

INSPECTION REPORT

MEADOWHEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 119121

Headteacher: Mrs J M Knight

Reporting inspector: Mrs V Farrow
22428

Dates of inspection: 24 – 27 March 2003

Inspection number: 247968

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Type of school: | Community |
| School category: | Junior |
| Age range of pupils: | 7 - 11 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Anglesey Street Blackburn |
| Postcode: | BB2 4QG |
| Telephone number: | 01254 209871 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr J Thompson |
| Date of previous inspection: | 24–28 November 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|---------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 22428 | Val Farrow | Registered inspector | Design and technology Religious education | What sort of school is it? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9282 | Clare Lorenz | 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? |
| 21020 | Tess Galvin | Team inspector | Science Music Physical education Educational inclusion | How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements |
| 30724 | Delia Hiscock | Team inspector | English Information and communication technology Art and design Special educational needs | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

| | | | | |
|-------|----------------|----------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 12232 | Diane Atkinson | Team inspector | Mathematics History Geography English as an additional language | How well are pupils taught? |
|-------|----------------|----------------|--|-----------------------------|

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Meadowhead is a larger than average sized junior school close to the centre of Blackburn. It serves the communities of Mill Hill and Livesey, made up of local authority and private housing. Most pupils transfer from the infant school and their attainment on entry to the junior school is about average overall. The school has 356 full-time pupils on roll, more than during the last inspection. A very small number of pupils travel from the centre of Blackburn by bus. The great majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. There are five pupils who speak English as an additional language. Two pupils with early language acquisition left the school immediately prior to the inspection. Sixty-six pupils are currently identified on the register of special educational needs, which is about average. Most of these pupils' needs relate to emotional and behavioural, physical or learning difficulties. The number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is above average. About a quarter of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is just above average. The school is part of a mini-Education Action Zone (EAZ) aimed to raise standards and increase pupils' motivation.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education within a caring environment that generates the right conditions for learning. As a result, relationships are very good, behaviour is very good and pupils are keen to learn. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, with the exception of the higher-attaining pupils, who do not do as well as they might. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. There is sound provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. When pupils enter the school the standards they achieve are about average and by Year 6 they remain average in most subjects. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The headteacher and governors are committed to the life and work of the school. They give sound leadership and management and are appropriately supported by a hardworking team of staff. There are good links with parents. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above those normally expected in design and technology
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- Relationships are very good and staff take good care of pupils
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, social and personal development. Moral development is very good.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities
- Parents have very positive views of the school

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, geography and practical science are not high enough
- There is not enough challenge for the higher-attaining pupils
- Procedures to check and review the quality of teaching and learning are not systematic enough

- The information obtained from checking pupils' progress is not used well enough in helping them to improve
- The use of the school's analysis of its strengths and areas for development to identify priorities and action them in planning

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress overall since it was last inspected in November 1997. Good progress has been made in developing very good attitudes and very positive relationships. The quality of teaching is almost identical to that found during the last inspection. Significant improvements have not taken place because the school does not have systematic procedures in place for checking and reviewing teaching quality. Inspection evidence indicates that by Year 6 standards in mathematics and science remain average, as at the time of the last inspection. Standards in English were average during the last inspection but are now below, because the school does not have a co-ordinated approach for teaching writing. By Year 6 standards are now also below what is expected in geography because teachers do not cover the subject in enough depth. The above average standards in design and technology have been maintained since the last inspection but standards in history are now average. At the time of the last inspection teaching in history was generally good; it is now satisfactory. Good improvements have been made in information and communication technology (ICT). The new ICT suite has been effectively used to increase teachers' confidence in the subject. At the time of the last inspection pupils' achievements were below average in ICT. By Year 6 they are now achieving in line with what is expected nationally. The school is involved as part of the mini-EAZ but it is too early to closely measure the impact on pupils' attainment. Suitable use has been made of national guidelines to develop schemes of work and there are good links across the different subjects. Progress in the development of short-term planning has been slower and is inconsistent. Short-term plans are often not lesson-specific and do not identify the small steps to be taken within each unit of work. Activities are often not well matched to pupils' varying levels of ability. Satisfactory progress has been made in the development of whole-school systems to record pupils' progress, such as interim tests at the end of each year. Not enough use is made of this information to determine the next steps pupils need to take to improve their performance. The governors' annual report does not sufficiently update parents on the exact progress made each year on the main issues for improvement noted in the last inspection report.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 | |
| English | C | D | E | C | well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average |
| Mathematics | C | B | D | B | |
| Science | C | C | D | C | |

In the 2002 National Curriculum tests the standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 were well below average in English and below in mathematics and science. One of the main reasons for this was that more pupils needed to reach the higher levels.

When compared with similar schools pupils' achievements were good in mathematics and satisfactory in English and science. Pupils did not achieve as well as they should have considering their results at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics and science are now average, but remain below in English. This is because pupils do not do as well as they should in writing. Not all teachers are secure in their knowledge of how to teach writing and do not sufficiently focus on the basic skills. In mathematics suitable emphasis is given to problem solving but practical work in science is restricted because of over-direction by some teachers. Standards are better this year because there are currently fewer pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 and there had been some historic unsatisfactory teaching in the school that has now been eliminated. The school has set challenging targets for literacy and numeracy but will require a more co-ordinated approach than at present to achieve them in literacy. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Standards are average in all other subjects except for design and technology where they are above and in geography where they are below. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards in physical education or music. Music has a high profile in the school. Singing is good and pupils attain high standards in the school's productions.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils have very good attitudes. They are keen, enthusiastic and eager to learn. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is very good in classrooms and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good emphasis is given to pupils' personal development and as a result, they form very good relationships with adults and with each other. |
| Attendance | Attendance is above the national average but some pupils do not arrive punctually. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1- 2 | Years 3 - 6 |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Quality of teaching | - | - | Satisfactory |

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

Teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in just over half of the lessons. It is variable across the school but there is some good teaching in each year group and for pupils of differing abilities. In mathematics and design and technology the teaching is good and this leads to some good learning. As a result, pupils' achievements are above average in design and technology and they are now doing better in mathematics than at the time of the National Curriculum tests in 2002. In the best mathematics lessons, which are found in Year 6, teachers make sure that they challenge pupils of all ability levels through careful planning. They use questions well to check what pupils have learned. The National Strategy for Numeracy is used more soundly by the school than that for Literacy. In English the teaching is satisfactory overall but teachers do not identify clearly enough what they want pupils to learn and on occasions the work is not well matched to pupils' varying learning needs. Across the school teachers manage pupils very well, which creates a calm and orderly environment, in which pupils learn. They are well prepared and make good use of resources. Teachers do not always make good use of their knowledge of how well pupils are doing to plan the next steps for learning. In science some of the teaching does not sufficiently allow pupils to transfer the skills they have learned into their practical work and this slows learning, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. The school provides rich experiences in many subjects that promote positive attitudes to learning. There are good links between the different subject areas but these do not make a good contribution to pupils' writing skills. The provision for higher-attaining pupils needs to be improved. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Pupils receive good help from support staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator. As a result, they make sound progress. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The school makes satisfactory provision for these pupils. They progress at the same rate as their classmates. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good. Moral development is very good. Cultural development is satisfactory. The very good range of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' personal development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school's strong supportive ethos ensures that pupils are very well cared for. There are sound procedures in place to check on their academic progress but assessments of how well pupils are doing are not used well enough to plan what they need to learn next. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory. The headteacher and staff work well as a team in creating a positive environment for learning in which pupils feel safe and secure. The right priorities to move the school forward are identified but there is not a co-ordinated enough approach in working to achieve them. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors are committed to the development of the school. They understand their role as a critical friend but need to focus more clearly on improving quality and standards. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. The headteacher and co-ordinators review each subject area annually to plan what should be done next. The school's procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning are not systematic enough. The school collects information about how well pupils are doing and has begun to analyse it. More account needs to be taken of this information when planning what should be done to improve. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. Funds are used to support priorities in the school development plan and to improve the accommodation. Funding to support pupils with special educational needs is well used. The accommodation is satisfactory and the school has a good level of resources. There is sufficient staffing to meet the needs of pupils. Educational and financial decisions are considered by the governors and help the school in deciding if it is providing best value. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|----------------------------------|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school• The good teaching and management of the school and approachable staff• Behaviour is good• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible and expects them to work hard | |
|---|--|

Parents have very positive views of the school and did not identify any significant areas for improvement. A small number of parents do not feel that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. Inspectors judged the quality and quantity of homework to be satisfactory overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Inspection evidence indicates that standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English and average in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6 when compared with how well they achieve appropriate standards at the time they enter the school in Year 3. This is not the case in writing in English, not in practical investigative work in science. The main reason for the underachievement is that in English the school does not have an effective and consistent strategy for teaching writing. Also it does not have a unified approach to the teaching of basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Another contributory factor in English and in practical work in science is that teachers do not provide enough work that challenges the higher attaining pupils. Standards in writing and in practical investigative work in science are lower than they were at the time of the last inspection, when they were reported to be average. This is because some teachers are not secure in their knowledge of how to teach writing and in science the teaching does not always allow pupils to experiment independently with their ideas.
2. This year standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than they were last year. One of the reasons for this is that the school now has fewer pupils with special educational needs. Also, this year's pupils have had better quality teaching in previous years than the Year 6 pupils in 2002. Other factors in mathematics are the good teaching and good leadership and management of the subject. The school's targets for what Year 6 pupils are to achieve by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are challenging. Progress towards meeting them is better in mathematics than in English.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards in design and technology are above those found in most schools nationally. This is because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can learn and they receive effective support from the co-ordinator. In art and design and in history standards are average. Standards in history have declined from the above average standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the teaching is now satisfactory rather than largely good as it was at the time of the last inspection. On the other hand the school has made good improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) since then and standards are now average. Planning for different aspects of the subject ensures that pupils are developing their skills in using computers and pupils apply these well in other subjects. In religious education pupils attain standards that are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in geography are below average. This is lower than the average standards reported at the time of the last inspection. One of the main reasons for this is that teachers do not cover the subject in enough depth. Inspectors made no judgement regarding standards in music and physical education because few lessons were seen. However, the school provides a good range of activities in these subjects. Standards in singing are good and pupils achieve well in school productions and other extra-curricular activities.
4. Throughout the school standards in numeracy are satisfactory. Standards in literacy are unsatisfactory overall. The main reasons for this are that there is an inconsistent approach in English lessons, and in other subjects teachers

give pupils too many worksheets that do not challenge them to use their writing skills and show fully what they know and understand.

