

INSPECTION REPORT

BEECHVIEW JUNIOR SCHOOL

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110521

Headteacher: Mrs. B. A. Smith

Lead inspector: Jo Cheadle

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th March 2004

Inspection number: 255470

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Guinions Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP13 7NT
Telephone number:	01494 527113
Fax number:	01494 443583
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. S. Horswell
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Beechview is an average-sized junior school for boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 11. The surrounding area is a mix of rented accommodation and some privately owned properties. An average proportion of pupils receive free school meals, but this would be higher if hot meals were available. Overall, the social circumstances of families are less favourable than found nationally. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds. The next largest group of pupils come from Asian origins and other groups include black African and black Caribbean. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high in comparison with schools nationally, as is the proportion of pupils who need support for a range of learning and behavioural needs. The percentage of pupils who have a statement to support their special educational needs is lower than the national average. When pupils join the school in Year 3, their attainment is below expected levels overall, although many do well in national tests at the end of Year 2. The school is currently involved with the Excellence in Cities initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23233	Jo Cheadle	Lead inspector	English; religious education; physical education; special educational needs; English as an additional language
9595	Susan Cash	Lay inspector	
30814	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics; design and technology; art; music
33100	Margo Barraclough	Team inspector	Science; information and communication technology; History; Geography

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited

Langshaw
Pastens Road
Limpsfield Chart
Oxted
Surrey
RH8 0RE

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet 'Complaining about Ofsted Inspections', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	16
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Beechview is an effective school where pupils achieve well. The school is very well led and managed. Teaching is good overall and a significant proportion of very good teaching was observed during the inspection. The governors provide good support and advice for the school. The school uses its finances wisely and achieves good value for the money it receives.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher and her deputy work together very effectively so that the standards the school is aiming to achieve are very clearly established, evident in all that the school does and shared by staff and governors
- Teaching is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning
- Very good levels of care, support and guidance shown to all pupils ensure that individuals can take full advantage of all that the school has to offer
- The very effective work of the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) helps pupils to achieve well
- By the end of Year 6, standards in art exceed the nationally expected levels
- Pupils' imaginative and creative skills are not developed well enough in some subjects

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the last inspection

The school was last inspected in 1998. In relation to the key issues raised at this time, **the school has made good progress.**

- Standards in information and communication technology now meet the expected levels and the overall provision is good
- The quality of leadership and management has improved and the school has responded effectively to its change in status and all national initiatives
- Curriculum developments have been good in most subjects and the school continues to improve the opportunities for pupils to learn in an exciting way
- The care and support for pupils has improved further and the employment of a learning mentor has greatly benefited many pupils

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	C	A
mathematics	E	E	E	E
science	D	E	E	D

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils achieve well at the school to reach overall standards that are in line with nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. Attainment on entry is lower than expected levels overall. When pupils join the school in Year 3, they have generally been successful in their Year 2 national tests, but assessments at the start of Year 3 show that many pupils have weaknesses in their basic literacy and numeracy skills that also affect their attainment in other subjects. In 2003 national tests, pupils did well in English, but the limited proportion of pupils who attained better than the expected level 4 affected overall test results in mathematics and science. Attainment at level 5 was similar to the national average in both subjects. Overall standards are currently higher in mathematics and science than last years tests indicated. Pupils also achieve well in ICT and art. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, resulting in very positive attitudes to learning, very good social skills and good behaviour. Attendance at the school is in line with national averages.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education for its pupils.

