

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **SANDCROSS JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Reigate

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125110

Headteacher: Mrs M Reid

Reporting inspector: Mr P Kemble  
7269

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 248658

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandcross Lane Reigate Surrey
Postcode:	RH2 8HH
Telephone number:	01737 245467
Fax number:	01737 244703
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Sanders
Date of previous inspection:	8 <sup>th</sup> December 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7269	Mr P Kemble	Registered inspector	Science Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12682	Mr J Griffin	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion, including race equality	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?
11227	Mr J Moles	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education	
21090	Mr D Manuel	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design	
32201	Mr D Shearsmith	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sandcross Junior School is a larger than average school. There are 347 pupils on roll, consisting of 166 boys and 181 girls. Numbers are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils attend from a wide range of privately owned and local authority housing within the school's catchment area, and from other parts of Reigate and surrounding villages as a result of parental choice. The school has achieved a good reputation for its academic success and for the way it works with pupils with special educational needs. Some parents have chosen the school for these reasons. Pupils join the school each year from as many as ten different infant and primary schools. Their level of attainment on entry into school varies from year to year, but is typically below average. There are 77 pupils (22.2 per cent) on the register of pupils with special educational needs, a figure similar to the national average. Four pupils (1.15 per cent) have statements of special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Almost all pupils (93.7 per cent) are from white backgrounds, with 6.3 per cent of pupils from five minority ethnic groups. Nine pupils (2.59 per cent) have English as an additional language. Sixty pupils (17.3 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, a figure in line with the national average.

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

Sandcross Junior School is a very effective school, with many strengths. Standards in English are well above average, and in mathematics and science above average, by the end of Year 6. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are above those expected for pupils of their age by the end of Year 6. Standards in history are well above those expected. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress when compared with their levels of attainment on entry into school. This is the result of very good teaching, a commitment to improve standards further amongst all staff, very good provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' very positive attitudes to school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Standards in English are well above, and in mathematics and science they are above, the national average.
- Pupils make very good progress; they behave very well, have very good attitudes towards their work and have excellent relationships with each other.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- Pupils benefit from a very broad, balanced curriculum and their learning is extended by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for pupils' social development is excellent.
- The school's partnership with parents and the local community is very good.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher, and the teamwork amongst all teaching and non-teaching staff, are excellent.
- Governors carry out their responsibilities very well and work very effectively with the headteacher and staff in monitoring and evaluating progress towards targets for school improvement.

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

- There are no significant areas for development.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since the previous inspection in December 1997. This is mainly due to the headteacher's leadership, improvements to curriculum provision and teachers' higher expectations of pupils' academic and social achievement. Weaknesses identified in the previous report have been dealt with successfully. Medium-term planning is now of good quality. It is based closely on national guidelines and the outcomes of the school's improved procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' standards. Co-ordinators are in post for all subjects of the curriculum and are fully involved in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. Pupils' standards in design and technology and information and communication technology have improved and are now in line with expected standards by the end of Year 6. There have been other significant improvements since the previous inspection. Standards in English are now well above average, and in mathematics, science, music and physical education, standards have improved and are now above average. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are now very good, and pupils benefit from improved links with parents and the local community. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships, and the progress they make, have improved and are now very good overall.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Results in the above table show that standards vary from year to year. This is due mainly to variations in the level of pupils' attainment on entry into school. When results are compared with those of similar schools, based on pupils' level of attainment on entry into school in Year 3 with their level of attainment by the end of Year 6, pupils are shown to make very good progress. Results show that science standards have made a steady improvement over time due to significant improvements in the way the subject is taught. There are no significant differences in the progress achieved by boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs or pupils with English as an additional language.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards achieved by the present Year 6 pupils are well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Standards in history are well above those expected. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are above expectations. Standards in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology and religious education are in line with those expected of pupils of their age. It is likely that pupils will achieve the English and mathematics targets set by the school in the 2003 national tests for pupils aged eleven.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils in all classes tackle work with interest and enthusiasm. They are keen to learn and concentrate very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils work and play very well together. They are respectful, polite and courteous to each other and to all adults.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships amongst pupils are excellent. Pupils co-operate very well in group activities, during assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes.
Attendance	Good. There are very few instances of unauthorised absence. Registration meets statutory requirements.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and meets the needs of all pupils very well. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. The quality of pupils' imaginative and creative writing is of a particularly high standard. Numeracy skills are taught well because teachers plan interesting and motivating activities which sustain pupils' concentration and effort very well. All pupils benefit from excellent teamwork amongst teachers and teaching assistants. Teachers often take classes other than their own so that pupils gain from specialist subject knowledge and expertise. Day-to-day assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is used very well to match activities closely to pupils' individual needs and levels of challenge are good as a result. Pupils requiring additional support receive well-planned tasks taught by special educational needs teachers and teaching assistants. A small number of pupils identified as being more able in English and mathematics are provided with additional tasks to extend their learning, although the range of planned opportunities for these pupils is not sufficiently broad. Levels of respect that teachers show pupils are excellent and contribute significantly to pupils' very good rate of progress and attitudes to school. Very good lessons were seen in all classes. Excellent lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music, physical education and in special educational needs provision.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils' learning is extended very well by an excellent range of after-school clubs, visits, visitors and residential trips.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Needs are identified soon after pupils start school. Individual education plans are of good quality with achievable targets linked closely to pupils' classroom work. Liaison with outside agencies is very good and parents are fully involved at all times.
Provision for pupils with	Very good. Pupils are included in all activities and receive very good

English as an additional language	support from class teachers and teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Promotion of pupils' social development is excellent. Promotion of pupils' moral development is very good. Promotion of pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Provision for raising pupils' awareness of life in a multicultural society is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and social development are very good. Pupils benefit from very good levels of personal support and care for their wellbeing and safety.

The school has worked hard to develop very effective links with parents and the local community. This is reflected in the substantial financial support the school receives from parents, their very good attendance at school concerts, parents' evenings and social events, as well as the strong involvement parents have with their children's learning at home.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and sets high standards for staff and pupils to achieve by her own commitment and example. All staff work hard to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. Teamwork amongst staff and governors is excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This helps them to make effective decisions about school improvement and to give good support to the work of the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very effective. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the life and work of the school involve all staff and governors. Critical analysis of the information gathered leads to the establishment of well-considered priorities each year. These are well documented in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staffing, accommodation, resources and finances are used effectively and efficiently to promote high standards. The principles of best value are promoted very well.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children like school, behave well and make good progress.</li> <li>Standards of teaching are good. Teachers have high expectations and help children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>The amount of homework is about right.</li> <li>The school deals effectively with questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school does not keep parents well enough informed about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

<p>and problems and works closely with parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>	
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Inspectors agree with all the aspects that please parents. Information for parents about school life and their children's progress is judged to be very good.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

##### Strengths

- Standards in English and history are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics, science, art and design, music and physical education are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make very good progress overall.
- The standard of pupils' speaking and writing skills are strengths of the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Standards have made a good improvement since the previous inspection.

##### Area for improvement

- Gifted and talented pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by tasks in subjects other than English and mathematics.

1. During Years 3 to 6, pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science when compared with their levels of attainment on entry into school. Pupils benefit from very good teaching, particularly of basic skills, and a range of stimulating and motivating activities in all classes. As a result, pupils' achievements in speaking, listening and writing are well above, and in reading and numeracy above, the national average by the end of Year 6.
2. Pupils benefit from very good levels of educational inclusion. Pupils of all capabilities, gender and background have equal access to all that the school provides. This is reflected in the very good progress overall made by pupils in all classes and year groups, including pupils with English as an additional language and those from ethnic minority groups. Pupils of different capabilities generally receive good levels of challenge in lessons. This is invariably the case for lower, average and higher attaining pupils. Levels of challenge for gifted and talented pupils are slightly more variable. They are good in day-to-day lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, but opportunities are missed to provide these pupils with additional activities to which they could apply their well-developed skills to more demanding tasks.
3. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school as a result of teachers' motivating and sensitive encouragement. The support given by class teachers, specialist teachers and teaching assistants is very good. A good number of pupils have significant learning needs and a few have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils also make good progress because of the extra support that they are given. Although the standards of a small minority with particular problems remain below average, they achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.
4. The results of the 2002 national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 show that standards in English and mathematics were in line with the national average and that science standards were above average. The picture was similar when these results were compared with schools that have a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

5. However, when the attainments of the 2002 Year 6 pupils were compared with their prior attainment on entry into school in Year 3, the test data shows that pupils made very good progress. This represents an improvement on the 2001 results, which showed that, even though standards in English and mathematics were better than in 2002, pupils made only good progress. The results reflect the school's continuing success in improving the progress that pupils make over time from their level of attainment on entry into school. Inspection evidence confirms the very good progress.
6. Results of the 2002 national tests show that a high percentage of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 or above in English, mathematics and science. Nearly half the pupils achieved this level in science; in English, it was 40 per cent and, in mathematics, it was 31 per cent. School and national data shows that there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, pupils with special educational needs or pupils with English as an additional language.
7. There has been a good improvement in standards overall since the previous inspection. Standards in science have risen significantly to above average, with 91 per cent of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above in the 2002 national tests, compared with about 40 per cent at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. Standards in English have improved to well above average. Standards in mathematics, science, music and physical education have improved from average to above average. Standards in design and technology and information and communication technology have improved from below average to average. Standards in these subjects have risen because of improvements to the schemes of work on which teachers base their lesson plans. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised, and monitoring and evaluation of standards and the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators are more effective in identifying areas for improvement.
8. Inspection findings are that, by the end of Year 6, standards in English and history are well above average. Standards in mathematics, science, art and design, music and physical education are above average and pupils achieve very well. Standards in design and technology, geography, information and communication technology and religious education are in line with national averages. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in their knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation, spelling and number facts.
9. In English and mathematics, teachers have very good subject knowledge. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Basic skills are taught very well from Year 3 onwards so that pupils have a good basis on which to tackle increasingly more challenging work in other year groups. In other subjects where progress is very good, such as science and history, teachers' enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, the subjects is successfully conveyed to pupils, who work hard and achieve well as a result.
10. In subjects where pupils make good progress, such as art and design, music and physical education, pupils benefit from well-planned lessons that develop their skills step by step. Effective use is made of materials and equipment to make sure that pupils' learning is not interrupted by unnecessary delays while they wait for their turn. Lessons are often linked to other subjects, such as English or history, and this makes tasks relevant for pupils and sustains their interest. In subjects, such as design and technology, geography and religious education, where progress is satisfactory, lessons are based on good quality schemes of work. However, procedures for

assessing pupils' attainment and progress are not as effective as they are in other subjects to identify specific skills where improvement is needed. Pupils' progress in information and communication technology is no more than satisfactory due largely to unforeseen problems connected with the hardware.

