging the response of pupils. The school library is run by pupils in Year 5 and many pupils enjoy reading a variety of books that can be taken home to read.
62. On entry to the junior school standards of writing are below the national average. Pupils' handwriting and presentation is poor in Years 3 and 4 but teachers are placing great emphasis upon raising the standards in these aspects. The setting system adopted by the school is enabling pupils of all abilities to work at their own level and pace. Pupils in Year 3 learn how to set out and structure a letter and develop an understanding of formal and informal styles of writing. They use capital letters and full stops with increasing confidence, beginning to write in a legible joined hand and in paragraphs. The computers are used effectively with pupils with special needs to consolidate the use and understanding of punctuation.
63. Pupils in Year 4 use their writing skills to create a plan for the conclusion of stories they are completing. They acquire knowledge of nouns and adjectives that enhance their story and of rules relating to singular and plural words. Some pupils describe their feelings when faced with a bullying situation, recounting their anxieties in spoken and written language. The presentation of work in Year 4 is often unsatisfactory with work scrappily completed and erratic formation of letters. The standard of written work in Year 5 is good overall as there are higher expectations of presentation and spelling. In one excellent lesson observed, pupils with special needs worked with enthusiasm making very good progress in spelling and reading. They enjoyed dramatising a poem to the rest of the class using expression, dialect and dramatic gestures to interest their audience.
64. By the end of Year 6 pupils have acquired a wide range of writing styles to suit differing audiences. For example, they write reports, play scripts, diary extracts, school reports, letters and adverts using persuasive language, understanding alliteration and onomatopoeia as means of attracting the reader. Pupils make use of dictionaries and thesaurus to widen their use of vocabulary. They learn to use suffixes and prefixes and know the grammatical names of many words. Learning in class is consolidated at home; for example, pupils are asked to look and read advertisements in papers and on television and to write their own snappy slogans.
65. Although the national tests at the end of Year 6 show that boys achieve less well than girls this is not evident in the class work. However all the pupils in the higher ability set are girls. The school is monitoring the situation carefully through its good assessment procedures. Pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in Year 4 where the standards of writing are poor. The presentation and content of the work are frequently untidy and the expectations of some of the teachers are not high enough.

66. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is good in Years 3 and 6, very good in Year 5 and satisfactory in Year 4. This reflects the learning in the four year groups. Teachers prepare the lessons well, set out the learning objectives clearly to the pupils and plan into lessons elements of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Where the expectations of teachers are high then the resulting quality of work and effort is high. There is evidence of developing use of ICT to support work in English.
67. Pupils respond to English in a positive way. They are usually enthusiastic and motivated as in the lesson in Year 3 where they were replying to a letter, and in Year 6 where pupils planned an advertisement for a local company. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good due to the consistency of approach and the care of the teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language receive similar support and consideration to the other pupils and they make similar progress.
68. The co-ordinator has held the post for the past two years. She monitors teaching plans satisfactorily and has an oversight of the work throughout the school. As yet the monitoring of teaching and learning is not fully established but the work of the pupils is monitored. The assessment of English is the responsibility of the assessment co-ordinator who has an excellent understanding of progress and achievement throughout the entire school. The setting system that has helped to raise standards, especially of higher achieving pupils, is a direct result of the very clear information that is collected and analysed. The senior management of the school is aware of the action required to raise standards of writing, especially in Years 3 and 4.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69. Standards in current work are broadly average by the end of Year 6 and show an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment and in Years 3 to 6 they achieve well and make good progress. The improvement in standards by Year 6 compared with attainment on entry is the result of good, focused teaching on a wide range of skills through the school, the effects of positive behaviour management and the very positive attitudes of the pupils. The pupils work well when support is available by the teacher or teaching assistant but many pupils have limited skills for independent learning and find concentration difficult. Targets for Year 6 pupils for 2003 are much higher than for 2002 and inspection evidence points to the school having challenging but determined expectations of higher standards. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys over the past three years. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
70. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. Teachers usually provide a good level of challenge with a mental starter at the beginning of lessons which focuses well on skills to increase pupils' speed of calculation and confidence. In Year 3, for example, pupils kept skip counting in tens and twos - reaching their limit at around 190. Pupils have an early understanding of angle and are beginning to understand how to make comparisons with a right angle, but they have a limited idea of what an angle is. In Year 4, the teachers introduced a lesson on forming shapes with a floor turtle by having the pupils jump a quarter or half turn, several not knowing their right from their left for their jumps. They mostly applied an early understanding of geometry correctly after a few trials to make the floor turtle follow a square with a diagonal. In Year 5, good teaching led a class into making links between percentages, fractions and decimals. The teacher's good subject knowledge and use of resources ensured that the relationships were developed very thoroughly. Most pupils understood and were able to apply their knowledge to the simpler values, and the teacher's skilled questioning and explanations led most pupils to link 0.75 and 75%. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour helped them to take the worksheet task well, although when working independently of the teacher several pupils demonstrated insecure understanding of the relationships.
71. In Year 6, lower attaining pupils consolidated the division process. Careful questioning led most pupils to recognise the steps to take, but the teacher gave insufficient time to emphasising the values of the numbers and the need for careful positioning. In another lesson, the teacher had set up a shop counter to provide good motivation for the pupils to pose and solve money problems. Most pupils were keen to offer their methods, the teacher ensuring that pupils explained the