Teaching is good overall and has many very positive features that encourage pupils to learn well in lessons. A good curriculum is well enriched by a good range of extra activities that extend pupils' learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language is good. These pupils are fully included in all that the school has to offer. The gifts and talents of individual pupils are recognised and effectively promoted. Very good attention is given to health and safety and pupils are cared for very well. The school has strong links with many parents and good links with the local community. Links with secondary schools are very positive and the school works hard to maintain productive links with feeder infant schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management at the school is very good. The headteacher leads the school very well and her very clear aspirations for the school are shared with clarity and precision with the staff. The deputy head very ably supports the headteacher, and all staff know what they must do, when and why. Key staff carry out their work very effectively. They recognise the contribution they must make to whole-school developments and their work has a positive impact on standards. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and play a full role in planning the school's future. Overall governance of the school is good. Long-term developments are planned well and day-to-day business is highly efficient. Administrative staff provide a very professional, helpful and friendly welcome. Standards are improving because of the very good quality of leadership and management.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school and the opportunities offered to their children. Those who visit the school on specially organised days are very impressed by the work that is going on. The majority feel well informed about how well their children are learning and are especially happy with the quality of end of year reports. Children are proud of their school and really enjoy their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has a very clear understanding of what it does well and what needs to improve. The areas highlighted in the school improvement plan are accurately prioritised and organised to bring about the necessary developments.

The most important thing the school should do to improve is

- Improve the curriculum in those subjects where more creative and enriching activities would provide increased breadth and interest

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve **well** to reach standards that are in line with expected levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Those pupils who are identified as having particular gifts and talents make good gains from their starting levels and attain suitable standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading to reach better than expected standards
- Standards in art are higher than would be expected and pupils achieve well
- Pupils make good use of their information and communication technology skills in other subjects
- Numeracy skills are a weaker aspect of pupils' work and are not used well enough across the curriculum
- Many pupils find difficulty in being imaginative and creative in all subjects

Commentary

1. The school concentrates well on developing pupils' basic skills and reading is a primary focus. Teachers pay good attention to developing an enthusiasm for reading and providing suitably stimulating reading material to hold pupils' interest. As a result, pupils enjoy reading and many exceed the expected levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils' reading skills support good performance in national tests. In 2003, the proportion of pupils who attained above the expected level was better than the national average. Standards in art are also better than expectations. Creativity through artwork is well promoted through a broad curriculum and pupils develop good artistic knowledge and a range of skills. This is a strength that has been maintained since the last inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.4 (26.6)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.3 (25.2)	27.0 (26.7)
Science	26.8 (26.6)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 68 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now in line with expected levels. Pupils learn basic computer skills thoroughly and apply them well to support and extend their learning in other subjects. ICT is used as a tool to improve standards across the curriculum and pupils are confident to use the Internet, record results using specific programs and test out their design ideas with the help of computer technology.

3. While the use of numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory overall, pupils' numeracy skills are weaker than their basic skills in English and ICT. Starting levels are lower in mathematics and the school is working hard to ensure that improvements to the curriculum, staffing and resources are all used effectively to ensure that standards continue to rise. Pupils are not always confident in using number and this is most evident in lessons where they are asked to use their mathematical skills to aid learning in another subject. Out of the context of mathematics lessons, some pupils are unsure of calculations, recall of times tables is shaky and general mathematical knowledge and understanding are not readily available to support their learning. The school is well aware of pupils' needs, and mathematics lessons concentrate on developing practical and relevant skills to aid pupils with real life situations. Results in national tests are gradually improving and standards of work are

generally in line with expectations. As the impact of development work in mathematics becomes more evident, results in national tests are gradually rising.

4. Many pupils find difficulty in thinking creatively and imaginatively to improve their work. This affects overall standards, especially at the borderline between Levels 4 and 5, where self-initiated and original ideas are often the key to better levels of attainment. The school is working towards the development of creativity throughout the curriculum, and speaking skills are well promoted as the first step to developing original and interesting ideas. In story writing for example, much of the lesson time is spent talking through ideas from start to finish and teachers work very hard to encourage original ideas by working with pupils basic suggestions and *growing* the idea together with the class.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is **satisfactory** and their punctuality is **good**. Pupils' attitudes are **very good**. Their behaviour is good. Their personal development is good overall, with their moral and social development being **very good**.