11. The standard of all pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Teachers make effective use of the national guidelines for these two aspects of learning. They provide many opportunities for pupils to write in literacy and other lessons and pupils soon become used to writing quickly and legibly and achieve very well as a result. Sentences are often well punctuated, with correct spelling. The standard of pupils' speaking skills is high because skills are promoted very well through many whole-class discussions, group activities, oral presentations of work and drama activities. The high standard of pupils' speaking and writing skills are major strengths of the school. Handwriting standards are good. Pupils are successfully encouraged to use joined script and write in pen from Year 3 onwards. Pupils have a good knowledge of number facts and multiplication tables because of the strong emphasis given by teachers to learning and using these in mathematics lessons.

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

Strengths
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupils are keen to come to school because they feel valued and well supported.</li><li>• Excellent relationships exist throughout the school.</li><li>• Behaviour is very good in lessons and during playtimes and lunchtimes.</li></ul> |
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12. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development were reported to be good. The school has successfully built on, and improved, these good standards. Pupils now show very positive attitudes towards school and their work and behave very well. They form excellent relationships and their personal development is very good. The school's very good partnership with parents and its provision for pupils' personal development make significant contributions to these very positive attitudes and values.
13. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall. Based on evidence from their parents' responses to school and inspection questionnaires, nearly all pupils like school and it plays an important part in their lives. This is reflected in above average attendance. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils ranked school ahead of hobbies, level with friends and only behind family, in a list of the important things in their lives. They like the way class teachers encourage them and make their learning interesting. Pupils value the fact that their views are respected by adults. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of clubs, playtime activities and school trips. Pupils value their friendships with other pupils.

14. In almost all lessons seen during the inspection, pupils listened and concentrated very well, were eager to answer teachers' questions and start promptly on their individual work. Pupils' favourite subjects and lessons are those where they are practically involved such as physical education, art and design and experimental science. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke positively about recent experiments where they explored whether certain materials floated or sank in water. The best attitudes and behaviour occur in lessons where expectations are high, work is demanding and pupils are busy and engaged in a variety of activities, which provide the right level of challenge for them. Pupils with special educational needs are positive about the extra support provided for them.
15. Behaviour in classrooms, during lunchtime and playtimes is very good. Pupils' reliable behaviour is an important element in the prevailing very positive atmosphere for learning throughout the school. There were very few occasions during the inspection when standards of behaviour were less than very good. Instances of inattentiveness and lack of concentration were rare, but were evident amongst a few immature pupils in Year 4 and Year 5. When moving about the school, pupils form orderly lines and walk in a calm and responsible way. During playtimes, skipping, Hula-Hoops, a range of soft ball games and basketball for older pupils are clearly enjoyed. A calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. Instances of bullying or other anti-social behaviour are extremely rare. No fixed term or permanent exclusions have occurred for several years. Pupils take good care of property and resources and help keep their school in an attractive condition. Parents' questionnaire responses fully support this very positive picture, and parents are pleased with the standard of their children's behaviour.
16. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are excellent. Adults act as very good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and very effectively praise effort and good work. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke positively about the support they get from teachers and the fair way in which they are treated. As a result, pupils are very comfortable about expressing views and asking questions of their teachers. This assists their learning very well. Excellent relationships among pupils, including those with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and pupils from ethnic minority groups, are a very striking feature. There are no problems between pupils of different gender, capability or race. As a result, pupils co-operate very well in group work and enjoy celebrating others' achievements in classrooms and in assemblies.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. Pupils know, and calmly carry out, the daily routines expected of them. They enjoy speaking with visitors. When questioned as a group, Year 6 pupils listened carefully to the different views expressed by others. Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, pupils show concern for those who are ill or otherwise upset. Pupils regularly, and without prompting, hold doors open for each other and for adults. Pupils are keen to help others and speak positively about their charitable collection work. They also run stalls at fund-raising events. Most pupils show a good sense of responsibility by routinely returning homework on time. Older pupils support younger ones at playtime. Members of the active, well-established school council, which is composed of 12 elected members from Year 6, each representing a class, make a significant contribution to school life by promoting the views of the pupils they represent.
18. Attendance is good. It has risen steadily in recent years and is now above the national average. The unauthorised absence level is minimal and, therefore, below the national

average. Punctuality is good. Almost all pupils come to school on time and settle to their work promptly and calmly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall; the management and organisation of pupils' learning is excellent.
- Pupils benefit from interesting activities that stimulate pupils' thinking and sustain their interest.
- Teamwork amongst teaching and non-teaching staff is excellent.
- Pupils make very good progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding because relationships are excellent and lessons move at a good pace.

19. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and makes a significant contribution to the very good progress made by pupils over time. Seventy-three lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed during the inspection. Sixty-five were judged to be good or better, including 23 which were very good and ten which were excellent. The remaining eight lessons were satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in English, mathematics, history, music and personal, social and health education. It is good overall in science, art and design, geography, information and communication technology and religious education. There was insufficient evidence gathered during the inspection to make valid judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology.
20. The quality of teaching and learning has improved well since the previous inspection, with fewer satisfactory lessons and considerably more good or better lessons. Improvement is due to higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, greater breadth and balance in the curriculum and more effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. These improvements result in good levels of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning across all year groups and in all subjects. For instance, good lessons were observed in all classes and in all subjects during the inspection. Very good lessons were seen in almost all subjects, with the exception of art and design and design and technology. Excellent lessons were seen in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music and physical education.
21. The management and organisation of pupils' learning is excellent. Teachers are skilful at moving pupils quickly on in their learning from whole-class sessions to group and independent work. This was a characteristic of many of the lessons seen in several different subjects. For example, in an excellent Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils first completed handwriting activities at their desks. They then moved to a whole-class session on the carpet with the teacher, then on to group writing activities back at their desks. Finally, the pupils gathered together to read out some of their work and to review what had been learned. The teacher was successful at organising a smooth transition between each session because resources were readily available for pupils to use, routines were well established and understood by pupils, and pupils were clear about what they had to do during each part of the lesson. Consequently, the lesson moved at a good pace, time was used very effectively and pupils maintained good levels of concentration and effort.

22. Year 6 pupils benefited from the very good management and organisation of a geography lesson as they put into practice, in groups, the skills they had learned from a whole-class teaching session. Pupils who entered the classroom later in the lesson, after receiving small group tuition with another member of staff, were given very good support to help them take part meaningfully in the group activities.
23. A significant aspect of the management and organisation of pupils' learning is the sharing of expertise amongst staff. Pupils in classes in all year groups benefit from lessons taught by other teachers in, for instance English, mathematics, science, music, religious education and personal, social and health education. The effective use of teachers' specialist expertise has helped to raise standards in several areas of the curriculum, notably science and music. There is a close link between teachers and teaching assistants who provide additional support for pupils, often in groups withdrawn from the class. Teaching assistants are given considerable responsibility in managing and organising pupils' learning and their expertise and subject knowledge make a significant contribution to the good progress made by special educational needs and lower attaining pupils in particular.
24. Basic skills are taught very well. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy guidelines are used effectively to promote very good standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling, handwriting and knowledge and recall of number facts. Teachers make good use of other subjects of the curriculum to achieve this. For example, pupils' speaking skills were promoted very well in almost all the lessons seen because of the teachers' skill at encouraging pupils to talk. Teachers plan regular occasions in lessons when pupils are asked to explain their methods, talk about what they have learned, read out their work or discuss how their performance might be improved. Year 4 lower attaining pupils gained a better understanding of problem-solving strategies as they explained how they had come to their answers. Year 3 pupils made good progress in the technique of showing light and shadow in their artwork as they explained what they liked about their partners' work and how it might be improved. Year 5 pupils' rugby skills were extended as they discussed each other's performance at ball-handling activities.
25. Teachers select appropriate teaching methods very well when planning their lessons. This leads to a good balance between whole-class, group and individual work. Particularly good use is made of the method of reviewing at the end of a lesson what has been achieved. This good practice has a significant impact on pupils' very good attitudes to their work. They are keen to join in evaluations of what has been learned, and confidently discuss what they found interesting or what they did not understand. In a Year 5 music lesson, pupils' learning was successfully consolidated as the teacher encouraged pupils to talk about their understanding of the main teaching points. Pupils talked openly about difficulties they had encountered maintaining a beat as they played glockenspiel accompaniments and the teacher and other pupils offered helpful advice and encouragement.

26. As a result of very good teaching, pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding very well. Learning in English, mathematics and science is especially good and is evident, for instance in the high standards of pupils' creative writing. One reason for this is the teachers' ability to accurately assess pupils' progress during lessons and to move them on to more challenging or beneficial activities, either during the lesson or in a subsequent lesson. Teachers' weekly planning shows that lessons are evaluated and adjustments made so that the pace of pupils' learning can be maintained.
27. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is very good because teachers focus on their particular learning needs to help them meet their individual targets. Teachers and teaching assistants are patient and are clearly aware of pupils' emotional needs while supporting them academically. As a result, they grow in confidence when tackling new learning and are willing to try new tasks. When pupils are withdrawn individually or in small groups for extra help by specialist teachers and teaching assistants, teaching is very good. In the sessions observed, individual pupils made clear gains in basic language skills and, where necessary, in their personal and physical development as a result of focused teaching related to current targets. This makes a significant contribution to the above average standards achieved by the school in the national tests at the end of Year 6 and throughout their time in the school.
28. Day-to-day assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are successful almost all of the time in benefiting pupils of different capabilities. Opportunities are sometimes missed for gifted and talented pupils to make decisions for themselves and to work more independently on some activities. There were occasions during the inspection, for instance in mathematics and science lessons, when teachers directed these pupils' learning rather than letting them use their well-developed skills, knowledge and understanding to work out for themselves ways of tackling a situation or a problem.
29. Teachers promote the school's agreed aims, values and policies very well. Expectations of pupils' achievements are high. Relationships are excellent. Pupils' contributions are valued in lessons and assemblies and pupils respond well to the respectful and caring way that they are treated. As a result, pupils settle quickly into school in Year 3 and rapidly become confident class members. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties benefit considerably from their teachers' sensitive but firm approach, helping them to improve their self-esteem.

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

### **Strengths**

- Pupils benefit from a very broad and balanced curriculum.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The promotion of pupils' social development is excellent.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities are missed to prepare pupils more fully for life in a multicultural society.
- The range of planned opportunities for gifted and talented pupils is not sufficiently broad.

30. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was reported to be broad and balanced. Weaknesses were identified in the provision for design and technology and information and communication technology. Planning did not always promote the progressive development of pupils' skills. There has been a good improvement since then. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are now very good and all subjects, including design and technology and information and communication technology, are supported by policies and schemes of work of good quality. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent.
31. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good for pupils in all year groups. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers' planning to meet the wide range of pupils' capabilities in each class and each year group is very good, so that there are no unnecessary repetitions of work or omissions in the provision. All subjects have schemes of work based on national guidance and these give helpful advice and support to teachers as they plan their lessons.
32. The school's strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. Provision is very effectively monitored and evaluated on a regular basis and priorities for improvement and targets for raising standards established. Very effective links with other subjects are made in teachers' plans for the year and for each term. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Special curriculum days, when all classes focus on a subject area, such as history or poetry, and book weeks, when a wide range of literacy skills are successfully promoted, are used well to extend learning. The school strongly supports environmental issues by developing the school grounds as an outdoor classroom to support pupils' learning in science and geography.
33. Almost a quarter of pupils in the school has been identified as having special educational needs. Provision for these pupils is very good. Generally, they learn alongside their classmates and, therefore, are involved in learning about the same subjects and topics. Their individual education plans are of very good quality and are drawn up by the two special educational needs co-ordinators in consultation with class teachers and teaching assistants. They include targets that are relevant to pupils' needs and are achievable. They help, therefore, to motivate pupils to succeed. In most lessons, and especially in literacy and numeracy, activities are planned carefully to match pupils' learning needs and to enable them to meet these targets. In a few sessions, individuals and small groups are taken out of the classroom to work on particular tasks. This withdrawal happens mainly to support pupils who are having difficulties with personal issues and literacy skills and contributes strongly to the good progress they make in personal, social and academic development.

34. Provision for pupils who have been identified as being gifted and talented in literacy and numeracy is good. Teachers plan specific tasks for these pupils in their daily lessons which provide additional challenge. The school has not, however, formally identified provision beyond that of literacy and numeracy. There are useful plans to extend provision to include a wider range of subjects in which pupils achieve particularly well. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Teachers promote appropriate vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar very well in lessons and give helpful individual support when necessary.
35. The quantity and range of extra-curricular activities is excellent. Parents are very pleased with the provision and the hard work and dedication of staff in organising and running sporting, creative, technological and musical activities, all of which make a significant contribution to their children's learning. Clubs are very well attended. In addition, a comprehensive range of visits, visitors and residential experiences extend pupils' learning in several areas of the curriculum.
36. Pupils benefit from an extensive and well-planned programme of personal, social and health education which makes a very good contribution to their personal development. The scheme of work provides very clear guidance for teachers on what is to be taught and is well supported by appropriate resources. It includes sex education and drugs awareness education. Activities, such as group discussions, called circle time, give pupils valuable opportunities to express their views and opinions on a range of issues, as well as exploring personal values and beliefs.
37. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well by the provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision has made a good improvement since the previous inspection when it was reported to be good overall. Provision for social development is now excellent and it is very good for moral development. Provision for the promotion of pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good.
38. Provision for pupils' moral and social development makes a significant contribution to the excellent relationships that exist in the school. Pupils' understanding of the difference between right and wrong is well developed and is reinforced by the very good role models provided by staff. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to understand what constitutes responsible behaviour and conduct in all aspects of their life in the school community. This results in pupils respecting each other's needs and feelings, whilst having the confidence to express their own views. Pupils are expected to care for each other, help visitors to the school and take on a range of responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the school. In lessons, pupils are expected to develop an independent approach to their learning whilst, at the same time, co-operating well together when required. As a result, almost all pupils have mature attitudes and these play a significant part in the very good progress they make.
39. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual development well by encouraging them to put forward their own thoughts, ideas and concerns. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils discussed, with considerable feeling, emotions Mary may have felt on hearing that she was to give birth to Jesus. They talked about the effect this may have had on her relationship with Joseph. In art lessons, pupils study plants and other living things. They draw with care, often sensitive to the shapes and how the parts relate to each other. Following their drawing and painting sessions, they write thoughtful descriptions of their attempts to catch the beauty and complexity of nature, with many pupils showing an understanding beyond merely the physical appearance of the plant.

The environmental areas around the school contribute well to this sense of spiritual understanding of nature.

40. Opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons and assemblies for pupils to think about what they have just learnt or heard. Pupils are not always encouraged to pause and reflect on what they have achieved in a lesson, or to remain quiet after a piece of music has concluded or to think about what a story may mean for them. A successful example was seen when a visiting minister followed a story with prayerful thought about how individuals may contribute to other people's enjoyment of life.
41. Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to gain a good understanding of the cultural influences that have shaped western society. In French lessons, they learn for instance about the social differences in the way people greet each other in France and Britain. They learn the importance of intonation and gesture in communication when speaking in French. Through visits to places of worship, they gain an understanding of the significant principles of religious belief founded in other parts of the world. Visits to museums help pupils develop a greater understanding of influences on the development of British culture. From visitors to school, pupils are given good opportunities to experience the cultural heritage of other countries, for example the significant place of storytelling in African culture. Opportunities are missed, however, to study and experience non-western art and music to help pupils gain a greater appreciation of the diversity and increasing interdependence of cultures.
42. The school's very good links with the community extend curriculum provision well. The local area is used extensively to support pupils' work in several subjects, for instance geography through fieldwork. Visiting speakers from the community provide specialist knowledge. For example, the police talk to pupils about drugs awareness and visits from a nurse and a dentist promote health education well. Pupils are involved in beneficial links with the elderly by singing at the local day care centre and delivering Harvest Festival gifts. The school is represented on local community groups and school council members are currently advising on uses for a piece of wasteland. Members of the community assist with reading in the school. Pupils and teachers benefit from positive links with the many infant feeder schools and local secondary schools. As a result, arrangements for pupils to join the school or move on to the next phase of their education are very good.

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

### Strengths

- The school is a very safe and caring environment.
- Procedures for child protection, health and safety are very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements are very good, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of what they need to do to improve and this helps them to achieve well.

### Area for improvement

- There are inconsistencies amongst teachers in the way that they mark pupils' work.

43. The pastoral care arrangements for pupils are very good overall and have made a satisfactory improvement on the good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. There are now very good measures to promote and support good behaviour and pupils' personal development. Assessment procedures are very effectively used to follow, or track, pupils' progress, forecasting end-of-year standards and identifying the next steps in pupils' learning.
44. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' wellbeing are very good. The headteacher and staff work effectively to address difficulties experienced by individuals and groups of pupils. The school has established very good arrangements for the induction of pupils to Year 3 and other classes. Induction arrangements work particularly well and help pupils, from as many as ten different infant schools, settle quickly into friendship groups and school routines. Transfer arrangements to secondary school are well established and effective. Pupils confirm that they are well cared for when they are ill or otherwise distressed. There are positive links and involvement with outside agencies such as social and health services. Child protection procedures are very good. The procedures to follow, and the designated staff member, are known by all adults in the school. Pupils are made aware of this issue as part of their personal, social and health education programme.
45. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are very good overall. Teachers make pupils aware of health and safety issues in lessons, for example in handling apparatus safely in physical education. Internet access arrangements are closely supervised and protected by highly effective security software. An important emphasis is placed on pupils taking responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety conscious attitude among them. Health and safety forms an important part of governors' deliberations. Fire alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out. Fire drills are carried out regularly. First-aid arrangements are well established and pupils receive very good attention from well-trained staff.
46. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are very good overall. Expectations are clearly explained to pupils as part of their Year 3 induction. Consistent adherence to these expectations by all staff is a key feature of success. There is a strong emphasis on recognising and rewarding good behaviour and pupils respond positively. For example, praise and encouragement are used well by all staff in assemblies, lessons and during lunchtimes to identify good behaviour so that high expectations of behaviour are continually reinforced and rewarded. Measures to create and maintain discipline are consistently applied by staff. A measure of the success of procedures is that senior staff, such as the deputy headteacher, are rarely called upon, as part of the discipline process, to speak to pupils.
47. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism, are very good overall. Sanctions, in relation to classroom and playground behaviour, are well known by all staff and pupils. Separate playground areas for each year group, and a good range of playground games, make playtime an inclusive and positive experience. Lunchtime staff feel very well supported by teaching staff and the headteacher in relation to playground incidents. Parents are very effectively involved where concerns arise. Pupils confirm that they feel comfortable reporting rare incidents of bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Parents and pupils confirm that the measures taken to resolve such cases are usually very effective.

48. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. Absence, due to holidays during term time, is strongly challenged by the school. Parents are clear that they are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and almost all do. A small minority of pupils with significant absence is clearly identified and carefully monitored. Recognition of termly and annual high and full attendance is not part of celebration assemblies because regular attendance is an expectation for all pupils. When it is known that pupils are going to be absent for several weeks, they are provided with work to complete.
49. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils and their needs are very well known to staff. Good attitudes and achievements at school, or when representing the school, are celebrated in weekly assemblies. This recognition provides pupils with public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. In classes, pupils are given a good range of responsibilities. The school council provides very good personal development opportunities for its members. The excellent range of extra-curricular activities, as well as sporting and musical events, provide very good opportunities for pupils' personal development outside of lessons. Parents are very positive about the school's part in helping their children to become mature and responsible. They justifiably speak very positively about the well-rounded education their children receive.
50. At the time of the previous inspection, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress were reported to be good. There has been a satisfactory improvement since then. Procedures for assessment are now very good because the information is used very effectively to match activities to pupils' needs and identify specific areas of learning that require improvement.
51. Assessment procedures are effective in gaining a considerable amount of information about pupils' achievements, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Regular assessments made by teachers help them to identify pupils who either need more challenge or have not yet reached the required standard. In other subjects, procedures are not as formalised and systematic, but are nevertheless satisfactory. Staff and subject co-ordinators are trying out new procedures this year intended to increase the amount of useful data that can be gathered in order to focus lesson planning more closely on skills identified as requiring improvement.
52. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. A detailed assessment system helps staff to follow, or track, the progress pupils make in English, mathematics and science. Collections of pupils' work are a very helpful way of showing progress. Staff annotate individual pieces of work, assessing them against the expected levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. Staff

analyse the results of national tests and assessments made at the end of Year 6, as well as the results of optional national tests in other year groups, to supplement and support their own assessments of pupils' achievements.