5. Throughout the school the few pupils who speak English as an additional language reach similar standards to their classmates. They work mainly in the higher-attaining and average groups in English, mathematics and science. The school's programme of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is effectively organised to identify pupils who need extra help in the classroom. This ensures that they make satisfactory progress. Arrangements to support pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Needs are very good and ensure that they attain standards that are good compared with their prior achievements. The school has not identified any gifted and talented pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The previous inspection report indicated that this was an area of strength. Relationships, pupils' attitudes towards work and enthusiasm for school have improved even further and are now very good. Pupils' behaviour and personal development remain very good.
7. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm in their work. Their very good attitudes enable them to gain great benefit from the school's activities, both inside and outside the classroom. They want to succeed in their learning, and increasingly understand, as they progress through the school, that hard work will produce good results. Pupils concentrate on tasks and are attentive and responsive to their teachers. They are kind and considerate to each other. In a mathematics lesson, Year 6 pupils were keen to offer ideas and listened to each other's response, correcting their classmates' errors politely, in a supportive manner.
8. Pupils require little prompting to answer questions and respond confidently. They work together, often with pupils of different ability levels, to produce successful outcomes. Their co-operative attitudes ensure that most classrooms have a good atmosphere in which to learn. Pupils are eager to participate in the wide variety of clubs. Members of the football team talked about the teamwork required to be successful. The attitude and willingness of special educational needs pupils, to 'have a go' are very good. Their self-esteem is boosted through hard work and success. They are fully included in classroom and playtime activities.
9. The behaviour of the pupils in classes is very good. The majority of pupils accept the school's high expectations for behaviour and self-discipline. Staff are able to guide pupils with a quiet word, which leads to a calm, respectful and happy working atmosphere. Behaviour around the school is also very good and allows the school to operate smoothly and harmoniously. Neither bullying nor bad language was observed during the inspection. These only appear to surface very occasionally and are quickly resolved. The school's 'buddy system', run by Year 6 pupils, is popular with younger pupils who find it reassuring. The school has permanently excluded one pupil during the last year and three other pupils for fixed term periods.
10. The very good relationships are a fundamental strength and the backbone of the school's ethos. The pupils show good respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They work productively in groups and in teams but respect individuals' needs when given the opportunity to undertake independent work. Courtesy, kindness and concern for others are distinctive features. Pupils crowded round a boy who had accidentally tripped in the playground, comforting him and seeking help from a teacher.
11. The personal development of pupils is good. The pupils' efforts in the classroom, both academic and social, are valued and praised. This enhances confidence and self-esteem. Weekly social targets are set for pupils with special educational needs and are clear and achievable. The pupils are eager to both meet them and receive recognition for this.

12. Good personal, social and health education is evident, as was seen in circle time with Year 3 pupils. This enabled them to develop their listening and speaking skills and to understand concepts of citizenship.
13. Pupils are encouraged to think about how they might help others as well as gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, through charity work. They feel involved in the life of the school through taking part in School Council meetings. These have resulted in the decision to buy bins to tackle the playground litter problem. Pupils are given a range of duties to assist teachers: for example, Year 6 pupils set up the hall for morning assembly.
14. The school takes Year 6 pupils on a residential visit to stretch their spirit of adventure. Other pupils, to support their studies, make visits into the local community. The school has a very good range of extra-curricular activities that pupils of all ages greatly enjoy.
15. Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. Unauthorised absence is below the national norm. A few pupils have been late for school but classes start on time. The school makes effective use of the Education Welfare Officer in dealing with consistently poor attendance or punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In mathematics and design and technology it is good and this results in some good learning. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except for geography, music and physical education where overall judgements about teaching quality could not be made. In just over half of all the lessons observed teaching was good and in one in ten lessons was very good. Teaching was satisfactory in just under half of lessons and a small fraction was unsatisfactory. This is an almost identical picture to that noted at the last inspection. Systematic procedures for checking and reviewing the quality of teaching are not sufficiently in place to secure ongoing improvement.

Strengths in teaching are:

- very good relationships within classes and between pupils and teachers;
- very good management of pupils' behaviour;
- the range and use of resources.

The main areas for development are:

- more challenge for the higher attaining pupils;
- better use of ongoing assessment;
- teaching methods that enhance pupils' independence and initiative;
- systems for checking and reviewing teaching and learning.

17. All teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. Relationships within classes are very good and as a result, discussions take place where pupils listen attentively to points made by their classmates. The `road issue` debate in Year 6 depended on pupils' mature respect for those arguing an alternative point of view. Pupils understand the high expectations that teachers have of

their ability to behave. This supports teachers' overall organisation of lessons, especially where some classrooms are quite small and conditions for collaborative work are not always easy.

18. Teachers and support staff work well together. Their roles are complementary and during question and answer sessions pupils who have more difficulty understanding are well supported. Work is planned so that both adults in the class are working towards the same goals. This collaboration presents a good role model for pupils.
19. Teachers teach the basic skills in ICT effectively and pupils are keen to use the computer as a source of information. In some classes elements of basic skills in literacy are well taught. For example, Year 4 pupils reviewed singular and plural and first, second and third person as part of their exploration of what supports a reader in obtaining information from non-fiction texts. There is a lack of consistency in the teaching of spelling, punctuation and handwriting across all classes. In mathematics the picture is both more positive and consistent and has increased the rate of pupils' learning.
20. The range and use of resources are good. In the best lessons teachers provide stimulating resources that capture pupils' attention. Year 5 pupils were fascinated by the way that they could use plasticine and plaster of paris bandages to create 'mummies'. The school uses visits to museums and the occasional visitor to bring lessons to life and provide first-hand evidence.
21. Teachers' expectations are inconsistent and often not high enough. This restricts the achievement of the higher attaining pupils. In the best lessons, all pupils are challenged effectively. This is more consistently evident in mathematics. In Year 6 the highest achievers were investigating and manipulating minus numbers, whilst the lower-attaining pupils relished the chance to play detective and find missing numbers. The challenge was right for both groups of pupils. Teaching is often over-directed. This results, as seen, for example, in a religious education lesson, in little opportunity for pupils to explore and express their own ideas. In art and design this sometimes restricts pupils' creative flair and the use of their own initiative.
22. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching methods. The school gives a high priority to oral work and this features strongly in most lessons. In the best lessons, questioning skills are used very effectively to help pupils reflect on their work. For example, in a music lesson the teacher

asked 'Do our voices sound the same when we record them and play them back? Why might there be a difference?' A pupil suggested 'The microphone alters the pitch of voice. It's echoing.' In this way teachers successfully draw on prior learning.

23. Planning, except in mathematics, though often detailed, has some weaknesses. At the start of lessons, teachers are fairly consistent in their explanations about the learning that will take place. Where teaching is strong they continue to refer to this learning as pupils work through tasks. However, this intended learning is not well expressed in short-term plans. They are often not lesson-specific and do not identify the small steps to be taken within the particular unit of work. They often describe the task rather than the learning. They are not always matched to the very different needs of a large class because the same task is often provided for all pupils. The need to improve short-term planning was raised in the previous inspection and has not been fully attended to.
24. Many teachers across the school are not secure in their knowledge of how to teach some elements of literacy, in particular writing. As a result, pupils do not sufficiently acquire the basic skills in this area. In science the investigative process is insufficiently developed. Pupils do not have to think for themselves about either the approach or the materials to select. As a result, the quality of learning is restricted, especially for the higher-attaining pupils.
25. Pupils with special educational needs learn soundly in all areas of the curriculum. It is better in their additional support sessions, where the specialist teaching ensures an effective level of challenge and match of activities. Pupils' personal needs are known to staff. Teaching plans are adjusted so that these pupils are fully included in all activities. Individual Education Plans are well prepared with the help of the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO).
26. The use of information from checking pupils' progress is underdeveloped and does not sufficiently shape the precise focus of the next lesson. Teachers frequently concentrate on the completion of a task or the content covered rather than the extent to which learning has taken place.
27. Satisfactory use is made of homework. Reading books and learning tables are regular features. Often teachers pick up on an area of interest or the focus at the end of a lesson for further work at home. Year 3 have formulated their own questions to direct their history research, and in mathematics setting their own number problems presents a real challenge to pupils.
28. Teaching across the school is inconsistent. There is some good teaching in each year group and for pupils of varying abilities. Much of the good teaching is found in Years 3, 4 and 6. In mathematics it is consistently good or very good in Year 6. In contrast, teaching across the school in English is satisfactory in the main. This results in different rates of learning for pupils in these subjects. There are some examples of good practice in most subjects, which provide a good starting point for future development.