process. The lesson concluded with several challenging questions which they were very keen to answer.

72. While the teaching of mathematics is good overall, and there are many good features, in general teachers make insufficient use of the final plenary session to draw together their observations of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses in understanding and skills demonstrated during the lesson. There are also occasions when teachers have not made a careful diagnostic assessment of the pupils' understanding in order to lead into a lesson with a well-judged activity. This was noted for example, in connection with pupils' difficulties in understanding angle or the significance of putting numerals in the correct place during a division. Moreover, there is a strong emphasis on correct factual answers. There are many examples of good, well-structured questioning to help pupils acquire certain skills and to explain those methods, but few questions are more open and designed to encourage creative thinking in mathematics. While the sessions provide pupils with many opportunities for relevant work, they are not challenged by worthwhile investigational work, as envisaged by Attainment Target 1, to explore relationships and to bring their findings or conclusions together in a finished piece of writing about their mathematical observations.
73. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour that promote good concentration and effort. A few pupils rely on adult support or firm handling to keep them on task. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and confidence in presenting the ideas. They place a good emphasis on quick and accurate mental calculation, with a good pace in most lessons. Teachers know their pupils well in many ways but carry out insufficient diagnostic assessments of pupils' learning needs. The pupils are placed in sets in all year groups according to their prior attainments, which helps to promote good interest in the tasks and good progress. There is a classroom assistant for each group, which is effective in helping to raise standards. The teachers respond well to pupils and value their contributions, usually giving well-deserved praise. The teachers manage the pupils very well.
74. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has time to monitor and review provision for the subject, and has made some lesson observations, providing a careful evaluation afterwards. The teachers plan their lessons co-operatively which ensures continuity. Daily assessment takes place during lessons and teachers use a good formal recording procedure. The school has established the mathematics curriculum well, with good support procedures to help improve standards and the quality of learning. Previous work indicates good progress in standards through the school overall and appropriate subject coverage. There is evidence of the good use of ICT to support the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

75. Pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards that are average for their age. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' prior attainment. It also represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were below average. Class teachers ensure that all pupils are fully involved in lessons and that boys and girls work together at all levels of attainment. As a result, no difference was apparent in meeting the needs of boys and girls. The improved standards are a direct result of the much improved consistency in teaching, better provision for higher attaining pupils, and improved use of assessment. These initiatives include a thorough analysis of tests to identify weaknesses in pupils' understanding, and the setting of realistic but challenging group and individual targets for future work, and they are helping to guide teachers' planning.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teaching was excellent in one of the lessons seen, very good in three and good in seven. Throughout the school, teachers plan well in year groups, and class teachers adapt the common plan to meet the needs of their group of pupils and to suit their own particular style of teaching. Lessons are delivered with flair and pupils are inspired to learn. In all classes, lesson plans are based on clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils so that they know what they are to learn. Class teachers and teaching assistants are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational and physical needs and ensure that they are fully included in lessons. The very high quality support provided for these pupils allows class teachers time to challenge and support higher attaining pupils so that they too make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly true in the very good and excellent lessons, where teachers