53. Information gathered is being used increasingly effectively to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. Special educational needs pupils have manageable targets set in their individual education plans and teachers and teaching assistants use these well to plan suitable activities. All pupils have a good awareness of personal targets. A very effective strategy is the use of assessment prompt cards in each classroom. These remind pupils of how and when they need to assess and evaluate their learning. Involvement of pupils in deciding what they need to do next to improve is a major strength of the procedures and makes a significant contribution to the very good progress pupils make. Care is taken to examine how all groups of pupils are getting on. Teachers look at achievements of boys and girls, pupils from ethnic minority groups and those with English as an additional language, to identify where support is needed. The effectiveness of these arrangements is seen in the very good progress made by pupils, for instance in writing and science, since the previous inspection.
54. Procedures for assessing pupils' special educational needs are good and ensure that pupils receive suitable levels of support. All teachers are alert to the needs of individuals and this helps them to identify difficulties at an early stage. This level of care is reflected in the very good provision made for these pupils. Individual education plans are reviewed and updated regularly and the co-ordinators keep a close eye on pupils' progress. As a result, they and the class teachers know these pupils well and have a clear awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement. The school works hard to share this information with staff and parents. The school actively seeks the involvement of outside agencies in assessing and supporting the needs of pupils with more significant difficulties.
55. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and regularly. However, there are inconsistencies amongst teachers in the way that marking is used to help pupils improve. Where written comments give pupils a clear indication of how to do better, subsequent learning is improved.

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

### Strengths

- Parents' view of the school is excellent; they are very supportive of its work.
- The school provides very good information for parents.
- The very good links with parents have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

56. There is a very good partnership with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. Informed by regular surveys of parents' views, the headteacher and governors have worked systematically to address the needs and concerns of parents. The partnership works very well on the basis that school and parents have key roles in a shared enterprise.
57. Overall, parents are exceptionally positive about what the school provides and achieves. Over two-fifths of parents replied to the questionnaire and 23 attended the pre-inspection meeting. Almost all confirm that pupils like school and make good

progress. They consider that the school has high expectations and helps pupils become more mature and responsible. They are positive about the teaching and their children's attitudes to school and their behaviour. Most feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions, questions or concerns. They are positive about the leadership of the headteacher, particularly the strong sense of teamwork she helps create. Almost all parents are pleased with homework levels and its arrangements, the way that the school works closely with parents and the range of extra-curricular activities.

58. Links with parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Parents are consulted regularly, using the inspection questionnaire. As a result, the school has successfully responded to parents' concerns about inconsistencies in homework levels and levels of information about pupils' progress, for example. Parents value the accessibility and approachability of staff. Pupils have well-used home contact books, which provide a clear outline on set homework and act as a good routine communication medium between school and home. Parents are fully involved where staff have concerns about pupils' progress, behaviour or attendance. Very good arrangements are in place to help parents and their children when they join the school.
59. A small minority of parents in the questionnaire returns expressed dissatisfaction with the information they receive about their children's progress. Inspectors do not share these concerns. The quality of information to support pupils' progress is judged to be very good overall. Year group meetings are held with parents early in the autumn term to outline expectations for the year. Termly parents' evenings create regular opportunities for updates on progress or concerns. The quality of pupils' written annual reports is very good overall. Reports convey a clear sense of what, and how well, pupils are doing and give a clear indication of the progress they are making. Areas for improvement in attitudes and the tested subjects are systematically identified. The innovative practice of issuing the reports in the spring term is used as the basis for a target-setting session at the parents' evening. As a result, all parties have a clear understanding of the key improvement areas while there is still time to influence progress.
60. Information for parents about the daily running of the school is of very good quality overall. Regular newsletters, together with other letters and notes, keep parents very well informed about school life. Parental comments, ideas and suggestions arising from newsletters are regularly sought and given. The prospectus gives a very clear outline of the school's aims and values, expectations and character. The governors' annual report clearly informs parents on the work of governors.
61. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. Parents are keen for their pupils to do well, ensuring pupils attend school at above average levels, with minimal unauthorised absence, for example. Almost all respond positively to individual requests to discuss issues such as pupil progress, behaviour and attendance. Discussions with pupils indicate that most have somebody at home who checks that set homework is completed. Most pupils are represented at the termly parents' evenings. Many parents attend and enjoy Christmas performances, class assemblies, sports days and sporting fixtures during the year. Adult helpers support with group reading, clubs and trips. Parent governor positions are filled, often following elections, which is another indication of parental support. The Friends of Sandcross provide very good support by organising a range of social and fund-raising events. These activities help to establish and maintain good informal links between staff, parents and pupils, as all parties are

involved in many of the events. Events contribute to pupils' wider social and personal development and the very positive sense of community that prevails.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### Strengths

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and a clear educational direction to the life and work of the school.
- Teamwork amongst all staff and governors is excellent.
- The reflection of the school's aims and values in its life and work is excellent.
- Procedures for monitoring and evaluating progress towards targets in the school development plan are very effective.
- Pupils benefit from very effective and efficient use of staffing, accommodation, resources and available finances.

62. At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership and management of the school were reported to have many strengths. Since then, there have been improvements to procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching and learning by staff and governors. Adjustments have been made to the compilation of the school development plan. The expertise of the headteacher and governors in carrying out their roles has been successfully developed. As a result, high standards have been maintained and successfully improved.
63. Under the headteacher's excellent leadership, the school has made a good improvement since the last inspection. She has achieved this by setting high expectations of pupils' academic and social standards in her teaching and her other contacts with pupils. Her example is followed by staff and, as a result, they work very hard to raise standards and improve all aspects of school life.
64. The headteacher places the aims and values of the school at the centre of her work. She promotes these very well through her assemblies, through the personal support she gives to members of staff and the time she gives to individuals and groups of pupils when they have problems or worries. For example, during an assembly in which pupils were being congratulated for particular achievements, the headteacher praised three pupils for their responsible behaviour at home in helping parents who were ill. The results of her effective leadership are seen in the very good provision for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the high standards of care for pupils and the successful inclusion of pupils of all capabilities, gender and background in school life.
65. A significant consequence of the headteacher's leadership is the excellent teamwork. Members of staff give very good support to the headteacher in the way that they carry out their duties and responsibilities. The deputy headteacher works very well with the headteacher in managing and organising the daily running of the school. He is a good role model for staff in the quality of his teaching. Members of the senior management team are successful in discussing school policy with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, as well as maintaining an overview of standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their respective year groups. Some subject co-ordinators are more experienced than others but, overall, they understand their roles well and work effectively and efficiently to gather information about strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. All teaching and non-teaching staff are valued by the

headteacher as important members of the team and this means that decisions made and policies agreed are implemented consistently by all staff.

66. The school is managed very well by the headteacher and staff. Procedures established by the headteacher for monitoring and evaluating the life and work of the school are very effective in gathering information on the school's progress towards targets in the school development plan. The headteacher has achieved this by careful delegation of responsibilities to all teaching and non-teaching staff, with job descriptions that clearly define what is expected of them. Staff are very well supported with time and resources to carry out their monitoring and evaluation responsibilities. For instance, subject co-ordinators are allocated periods of time each term away from their class teaching commitments to observe colleagues teach and to look at samples of pupils' work. Procedures are continually reviewed to evaluate their effectiveness. As a result of several staff changes since the previous inspection, the headteacher appoints two members of staff to manage each subject to avoid situations when a subject does not have a co-ordinator. This arrangement is often successful in helping recently appointed staff, and teachers new to the profession, to gain valuable management experience. A review of procedures has also highlighted the fact that the deputy headteacher has too many roles and responsibilities and that some of these, such as daily administrative duties, could be carried out by other staff members.
67. The two special educational needs co-ordinators are new in their roles working with pupils with learning and emotional difficulties, having taken over at the beginning of this term. They already provide good leadership and management of their responsibilities. As a result, the positive picture outlined at the time of the previous inspection has been strengthened. They have a clear view of what needs to be done to maintain and further improve the very good provision. This includes continuing to refine teachers' expertise, particularly in connection with the involvement of pupils in target setting. The school's provision is strongly supported by the designated governor, who has a very clear view of the school's work in this area. All statutory requirements in relation to special educational needs and the new Code of Practice are met.
68. Governors play an important part, along with the headteacher, in shaping the future direction of the school. They are led very well by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and hardworking chair of governors, who manages and organises an effective programme of governor involvement in the life of the school. As a result, governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and this helps them to make well-informed decisions about priorities for development, the action to be taken and the allocation of finances. Decisions are very well documented in the school development plan. It clearly identifies responsibilities, targets, success criteria and costs and gives good guidance to governors and staff in implementing short- and long-term priorities.
69. The overall efficiency of the school is very good. The school has built successfully on the good standards of financial planning reported at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and governors have developed well-structured and systematic procedures that effectively support the school's educational priorities. This is a process that involves all members of staff in an annual review of the work of the school in order to identify and agree future priorities. Efficient use has been made of national funding for information and communication technology equipment and teachers' training. Good use is made of new technology in all aspects of school life to improve efficiency levels and to support the curriculum. The carry forward of funding

at the end of the last financial year was 7.6 per cent of the total income figure. Governors have planned for this over the previous year to fund a continuous programme of support for information and communication technology and a new playground area.

70. The school successfully applies the principles of best value. Standards are regularly compared with those of other schools, and targets set provide good levels of challenge for both staff and pupils. The headteacher and governors are good at consulting and involving all those concerned in decision-making about spending. This includes annual use of the school's own questionnaire to seek parents' views and holding discussions with pupils about their opinions. Full consideration is given to alternative providers for services and resources in order to acquire cost effectiveness and, as a result, money is spent carefully. The school's day-to-day financial controls and procedures are very good, enabling the headteacher and governors to closely monitor and evaluate spending decisions such as the recent improvements in information and communication technology equipment to raise standards of attainment. The most recent financial audit, three years ago, made a number of recommendations, highlighting omissions in information and reporting. The headteacher and the finance officer, both fairly new at that time, have responded very well to the recommendations and have improved matters considerably. Teaching and support staff are deployed effectively to promote pupils' learning and their improved expertise is used for the benefit of all.
71. Taking into account the below average levels of attainment on entry, the above and well above standards when pupils leave the school, the good levels of improvement since the previous inspection, the excellent leadership and management, the high quality of education provided and the above average unit costs, the school provides very good value for money.
72. The quality and quantity of teaching staff is good and all are well qualified to deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum. Many are experienced, though some more recently qualified members of staff have been appointed in the last few years. Roles are regularly reviewed and the training needs of all staff are monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Specialisms are taken into account well when subject co-ordinator roles are allocated. Subject co-ordinators are effective in keeping their colleagues up-to-date, monitoring their planning and providing them with advice and resources.
73. There has been a considerable turnover of staff since the previous inspection. Induction has been a priority for both newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers new to the school. Teachers consider that they are well supported prior to, and during, their entry to the school. In addition, teachers work in year groups, plan

together under the direction of a year leader and draw on each other's strengths in this process. This has a significant impact on the very good quality and range of learning opportunities offered by the school.