Main strengths

- Pupils have very good attitudes to lessons and school: they are attentive and enjoy the activities
- The school sets high standards of behaviour and has very good systems for promoting them
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development
- Pupils get on very well together and there is very little bullying or harassment

Commentary

5. Pupils enjoy many of their lessons. When the teaching is interesting and fun, they listen very attentively, are keen to answer and ask questions and are absorbed in what they are doing. For example, in a very good English lesson, pupils worked in almost total silence as they were so absorbed in writing their poems. They are willing to persevere when the work is challenging and have the confidence to ask for help when they need it. They often work in pairs and do so willingly and without fuss. They are keen to earn points for their House and happily do helpful tasks, showing a good level of responsibility. Pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs and activities offered, though some find it difficult to maintain their commitment.

6. The school has a very detailed behaviour policy with a clear system of rewards and sanctions. The Golden Rules are discussed with pupils and frequently reinforced. Adults are very consistent in the way they deal with inappropriate behaviour, and they use the policy to good effect. They find many opportunities to praise and reward good behaviour, so that there is a positive atmosphere in the school. The number of 'exclusions', from internal detentions to permanent exclusions, is carefully monitored and all show a marked decrease over the last few years. There have been no permanent exclusions for the last three years.

7. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop socially during residential visits. Pupils in Year 4 go for a 'sleepover' and activity day, while Years 5 and 6 go on longer visits. A particular feature of the school is the way teachers sit with pupils while they eat their lunches in their classrooms and this provides very good occasions for pupils to talk informally with their teachers and with each other. Pupils learn good manners and are encouraged to bring healthy packed lunches to school. Pupils are invariably polite and considerate, holding doors open and greeting adults with confidence. Well-prepared assemblies, which involve pupils and hold their attention, support pupils' personal development. They frequently have a moral or social theme, for example, about being honest. Pupils contribute to a number of charities during the year, aware that there are others who need their help, including local elderly people. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Local religious leaders visit the school and pupils attend the church for their Christmas service. Pupils celebrate the major faith festivals such as Eid and experience music and dance from a number of different cultures. Visits and visitors widen their horizons.

8. Relationships throughout this multi-ethnic school are very good and so there is very little bullying or harassment. Pupils report that any incidents are quickly dealt with, directly by adults or through Circle Time. Adults set very good examples in the way people should behave towards others. Each individual is valued. Lessons regularly include paired and group work or need pupils to listen respectfully to their peers. This very positive learning environment has been maintained well since the last inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.5
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.0
National data:	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
119	1	0
31	1	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality education. Teaching is good overall. The curriculum is well organised and the needs of pupils with special education needs and those who speak English as an additional language are effectively supported. Pupils' achievements benefit from high levels of care and good links with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** and helped the pupils to make good gains in learning in most of the lessons seen. Effective use is made of assessment information to ensure that lessons are suitably challenging and pupils learn well as a result.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective arrangements for teaching English and mathematics in ability sets have a marked impact on how well pupils learn
- Very effective use is made of good quality learning support assistants
- Basic skills in English are taught well
- Sessions at the end of some lessons are not used well enough

Commentary

9. Teachers make good use of information about what pupils already know and can do to plan suitable lessons that challenge them to move on from the levels they have already reached. Setting arrangements, where pupils are taught in ability groups, are used particularly well to ensure that the work set for pupils matches their needs exactly, with the result that pupils learn well. Ongoing assessment is used to monitor how well pupils are doing and to respond to individual needs. Because teachers keep abreast of the standards that pupils are reaching, they plan effectively and new learning is well promoted.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	9 (27%)	14 (42%)	9 (27%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

10. Teachers work very well with learning assistants who provide good support so that pupils make as much progress as possible. Learning assistants are effective in their work, have good relationships with pupils, support teachers well and ensure that pupils' learning is continually promoted in lessons. This is of particular benefit to lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils have trusting relationships with their helpers and working partnerships are very respectful. Even when work is very challenging and pupils struggle at times, they are encouraged to persevere and this helps them to learn well.