challenge pupils to explore for themselves, ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. An excellent example of this was seen in a Year 4 lesson, where the class teacher's very good knowledge of the solar system motivated pupils to ask high level questions and to independently research the topic using books and ICT. All teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and, as a result, excite pupils' interest through stimulating introductions to lessons. This good subject knowledge also allows them to support pupils' learning through challenging questions at all stages of the lesson. In many of the lessons seen during the week, pupils used laptops to support their learning in science, and were well supported by the knowledgeable technician so that no learning time was lost.

77. Teachers expect work to be well presented and they regularly mark completed work. However, the quality of marking rarely challenges pupils' thinking or indicates to them how they might improve. Although a marking policy has recently been introduced, the quality of marking is still too dependent on individual teachers. Expectations of pupils to record their work in an organised way, and the teaching of correct scientific vocabulary, mean that the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' literacy skills. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the class teacher challenged pupils to describe the movements of the parachutes which they had designed and made using words such as *floats*, *sways* and *glides*. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is well supported, as pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically.
78. The very positive relationships forged by teachers in all classes result in pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to work. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of the tasks and work well together. Teachers use a wide range of interesting teaching strategies such as small group discussions, to which pupils respond very well and discuss their ideas sensibly. Their good behaviour and strong relationships contribute well to pupils' learning.
79. Analysis of pupils' work shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention and that learning across all aspects of the subject through scientific enquiry is good. Pupils in Year 3 understand why only one variable should be changed at a time. Pupils in Year 5 are challenged to carry out fair tests when considering the suitability of different soils for plant growth. As a result of the emphasis placed on scientific enquiry, most pupils by the end of Year 6 make sensible predictions and decide on a suitable method, such as a fair test, to answer scientific questions. Higher attaining pupils draw conclusions consistent with evidence, making connections to their scientific knowledge and understanding.
80. The school's own environment is well used for work on life processes and living things, and materials and their properties. Pupils use the school grounds to observe conditions in different habitats. By the end of Year 6, most pupils appreciate the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat, describing them in suitable scientific terms such as food chains, predator and 'prey'. Higher attaining pupils appreciate the great variety of living things and are taught the importance of classification. By the end of Year 6, pupils have been guided to discover the differences between the properties of various materials, and the resulting classification into solids, liquids and gases. Through their investigations, most describe methods such as filtration for separating simple mixtures. Higher attaining pupils go on to apply their knowledge about how a mixture such as salt and water can be separated and suggest how other mixtures can be separated. In conjunction with their work in geography, pupils in Year 6 investigate how porous different areas of the school are and measure the rate of evaporation.
81. By the end of Year 6, pupils build circuits which include switches and motors and explain 'short circuiting' in scientific terms. As a result of the strong emphasis on pupils testing hypotheses and finding things out for themselves, most pupils by the end of Year 6, have a good understanding of motion being affected by gravitational and magnetic attraction. The higher attaining pupils use abstract ideas in describing known phenomena, such as stationary objects revealing a balance of forces. After researching phases of the moon a pupil wrote: 'My friend and I did an experiment in a dark area using a torch as the sun and a football as the moon. As we rotated the ball we noticed the shadow moved.'
82. Teachers ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of the need for healthy living and make them aware of the need for a healthy diet and exercise. The school has



been recommended for a Healthy School's award for this area of its work and is to apply for validation for the advanced level in the autumn. The subject also makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, as they are taught to appreciate the wonders of nature and care of the environment, as did the pupils in Year 4 in their study of the solar system.