74. Non-teaching members of staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in the quality of their work. The partnership with teachers is very effective and they give good support in lessons and whilst working with groups withdrawn for extra support. Lunchtime supervisors work well and consistently apply the school behaviour policy. The site manager takes a great interest in his work and in maintaining a high quality environment as part of the school's commitment to high standards. Administrative staff are very approachable and helpful. They provide welcoming points of contact for parents and visitors arriving at the school and their work contributes very well to the efficient and effective management of school life.
75. Accommodation is good overall, positively supporting learning. Pupils benefit from a pleasant, bright, clean and generally spacious learning environment. Displays in classrooms and corridors are of good quality. Since the previous inspection, important improvements include carpeting of classrooms to reduce noise levels and the installation of quiet areas and extra play areas in the playground. The playground is spacious and marked out to support a range of games, making playtimes and lunchtimes more interesting for pupils. The substantial grassed area provides additional playtime opportunities in periods of fine weather.
76. Learning resources are of good quality and quantity. They make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in the effective and efficient way they are used by staff. There is a very good range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library and in classrooms. Consumable materials, such as those used for art and design and design and technology, are regularly replaced. The range and quality of hardware and software for information and communication technology are satisfactory. However, further developments in provision are hindered by problems the school is experiencing with the supplier in providing technical support and maintenance. Pupils benefit from equipment of good quality for use in the hall and outside during physical education lessons. The variety and range of musical instruments are good. Resources available to support pupils' multicultural education, particularly in the creative arts and religious education, are of good quality but the range of cultures represented by them is narrower than might be expected.

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

There are no key issues for the school because of its many strengths.

### **Other matters for consideration by the school**

- (1) Provide more opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to devise their own experiments and investigations, follow their own lines of enquiry and solve problems.  
*(Paragraphs: 2, 28, 34, 100, 107, 130, 137)*
- (2) Improve the provision for the promotion of pupils' multicultural education.  
*(Paragraphs: 41, 143)*
- (3) Consider ways that information and communication technology resources can continue to be used effectively to support pupils' learning whilst governors deal

with difficulties experienced with the company contracted to supply and maintain hardware and software.  
*(Paragraphs: 10, 131, 137)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	23	32	8	0	0	0
Percentage	14	31	44	11	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	347
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.2
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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
	2002	41	46	87

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	28	30	39
	Girls	37	36	40
	Total	65	66	79
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (80)	76 (72)	91 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	28	31	29
	Girls	35	37	36
	Total	63	68	65
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	72 (78)	78 (86)	75 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	324	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	29

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	807,172
Total expenditure	790,177
Expenditure per pupil	2,258
Balance brought forward from previous year	46,452
Balance carried forward to next year	61,441

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11

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	288
Number of questionnaires returned	125

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	0	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	45	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	43	6	2	1
The teaching is good.	61	38	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	41	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	22	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	47	45	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	69	29	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	1	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	18	2	1	1

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

**ENGLISH**

Strengths

- Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very effective.

77. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are well above average. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were above average. Test results over the past three years show that the performances of pupils by the end of Year 6 have been just above average in reading and writing when compared to national results and those of similar schools. More significantly, national test results show that Year 6 pupils in 2002 made improvements well above the national average when compared with their level of attainment on entry into school in Year 3. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make very good progress.
78. All pupils make very good progress and the very good achievement reflects significant improvements in the quality of provision since the previous inspection. The school's strategies for implementing and adapting the National Literacy Strategy have been made particularly effective by a number of inter-related developments. These include the analysis and creative use of information derived from the school's good assessment procedures and good planning to meet the needs of all pupils, with a strong focus on the specific skills requiring improvement. Teachers identify individual strengths and weaknesses at an early stage in school life, to create and re-arrange groups and to follow, or track, and target individual progress. The current priority is on improving pupils' writing skills, and strategies have been very successful as a result of very good teaching. Standards are well above expected levels.
79. Standards in both speaking and listening are well above expected levels. All pupils achieve very well in these skills. Significant strengths are the very good quality of discussions in lessons, the confident way that pupils express their views and opinions and how they listen considerately to others. Very good examples are set by all adults. In reading activities, pupils are encouraged to read aloud expressively. For example, in Year 4, average and higher attaining pupils read from the book 'Fantastic Mr Fox' fluently and accurately, with good expression and pace, to communicate the events and different characters. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 read selected examples from their own written work about poor people in Victorian times. One pupil read with real feeling for the family conditions at that time, 'The poor children stood on the corner of the street, dreaming. I don't know what of, but probably of home.'
80. The school has incorporated national guidance on spoken language into its literacy strategy and this has improved the consistency and quality of learning opportunities. As a result, pupils have good opportunities to work in pairs or larger groups. Pupils in Year 6 used interviewing skills very successfully as they worked in pairs to prepare biographical accounts of each other. They took turns to ask thoughtful questions and to speak skilfully to express opinions and feelings. With their partners, pupils listened with attention and strong interest. These skills made very strong contributions to the quality of pupils' written work and pupils are always very enthusiastic to read out their work to the rest of the class.

81. Reading standards steadily improve throughout the school and all pupils make very good progress over time. By Year 6, standards are above expected levels. On entry to Year 3, standards are below the expected range of attainment with more lower attaining pupils than expected. Very good teaching of key skills maintains progress at the correct pace for every pupil. In Year 3, pupils read text accurately and confidently express opinions about events in their story. They sensitively identify with different characters in books that they read. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit from regular and planned use of the library areas. Very good achievement is maintained in Years 5 and 6 with pupils gaining greater and greater enthusiasm for books and having preferences for favourite authors.
82. Year 6 pupils read a wide range of novels with enjoyment, reading parts dramatically. They note different ways in which the author has used print expressively and raise their voices, for example, when the print becomes larger. Pupils make perceptive comments about the feelings of different characters. These feelings are not always explicit in the story and the ability displayed by many pupils to use deduction is higher than that expected of eleven-year-olds. Lower attaining pupils read well and showed good knowledge by their clear explanations of different types of text and authors.
83. Standards of writing are well above expected levels by Year 6 and reflect the school's current focus on writing skills. In Year 3, very good strategies are used by teachers to encourage pupils to write structured and imaginative sentences which are grammatically correct. Almost every pupil uses a neat, legible joined style of handwriting. All pupils in Year 3 work at or above the level expected for their age when retelling simple nursery rhymes in descriptive style, and learning to use paragraphs to unfold events in clear sequence with good structure and detail. One group, working together to write about Jack and Jill, wrote very imaginatively. Their opening paragraph read: 'Jack and Jill were going up the hill to get some water. It was pouring cats and dogs but they were cheerfully singing. Even so, they kept slipping in the mud.' They used complex sentence forms effectively to show sequencing and empathy with characters and their feelings.
84. Almost every pupil in Year 5 and Year 6 has reached at least the skills levels expected for their age, with over half the pupils above and well above these levels. Higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils compose long stories which blend action with dialogue to entertain the reader. They use a mature, fluent and joined handwriting style and respond very well to a range of different forms such as interviews, science fiction and mystery. In demonstrating good response to one particularly challenging task of using personification in writing a poem entitled 'The Fog', one pupil began, 'He crouches down, afraid of his enemy the sun.' All pupils take great pride in their written work.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Of the 13 lessons seen during the inspection, ten were good or better, including seven which were very good and three which were excellent. Three lessons were satisfactory. The quality of pupils' work and progress over time, across the school, reflects consistently very

good teaching. Teachers mark work thoroughly and sensitively, giving clear direction to learning with constructive comments to help pupils improve even further. As a result of this acknowledgement, pupils feel that their work is valued.

86. Relationships everywhere are excellent and bring a happy and co-operative spirit to learning activities, within which pupils enjoy learning. All teachers use questions skilfully to promote further understanding of tasks. When relevant, they use prompts very effectively to stimulate different ways of thinking and encourage pupils to explore their own ideas through discussion. Resources and activities are well matched to pupils' different attainment levels. Teachers set clear lesson objectives and group targets, organise support effectively and make very good use of homework on a regular basis.
87. All teachers and pupils work together in a climate of high, but achievable, expectations. A key development is the planning of stimulating literacy opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to consolidate new learning, as observed during the inspection in history. Pupils develop a greater range and assurance in language skills by using them very imaginatively in different contexts and settings. Although limited in range, adequate links are made with information and communication technology in developing wordprocessing and research skills.
88. In the small number of lessons which were satisfactory overall, teaching assistants sometimes lacked an active role in the first part of the literacy session. When supervising group activities and in review sessions, teachers sometimes drew pupils' attention to routine points, rather than maintaining a critical focus on the key learning purpose of the activity. It is for these reasons that pupils' learning sometimes lost impetus and focus.
89. The two co-ordinators have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and also of their roles, which they perform very well. The impact on standards in English and on the quality of classroom practice and other provision is significant. They monitor teaching and pupils' work effectively and initiate and support developments which extend provision and maintain or raise standards. Resources are of good quantity and quality and are used regularly to support learning very well. Poetry competitions, drama productions, visits to the local library and visits to the school by local authors all contribute to the high standards in the subject.
90. The co-ordinators analyse assessment evidence thoroughly to identify features that need to be improved such as the current focus on pupils' writing skills. In support of this priority, separate lessons are provided for higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils in Year 4. During the inspection, these pupils were observed evaluating different versions of the school prospectus and agreeing ways to improve them. They used the style of persuasive writing to indicate to an anticipated audience that theirs was a good school. One section read, 'We are well known for our outstanding music and fabulous drama productions. Don't worry about anything, children here are really friendly.'

## MATHEMATICS

### Strengths

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils make very good progress and achieve well.
- Assessment information is used very well to identify pupils who need additional support or skills that need improving.

### Area for improvement

- Higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils do not have as many opportunities to solve problems as might be expected.

91. At the end of Year 6, attainment in the 2002 national tests was in line with the national average for pupils of this age. Results indicate that, in that year, the school was performing in line with the average of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average. When results are compared with similar schools based on pupils' level of attainment on entry into school in Year 3 with their level of attainment by the end of Year 6, pupils are shown to make very good progress.
92. Inspection evidence shows that the standard of work of the present Year 6 pupils is above average. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school due to the very good quality of teaching, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and careful analysis of performance and assessment data. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress because teachers ensure they are fully involved in learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make very good progress. There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of girls and boys or the attainment of pupils from ethnic minority groups.
93. Pupils in Year 6 confidently make a tally chart, enter data into a database and produce a range of different types of graphical presentation of the data for analysis. They make effective decisions about which type of graph shows the information in a format that is readily readable. For example, they analyse the length of time television commercials last to establish the average and produce graphs that clearly demonstrate their findings. These good standards are an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils have a good command of mental mathematical strategies. They use these well to calculate area and perimeter quickly and accurately in response to teachers' challenges, set by a series of images on an interactive white board. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produce pictogram graphs, showing which are the favourite fireworks in their class. They make up and cost a menu for a picnic and become increasingly adept at estimating how long it will take to carry out such simple tasks as writing their names or sharpening a pencil. Pupils in all classes benefit from teachers' emphasis on the development of different strategies to calculate and solve problems.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Of the ten lessons seen, nine were good or better, including four which were very good or excellent. The remaining one lesson was satisfactory. Where the teaching is most effective, for example in an excellent Year 3 lesson, it is characterised by frequent checking of pupils' understanding, revising misconceptions and moving on at a brisk pace when pupils' understanding is secure. Pupils were motivated by looking for their teacher's deliberate mistakes and this created humour and heightened pupils' enjoyment. The pace of learning is very good and is a significant reason why pupils achieve well. For

example, Year 5 pupils responded very well to lively and enthusiastic teaching as they were challenged to look for different strategies to solve problems. The teacher made good use of a competitive atmosphere to sustain pupils' interest and he was successful in maintaining a very good pace to pupils' learning as a result.