11. In most lessons, teachers focus effectively on the teaching and consolidation of basic skills in English. They understand pupils' needs and are responsive to the higher than average percentage of pupils who require support for learning difficulties and the high proportion who speak English as an additional language. Basic skills are taught, practised and consolidated effectively as the necessary tools for the next stages in education. Even when pupils do not reach the levels expected nationally the end of Year 6, they acquire sound reading, spelling and speaking skills that support their future learning.

12. In some lessons, the plenary session (a time at the end of the lesson when the teacher consolidates and extends pupils' learning) is not used effectively. Sometimes it is used to talk about completed work in a *show and tell* style, rather than adding something new to pupils' learning or consolidating and affirming what has been learned. In some cases, the session is rushed and a few pupils pay little attention to what is being said. Where teaching was very good, the plenary session was used to assess how well pupils had done by looking at the work they had completed, but also to add to learning by asking new questions or providing a further challenge. Good plenary sessions also introduced the next step in learning and inspired pupils to look forward to the next lesson.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum that includes a good range of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is **good** and the school is **well** resourced. The staff are well qualified and have good expertise.

Main strengths

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good
- The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities
- The accommodation is safe and attractive

Commentary

13. The school provides a good curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Very effective emphasis is placed on building high levels of confidence and self-esteem that prepares pupils well for future learning and supports their good achievements. Pupils learn to work together and support each other. They develop personal values that affect their opinions about society and their responsibilities to others and the environment. Health and safety issues are promoted effectively. Pupils in Year 6 had recently visited Hazard Alley where they participated in health and safety scenarios. They related what they had learnt to their own lives and knew the procedure for making a 999 call.

14. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well so that they get the most out of lessons. The effective provision for special educational needs includes good systems for identifying and assessing pupils' needs, good individual education plans that effectively target what the pupils need to learn next and good support in lessons. National initiatives and specific learning programmes, such as additional support for language, add to the provision. The schools' learning mentor, provided by involvement in the Excellence in Cities initiative, provides highly effective support for pupils with social, personal and learning needs. The impact on these pupils' learning is that they make good progress towards the targets they have been set.

15. All pupils are treated fairly and they have equal access to the curriculum. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are valued and well attended. Activities include football, netball, hockey, athletics, cross-country, music and drama. All teaching staff and some parents run the clubs. Visitors to the school contribute to the curriculum. For example an astronomy road show gives pupils a greater understanding of earth and space, and members from local clubs have run coaching sessions in football, rugby, hockey, lacrosse and cricket. The Excellence in Cities initiative for gifted and talented pupils has enabled the school to enrich the curriculum by offering challenging activities in physical education linked to master classes at the boys' grammar school. As a result of their involvement in a wide range of activities, many pupils do well in sport and music, which also builds their confidence to achieve well in other aspects of their work.

16. The accommodation is safe, attractive and well resourced. All displays are very bright and colourful with some good work showing the effective links made between subjects, for example mosaics in the style of Ancient Rome. Resources for ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very well** provided for. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is recent and is sound.

Main strengths

- The school makes excellent provision in ensuring that pupils have an adult they can turn to
- The care and well-being of pupils is a very high priority of the school
- Careful monitoring ensures that pupils receive appropriate and timely support and guidance

Commentary

17. Many pupils need considerable support to get the most from their education and the school is very pro-active in finding ways to help each individual accordingly. To best achieve this, the school employs a learning mentor, a transition mentor and a home school liaison officer to work with the children and their families. These key workers are funded through the Excellence in Cities scheme, with which the school is closely involved. These adults, together with class teachers, learning support assistants and other staff, ensure that every pupil has someone to turn to at times of need. The learning mentor works with individual children and also provides a 'drop in' centre before school and at break times, which is a sanctuary for many. The home school liaison officer works particularly with the Asian families, providing translation services and explaining the British education system and what is expected of parents. The transition mentor enables pupils to move on to secondary school with confidence. The youngest pupils have a good induction programme, which helps them to settle quickly. Because of these excellent systems, many pupils achieve more at school than would otherwise be the case.