83. The subject is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who himself is a very good teacher of science. As a result, he is able to give good advice to teachers and is a very good role model. He carefully monitors teachers' planning to ensure consistency of practice and looks at pupils' work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered. The co-ordinator, together with his colleagues, is strongly committed to improvement and has a clear plan of action to do so. There is a satisfactory range of resources, visits and visitors which are well used to support teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Attainment is in line with expectations, a similar finding to that of the last inspection.
85. Throughout the school all pupils have opportunities to use a variety of media and techniques. Pupils from the speech and language unit join the classes for art and they have equal access to the curriculum, making good progress in their design skills. Pupils with special needs make good progress with the support of the teachers and teaching assistants.
86. Satisfactory progress is made by pupils in Year 3 as they learn to mix colours creating tones of light and shade. They appraise their resulting seascapes and note improvements that can be made, developing speaking and evaluating skills.
87. Pupils in Year 4 consolidate their knowledge of land and seascapes by using materials to create a landscape collage. They use the terms *foreground* and *background* with understanding and share ideas about the tactile and visual qualities of the materials.
88. Year 5 pupils learn to use a variety of printing techniques. They build up a collagraph of a pineapple and using wax crayons create good quality prints of the fruit. The activity enhances their social, spiritual and social development as they work closely together, talking about and evaluating their work.
89. As part of a project for a leaving assembly, pupils in Year 6 design hats that can be used to express emotions. They draw their initial designs in their sketch books and move on to translate their ideas by rolling paper to make a base for the head-dress.
90. Pupils throughout the school thoroughly enjoy all aspects of the subject as they learn about artists from different eras and countries. They make patterns and decorate urns in the style of Clarice Cliff and use coloured sticky paper to make mosaics in the style of the Romans. They realise that emotions can be expressed in art as depicted in a Year 5 class mural that represents 'Good replacing evil'. The theme is from a set design by Natalia Gontcharova.
91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but good in Year 5. Lessons are clearly planned and well structured, reinforcing pupils' skills and knowledge. Very good links are made to other subjects, such as the Caribbean project, that involved geography, music, English, drama and ICT. Currently there is no formal assessment of pupils' work but the school management is working towards an assessment system to identify individual pupils' progress.
92. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily, providing advice and ideas to staff where required. He monitors curriculum planning and orders appropriate resources that extend the learning of pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. Due to time-tabling arrangements it was not possible to observe any design and technology lessons during the inspection and a very limited range of examples of pupils' work available. Scrutiny of a wide range of photographs, display around the school and teachers' planning and discussions with the subject leader indicate that standards are on track to meet national expectations at the end of Year 6. This maintains the position at the last inspection. All pupils are suitably included in the

curriculum, including those with learning difficulties, and make satisfactory progress, with no difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

94. Standards of work indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most pupils work at average standards in their planning and designing skills. Some examples of Years 5 and 6 work show well-drawn plans which are appropriately labelled and annotated, indicating effective teaching of basic planning skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work, and that of others, and examples show that teachers are using age-appropriate styles for this, with higher expectations of the older pupils, such as the Year 6 evaluations on their slipper making project. Although the majority of pupils are still only working at average standards in their evaluation, the school's approach to this area indicates it is a developing strength. The use of assessment is satisfactory but marking of work does not yet explain to pupils how they can improve their work. The school is aware of this and accepts this as an area for development.
95. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to develop their making skills through their own ideas. Photographic evidence demonstrates that some pupils are working at above average standards in this area. Resources are well used when Year 5 pupils make model vehicles using wheels and axles to allow effective movement. Links with other subjects are good. Pupils' numeracy skills are effectively used, for example, in Year 4 where pupils measure and saw wood for the frames of their Tudor houses, with special attention given to the corner joints. There are some good examples of development of pupils' basic literacy skills through labelling of diagrams, lists and instructions, as well as posters, leaflets and information texts. ICT is increasingly used for designs, evaluations and some data handling. The Year 4 pop-up pictures made particularly good links with pupils' work on the Egyptians. Discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils indicate that they thoroughly enjoy design and technology lessons and that they are able to recognise the planned links with other subjects, for example, with their study of the Vikings and Tudors.
96. Leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory overall and there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Improvements include the incorporation of national guidance to support the school's programme of work; health and safety procedures are now written into plans, for example, the use of knives and cooking utensils, hand washing, use of aprons and care when using glue. Monitoring of teachers' planning to check teaching and resources has helped to raise the profile of the subject and has demonstrated that teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have improved over time through experience of their year group areas. However, the co-ordinator has not monitored the quality of teaching with an emphasis on pupils' planning and evaluations and there is therefore no clear idea of standards across the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development when they work together in pairs or groups. It also makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development when they reflect on their experiences and show pride in their achievements. Resources for design and technology are good and effectively managed.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. Pupils attain standards that are in line with what is expected nationally for their age, as they did at the time of the last inspection. However, teaching is better now than it was then and, as a result, pupils are making good progress in their learning.
98. Four geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Teaching was excellent in one lesson, very good in one and satisfactory in two. All evidence indicates that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons well to provide a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. They provide pupils with an interesting range of activities to motivate their interest and to challenge their thinking. In the excellent Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils were very highly motivated as they discussed which pieces of 'lost' luggage were bound for Sydney, Cairo or Belen. The pace of their learning was very high as they used a world map to identify where these places are, and labelled the luggage, having decided which destination the clothes and other contents suggested. Pupils were very well supported by the technician as they used laptops to find information about weather conditions in Egypt, Brazil and Africa. By the end of the lesson, they had a good understanding of the effects of climate on a location and how it can influence tourism and land use. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' use of