95. Teachers plan interesting and motivating activities for pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and have a very positive effect upon learning as pupils try hard to achieve the high standards set. Pupils of all capabilities willingly join in discussions and have a go at answering, even if there is a good chance their contribution is not accurate. It is in this way that pupils learn so well and at a good pace. Year 6 teachers make very good use of interactive white boards to catch pupils' interest early in a lesson. Motivation is sustained throughout the lesson when, for example, pupils keenly await the use of interactive voting to demonstrate their understanding of what they have learned.
96. Teachers use correct mathematical terminology at all times, which pupils then use to explain and interpret their work. Teachers are successful at encouraging pupils to explain the methods used to achieve their answers. This effective technique was a feature of all the lessons seen. Pupils of all capabilities gain from evaluating their work in this way. Lower attaining pupils in particular benefit from talking about what they have done. They gain the confidence to tackle problems in different ways, often encouraged and supported by skilled teaching assistants. Higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils are generally well challenged by their tasks, but there are not as many opportunities for them to apply their skills to solving problems as might be expected. However, the school has identified this aspect of learning as an area for development. Teachers' planning shows that they are beginning to set more realistic and relevant problems for all pupils to help develop understanding of the mathematical concept being taught.
97. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and used effectively throughout the school. All staff consistently apply the nationally recommended three-part lesson format. The three teachers in each year group plan lessons together. This effective arrangement means that each class is covering the same area of work and pupils benefit from a steady progression of skills between year groups. Teachers are very confident in their subject knowledge and planning clearly identifies what is to be taught. The purpose of lessons is shared with pupils at the start and this helps to make activities relevant. At the end of the lesson, teachers and pupils discuss what has been achieved and these occasions are used very well to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding.
98. The use of other subjects to support pupils' learning is satisfactory. For example, in geography, pupils give clear directions for a stranger to find their way around the local area, using mathematical language. Pupils collect data in science experiments and investigations and convert their results into different forms of graphs. The use of information and communication technology by teachers as a teaching tool has improved well since the previous inspection. As a result, pupils' use of information

and communication technology to support learning in mathematics is now satisfactory, particularly when handling data, but a shortage of appropriate software is limiting its effectiveness.

99. The subject is led very well by the subject co-ordinator. He regularly monitors teachers' weekly and medium-term planning, and the quality of teaching is monitored throughout the year. Consequently, he has a very good understanding of how the subject needs to improve further and what action needs to be taken. Assessment data is used very effectively to follow pupils' progress. Effective analysis of test data has led to the identification of groups of pupils who need additional support and the allocation of extra resources to boost the performance of lower attaining pupils. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and teachers target appropriate and more challenging work to these pupils. The organisation of Year 6 pupils into four ability groups is used effectively to raise standards.

## SCIENCE

### Strengths

- Standards have improved very well since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall.
- Pupils benefit from stimulating and motivating activities that sustain their interest and concentration.
- Lessons are well planned to make sure that activities meet the needs of pupils' differing capabilities.

### Area for improvement

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions for themselves about methods and ways of recording results.

100. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be average by the end of Year 6. Results of the 1997 national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 were below the national average. The scheme of work did not provide sufficient guidance for teachers on the step-by-step development of concepts, vocabulary and the extension of enquiry skills. There has been a very good improvement since then. There is now a good quality scheme of work. Planning provides good coverage of the required areas of learning and teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils develop a good breadth of knowledge and understanding, but do not have enough opportunities to independently apply their scientific enquiry skills to investigations and experiments.
101. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress. The percentage of pupils gaining the required Level 4 or above in the national tests and assessments has risen from about 40 per cent in 1997 to over 90 per cent in 2002. Forty-six per cent of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in 2002. When results are compared with similar schools based on pupils' level of attainment on entry into school in Year 3 with their level of attainment by the end of Year 6, pupils are shown to make very good progress.
102. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that teachers provide them with a wide range of interesting and motivating activities about the conditions

necessary for growth in plants, humans and other animals. Pupils work hard at writing and drawing about the human body and healthy eating. Teachers make activities particularly relevant to pupils by linking themes with other subjects. For example, during the inspection, pupils in physical education lessons showed a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the human body. The way the human ear works to hear sound was an important aspect of Year 5 lessons on designing and making percussion instruments of differing pitch. The work of Year 6 pupils shows a mature and sensible approach to lessons about human reproduction.

103. Pupils benefit from some interesting investigations and experiments in all year groups that develop their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties well. Year 3 pupils were observed testing the absorbency of various types of paper. The teacher effectively raised pupils' interest at the beginning of the lesson by reviewing their previous knowledge and understanding of the properties of materials such as wood and plastic. Pupils participated keenly in the discussion. The teacher gave pupils many opportunities to talk about how they might carry out the investigation and pupils' comments showed that they had a good awareness of why investigations had to be conducted fairly so that results were valid. As a result, they settled quickly to the investigation, worked hard and achieved well. The work of Year 6 pupils shows that they are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of reversible and irreversible changes. They record results carefully and make sensible predictions about what they think will happen during investigations. Interpreting results is not such a well-developed skill, although there is evidence in pupils' books of some higher attaining pupils writing thoughtful and well-considered conclusions.
104. Pupils are making good progress in their knowledge and understanding of physical processes. One reason for this is that teachers make effective use of resources and equipment to support pupils' investigations and experiments. For example, Year 4 pupils benefited from a good range of different materials to discover which ones did and which ones did not reflect light. Pupils worked in small groups and had sufficient equipment to help them move on in their learning at a good pace. Year 5 pupils made good gains in their learning about sound as they used a wide range of materials and equipment to make musical instruments.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and has made a significant contribution to the improvement made in pupils' standards since the previous inspection. Of the seven lessons seen during the inspection, five were good or better and, of these, two were very good or better. Two lessons were satisfactory.
106. Teachers are enthusiastic about their lessons and this is conveyed to pupils, who are motivated and keen to learn. Lessons move at a good pace. The management and organisation of learning for pupils of different capabilities are very effective. For example, a Year 3 teacher worked very well with a learning support assistant to involve groups of lower, average and higher attaining pupils in separate discussions matched closely to their levels of attainment as they prepared for an investigation. Lower attaining Year 6 pupils are given additional support by the subject co-ordinator

to help them with concepts and skills they find difficult. Pupils drawn from the three Year 6 classes were observed making good gains in their learning as the co-ordinator skilfully revised aspects of the constituents of a healthy diet with them.

107. Planning provides good opportunities for pupils to use skills, such as arithmetic, measure and data handling, which extend pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils are encouraged to write at length about their activities and to record how experiments were carried out. Worksheets are rarely used and, consequently, pupils' literacy skills are promoted very well. Information and communication technology is used well to help pupils, and particularly those with special educational needs, to record the results of experiments. Pupils' past work shows that there is a tendency for investigations and experiments to be too teacher-directed, with not enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions for themselves about methods and ways of recording results. The school is aware of this and work has already begun to adjust planning to promote more independent thought and application of skills.
108. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator. She has had a significant impact on raising standards since the previous inspection through her own effective teaching, providing helpful training and guidance for staff, and by improving the use made of assessment information to identify areas for improvement, provision and standards. The quality of her work is setting a good example for her co-ordinator colleague, who is new to post. Scientific activities reflect the school's aims and values very well in that they create positive attitudes and a desire to learn amongst pupils. The subject is well resourced and materials and equipment are well-labelled and stored, making them easily accessible to staff.

## ART AND DESIGN

### Strengths

- Pupils are given many opportunities to evaluate and improve their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

109. This subject has a high profile in the school and this contributes to pupils achieving standards above those expected for their age. The school has successfully maintained the good standards in this subject found at the time of the previous inspection. The recent introduction of the use of sketchbooks to add to the good provision has improved pupils' observational skills, an area identified for improvement in the previous report.
110. All staff use clear plans that build on pupils' skills and understanding very effectively. The school places a high emphasis upon pupils trying out ideas, evaluating their own and others' efforts and making improvements over time to produce work of good quality. For example, Year 5 pupils created a design using flower shapes from four different angles. Having studied some designs of William Morris, they used their own creations as the basis for a repeating pattern. They then enlarged their designs by transferring them square by square to an enlarged grid. Adding detail and colour very carefully, they produced finished work of a high quality.
111. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this, in turn, encourages pupils to challenge and extend themselves. As a result, most pupils

use colour and shape with maturity and their observational work is more accurate than is usual for their age. For example, pupils in Year 3 draw pencil sketches of each other with good attention to highlights and shadows using thin and thick lines and shading. Year 4 pupils extend their skills well to create portraits of the Tudors and then consider which materials should be used to create a collage and which areas should be painted to achieve the most realistic effects. Teachers make good use of the language of the subject to extend pupils' vocabulary and introduce them to a range of famous artists such as Morris, Seurat, Van Gogh, Lowry, Degas and Cézanne.

112. The detailed system of lesson planning provides good opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of materials and techniques such as painting, printing, collage, water-colour pencils, clay, wire sculptures and papier-mâché. Pupils become adept at selecting and mixing media. In Year 6, for example, they elected to use both water-colour and very detailed pencil lines and shading to add texture to their representations of flowers in a vase. The very detailed leaf and stem sketches were achieved very effectively through the use of faint lines for the slender leaves, strong lines for the large curved leaves and different shades of green to represent the different leaf forms and textures. Water-colour was used to provide a gently toned background to offset the colour and detail in the plants. Additionally, teachers plan adequate links with information and communication technology. Pupils use computer programs to explore and extend their artwork and a digital camera is used to put examples of school art and design work on the school's website.
113. Teachers frequently plan to use art to support pupils' learning in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. They enhance their classroom displays in literacy with colourful backgrounds and three-dimensional displays such as those in Year 3 relating to Celtic homes and patterns. In Year 5, pupils created detailed pencil sketches of Victorian artefacts. At the end of the session, pupils were invited to walk round and observe the work, comparing ideas and successes. This review involved sensitive and thoughtful evaluations in the appreciation of each other's efforts.
114. The subject co-ordinators lead with enthusiasm and a desire to reach even higher standards. They have begun to work with colleagues to extend the previous strengths in painting to other techniques and skills, particularly sketching. There is an effective shared approach to assessing pupils' work and this is helping standards to rise as areas for improvement are identified.
115. The rich curriculum helps pupils to express their appreciation of the natural world, to value creativity and the world of the imagination. These qualities ensure that the subject makes considerable and positive contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Two different art clubs are run and visitors to the school help to extend the range of experiences such as the brass rubbing sessions in links with the Victorians. Interactive displays are a strength of the school and one area is set aside as an art gallery to display examples of high quality work from past and present pupils. These displays are a constant reminder of the high profile of the subject in the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

### Strengths

- Teachers plan interesting tasks for pupils by linking them to class projects and work in other subjects.