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

29. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides an interesting range of worthwhile experiences that are open to all its pupils. Sound work has been undertaken to attend to issues identified in the previous inspection. The essentials of a broad curriculum are in place and there are some good features. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are met.

Areas of strength in the curriculum are:

- rich experiences in many subjects, which promote positive attitudes to learning;
- the provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- the very good range of extra-curricular activities;
- successful links with local schools and businesses as partners in learning.

The main areas for development are:

- an effective strategy to raise standards in writing;
- better provision for the higher attaining pupils.

31. Some of the plans that map out the curriculum over time make helpful links between subjects and where this occurs there are benefits to learning. The shortcomings identified in the previous inspection have been somewhat overtaken by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the guidance issued for most other subjects. The school uses the numeracy strategy with a degree of soundness not seen in literacy. The provision for English, as for literacy, is better in reading than in writing. One of the reasons for this is that the school has generated too many different approaches and priorities.
32. Provision for many of the other subjects in the curriculum is good. It ensures that learning is meaningful to pupils' lives and brings interest into the curriculum. This is the case in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and ICT. In history pupils gain a secure bank of knowledge, which they share well in discussion. Much of this success is not developed further because pupils do not consolidate their learning enough through written work. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met and assure that pupils gain enough knowledge and skill in most subjects. In geography the curriculum is not covered in sufficient depth. This means that pupils' attainment is not high enough.
33. Successful work over a period of several years has maintained the profile of reading in the school and resulted in increasingly positive attitudes of both boys and girls. Many of these pupils are currently in Year 6 and show good interest in reading.
34. Provision for ICT is good. The identified shortcomings noted in the last inspection report have been tackled well. Planning for different aspects of the subject ensures that pupils are developing their skills in using computers. Computers are used increasingly in other subjects as a tool for learning. This enables pupils to learn for themselves as they start to search, modify and use information on screen. Given more challenge and opportunity, higher-attaining pupils could move more rapidly in their skills and understanding.
35. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and better when pupils have specialist support. They have good help when classroom assistants and teachers support them. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory.
36. The very good range of extra-curricular activities contributes a great deal to pupils' personal development and enthusiasm. These include sports, drama and art, and the design and technology club where pupils make sculptured figures and three-dimensional constructions. In addition, Year 6 pupils have a valuable residential experience.
37. The school makes good links with local businesses, from which has grown a very worthwhile school newspaper and editorial team of pupils. This is added

to by the successful links with other schools and organisations to assist the school staff in their work. The school is part of a mini-EAZ. Through their links with the High School, within the last year pupils have benefited from street dance tuition and taken part in a millennium Olympiad. The school's Family Support Worker, funded through the EAZ, has worked very effectively with a few pupils and their families.

38. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is satisfactory overall. The school lacks a planned series of activities designed to prepare pupils to deal with difficulties they encounter as they grow up. Similarly, there are no teaching plans to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship. The school has a soundly planned programme to teach sex education and drugs education. It is supplemented by health professionals who visit the school regularly to improve pupils' understanding of health-related issues in their lives.
39. The school makes satisfactory provision for ensuring that pupils have equality of opportunity to take full advantage of the learning experiences that it offers. However, the quality of this provision varies between groups of pupils. Boys and girls and pupils with English as an additional language have equal access to the curriculum. On the other hand, teachers do not give higher-attaining pupils and sometimes the lower-attaining pupils enough work that matches their learning needs. This is evident in English and science. The school provides good opportunities in lessons for pupils with special educational needs to participate, including those with statements of their learning needs, and it implements very well the revised national guidance for these pupils. Each week the school withdraws some of the pupils from some acts of collective worship for extra help with their learning. Staff do, however, make appropriate arrangements to ensure that these pupils participate in a collective act of worship as part of the small group activity. Also, a very small number of parents have chosen to withdraw their children from religious education lessons when their classmates are studying the traditions and customs of non-Christian faiths.
40. The good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained since the previous inspection and contributes positively to pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.
41. Spiritual development is good. Occasions of collective worship, assemblies for the whole school and for each year group, are calm and happy. Brief moments of prayer are included and contribute to pupils' awareness of Christianity. For those pupils whose families have a different set of beliefs, this promotes an awareness of a greater being. Where pupils work together to 'hot-seat' characters in part of a literacy lesson, they have the chance to climb into the shoes of a character, imagine what this is like and relate this experience to their own lives. This adds effectively to their learning. Other subjects contribute to pupils' understanding of feelings; for example, in their studies of the work of artists such as Picasso, pupils learn to appreciate the harmony and order of perspective in drawings.

42. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school teaches pupils to understand what is right and wrong and all staff reinforce this. In mathematics lessons in Year 6, pupils are invited to 'shine through' and reach up to this, whenever they can. Teachers and support staff are good role models and promote a sense of moral responsibility through care for others that extends beyond the school. For example, pupils contribute to organisations such as 'Macmillan Nurses'. Assemblies often have a strong moral message in stories and these provide opportunities for pupils to consider their own lives and the choices they make.
43. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils care for the school and for each other. Teachers and support staff work hard to sustain high standards of behaviour so that pupils can work and play in a positive climate where it is all right to make a mistake. Relationships between pupils are very good. They understand the importance of considering others at all times. Adults in the school value pupils' views and there are lots of opportunities for pupils to work together at lunchtimes. In design and technology activities pupils have good opportunities to work together in pairs and small groups, which adds to the learning of pupils from all ability groups. In the majority of lessons in other subjects, except for art and design, there are fewer chances to develop the skills of working effectively with others.
44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. The variety of the curriculum adds particularly to pupils' understanding of traditions in Britain and of European and other cultures, for example, through music and the range of interesting artists that pupils study. Religious education also gives pupils insight into other cultures through their study of different faiths. The school's strong, caring ethos places value on each and every individual pupil. As a result, mutual respect is very evident. This plays a key role in satisfactorily preparing pupils for living in a diverse and multi-ethnic Britain. Resources to further support this development are being added to by the school, for example in religious education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. Overall, the procedures for the welfare of the pupils are, as at the last inspection, good. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory, as is the educational and personal support and guidance offered to its pupils. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and those for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying or racial harassment are very good.

46. A high priority is placed on pupils' welfare. The headteacher and staff undertake their pastoral role with dedication and enthusiasm that is communicated well to parents and pupils. Pastoral and welfare issues take up a significant part of the senior management team's time in school and as a result, pupils are well supported. Parents value the school's strong, caring ethos.
47. The school's good overview of each pupil allows it to involve professional agencies as required for pupils with special educational needs or those with particular difficulties. The help of the EAZ funded Family Support Worker is appreciated. The school has brought in external agencies to teach parts of its health education programme, and has used the school nursing service when required.
48. Good account is taken of information to identify and support pupils with special educational needs. For those pupils with a statement of their learning needs, there are very careful checks of the progress towards targets in their individual learning plans. These are sensitively matched by the care and support provided by the SENCO in particular. There are suitable Individual Educational Plans, which include attainable targets, and involve pupils and parents. These pupils are well integrated into lessons and make satisfactory progress.
49. In tackling the identified shortcomings noted in the previous inspection report, the school has taken steps to track the progress of its pupils in English and mathematics by building up a large bank of information. Much of this effort slips away because these findings are not translated into robust teaching plans that identify the next steps for learning. Similarly, there is limited use of pupils' learning to inform the next lessons. This limits the pace of progress particularly for higher attaining pupils in science and writing. Often there is an over-reliance on covering each subject rather than assuring good quality teaching and learning. In reading, writing and science, teaching plans do not tailor activities for pupils with the potential to achieve more. The use of assessment is inconsistent. Occasionally it is good when teachers gauge not only how much pupils have learned, but also identify where any misconceptions lie.
50. Additional support is provided to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through booster classes that are run by the school from March to May each year. Additionally, pupils attend out of hours weekly mathematics classes held at Blackburn Rovers Football Club.
51. The school has relevant and well-written support, guidance and welfare policies, which underpin its actions. The school has a racial equality policy and is currently developing one for drugs education.
52. Child protection procedures are good, and the school receives good support from the Educational Welfare Officer. The very good relationships ensure that pupils feel confident to confide in staff if there are problems. The headteacher has received training and capably discharges her responsibilities.
53. The school recognises that it has not yet identified or provided for gifted and talented pupils. This is a priority in the school development plan. Those pupils

who are capable of higher attainment than the majority are often, as at the last inspection, insufficiently challenged in academic subjects.

54. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The school makes good use of praise and rewards to promote good behaviour and raise self-esteem. Sanctions, including exclusions, are in place, and involve parents if necessary. There is hardly any oppressive behaviour and as a result, the school has felt no need to comprehensively record incidents or analyse trends.
55. The school's attendance is above average and procedures and systems for monitoring it are good. The school ensures that parents know that it focuses on attendance and punctuality issues. If need be, the school uses the services of the effective Education Welfare Service to improve attendance. A number of pupils are unpunctual and the school needs a more effective system for chasing up latecomers.
56. Health and safety procedures are good. All staff take a good account of health and safety measures in lessons and activities. The school has a certificated first aider and other staff who have received training.
57. Induction procedures for pupils are welcoming and sensitive to their needs. This ensures that pupils make a confident start at the school. All pupils spend a day at their secondary school prior to entry into Year 7.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school has good links with its parents and the support of the community. The pre-inspection parents' meeting and questionnaires, returned by roughly half the parents, showed that they approve of almost all aspects of the school. Parents' involvement in the work of the school, such as participation in fundraising activities organised through Friends of Meadowhead, is good. The information provided by the school about their children's progress has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall.
59. The school has good links with parents, both formal and informal. Staff are readily available to have a word with parents when concerns arise. The Friday assembly, when pupils' successes are celebrated, is open to parents and a good number attend. The end of year play is packed out with friends and relatives. The school has effective links with parents of children with special educational needs and parents are active participants at review meetings when progress is discussed. Parents are invited to two consultation evenings during the year, which the majority attend, and are asked whether they would like to discuss the end of year report with the class teacher.
60. The school has a small number of very supportive parents and grandparents who play a role within the school. They help in the classroom and hear pupils read. The Friends of Meadowhead involves a larger group of parents. It runs a variety of social events throughout the school year to raise significant sums for the school. As a result of parents' generosity, the school is able to purchase equipment such as the playground seats and games.

61. Overall, the quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are sound documents that communicate the ethos of the school. The governors' report does not sufficiently update parents on the exact progress made each year by the school since the last inspection. It provides only an overall indication of the level of progress being achieved. This is in need of improvement. Parents are given a satisfactory overview of the curriculum in the school brochure and of forthcoming events through the deputy headteacher's monthly newsletter. The majority of parents have signed the 'Home-School Agreement' and keep to it. The school's annual written reports on children's progress vary in quality, but are satisfactory overall. Most teachers grade effort and attainment but targets for pupils are not set.
62. A few parents felt that homework was either too much or too little. The use of homework is satisfactory. The homework diary, intended for use by most pupils, contains room for parents' and teachers' comments

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and governing body are committed to the school. They work effectively together and are supported by a team of hardworking staff in ensuring a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where each child is valued and feels safe. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing very good relationships and very positive attitudes, which successfully create the right conditions for learning. In this respect they do well in ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in practice. They are less successful in ensuring that pupils flourish academically according to their ability. This is because the needs of higher-attaining pupils are not fully met through appropriate levels of challenge. This was raised at the time of the previous inspection and has not been sufficiently attended to. There is not a whole-school approach for raising pupils' achievements other than for those with special educational needs.
64. The school development plan is written annually and does not therefore take account of how improvements will be secured from one year to the next. It is soundly based on an audit of current provision that involves all of the curriculum co-ordinators. They subsequently translate this information into one-year subject action plans. These vary in detail and most do not specifically relate to the development of teaching and learning in order to secure improvement. It is not clear how these action plans dovetail into the school's overall priorities such as raising achievement in literacy and numeracy. As a result, the school does not have a co-ordinated strategy for the development of writing and it is not clear how challenging targets set by the school for literacy, in particular, will be achieved.
65. Co-ordinator release time is currently shared among all members of staff rather than being used to target the priority areas. Senior managers check and review the quality of teaching and learning as part of the staff appraisal process, but systematic subject-specific monitoring with feedback to staff is less evident. Good advice is offered by individual subject co-ordinators in mathematics, ICT, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education. They have good subject knowledge and use this

effectively to support their colleagues, for example through the development of medium-term plans and staff training.

66. Some approaches aimed to secure improvements in English and mathematics have been introduced; for example setting arrangements in mathematics for Years 3, 4 and 6. Suitable interim testing arrangements have been introduced to begin checking on the progress that pupils are making. This has recently resulted in individual targets being set to support pupils in their writing skills. In this respect, the further development of whole-school systems for recording individual pupils' progress has been satisfactorily addressed. Not all of the information arising from the school's systems for reviewing its work, including the assessment of pupils' progress, is analysed systematically enough. It is not well used to identify the main priorities in the school development plan and in particular how they should be addressed in a coherent way.
67. At the time of the last inspection standards in information and communication technology were judged to be below average by Year 6. Good progress has been made and standards now match the national average. The school has made good use of additional grant funding to support staff training in ICT, led effectively by the subject co-ordinator.
68. The strong leadership of special educational needs in the school has assured that the good provision seen at the time of the previous inspection has continued. The co-ordinator has adapted provision well to incorporate the requirements of the new Code of Practice. She has developed good arrangements to meet the requirements of pupils from an increasing range of additional needs. These pupils make sound progress in most lessons. In some lessons where there is a lack of clarity in short-term planning about what is to be learned, these pupils learn less. The same difficulty was identified in the last inspection and remains to be dealt with effectively. Classroom assistants, other pupils and teachers provide good support in helping pupils with special educational needs to develop alongside others with ease. This is because everyone is considered to be important. On the other hand, the emphasis given to the higher-attaining pupils is less evident. Overall, the school gives satisfactory attention to the needs of individual pupils and promotes racial harmony.
69. Governors are well involved in the life and work of the school. Individual governors observe lessons, participate in extra-curricular activities, including residential holidays, and read stories to groups of pupils. They fully support the school's shared ethos of developing skills, confidence and self-esteem through the provision of a broad range of activities. The governing body meets regularly and fulfils its statutory requirements. Appropriate committee structures are established with agreed terms of reference. Good budgetary information is provided by the headteacher. This enables governors to set priorities for spending plans and to support the school in applying the principles of best value. The school carried forward a larger than average amount of funding in the previous financial year. This was, however, earmarked for toilet refurbishments and has subsequently been spent. Good use has been made of external funding to support the development of ICT. Governors are aware of the standards achieved by pupils and that they do better in mathematics and

science than English. They are less secure in their knowledge of the reasons for this underachievement, but recognise that historically the school has placed greater emphasis on supporting pupils with special educational needs rather than the higher-attaining pupils.

70. The secretary carries out day-to-day administration efficiently and the school makes good use of management information systems. All the recommendations of the most recent audit report have been implemented.
71. There is a satisfactory match of suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The induction of new staff is satisfactory and arrangements for managing the performance of all staff are in place. Classroom support assistants receive training and as a result, are effective in supporting the learning of individual pupils.
72. Resources are good overall. They are good for English, science, ICT, design and technology, art and design, music and physical education. They are satisfactory for mathematics, geography, history and religious education. The library contains a good range of fiction and reference books.
73. The internal accommodation is well maintained and takes good overall account of pupils' needs, such as the provision of air conditioning in some internal classrooms and a rolling programme of toilet refurbishment. It is satisfactory for teaching the curriculum and is enhanced by attractive and informative displays. The playing field is an asset that comes into its own in dry weather, for activities such as football and sports day.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. The headteacher, staff and governing body should:
 - (1) *Improve pupils' attainment in writing and in geography by:
 - for writing, developing and implementing systematic procedures to:
 - i) ensure the consistent and effective teaching of basic skills;
 - ii) improve teachers' subject knowledge;
 - iii) improve the contribution that other subjects make to pupils' writing skills.
(paragraphs 1, 24, 32, 64, 78, 117)
 - for geography, ensuring appropriate depth and breadth in coverage of the subject's curriculum.
(paragraphs 3, 32, 112)
 - (2) *Improve the use of assessment so that:
 - teachers have a clear understanding of what pupils already know and what they need to do to improve, in particular, the higher-attaining pupils;

- teachers are better able to match the work to pupils' different ability levels;
 - teachers' expectations of the different levels that pupils can achieve are raised;
 - the information is consistently shared with pupils to help them identify the next steps for learning.
(paragraphs 26, 49, 66, 78, 97, 117)
- (3) Improve the school's systems for identifying its strengths and areas for development by:
- setting up more consistent and effective systems for checking and reviewing teaching and learning and feeding back to staff;
 - using this information systematically to identify priority areas in planning at all levels, including the school development plan.
(paragraphs 16, 23, 64, 65, 100, 132)

*These issues have already been identified in the school development plan
The following less important areas for development should be included in the action plan:

- (i) Pupils' achievements in practical and investigative science should be improved.
(paragraphs 1, 94)
- (ii) Parents should be informed of the exact progress made each year by the school in the main areas for improvement identified during the inspection.
(paragraph 60)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 62 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 43 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | - | 7 | 26 | 27 | 2 | - | - |
| Percentage | - | 11 | 42 | 44 | 3 | - | - |

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 | Nursery | Y3– Y6 |
|---|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | - | 356 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | - | 90 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | Y3 – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | - | 7 |
| 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 | 5 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 31 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 24 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.9 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

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

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 6 | 45 | 42 | 87 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 29 | 34 | 40 |
| | Girls | 34 | 35 | 38 |
| | Total | 63 | 69 | 78 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 72 (73) | 79 (81) | 90 (95) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (72) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 29 | 33 | 39 |
| | Girls | 32 | 36 | 35 |
| | Total | 61 | 69 | 74 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 70 (75) | 79 (78) | 85 (96) |
| | 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 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 341 | 3 | 1 |
| 0 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 2 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 2 | - | - |
| 1 | - | - |
| 1 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 0 | - | - |
| 1 | - | - |
| 1 | - | - |
| 7 | - | - |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 15 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24:1 |
| Average class size | 30 |

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 7 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 180 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year | 2002/03 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 831,745 |
| Total expenditure | 807,778 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2308 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 68,426 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 30,257 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 3 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 6 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 358 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 189 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 64 | 30 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 61 | 35 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 55 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 45 | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 72 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 57 | 35 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 71 | 26 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 76 | 23 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 50 | 41 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 67 | 30 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 62 | 34 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 43 | 41 | 8 | 1 | 7 |

Other issues raised by parents

Inspection findings support the views of some parents that the school provides good support for children who have special educational needs.