mathematics as, for example, when pupils in Year 5 present data about economic activity, following their trip to West Mersea. In a very good lesson, pupils gained a good understanding of primary, secondary and tertiary industries, and went on to present their information graphically and interpret information presented by other pupils.

99. The contribution that English, mathematics, history and ICT can make to the development of pupils' geographical skills, is becoming an important feature of the school's provision. This, together with regular opportunities for field trips to places of geographical interest such as the local area, the Discovery Centre, river walks, and the Amenity Centre, enhances the curriculum and enriches pupils' experiences, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and culture development. Pupils in Year 4 consider what it is like to live in an Indian village and compare the lives of schoolchildren there with their own daily lives. This strongly supports pupils' social and cultural development as well as their research and literacy skills as they find information and use it to write 'Mari's diary'. Pupils throughout the school consider moral issues such as the war on Iraq when they study 'What's in the news'. In this way, teachers keep pupils up to date with current affairs and provide well for their moral development.
100. By the end of Year 6, most pupils demonstrate knowledge, understanding and proficiency in the study of places and environments at several scales, in various parts of the world. They have a clear understanding of mountain formation and pupils were observed preparing fact files about different mountain environments to be used as reference materials by others. The task was interesting and most pupils worked with interest and concentration, researching information using books, maps and computers. Pupils have a high level of interest in the subject and work hard in lessons, responding well to teachers' high expectations.
101. The well organised subject co-ordinator, who is also history co-ordinator, has been effective in improving provision and standards since the last inspection. The scheme of work is based on national guidance for the subject and helps to ensure that skills are progressively developed. The co-ordinator has increased resources for the subject and these are supplemented by books and maps through a loan scheme from the local library. She has identified the need to refine assessment procedures and has developed target sheets for each year group so as to track pupils' progress in knowledge, skills and understanding.

## **HISTORY**

102. Standards in history are broadly in line with those expected nationally. The school provides satisfactory teaching overall, which, with some additional, extra-curricular activities, helps pupils to make good progress in their learning. Boys and girls achieve similar results. Pupils who have learning difficulties make good progress due to the effective support from their teachers and support assistants. This maintains the position at the previous inspection.
103. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have absorbed a wide range of historical facts. They show a satisfactory understanding of chronology within periods such as that of the ancient Greeks or the Second World War, and of how different periods relate to one another. They identify key events and people, for example, from their studies of the Romans or Egyptians. Younger pupils are taught to look at how life has changed and how we know by learning about specific events, researching the lives of famous people and studying a range of artefacts. Higher attaining older pupils are able to suggest reasons for some events and draw out comparisons and differences between the present and specific periods in the past, within the home and in relation to other aspects of life. The impact of local studies is developing satisfactorily although pupils are not yet linking what they see locally with specific periods in history. Overall there are some good links growing with art, geography and technology in developing pupils' understanding and representation of the past. Particularly effective links were seen in the Year 6 work on the Second World War. Writing, including word processing, was well used through recording facts about rations and famous people and letter writing from evacuees to home, although handwriting and presentation were not good. Pupils have produced maps showing the invasion of countries across Europe and artwork showing pencil drawings of famous people and aircraft. However, across the school, links between history and literacy are not yet well developed so that standards of written work are not sufficiently high and standards of handwriting and presentation are barely satisfactory, which limits progress towards the achievement of higher levels. In some classes there is an unsatisfactory over use of

published worksheets, which is preventing development of pupils' writing skills. These are areas for development.