- Standards have improved well since the previous inspection.

Area for improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the emphasis teachers give to different aspects of the design and make process.

116. Due to timetabling arrangements, no lessons were observed during the inspection, although design and technology activities were included in some science and information and communication technology lessons seen. It is not possible, therefore, to make a valid judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements of attainment standards are based on evidence from the science and information and communication technology lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' past work, including photographs, and discussions with staff and pupils. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Girls and boys show a similar interest and, as a result, they learn and achieve at the same rate.
117. At the time of the previous inspection, standards attained at the end of Year 6 were reported to be below expectations. Improved standards are due mainly to improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and to the quality of planning. Activities are often planned as part of class themes or as part of learning in other subjects, such as science and history, and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' better rate of progress.
118. Pupils are taught a good range of design and make techniques. Pupils in Year 5 designed and made complex structures based on a historical study of the Crystal Palace. They made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of fixing techniques, using canes and string, as a result. A successful design and technology week provided good opportunities for staff and pupils to focus on several areas of the required curriculum. Year 4 pupils talked knowledgeably about how they designed and made a boat that would float and how they evaluated the success of their design. Year 3 pupils designed and made well a chariot related to their work on the Romans.
119. Links with other subjects are successful in making activities interesting and relevant to pupils. In the science lessons seen, pupils showed satisfactory standards when they designed and made musical instruments as part of a project on 'sound'. They showed good attitudes to their work as they worked in small groups, sharing tasks and equipment well. Pupils were keen to demonstrate their instruments and to talk about why the instruments varied in pitch. Pupils make good progress in their learning when they are set challenges, for instance in Year 6 where pupils were challenged to float an egg to a soft landing. Year 4 pupils were challenged to design and make muesli and a box to put it in. They made good gains in their learning because they investigated what constituted good muesli before completing a design brief. Pupils were seen developing good speaking and listening skills as they used a design program in an information and communication technology lesson. At the end of the lesson, pupils' observations and comments showed satisfactory skills of evaluation.
120. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and much improved since the last inspection. However, there are inconsistencies in the way that some aspects of the subject are taught. For example, Year 5 pupils in one class were not given enough opportunity to evaluate their own and others' musical instruments and to suggest ways of improving them. Year 6 pupils made good quality hardback books related to their work on Egyptians and good quality Egyptian masks. Development of their

making skills was good, but the design aspect of the project was not given sufficient emphasis.

121. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. There is clear direction for improvement, with the co-ordinator monitoring and evaluating planning and feeding back areas for improvement to the teachers. The co-ordinator has provided useful resources to assist teachers with the design process. The use of information and communication technology is limited but is developing as the school's provision for information and communication technology improves. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are mainly informal, but are satisfactory.

## GEOGRAPHY

### Strengths

- Pupils' learning is extended well by a good range of visits and residential experiences.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

122. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be above expectations by the end of Year 6 and pupils made good progress. During this inspection, standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 are average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is better in some aspects of their work such as mapping skills and study of rivers. Standards are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection mainly because there has not been a permanent co-ordinator for the subject for some time. Two temporary co-ordinators have been in post since the beginning of the term and have already made significant adjustments to the scheme of work and the quality of teaching and learning.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Three lessons were seen during the inspection, all in Year 6. Two were good and one was very good. The lessons were characterised by good levels of challenge, especially for the higher attaining pupils, and effective use of review sessions at the end of lessons to discuss what had been learned. Pupils' learning moved on at a good pace because lessons were well planned to contain a variety of activities that developed pupils' skills step by step. Pupils used atlases competently to decide on the relevant details needed to plan routes to varying destinations.

124. Discussions with pupils and a study of their past work show that teachers are successful at promoting good attitudes in pupils because of the interesting activities planned. Year 3 pupils have produced a good display of work on rocks and soils, where they explored the importance of these using correct geographical terminology. Pupils in Year 4 described in detail the impact of a waterfall on a river's erosion. In one classroom, a display of pictures and pupils' work about the life of a river showed standards of knowledge and understanding in line with national expectations. Where pupils were given a clear structure for writing, and the teacher's marking was developmental, for example: 'What did you notice then?', the quality of learning was good. Pupils' learning is significantly extended by a three-day geography residential visit, which includes the study of stream erosion. In Year 5, pupils' work on rainforests was evident in a display of good quality work. Their learning had been extended by a visit to a place of geographical interest in the local area.
125. The co-ordinators provide good leadership. Planning and the scheme of work have been revised this term because staff had identified that standards were only satisfactory. The new scheme of work is of good quality but has not had sufficient time to make a significant impact on standards since its implementation. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is satisfactory. The co-ordinators have successfully improved the range of CD-Roms available to staff to support pupils' use of information and communication technology in their learning. They have useful plans to monitor and evaluate standards and the quality of teaching and learning during this academic year. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

## HISTORY

### Strengths

- Pupils' attainments are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good; teachers are enthusiastic and convey their enthusiasm to pupils.
- Dramatic re-enactments of life in the past make a significant contribution to the high standards achieved.

126. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve very well and attain standards which are well above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress. The school has successfully maintained the very good standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.
127. Staff and pupils throughout the school share an enthusiasm for history. This interest makes a significant contribution to the very good level of historical knowledge gained by almost all pupils. The curriculum is extended by the provision of regular special events that are highly effective in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding. At the beginning of Year 3, pupils are introduced to the exciting aspects of history based on a visit to the school by Bodicea. This experience lays very good foundations for enthusiasm for history during the rest of their time in school. Pupils are inspired by the experience and, as a result, their understanding and work is of a very high standard, with comments such as: 'She was very fiery'. This event helps

pupils to remember a considerable amount of detail about that historical period and to develop an insight into how people lived. Written work is of a good standard, with coherent accounts and an expression of views and opinions.

128. The very good start pupils receive is successfully maintained as they move through the school and pupils achieve very well in all year groups as a result. In Year 4, pupils talk with detailed knowledge about the Tudor period and describe some of Henry the Eighth's good and bad qualities. By the end of Year 5, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of life in Victorian times because they have re-enacted how children lived in those times. By the end of Year 6, pupils show very good skills of relating their understanding of the historical periods they have studied to each other. Their sense of chronology is very well developed.
129. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Five lessons were seen during the inspection. Of these, two were good and three were very good. Lessons were characterised by high levels of discussion and exchange of views. For example, Year 5 pupils made very good progress in the development of their enquiry skills during a lesson looking at Victorian artefacts. Pupils were successfully encouraged to use their previous learning to investigate what an object was and who might have used it. Pupils' enthusiasm for the task was evident as they discussed their ideas with each other. The teacher provided pupils with a useful framework on which to base their feedback to the rest of the class. Pupils were very confident in speaking and listening and were very good at explaining their thinking. The teacher used questions effectively to promote thinking and help pupils with their investigations when necessary. As a consequence of consistently good teaching and learning, pupils in all classes understand that there are various sources of information about life in the past that can be used to gain an insight into people's lives. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to help pupils search for historical evidence. Pupils use information with increasing success and, by the end of Year 6, have very well-developed historical enquiry skills.
130. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She is very enthusiastic about history and this has a major impact on the subject. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates standards and the quality of teaching and learning well, and this helps her to have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. She is aware that procedures for assessment, although satisfactory, require improvement to identify more accurately specific skills and groups of pupils where improvements could be made, for instance in the provision for gifted and talented pupils. The subject is used very effectively to promote pupils' personal development through drama, role-play and group activities. Speaking skills are promoted very well through the many opportunities to talk about history.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

### Strengths

- Pupils are provided with a wide range of activities that cover all areas of the required curriculum.
- Pupils use information and communication technology equipment confidently and have mature and responsible attitudes to its use.
- Pupils in Year 6 benefit from effective use of interactive whiteboards.

### Area for improvement

- Pupils' progress is not as good as might be expected because of problems experienced with the school's supply of hardware and software.

131. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Effective staff training, the use of interactive whiteboards in Year 6 and improvements to the subject scheme of work have helped to raise standards throughout the school. However, unforeseen problems experienced with the supply and maintenance of the school's equipment have made it difficult for staff to raise standards further.
132. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all areas of the required curriculum because teachers regularly plan opportunities for them to use computers in lessons. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils confidently enter data onto spreadsheets, command the program to analyse the data in various ways and then display the findings as graphs. They competently move through a series of different types of graphs looking for the one that will best display the information most clearly. They then refine their results further by, for example, adding horizontal lines to make reading the data easier, or changing the colour of relevant parts to emphasise particular findings. They are familiar with accessing the Internet and drawing down selected texts, illustrations and symbols to produce well-structured information sheets. For example, one group produced information on the devastating effects on animal life of fur hunting in Africa.
133. Year 3 pupils confidently use laptop computers and personal computers to produce display sheets for their work on 'autumn'. They competently change the style, size and colour of fonts, add borders and insert clip art illustrations. Pupils' control technology skills are satisfactory and are developed through interesting projects such as devising models of street lighting systems. Simulation packages aid understanding of how people lived in ancient times and pupils use these well to support the development of historical enquiry skills. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers because teachers ensure they fully understand what is required in each lesson. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of well-targeted support from teachers and teaching assistants that enables them to play a full part in lessons.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Of the six lessons seen, five were good or better, including one very good and one excellent lesson. One lesson was satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection and a considerable achievement for the school's training programme given the high turnover of staff in recent years. Teachers make activities relevant by linking them to class projects or work in other subjects. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils benefit from the mature and responsible approach to their learning because they can be trusted to handle expensive equipment, such as laptop computers, with care and so are regularly encouraged to use them.
135. Teachers are evaluating the most effective ways to use interactive whiteboards both as a teaching tool and to support pupils' individual learning. For example, some very skilled use was observed in Year 6 lessons. Teachers used this technology extremely well, rapidly moving between very well-prepared illustrations, diagrams, maps and scanned pages of workbooks. One very good feature is the use of individual pupil wireless voting controls for teachers to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding

of what has been taught by, for instance pupils responding with the press of a button to multiple-choice questions displayed on the interactive whiteboard.