18. The school understands that children do not learn if they have worries or pressures and works effectively to provide a very safe and caring environment. All staff are very well briefed on child protection procedures. Very good attention is paid to health and safety. For example, a visit to Hazard Alley taught Year 6 pupils how to deal with some of the potential dangers they may face as they grow older. Pupils who are unwell are looked after and all accidents are logged and notes sent

to parents. Healthy eating and adequate exercise are encouraged. When pupils need extra support, the school seeks to work as closely as it can with outside agencies.

19. Thorough monitoring and tracking of individual pupils, alongside the personal interest adults take in the children, ensure that problems are quickly identified, remedial action taken and that improvement is taking place. Circle time provides regular opportunities for issues affecting particular groups to be discussed and resolved. There is a homework club for those who need help or a quiet place to work. The high quality care and support has been maintained since the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains **good** links with parents/carers and the local community. Links with other schools are **good** overall, with strengths in relationships with secondary schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links through Excellence in Cities and other groupings have led to a number of useful initiatives, which are benefiting pupils
- The school works very hard to support families in need
- Good information about children's progress, particularly end of year reports, enables parents to help their children if they wish
- Few parents are actively involved in supporting the school, despite the school's efforts
- Difficulties are experienced in maintaining productive relationships with some feeder schools

Commentary

20. The headteacher is quick to follow up opportunities to become involved in local initiatives, which will help pupils. Excellence in Cities funding has enabled the school to pay for much needed extra support for pupils and their families. The gifted and talented pupils enjoy a week at a secondary school doing science experiments and thinking skills. PE skills are developed through matches against other schools in a PE partnership and by having training from professionals. The headteacher has recently been to China to see schools in action there, and the group that arranged this visit plans to extend the links. Links with local infant schools are sufficient to enable pupils themselves to transfer happily but the school is concerned about the quality of information provided and there is little professional dialogue.

21. The school is committed to supporting whole families. The learning mentor, transition mentor and home school liaison officer all support families, as well as pupils within school. The learning mentor runs parenting classes and the school has facilitated adult literacy and numeracy classes and family learning. The home school liaison officer also provides translation for Asian families. A new project for the school that is proving successful is 'bring your parent to school'. Several families of children in Year 3 have taken advantage of the invitation and the school is planning to extend it to Year 4. An after-school club, 'computers for dads and kids' is also proving popular.

22. End of year reports are very detailed and have recently been redesigned after consultation with parents/carers. Termly grades for effort and achievement in each subject are also given. Each year group provides an outline of the topics that will be covered each term so that parents can help at home if they wish. Parents/carers can meet their child's teacher each term for formal discussion and the school says parents are very welcome to make an appointment at any time. It is difficult for parents/carers to speak informally to teachers at the beginning and end of the day as the school's situation means that they wait on the street rather than in a playground that has direct access to classrooms. A group of Asian mothers provided an Eid party for the whole school, with traditional foods and hand painting; this was greatly appreciated. A few parents help with extra-curricular clubs or in the classroom but there is, for example, no parent teacher association, which was still in existence but struggling at the time of the last inspection. Teachers organise various fund-raising events, which are well attended.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher and her deputy together lead the school very well. Management systems and procedures are very good, and the quality of governance in guiding the strategic direction of the school is good.