104. Overall inspection evidence indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers plan to use resources well; for example, Year 3 pupils use a carefully selected range of resources to help them to improve their understanding of the travels and trading practices of the Vikings. This also helps them to make links with their knowledge and understanding of resources found in different countries in geography. In Year 6 pupils are given opportunities to use Internet links to access census materials in their study of local history in the 1800s. Most teaching shows good subject knowledge which helps to maintain the pace of learning and pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm are encouraged by the good questioning skills of teaching and support staff. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about periods they have studied such as the revolt against the Romans by Boudicca. This contributes to pupils' good cultural development. Where teaching is weaker, expectations are not sufficiently high for the more able pupils and they are not made aware of what they have to do to demonstrate higher levels of attainment. Assessment, including marking, remains basic and is not yet sufficiently developed to inform pupils what they have to next. This shows limited improvement since the last inspection. However, the school is aware of this and is planning to change the way history is taught so that pupils are assessed against specific objectives from the beginning of the autumn term.
105. The leadership of history is satisfactory. The current manager has been in post for over a year. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the post was covered by a temporary appointment. There is a clear action plan to improve standards, which includes increased use of assessment and ICT. Monitoring of plans is carried out termly but as yet there have been no lesson observations. Enrichment of the curriculum is satisfactory with a small number of celebrations of history, such as the Tudor day with dancing, food and decorations as well as visits to local places in and around the Witham area. Resources for history are generally good although there is a need to provide a wider range of artefacts. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

106. Attainment in ICT is in line with expectations by Year 6, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection, although there is evidence of pupils receiving good experiences through the good computer facilities. Teachers are using the facilities of the ICT suite with increasing confidence and provide a good range of activities. These promote good learning by the pupils across the knowledge and skills of the scheme of work so that they achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their peers. The higher attaining pupils produce work that exceeds the expectation. The ICT team is a very good arrangement to provide effective management and oversight of developments. The appointment of a knowledgeable and hardworking ICT technician is also a very positive decision to provide support across the school, which is also very effective. All pupils are included fully in ICT activities. They are very keen to be in the suite and know the routines for logging onto the computer. The school has adopted national guidance to provide for coverage and progression in the subject. In this way, pupils are given tasks that enable them to gain the skills and knowledge appropriate to their ages.
107. In a well-chosen activity in Year 3, pupils had made monster pictures where the features and characteristics were used to build a file of data using an information package. The teacher had also prepared an eye-catching monster to introduce pupils to the ideas of recording data according to agreed fields. The pupils responded very well to the task and used imaginative language, such as 'Blink' and 'wobbly' for the monster's name and his movement. Also in Year 3, pupils used laptop computers to research information on Brazil, on the main theme of weather. The teacher exhibited very positive relationships so that pupils were highly motivated in their task. This task provided pupils with very good opportunities to use ICT skills in their search. By Year 5 pupils are developing good mouse skills but their keyboard skills are clumsy with a poor style. A clear introduction to spreadsheets indicated most pupils had satisfactory recall of earlier work, and they know how to name and identify a cell. Pupils demonstrated satisfactory skills at entering simple text into named cells in order to decode a message. Pupils' very good interest and behaviour were evident as they worked, motivated by the challenge of reading the final message.