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

ENGLISH

75. Inspection evidence shows that standards of work in Year 6 are below average when compared with those found nationally. Achievement in reading is broadly satisfactory. From an average starting point in Year 3, pupils' achievement in writing is unsatisfactory. Many teachers have worked hard to tackle the underachievement in writing but the standards remain below average. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were average. In 2002 pupils achieved as well as those in similar schools, but did much less well than expected compared with all school's nationally. The subject leader has examined the factors that are limiting pupils' attainment and has sought to improve standards in writing for a period of several years. There has been a small amount of success but there has not been a significant impact because the school has not developed a co-ordinated strategy for teaching writing, including the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Also, the higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and more of them need to achieve the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Strengths in the subject are:

- that both boys and girls have positive attitudes to reading and for some, this includes writing;
- that there is good organisation and use of the school library;
- the sharing of books; older pupils read with younger ones;
- the time each day set aside for purposeful reading.

Although pupils in Year 6 are interested in their work and show an average use of language in their discussions, this level of attainment does not flow readily into their writing. The factors that hamper pupils' attainment are noted in these areas for improvement, which include:

- developing an effective school strategy to teach writing and basic skills across each year group;
- generating effective links between literacy and other subjects;
- planning sufficient levels of challenge for average and higher-attaining pupils;
- making better links between progress checks and teaching plans.

76. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 6. Pupils make steady progress. They use a competent vocabulary and some pupils speak with self-assurance. Teachers extend this by using some technical language in the subjects that pupils study. Listening skills are good and particularly so when lessons catch attention, provoke thought and relate well to pupils' personal lives and interests. Pupils respond with some warmth towards each other, encouraged in the many opportunities they have to listen carefully to others. In this way, learning is strengthened. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve at a similar pace to their classmates.

77. Reading standards are average. Much of pupils' interest and knowledge of the stories they read is based on the events and dilemmas encountered by characters and the ways they deal with them. Pleasingly, many of the pupils are eager to unravel the intricacies of the plot in a story. Despite these strengths, pupils in most classes have a limited knowledge of the features of different kinds of fiction. These key elements are not planned consistently into literacy lessons. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 confirmed that they have too little knowledge of key vocabulary that would help them to explain the effects intended by an author. For example, few pupils could explain the term 'metaphor' and other important vocabulary. These basics of reading are set out in the National Literacy Strategy but the school does not make consistently sound use of the ideas and methods. This is one of the main reasons why attainment in literacy is not high enough. Where teachers read with pupils, these sessions are satisfactory. In some classes, the provision is better because teachers provide a good level of challenge for different levels of ability. Similarly, where teachers use the themes in books to develop comparisons between stories, pupils learn more. Most know how to find information in a range of non-fiction books and understand the contents and index pages. Many of the pupils in Year 3 with average and above average attainment in reading use their existing range of reading clues but do not move on quickly enough because the lessons are occasionally unsatisfactory. In one lesson observed, the two stories used were relevant and interesting but pupils achieved relatively little in the lesson because the teaching intentions were not specific enough. Opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to compare stories were missed. There is a satisfactory range of catch-up activities in Years 3 and 4 for a small number of pupils.
78. Writing standards are below average by the end of Year 6. Given pupils' prior attainment at the start of Year 3, standards could be significantly higher than they are. Pupils demonstrate an average use of language in their writing. It contains the subtle qualities of their speech and expressions that give it a rich sense of identity. Higher-attaining pupils and some of average ability can write according to the conventions of style and organisation when they write about information. Where teaching is good, pupils' achievement is higher. For example, interest in the shared stories and the devices that authors use stimulates interest. One boy noted in discussion: 'There's a lot of cliff-hangers in it and that's why I like it.' These strengths do flow into pupils' writing to a degree but there is not enough teaching of language effects created by the authors. This hampers pupils' achievement overall. In too many classes, the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are taught inconsistently. Much of the pupils' attainment on entering Year 3 reaches a plateau by the end of the year. Teachers do not always make good use of information about what pupils already know. For example, often, the more able pupils in Year 3 practise their writing rather than develop it, despite the introduction of writing targets. This continues through many of the classes. Where teachers do plan to match the work to pupils' learning needs, the level of challenge is often too low. Much of the teachers' focus on planning presumes, rather than checks, pupils' achievements.
79. The school uses the format of the Literacy Hour but does not make sound use of the strategies recommended in a planned and consistent manner. For

example, teaching plans are not focused sufficiently enough on the conventions of writing and marking does not deal effectively with the gaps in basic skills. Some teachers do not attach enough importance to the quality of handwriting. This has an adverse effect on other subjects of the curriculum and is compounded by the over-reliance on worksheets for pupils. These key factors delay pupils' achievement.

80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Relationships are very good and literacy sessions demonstrate that pupils feel a sense of belonging. Teachers devise some appealing activities and make efforts to ensure that most pupils enjoy their work. This is more successful in the first part of the lesson and at the end where work is shared and celebrated. Pupils make good use of the computers in their classroom to enhance their writing and to search for their studies where relevant. Classroom assistants contribute well. They use their knowledge of individual pupils to assure the next step in learning for those with special educational needs. They are aware of each pupil's individual learning plans and build confidence that enables pupils to 'have a go' themselves. The teaching of writing is unsatisfactory even though well intentioned. In Years 5 and 6 it is sometimes better. Most teachers work extremely hard and strive to lift attainment. Not all teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and understanding of the methods that would accelerate learning and inspire young writers. Although the quality of planning is sound, the lack of teaching of many basic skills means that teachers in Years 5 and 6 have to re-teach them. Conversely, pupils' work is well presented in displays of work and reflects a well-organised and hard-working staff. The quality of marking is uneven. Where good, it provides pupils with a clear insight into their progress; at worst there are cursory ticks and poor written conventions of writing not dealt with.
81. Leadership is sound overall. There is good teamwork. The subject leaders have worked hard to support teachers and pupils. There is an over-abundance of material aimed at developing the subject but it lacks focus and clarity. With a coherent strategy to develop writing through literacy lessons and in other subjects, standards in pupils' writing would be better served.

MATHEMATICS

82. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6, attainment in mathematics is in line with the national average. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout their time in school and it accelerates in Year 6. This presents a similar picture to that of the last inspection. The setting of pupils into three attainment groups in three of the four year groups has had a positive impact on the achievement of pupils of varying ability levels. In Year 6 it is clear that this has resulted in a suitable level of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. In 2002 results were lower. The main reason for this is that fewer pupils reach the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests than expected nationally. One of the reasons why pupils are now doing better is that the school currently has fewer pupils with special educational needs than it did last year. In 2002 pupils' attainment was good in relation to similar schools. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils

who speak English as an additional language attain and make similar progress to their classmates. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

Strengths in the subject are:

- good quality teaching based on effective planning;
- good subject leadership based on good knowledge of how pupils learn mathematics;
- pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and very good behaviour;
- emphasis on investigating and applying knowledge, particularly in number.

The main areas for development are:

- more consistent and higher expectations of the rate and level at which most pupils can learn;
- encouraging greater pupil independence and initiative.

83. Across the school three quarters of the mathematics teaching seen was good or better. The remainder was satisfactory. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their mathematics lessons and are very eager to contribute ideas and demonstrate in front of their classmates. They listen carefully to each other as they seek to explain the strategies that they have used, which many do with confidence. Those pupils in Year 6 who find mathematics more challenging respond extremely well to the teaching methods adopted. As a result, they talk with confidence and clarity about how they have approached a problem. They are very comfortable with a method of counting on or back which allows them to find a missing number in a sequence. They make very good progress from a relatively low starting point.
84. Pupils' very good behaviour enables teachers to use a variety of teaching methods, including pairs, groups and the whole class. In the best lessons, sharp question and answer sessions are often combined with the use of individual pupil white boards. This ensures maximum participation and provides a good opportunity for teachers to check the level of pupils' understanding, such as in Year 6 when incorrect answers are explored carefully and effectively used as main teaching points.
85. Teachers make good use of the overhead projector and the ICT interactive teaching board. For example, in Year 5 this approach successfully emphasised the visual layout for converting kilograms to grams and vice versa, resulting in good learning. Most teachers give clear, well-structured explanations, drawing ideas and suggestions from the pupils themselves. In Year 6 one set tackled word problems. The pupils did the thinking and the teacher acted as a very neat scribe. The result was that all pupils could approach the set challenges in an orderly and systematic way. The visual structure enabled them to keep their mathematical thinking clear and the ordered presentation was easy to check. Learning was good. Similarly Year 3 higher-attaining pupils were tackling word problems. The teacher skilfully helped them analyse the question and decide whether it required addition or subtraction and whether their answers would be bigger or smaller than the numbers in the question.

86. The degree of challenge presented by individual teachers is not consistent. Some teachers ask questions which are suitably matched to pupils' varying levels of ability. Here the best consolidation of learning takes place. In these lessons, teachers manage their time well so that when one group of pupils is working independently, they work with another group to challenge and extend their understanding. This effective use of time results in better learning.
87. Opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves are variable. These are best where teaching is creative and imaginative and provides regular opportunities for pupils to design their own challenges. For example, Year 6 pupils added and subtracted the numbers 1-10 using each once only to arrive at a final answer of 10. Year 3 pupils considered the number of the week. Their challenging homework was to construct a series of word sentences. They used addition and subtraction, and as many numbers as they wished, to arrive at the number 20. Year 4

pupils enjoyed exploring factors and finding the common factors for two numbers. It was very much harder for them to think of appropriately phrased questions about the 'Venn diagrams' they produced.