136. The curriculum is broad and balanced and covers the required areas of learning well. The subject scheme of work provides teachers with helpful guidance on how skills can be developed step by step in each class and between year groups. The scheme represents a good response to criticisms in the previous report about its effectiveness. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory.
137. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is knowledgeable and has positive plans for the future direction of developments in the subject which are fully supported by governors. Following the previous inspection, the school rightly decided to overhaul its provision for information and communication technology. The school provided good quality training for staff which has successfully increased confidence and expertise. Governors and staff carefully selected a commercial hardware package. However, there have been problems with the equipment installed. As a result, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, whilst satisfactory, is not as well developed as it should be. This has slowed the rate of progress made by pupils of all capabilities, and that of higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils in particular. The co-ordinator and staff are aware that, while the problem is being sorted out with the supplier, teachers need to continue to provide pupils with as much access as possible to the existing hardware and software.

## MUSIC

### Strengths

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above expectations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good; pupils benefit from very good subject knowledge and expertise amongst staff.
- Pupils perform their own compositions and take part in school concerts with confidence and enthusiasm.

### Area for improvement

- The range of experiences for pupils of music from cultures other than their own is not as wide as might be expected.

138. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. Teachers had the expertise needed for specific teaching points, but lacked the knowledge to develop pupils' skills further. There has been a satisfactory improvement since then, largely as a result of the appointment of staff with specialist expertise and an emphasis on raising the status of music in the life of the school. As a result, standards, by the end of Year 6, are above expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. Of the five lessons seen during the inspection, one was good, two were very good and two were excellent. Teachers with particular expertise often take more than one class for music lessons or help colleagues in their year group with planning lessons. The subject co-ordinator is a part-time teacher without a class commitment, and this means that she is able to take classes and

groups of pupils during her time in school. As a result of these arrangements, pupils in all classes benefit from consistently good or better teaching, achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards of composing, listening and performing are above those expected for pupils of their age.

140. In a very good lesson for Year 4 pupils, the teacher's high expectations of what pupils could achieve were a key factor in the success of the lesson. Pupils showed a good knowledge and understanding of hand signs used to indicate notes, such as 'doh', 'me', 'fah' and 'soh', as they followed their teacher in warm-up singing exercises. Their listening skills were developed very well as they listened to bagpipe music and tried to identify the sound made by the drone. By the end of the lesson, they performed a song accompanied by a range of percussion and keyboard instruments. The teachers' skilful keyboard and guitar skills helped pupils to sing tunefully and with a good awareness of rhythm, beat and diction. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils made very good progress in a short time towards performing together two songs with similar accompaniment. The teacher continually encouraged pupils to raise the standard of their performance through her own demonstrations and her effective use of praise.
141. Teachers use the subject very well to promote pupils' personal development. There is a strong emphasis in lessons on evaluating performance, so that pupils are used to telling others about how they might improve their composition or the quality of their singing. For example, Year 5 pupils were observed practising an accompaniment to the song 'Frère Jacques' on glockenspiels. Pupils worked in small groups, taking it in turns to play whilst others listened. Levels of discussion were good as pupils worked hard to improve their performance. The teacher led a successful whole-class discussion in which pupils suggested how each group might improve. Pupils spoke confidently and all accepted the helpful criticisms very well. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils' confidence was such that the teacher received two offers from boys to sing by themselves.
142. Pupils have many opportunities to perform. Concerts and drama productions each year involve all pupils. The many pupils who learn to play recorders, woodwind instruments and violins play in an orchestra, typically consisting of over 50 pupils, at school concerts. The school choir sings at a variety of venues and events throughout the year in the local area.
143. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and is well supported by the other music specialists on the staff. She leads staff well in raising the status of music in the life of the school by providing effective guidance and support for teachers as they plan their lessons and class or year group contributions to school concerts. The curriculum is broad and pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities. During the inspection, these included recorder and guitar clubs, choir and orchestra. However, the balance of the curriculum is towards European music and composers and there is not as much emphasis as might be expected on providing pupils with musical experiences representative of other world cultures. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are largely informal, but are satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths
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- Pupils achieve well and standards are above expectations.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject is used very well to promote pupils' personal development.
- Pupils are regularly encouraged to discuss how their own and others' performance might be improved.

Areas for improvement

- Not enough time is always given to warm-up and cool-down activities at the beginning and end of lessons.
- There are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' performance.

144. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' standards were reported to be in line with expectations. Pupils made insufficient progress in some aspects of dance, gymnastics and games because teachers did not build on pupils' skills year by year. There has been a good improvement since then. Standards are now above those expected for pupils of their age by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. Standards are better because the scheme of work has been strengthened and teachers' subject knowledge extended so that there is closer attention given to the step-by-step development of pupils' skills.
145. By the end of Year 6, standards are above expectations overall. Pupils show good control of their bodies in gymnastics and dance lessons. Almost all pupils balance, jump and run with good levels of agility. They skilfully throw, catch and strike large and small balls. They are developing a good awareness of playing as a member of a team. Swimming records show that standards achieved by pupils are good, with a high proportion of pupils achieving the required 25 metres and many pupils swimming further than this. In games, the school achieves notable successes in competitions with other schools in the local area.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the eleven lessons seen during the inspection, seven were good, two were very good and two were excellent. Teachers plan lessons using a common structure, beginning with a warm-up session, followed by a main teaching session and ending with cool-down activities. Pupils show very good knowledge and understanding of the effects of physical exercise on their bodies as a result. In all the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were asked by teachers to explain the purpose of certain activities and responses indicated that pupils of all ages knew, for instance, about the function of the heart and the importance of preparing muscles prior to exercise. This was particularly evident in two lessons for Year 5 pupils, based on circuit training. In both lessons, teachers discussed with pupils the specific parts of the body that benefited from each of six exercises and pupils accurately identified appropriate muscles and limbs.
147. The Year 5 lessons were characterised by rigorous warm-up sessions. In some other lessons seen, warm-up activities were not sufficiently strenuous or lengthy or were followed by periods of inactivity whilst teachers explained arrangements for the main part of the lesson. All teachers effectively encourage pupils to improve by demonstrating skills themselves and provide good role models for pupils in this respect. They use praise and encouragement very well to sustain pupils' concentration and effort. As a result, pupils have very good attitudes to physical education, behave well in lessons and work hard to practise and refine their skills.

148. Teachers use physical education lessons very effectively to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem. They achieve this by regularly involving pupils in evaluating their own and others' performance. Pupils benefited from this good practice in all the lessons seen during the inspection. In an excellent Year 3 gymnastics lesson, the teacher discussed with pupils ways of improving their skills in all parts of the lesson. For example, during the warm-up, they commented on how they might improve leg, arm, hip and ankle movements. As they carefully set out the apparatus, they discussed with their teacher how techniques, such as carrying a floor mat safely, might be improved. Relationships between teacher and pupils were excellent and this meant pupils confidently offered their views and opinions. As a result, the atmosphere throughout the lesson was one of striving to do better and pupils achieved well and made good progress.
149. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are largely informal. Teachers know their pupils well and make satisfactory judgements about pupils' levels of attainment each year in annual reports to parents. However, the information they gather is not analysed critically so that areas for improvement can be identified and focused on in lessons. Consequently, there are variations in teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, for example between staff in Years 3 and 4 in gymnastics.
150. The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based on a good quality scheme of work that provides teachers with helpful guidance in all areas of the required curriculum when planning lessons. As a result, pupils benefit from a wide range of motivating activities that successfully promote fitness, agility and teamwork. Pupils gain from additional physical education activities provided during the year at after-school clubs and during residential trips. During the inspection, clubs included football, netball and basketball training and were well attended. Teaching staff, parents and visiting professionals train pupils to use equipment correctly and to play team games in a sporting manner. Levels of inclusion are good and pupils of all capabilities take a full part in the planned curriculum.
151. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and has not had time to make a significant impact on standards. He has good subject knowledge and expertise which he uses well to help and advise colleagues as they plan their lessons. Pupils benefit from resources of good quality and quantity.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Strengths

- Pupils' knowledge of world religions and other faiths is good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- The subject is used well to promote pupils' personal development.

### Area for improvement

- Pupils do not always appreciate the similarities and differences between different world faiths and religions.

152. At the time of the previous inspection, standards by the end of Year 6 were reported to be in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils made good progress. These standards have been maintained. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall in the acquisition of knowledge about different world faiths and events in the Bible.
153. Teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable by involving members of the community in lessons and taking pupils on visits to places of interest such as a mosque. As a result, pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. For example, they behave very sensibly during a variety of lessons that include such activities as singing with hand actions, debates, drama and videos. This means that teachers are able to use this interesting range of strategies, confident that the pupils will join in and respect each other's viewpoints. Consequently, pupils often achieve well and make good progress in lessons.
154. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a mainly good knowledge about the places of worship of a range of faiths. They describe the principal features of these places and what these mean to the followers of those religions. However, they do not make connections between these religions, for instance identifying those things that are similar and those that make them different. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 talk knowledgeably about Old Testament kings and prophets. Year 3 pupils discuss thoughtfully the story of Jesus' birth and the feelings that Mary must have experienced when told by the Archangel Gabriel that she had been chosen for this very special event.
155. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Four lessons were seen during the inspection, of which two were good and two were very good. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and, as a result, pupils' written work is neat and well presented. Effective use is made of the specialist subject knowledge of some staff to teach other classes. Older pupils benefit from these teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge and their ability to help pupils understand concepts and ideas that are often complex. An additional benefit is that pupils gain experience of the specialist teaching approach they will meet at secondary school.
156. Teachers use the subject well to provide very strong support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, Year 3 pupils' spiritual development was promoted very well as they thought about the implications of the birth of Jesus for Mary and Joseph. Group discussions and activities are used well in all classes to promote moral and social development. Study of world faiths and religions broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding of other people's beliefs, customs and traditions. Literacy skills are promoted very well, particularly pupils' speaking and

writing skills. They are encouraged to join in discussions and express their views and opinions, and to write at length.

157. Good use is made of visitors to the school, and visits by the school to places of worship. Local clergy are frequent visitors to the school where they talk about their work and lead collective worship. The use of a local church for a carol service gives pupils the opportunity to experience Christian worship in church.
158. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator. She provides good support for teachers as they plan their lessons and guidance on appropriate activities to suit pupils' ages and capabilities. She has monitored and evaluated provision well, with the result that the curriculum is based firmly on the locally agreed syllabus and provides for the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding between year groups. Assessment procedures are good and the information gathered gives the co-ordinator and class teachers a well-informed view of strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' standards. Resources are of good quality and quantity and well matched to the curriculum, an improvement since the previous inspection.