108. Pupils in Year 6 used the facilities of Powerpoint with satisfactory skill to produce a series of files and then to import pictures and maps. The class teacher used her good subject knowledge in giving a clear demonstration and in her good explanations. The pupils were motivated well by the task and worked co-operatively with a partner, sharing ideas and turns to enter commands. This promoted good learning. The teacher used several good teaching strategies, for example in going through one pair's work with the whole class and in evaluating it by discussing additional skills to use. Overall pupils' skills and understanding are average and the good learning opportunities enable the majority of pupils to make good progress in lessons.
109. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour, which supports their good progress. The teaching of ICT is good overall. Teachers plan well, drawing on the good experience of the ICT team. The school has developed good strategies for using computers to support learning across the curriculum. All areas of the curriculum are included appropriately in the planning. The pupils have a developing understanding of how computers may be used to support learning in other subjects and that the Internet may be used for researching information. There are suitable arrangements to track pupils' experiences or progress. The subject team have made good progress in organising good facilities and a well-structured curriculum. There have been a few opportunities to monitor provision.

## **MUSIC**

110. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and abilities. This is similar to the finding at the last inspection. A number of pupils enjoy learning to play the guitar and a few pupils are able to learn the piano. The school has an annual play that involves all the pupils in dramatic and musical presentations. These activities outside the lesson times enhance the music in the school and develop the social and spiritual elements of the curriculum.
111. Pupils in all classes consolidate their knowledge of pitch, dynamics, rhythm, tempo musical patterns and mood. They enjoy singing, as was evident in one Year 3 class. Pupils learn the term 'ostinato' as they accompany themselves in a variety of rhythms with unpitched percussion.
112. Pupils in Year 4 learn to sing the spiritual 'Swing low, sweet chariot' and to learn about pentatonic scales. One good lesson observed in Year 6 encouraged pupils to use their voices to produce a sound sculpture. The pupils worked well practising staccato sounds in preparation for the combined performance at the end of the lesson. The introduction of a graphic score to enable phrases to be read was met with some difficulty, but with perseverance pupils successfully mastered it. They performed the voice sculpture with enjoyment and musicality, sight reading the score and listening to one another with accuracy.
113. Another good lesson in Year 5 developed the compositional skills of the pupils as they chose tuned and untuned percussion instruments to represent the planets. Pupils in one group selected and composed a very evocative piece to describe a 'stormy wild planet.' It was appreciated and applauded by the rest of the class. ICT is not used to capture, change and combine sounds, as in a composition. The school has good ICT facilities that can be harnessed for this purpose.
114. Pupils respond to music lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They work together co-operatively and are confident and willing to demonstrate their achievements to the class. Pupils from the speech and language unit and pupils with special needs make good progress with the support of teachers and teaching assistants.
115. Class-teaching is good overall. Teachers plan effectively, use the resources well and have a good knowledge of the scheme that is used to deliver the programmes of study. The management of the pupils is very good and the teaching assistants provide very good support. Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and sensitively to themselves and to others singing and performing. The lack of good quality singing in the daily assemblies, during the inspection, meant that the opportunity was missed to enhance the already good spiritual provision for pupils.