88. Teachers place good emphasis on understanding the principles of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as pupils are encouraged to look for pattern in numbers. Work is well presented and in Year 6 marking is very constructive. This moves pupils' understanding forward.
89. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge. He provides very good support for all the staff and is instrumental in moving the approaches to teaching forward. He uses his subject release time effectively to check and review teaching and learning. He has identified the need to more closely check pupils' progress and greater emphasis on the development of pupils' independence and use of initiative. He agrees that for the middle and higher achievers the secure level of understanding achieved means that the school is well placed to increase its expectations of what pupils can do in mathematics.

SCIENCE

90. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. From an average starting point in Year 3, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language attain and make similar progress to their classmates. The evidence comes from lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work in books and on display and discussions with teachers and pupils. The improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
91. Standards in Year 6 are now higher than those reported for pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. The results then were below average. Pupils' attainment was satisfactory in relation to similar schools but their progress in relation to their prior attainment was much lower. The main reason for this is that fewer pupils reach the higher level in the tests than is expected nationally.

One of the reasons why pupils are now attaining higher standards is that the school now has fewer pupils with special educational needs than it did last year.

The main strengths are:

- teachers' manage pupils' behaviour very effectively;
- teachers' develop well the correct subject vocabulary.

The main areas to develop are:

- provision of more challenging practical investigative work, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils;
- more opportunities for pupils to apply their scientific knowledge in practical investigative work;
- use of assessment information to match the work to pupils' different learning needs;
- more effective checking and reviewing of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator.

93. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively so that pupils are able to learn without interruption. The foundation stone of this behaviour management is the very good relationships of all members of the school community. Staff are friendly yet have high expectations that pupils will behave well. Pupils respond very well to their teachers and their behaviour is very good. This contributes significantly to their learning. They are polite and courteous: for example, they listen carefully to adults and take turns patiently to speak in class discussions. This shows that they respect the views of other people. Pupils co-operate together as friends in the practical work and show good levels of concentration. They strive to do their best: for example, most pupils present their work neatly.

94. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is average in their knowledge and understanding of science. It is below average in the practical work and in this respect pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. One of the main reasons for this is that some teachers over-direct the work. Therefore, pupils are not challenged to use enough of their scientific knowledge when they undertake the activities, particularly the higher-attaining pupils. This was evident in a Year 6

lesson when pupils of all abilities created a shadow by shining a torch on an object. The teacher gave each group of pupils the same investigation, equipment and graph paper with the axes marked out for them.

95. In contrast, in a Year 4 lesson the teacher gave the higher-attaining pupils the challenge of making a sieve to separate a mixture of solids. The pupils made decisions about which equipment to use and created a variety of imaginative sieves and containers to catch the solids. This resulted in a good rate of progress by pupils.

96. The work in pupils' books and lessons shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory. It is good in Year 4. Also, a good lesson was seen in Year 3. A strong feature of this teaching is that teachers match the work well to pupils'

varying learning needs. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson when the teacher expected the higher-attaining pupils to write up the practical work independently. She gave the pupils with special educational needs a simplified worksheet and the key words to support them in their learning.

97. This good approach is not consistent across the school. This is because teachers do not use the information they have about what pupils can do to match the work to pupils' varying learning needs. This is evident in some of the work in pupils' books, for example when Years 5 and 6 pupils write down factual information. Pupils of all abilities mainly record the work by copying it out, inserting words in the gaps in the text or on worksheets. This strategy may sometimes be appropriate, for example for the lower-attaining pupils. However, it does not challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently or allow them to show fully what they know and understand, in particular the average and higher-attaining pupils. Also, it limits pupils' personal development, such as their independence, initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Another example of this was in a Year 5 lesson. The teacher expected pupils of all abilities to label in detail the parts of a plant, such as 'sepal' and 'anther'. The work was too difficult for the lower-attaining pupils to carry out independently so their rate of learning slowed down. The teacher gave extra help to the pupils with special educational needs so that they completed the work.
98. Across the school teachers develop well the correct subject vocabulary. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher asked pupils to discuss in pairs the reason why the petals on the white carnations turned blue when they were placed in a vase containing blue water. She praised the pupils when they used words such as 'absorb' and 'transport' to describe what had happened. Therefore, pupils used the words more confidently and readily as part of their discussions. It was also evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils used the words 'transparent' and 'opaque' in their answers to the teacher's questions. Some teachers make good use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science. This was evident when Year 4 pupils used text and graphics to record the practical work and when Year 6 pupils used a light sensor program to decide which colour of window blinds to use in the classroom.
99. Staff give extra support to pupils with special educational needs so they make the same progress as their classmates. This is evident when the special support assistants discuss quietly with these pupils their responses to the teacher's questions and encourage them to contribute to the discussion. This gives the pupils confidence and they take part equally in the discussion with their classmates.
100. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator gives useful advice and support to staff. She checks and reviews teaching and pupils' learning but the system for this is not as effective as it might be. Also, the action plan for the subject does not set out clearly how standards are to be improved. The co-ordinator has started to collect together samples of pupils' work but these are not matched to National Curriculum levels in order to help teachers when checking pupils' attainment. She is keen to improve the subject further and she has the support and commitment from staff to bring this about.

ART AND DESIGN

101. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment broadly matches that expected nationally by the end of Year 6. Pleasingly, pupils' skills in using line and tone are higher than those that typically seen. Since the previous inspection, there is a good amount of consistent work in the subject. Overall, this represents slightly better than average progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

Strengths in the subject include:

- good leadership;
- the successful observational work pupils undertake;
- the good range of artists, their styles and methods studied;
- the variety of techniques pupils are taught;
- partnership work with outside agencies to enrich provision.

The main area for development is:

- enriching the provision with resources from other cultural traditions beyond European.

102. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. This judgement represents a pattern of teaching that is variable in each year group and across classes. There are some good lessons in most year groups. Pupils enjoy these and particularly where they explore or refine their use of different media. Although teachers' knowledge and skills in this subject are variable, much effort is made to improve pupils' techniques of handling paint, pencil and charcoal. Pupils know what is expected because instructions are clear. Where teaching is good, activities are well thought out and teachers strive to use the work of famous artists and their methods to get pupils to see the purpose and effects created. The effectiveness of this work was seen in Year 4. Here pupils have produced some beautifully vibrant portraits of their own using primary colours to great effect. Discussions widen pupils' awareness of art and their interest in patterns, colour and objects from mainly European rather than multi-cultural traditions. On occasions, the teaching is over-directed, which limits opportunities for pupils' creative development.
103. Pupils experience a wide variety of media. Year 6 explore perspective with interest. Their sketchbooks show a developing use of line and tone that is above that typically seen, reflecting good achievement in these techniques. Good use of appealing resources, such as Gustave Dore's line drawings, captures pupils' attention and provides prime opportunities for pupils to compare their observations and sketches of local streets. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the artists and techniques they study. Much interest is generated from the good range of work around the school. Discussion with pupils indicates that they understand that an artist's work grows and changes from observation, detailed drawings and the collation of notes and sketches. The subject is enriched by the art club and by visiting artists, creating mosaics, plaques and exciting sculptures. Pupils' skills are refined and much three-dimensional work causes great interest around the school. Those pupils with a talent for the subject are encouraged to improve on their techniques, although there is no special provision for gifted and talented pupils. Everyone is

involved in this subject whatever their level of skill. Those who find the subject difficult get extra support, some of which is from volunteers, who provide a rich link with the heritage of the area. Pupils with special educational needs make at least sound progress because there is good help from support assistants and teachers.

104. The talent of the subject leader shines in aspects of the work in the subject, notably in pupils' sketchbooks and where pupils have worked in the style of an artist. She supports staff well and checks that teaching plans are matched to National Curriculum requirements. Her discussions with pupils in other classes about their work displayed provide a good informal way to gauge their knowledge and understanding in the subject. Digital images and computers are increasingly enhancing the subject. There are no arrangements in place for checking how much pupils have achieved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in design and technology is above average. This reflects the standards achieved by pupils during the previous inspection. Pupils throughout the school achieve well, including those with special educational needs. The subject is taught across a period of several days throughout the year and no teaching took place during the inspection. Evidence comes from discussions with pupils and teachers and analysis of pupils' work, photographs, displays and teachers' planning.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the teaching and progression of basic skills;
- the contribution to pupils' personal and social development;
- very good support from the co-ordinator.

The main areas to develop are:

- further development of short-term planning;
- checking and reviewing teaching and learning.

106. Evidence shows that the quality of teaching is good. The strong emphasis placed on the development and progression in the basic skills results in good learning. Pupils across the school identify the purpose when planning the sequence of their work. They evaluate the success of their designs and in discussions give good reasons why they need to modify them in order to achieve a good quality product. In Year 3 pupils design and make sandwiches. They taste and smell a wide range of different breads and fillings before making their final choice, taking account of healthy options. They know that cheese contains vitamins, minerals, carbohydrate and protein. Pupils describe how their sandwiches match the design brief, for example including peppers to make a spicy sandwich. In Year 4 pupils measure, cut and join with accuracy to make a good quality money container. When making moving toys, Year 5 pupils modify their design showing a good understanding of the needs of people who cannot see by giving due consideration to the texture. They know that their moving toys would not be suitable for babies who could not turn the mechanism.
107. Pupils work well together in designing and making their models and accept the principle of fairness, i.e. whoever scores highest on the dice will take the model home. This collaborative work supports pupils of all abilities. Year 6 pupils apply their ICT skills well in making rotating fairground rides of good quality. They modify their designs to make them more fit for the intended purpose. Pupils describe how they included felt on the seat for comfort and used reinforced triangles and an extended base to make the structure more stable. In discussions they identify further improvements to their work, such as incorporating a ladder to climb up onto the ride.
108. The co-ordinator, who is new to this role since the previous inspection, uses her very good subject knowledge well in supporting other members of staff. She has developed a very good policy document and suitably adapted medium-term plans with end of topic assessments, good exemplar materials and resources including a useful portfolio of pupils' work. Short-term plans

have yet to be consistently established across the school. Those already developed by the co-ordinator will serve as good quality models. The co-ordinator checks pupils' work but has not yet carried out any observations of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

109. By the end of Year 6, attainment in geography is below average and pupils underachieve across the school. Standards at the time of the last inspection were average. This represents unsatisfactory improvement because teachers do not cover the subject in enough depth. Lessons were observed in Year 6 only, therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Pupils from the three other year groups were interviewed and pupils' work and teachers' planning analysed.

Strengths in the subject are:

- the study of the local area, particularly in Year 6;
- good teaching in Year 6.

The main areas to develop are:

- the breadth of study, especially in relation to localities and themes;
- the use of a wider range of secondary sources and maps;
- the use of independent writing to explore ideas;
- the assessment of the progressive development of geographical enquiry skills.

110. Teaching in Year 6 is good overall. Teachers expect pupils to behave well. Very good relationships are established and they have high expectations of the way in which pupils will participate in lessons. Pupils took very seriously the challenge to present the case for, and against, a new bypass. They marshalled evidence based on that deduced from an analysis of a local map. They listened respectfully to the views expressed by their classmates who were representing 'a house owner', 'a shopkeeper', and an 'environmental group'.
111. In lessons such as these, teachers encourage pupils to recall and reflect on their prior knowledge of the local environment and use their understanding of road and Ordnance Survey maps. Teachers are skilful in drawing ideas and explanations from the pupils, who refer to personal knowledge about the jobs of family members. Pupils have to think for themselves. At the same time they are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary, such as 'built up area', 'issues' and 'environmental concerns'. The issue-based work in Year 6 builds on the short units of work on 'houses' in Year 3 and 'a consideration of the buildings a population needs in a town or settlement' in Year 4. These lessons are characterised by teachers' good knowledge, not only of this aspect of the subject, but also of how pupils learn. They write measurable and well-focused learning intentions and share these with pupils, who are then clear about what is to be investigated. Well-prepared resources, a brisk pace and group collaboration provide the context and structure for effective learning. All pupils, both high attainers and those who find learning more difficult, especially when writing is involved, participate equally.
112. In contrast, pupils' recall and discussion of other localities, for example villages in Scotland and in India, confirm the evidence in books. Work has been rather superficial and pupils lack the knowledge, map-interpretation skills and criteria with which to make comparisons meaningful and memorable. Likewise, Year 5 pupils' recall of work on both the Amazon Basin and pollution lacks any real geographical foundation. The potential for pupils to write at length, and in so doing clarify and extend their geographical understanding, is underdeveloped. They do not use a sufficiently wide range of resources.
113. The co-ordinator, who has good subject knowledge, has identified many of these shortcomings and is working effectively towards remedying them. She is considering a simple but effective way of checking the understanding and application of geographical enquiry skills from year to year, in order to ensure pupils' good progress.

HISTORY

114. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in history is in line with that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school. However, the standards reached are not as good as during the last inspection. This is because teaching was generally good at the time of the last inspection and now it is satisfactory overall. No history teaching was observed in Year 6, as geography and history are taught in blocks of time and the current unit of work is geography.

The strengths of the subject are:

- pupils' enthusiasm for the subject;
- good links with art and design, music and ICT;
- the use of discussion to share ideas.

Areas for development are:

- more extensive use of writing;
- better short-term planning with greater challenge for the higher-attaining pupils;
- more systematic development of history enquiry skills.

115. Throughout the school, teaching in history is satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm and keenness to explore this subject, especially through the medium of art. Year 4 pupils' drawings of Tudor houses, their study of portraits and Year 5 pupils' exploration of the Ancient Egyptian technique of systematically increasing the size of a drawing add significantly to their understanding of the periods studied. Many of the classroom displays are eye-catching.
116. Teachers have sound subject knowledge of the range of aspects chosen for study and how these might be linked to music or art. The checking of pupils' progress focuses largely on this aspect. They are less well informed about how to develop appropriate historical study skills so that pupils work progressively at a more complex level. Year 5 pupils, for example, found it quite difficult to extract and record appropriate information about Egyptian gods from a small collection of books and pictures. Others were happier to copy a series of pictures on the process of embalming a mummy than to write about this. A number of pupils commented that it was much easier to get information from the Internet than to search for it in books. In this respect pupils make good use of ICT for research purposes. Staff also make very good use of the simulation software on, for example, the Vikings and the Ancient Egyptians. This is of good quality and makes pupils think about choices, cause and effect.
117. The short-term planning and lessons observed demonstrate the importance that teachers rightly place on approaching history through discussion. This has the advantage of enabling pupils of all abilities to participate. Year 3 pupils recalled prior knowledge about the Anglo-Saxons and the monasteries as they discussed why the Viking invaders came to England. Across the school, planned activities in general are too heavily dependent on the use of worksheets. This limits further investigation and more effective ways of consolidating and extending understanding. Work is not sufficiently well matched to the capabilities of different groups of pupils and often tasks do not provide real challenge for the higher-attaining pupils. Opportunities for writing for a range of different purposes are not maximised. Year 6 wrote briefly on aspects of life in Britain during World War II but there was limited evidence of pupils' own thinking or search for further information. Thus, overall, the written work was rather superficial and lacked vibrancy and originality.
118. The extent to which pupils are encouraged to think and question relates closely to the quality of the teaching. Where they have to think for themselves, formulate the questions to guide their own research and justify their ideas, learning is more successful. Knowledge and understanding stays with the pupils.
119. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject. She has begun to address the issue of writing and the new approach

to assessment focuses well on the subject specific skills. She is expanding the school-based resources, whilst making effective use of library loans and museum visits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Standards in ICT are close to average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In the computer skills they are gaining, pupils are achieving at a better rate in those lessons where teachers' subject knowledge is strong. There is significantly improved provision for the subject since the last inspection. This is the main factor that has contributed to the improvement in the standards attained since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average.

Strengths in the subject are:

- knowledgeable leadership with substantial skills in information and communication technology;
- the training and continuous support and guidance for teachers;

- the good co-operative learning of pupils;
- the inclusion of all staff in training.

The main area for development is:

- the level of challenge for more able pupils and those with the potential to achieve more.

121. Improved provision has widened pupils' technological experiences. The school has achieved what it set out to do and confidence in the subject has picked up over the past two years. The full breadth of National Curriculum provision is now in place, as are the essential resources to meet teaching needs. As a result, pupils' computer skills are close to those expected for their age in each year group. Teachers' improved knowledge, although still variable across classes, is starting to accelerate the momentum of pupils' learning in the subject. Teachers are starting to use interactive teaching boards and pupils are benefiting from the positive impact on learning. The majority of pupils have an average understanding of how computers can be used to transform and manipulate information. Many know how to search, store and retrieve their writing, numerical data and clipart they use.
122. The subject leader has worked hard to develop this good level of provision. For example, activities planned as 'bridging blocks' have ensured that pupils are suitably prepared for units of work for their year group. The development of pupils' knowledge and skill levels in each year group and across the classes is assured now in sound teaching plans. In this way, the subject leader has ensured that pupils have enough prior skills to learn those devised for their age group. Her good leadership has developed much staff training in the subject and this is bearing fruit. Pupils' achievement is set to accelerate. All pupils use ICT in the well-equipped computer suite and computers are used increasingly to enhance learning in subjects such as mathematics, English, design and technology and music. A carefully thought out policy is in place for safe web browsing and for e-mail.
123. Pupils in Year 6 create slide shows to present their findings as part of their studies in history. Most can modify visual effects they choose by selecting tools to include sound clips and layout devices that appeal to the audience for their presentations. Pupils support each other well in these lessons and often, higher-attaining pupils work alongside the less confident in their skills. Pupils are very supportive of each other and they benefit from the school's 'computer consultants' who often help with small ICT problems. This policy helps to develop positive relationships and attitudes but there are no compensatory opportunities built into the curriculum for higher-attaining pupils. This is compounded by a lack of challenge planned into many of the lessons. As a result, these pupils do not yet use computers as power tools for learning for themselves.
124. Most pupils can log onto the computer and find the route through to their own folder. Word processing skills and the use of tools to draw, paint and manipulate simple effects are developing in all year groups. Pupils from Year 3 onwards can change the size, style and fonts of their headings. The use of ICT is at its strongest where the subject leader teaches new ideas and skills with some interesting activities based on the local area. For example, her skilful modelling of the precise steps to be taken, using accurate technical vocabulary, enables pupils to negotiate the control of traffic lights at a local bridge, simulated onto the screen. There are good opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss their new skills.
125. Pupils with special educational needs have suitable support, instructions and activities that ensure unambiguous steps in learning. These assure full access to the same activities. These pupils achieve as well as other pupils because they benefit from additional prior work.
126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In some lessons, teaching is good but there are inconsistencies in the pace and challenge of lessons. Where teachers' subject knowledge is good, specific skills are taught and as a result, pupils achieve more. In these lessons, well-organised planning and clear instructions quickly build on pupils' skills. Teachers make good use of pupils' mistakes to move their learning and that of other pupils forward. Lessons are somewhat cramped by arrangements in the computer suite when catering for a whole class of pupils. This adversely affects the quality of learning. Sometimes the time spent on the carpet is not as profitable in terms of learning because pupils have awkward conditions to cope with for as long as half an hour.