116. The co-ordinator has not held the position for long enough to improve the subject since the last inspection. The school management recognises that further development is required and is taking appropriate measures to provide additional training and resources to enhance teaching and learning. Formal individual assessment of pupils is not in place but the school assessment co-ordinator is providing staff with performance descriptors to measure progress. The provision for extra-curricular music is limited.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Standards in physical education meet the expectation by the end of Year 6, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. All pupils are included fully in the activities and pupils usually co-operate well during activities and games. The high attaining pupils have good co-ordination and development of skills. There is no significant difference in pupils' learning between boys and girls overall, or amongst different groups. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in developing skills alongside their peers.
118. In Year 3 pupils benefited from the skill and expertise of a visiting teacher from a partner secondary school who takes them for dance sessions. The teacher helped the pupils to express themselves in dramatic position, providing a very good example and style. The pupils took on the task with very good attitudes and behaviour, acting out a vicious-looking cat, for example. Overall they demonstrated satisfactory skill, the effective teaching promoting good learning. The pupils continue their experience of dance through the school; in Year 5 for example, they built up a sequence of moves to music, where the girls demonstrated the ability to pick it up quite confidently. In Year 4 pupils had good opportunities to develop their ball skills. All pupils were included well in a simple but effective game, organising themselves well with good relationships. By Year 6, pupils have the skills to portray a difficult journey, in pairs one supporting the other. Their ball skills and gamesmanship have improved and most have satisfactory control and skill while playing a modified game of rounders. Most pupils were very keen to play; a few found co-operation difficult, but overall they were well-behaved, playing within the teams. Their good attitudes, effort and involvement contributed well to their development of skills. They seldom recognised the strategies needed as a team, however, by backing each other up when throwing the ball. The teachers provided good oversight and direction. Overall, the pupils demonstrated satisfactory skill in the tasks, with good attitudes that resulted in good gains in skills.
119. The quality of teaching is good through the school and this is having a positive impact on standards. Teachers set out clear learning intentions and provide a good shape to lessons with a warm up and a main focused activity. The good choice of task promotes a good level of skills development and challenge. The teachers have good relationships with the pupils which encourages the pupils to have good attitudes and behaviour and to learn well. The teachers are very careful over health and safety matters.
120. The school provides a good range of experiences for development of skills and enjoyment in physical education. The subject leader provides good direction for the development and support of the subject and ensures that it meets statutory requirements. The quality and range of resources are satisfactory. The school hall, outside playground and school field provide good spaces for pupils' physical development. Assessment procedures to track pupils' skills and progress are in place but at an early stage of use across the school. Teachers use their observations during lessons well to evaluate pupils' work and help them to improve. There are suitable procedures to monitor lesson planning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Standards in religious education are above those expected by the local agreed syllabus for pupils at the end of Year 6. This represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. Teachers feel well supported by the school's scheme of work which is closely linked to the agreed syllabus, and there is good coverage of Christianity and other major world religions. Lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils show that the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers are well aware that pupils should learn not only *about* religion but also learn *from* religion.
122. The quality of teaching and learning was predominantly good in lessons seen during the inspection. In one of the four lessons observed teaching was very good. It was good in two lessons and satisfactory in one. In the best lessons teachers plan their lessons well to include an interesting range of strategies to motivate pupils' interest, by involving them in active learning. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson in which the class teacher made very effective use of a



video to focus pupils' attention and to give them an understanding of the importance to Jewish people of the Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah initiation ceremonies. Through probing questions, the teacher consolidated what pupils had learned about the ceremonies and the relevant vocabulary. Pupils went on to design their own Bar Mitzvah invitation cards, using the information they had gained. This interesting task resulted in a high level of interest and very good learning. In the lesson that was otherwise satisfactory, the teacher did not use this interesting range of teaching methods and the task was not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils, so that, overall, learning was satisfactory.

123. Teachers throughout the school research the subject well so that they feel secure in their explanations and in leading class discussions. All teachers form positive relationships with their classes and these result in pupils' confidently answering questions and engaging in discussions. Pupils with special educational needs are well included in lessons and make progress similar to that of all other pupils. The support provided for these pupils is of high quality and effectively supports their learning. There is an increasing use of ICT to support pupils learning. An example of this was seen in the Year 6 lesson where pupils used computers to help them design their Bar Mitzvah cards.
124. Guided by the mainly good teaching, pupils, by the end of Year 6, recognise similar beliefs and values found in faiths such as Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. Their understanding of the importance of festivals and holy days, such as the Shabbat, to members of religious communities is well reinforced in lessons and assemblies. Pupils know that many religions share common features and that each has a holy text such as the Bible and the Torah, and that each gives rules and example for living. The importance of places of worship such as the church, the Hindu mandir and synagogue to people of these religions is well understood. As a result of the good teaching and the school's strong moral and social codes, pupils understand the teachings of key figures such as Jesus and Moses. For example, through studying the Ten Commandments and the parables of Jesus, such as that of the Good Samaritan, pupils know that a key feature of different religions is that of love and caring for each other. The respect with which pupils treat each other, the concern and compassion they have for those with special needs, and their collections for children in the hospice, for example, reflect their understanding of this feature. Pupils behave well in lessons, and listen to information about Christianity and other religions with respect and interest.
125. The subject co-ordinator effectively promotes religious education throughout the schools and has a clear vision for its continued development. She has recently attended a course in preparation for the implementation of the newly updated agreed syllabus and its related assessment procedures which will soon be introduced. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need for respect and tolerance are emphasised in lessons. Teaching is supported and learning enhanced through visits from local clergy and Christian groups in addition to a well organised, developing range of interesting artefacts.