MUSIC

127. Across the school it was possible to see only a few music lessons during the inspection and only one lesson in Year 6. Therefore no judgment can be made on standards for the whole year group, pupils' achievement, or the quality of teaching for the whole school. Singing is good: pupils sing tunefully and with clear diction, for example when they sing 'We Like Joyful Music' in hymn practice. The evidence comes from observations of lessons, activities outside of lessons, discussions with teachers, tape recordings, and pupils' work on display. Improvement since the time of the previous inspection is good, for example in resources.

The main strengths are that:

- teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and the teaching of basic skills is good;
- the good resources and curriculum contribute positively to pupils' learning;
- specialist staff support very successfully pupils with special educational needs;
- music has a high profile in the school;
- pupils attain high standards in extra music lessons and in school productions;
- the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- the new co-ordinator provides good leadership and management.

The main area to develop is:

- systematically checking and reviewing of teaching and learning.

128. In the few lessons seen teaching and learning were good. In one lesson teaching was very good and in one lesson it was satisfactory. The school deploys effectively the few teachers who have expertise in music to teach some lessons for their colleagues. A strong feature in the teaching is that teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well through using lots of praise and encouragement. This motivates pupils, gives them the confidence to learn and promotes successfully their very good attitudes and behaviour. Another feature is the good teaching of basic skills; for example, teachers encourage pupils to plan and create their own music. This not only promotes effectively pupils' skills in music but also their personal development because it gives pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. The good resources and curriculum contribute positively to pupils' learning;
129. Teachers encourage pupils to show respect for the performance of others, so pupils make positive comments first when they check and review the work of their classmates and then suggest how they might improve it. This was evident in the Year 6 lesson when the teacher asked how the work of a group could be improved. A pupil with special educational needs said 'You could put the instruments in a different order.' Pupils plan their work together as friends, decide which instruments to use and perform the music to their classmates. These features were very evident in the Year 3 lesson when groups of pupils discussed thoughtfully and purposefully how to create their own music with their voices and a variety of instruments. They were also evident in the Year 6 lesson when pupils worked together in groups to create music that had contrasts in it, such as slow and fast sections. In the satisfactory lesson the introduction was too long, so pupils did not have enough time to practise and improve their performance.
130. In the Year 6 lesson specialist staff for pupils with special educational needs gave the pupils very good individual support. Therefore, the pupils had the confidence to work successfully with their classmates to create the music. Across the school pupils listen to a range of music from

other cultures in lessons and collective worship. Teachers satisfactorily use ICT to support pupils' learning in music; for example, the Year 5 teacher used it to record pupils' performances.

131. Music has a high profile in the school. The school and parents are justifiably proud of the high standards that pupils attain in productions, for example in the summer term. Also, pupils take part in special assemblies, for example when Year 5 pupils performed 'David Copperfield'. The choir performs in the community, for example at a home for the elderly at Christmas time. The learning of a considerable number of pupils is extended by the activities that the school provides outside of lessons, such as recorder, choir and percussion. The school uses expert visitors to

inspire pupils' work, such as a tambour specialist and music ensemble. In the extra lessons that the school provides in string and brass, a visiting specialist teaches very successfully the techniques required to play the instruments correctly. Therefore pupils attain high standards.

132. The co-ordinator, who is new to the role this year, provides good leadership and management. She uses her very considerable expertise to give guidance and support to teachers. The co-ordinator uses the hymn practices well to reinforce pupils' learning in music; for example, she asked the pupils to listen for the ostinato (a repeated melodic phrase) in the music from 'Inspector Morse'. The co-ordinator has plans to develop further the system that teachers use to check pupils' attainment and review their progress. She informally checks and reviews teaching and learning. The school does not have an effective formal system for this so that the co-ordinator can share good practice and identify areas in which the teaching and learning could be improved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. It was possible to see only a few lessons during the inspection. Therefore no judgement can be made on standards, pupils' achievement, or the quality of teaching in the subject overall. Most pupils attain the nationally expected standards in swimming and for some pupils attainment is high. Examples of dance, games and athletics were seen and these show that there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Teachers' lesson plans show that they cover all the areas of learning required by the National Curriculum. Improvement has been satisfactory since the time of the previous inspection.

The main strengths are that:

- teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour;
- teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate teaching points and encourage pupils to review and check their work;
- the teaching of basic skills and techniques, is good;
- the good resources and curriculum contribute positively to pupils' learning.

The main areas to develop are:

- devising and implementing a formal system to check pupils' attainment and review their progress;
- checking and reviewing teaching and learning.

134. In the few lessons seen teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour: for instance, they expect pupils to listen attentively and participate sensibly. They deal with pupils in a friendly yet firm manner. Teachers continually praise pupils' efforts and achievements: this motivates pupils and encourages them to improve their skills. Therefore, pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy the

lessons and behave sensibly, responsibly and with consideration for others. They listen carefully and try hard to improve their skills through practice and perseverance. Teachers encourage all pupils to try hard and take part fully in lessons, including pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. This ensures that they learn at the same rate as their classmates. These features were evident in the athletics lesson in Year 6. The teacher expected pupils to respond promptly to the instructions, for example to stop running, and to run around the perimeter of the school.

135. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate teaching points and encourage pupils to review and check their work in order to improve it. They promote well pupils' personal development through the opportunities that they give pupils to make decisions about the way they work. This promotes pupils' good understanding and co-operation with one another. This was evident in the Year 4 dance lesson. Pupils worked together in pairs: they twisted, turned and stretched high and low in unison with each other and to the music from 'Inspector Morse'. The quality of the movements was good. The teacher encouraged pupils very successfully to improve their performance, such as 'Are you moving in a variety of ways – think about the direction (of the movements) – the finishing position needs to be as impressive as the starting position.' Pupils watched carefully one another's performances and described what they thought went well and what might be improved. The teacher continually praised pupils for their efforts and achievements. Therefore pupils improved their performance very well and their rate of learning was very good.
136. The teaching of basic skills and techniques is good, and this effectively promotes pupils' learning. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher showed pupils how to throw a ball and catch it correctly whilst clapping their hands in-between the movements. Teachers have due regard for safety and involve pupils in suitable warm-up and cool-down activities.
137. The good curriculum, resources and facilities make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Also, pupils' learning is enhanced when they take part in the very wide range of activities outside of lessons. Examples of this are cricket, cross-country, dance, football, netball, swimming and competitions with other schools.
138. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The new co-ordinator provides good leadership and has clear plans for the subject's continued development. An example of this is that she plans to check and review systematically teaching and learning and put procedures in place for teachers to check pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has the ability, commitment and support to implement the plans successfully.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is the same as in the previous inspection and represents satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and it is good in Years 3 and 4.

Strengths in the subject are:

- teachers' very good management of pupils' behaviour;
- pupils' positive attitudes to the subject;
- the good teaching in Years 3 and 4;
- the good level of support from the co-ordinator.

The main areas for development are:

- pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths;
- increasing the range of religious artefacts.

140. In Year 3 teachers successfully use different techniques to make lessons interesting, resulting in good learning. In the lessons seen pupils were able to describe the different feelings and emotions of those present at the Last Supper, including Jesus, Judas and the Disciples. They used sensitive words such as 'heartbroken' and 'confused'. Teachers used resources effectively so that pupils could better feel empathy towards Mary Magdalene as they sat in a chair, huddled in a shawl using facial expressions to mirror an artist's impression of the scene. In Year 4 teachers extend this further, relating it to pupils' own direct experiences through sensitive questions such as 'Have you ever been let down by a friend? How did you feel? Why?' Follow up activities are well structured so that pupils reflect more deeply about the sacrificial love of Jesus by reflecting upon the choices he could have made, the actions he could have taken and the different consequences that each action could have had.
141. In Years 5 and 6 the teaching was satisfactory in lessons seen. The particular teacher's very positive relationships made pupils feel secure and want to join in. In Year 5 pupils consider who they are, who they might become and what they would like to be remembered for. In Year 6 pupils understand the importance of forgiving others and what is involved in reconciling different views. The teacher does not always ensure a good enough balance of time between the initial teaching input and pupil participation. This results in pupils not having enough time or opportunity to discuss their own feelings and views in depth and, as a consequence, the higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might. This is similar to the last inspection.
142. While pupils are secure in their overall understanding of God, Jesus and the Church, they are less secure in their knowledge of Islam and Hinduism. An analysis of their work shows progression in these areas but in discussions their recollection of the work covered was more limited.
143. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and very good behaviour throughout the school. They are keen and enthusiastic and want to learn. Pupils show respect for the views of each other and members of staff.
144. The co-ordinator has only had responsibility for the subject since September and has achieved much in a relatively short space of time. She has good subject knowledge and uses this effectively in supporting other members of staff. The co-ordinator has successfully introduced and implemented a new scheme of work, adapted medium-term plans to the needs of the school and recently introduced end-of-unit assessments. She has made a start in reviewing and checking the quality of work and developed resource banks for

the different areas to be covered. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop resources in this subject, including those for ICT, and the range of artefacts, particularly those representing other faiths and cultures. Also to enrich the curriculum by strengthening links with the local and wider community.