Main strengths

- The headteacher and her deputy lead the school with a very clear vision that is shared by all staff and governors
- A very strong commitment from staff to making sure each child gets the best from their education means that all pupils achieve well
- The co-ordinators for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) lead their subjects very well
- Approaches to financial management are very good
- Very good induction procedures support staff new to the school or the profession
- The governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses well and provide good support

Commentary

23. The headteacher, together with her deputy, leads the school very effectively by continually questioning what is done well and what needs to improve. In this way, staff and governors are always focused on raising the standard of pupils' achievement. The head and deputy's self-evaluation of the school is realistic. They have a very clear vision for future development, which is shared by all staff and governors. Everyone involved in the work of the school meets for a development day once a year to review the old, and formulate the new, school improvement plan, so that all staff and governors take ownership of future developments. Priorities in the school improvement plan are partly dictated by the school's involvement in the Excellence in Cities project, and they are very appropriate for the needs of the pupils. Currently the school is finding it difficult to plan strategically for the future because of the uncertainty about its size and designation.

24. The headteacher and deputy are knowledgeable about curriculum initiatives and developments and lead the team from the front. They are continually looking for new ways in which to maximise the opportunities for learning available to pupils. For example, an innovation as part of the Excellence in Cities project is the appointment of the learning mentor. She works closely with the deputy head, who is the special educational needs co-ordinator. These two key staff help to make sure that all pupils, and particularly those who have substantial needs, are given every encouragement and support to achieve as well as they can. Where possible, the families of these pupils are involved in their learning. This commitment to inclusion is shared by all staff, whether teaching or support.

25. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of subjects is very good, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT. Procedures for assessment are good, with pupils' progress being monitored carefully, especially in the core subjects. Effective monitoring of standards of teaching and learning takes place at all levels of leadership and has it led to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. Targets for the future achievement of pupils are linked effectively to the performance management of staff, and opportunities for professional development are good. The induction of staff new to the school or to the profession is very good, with entitlements to training, observations of good practice, and support being adhered to for the benefit of the pupils.

26. The governing body provides good leadership and ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Some governors are assigned to subjects or aspects of the school's work so that they have a better knowledge of school life, but currently there are several new governors who are still developing into their role. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it currently faces. They undertake the role of critical friend very well, both challenging and supporting the headteacher and senior team. The school's financial and resource management supports the implementation of the school's priorities very effectively, and the principles of best value are applied very well. The balance of money carried over from the previous

year is unusually large, owing to a residue of funding from the time when the school was grant maintained. This sum is gradually being eroded because the governors have made a conscious decision to maintain levels of staffing during a period of falling rolls for the benefit of the pupils. They are also aware that a contingency fund will be needed in the short term for essential maintenance work. New initiatives and projected spending are costed carefully with the help of an effective bursar.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	577 624
Total expenditure	607 664
Expenditure per pupil	2 712

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	245 737
Balance carried forward to the next	215 697

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good
- Teaching is good and assessment information is used effectively to match work to pupils' needs
- Speaking and listening skills are developed well
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported to learn basic skills

Commentary

27. Pupils achieve well to attain nationally expected levels in English by the end of Year 6. The subject is very effectively co-ordinated. There is a clear understanding of standards and an effective plan to improve the areas where developments are needed. For example, past action to develop speaking and listening skills has improved standards and pupils are attaining expected levels despite starting at a low entry point. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in their acquisition of spoken English. The co-ordinator is very open to trying new ideas to motivate and inspire pupils. She has high expectations of the pupils and staff and is enthusiastic about her work.

28. Teaching and learning in English are good. The co-ordinator successfully supports colleagues in improving their work and is a good role model for newly-qualified teachers. Good use is made of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils and are suitably challenging to move them on to new levels of attainment and understanding. Setting pupils by their prior achievements has enabled lesson planning to be even more effective, with the result that standards are improving steadily. The school's prediction that more pupils will achieve the expected level in national tests in 2004 is very realistic. There is also a clear understanding that the proportion of pupils who will attain better than expected levels might not be as high as last year, because the current cohort of pupils started with lower levels in writing.

29. Teachers have high expectations about pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons. This contributes effectively to the development of pupils' listening skills, as there is a general acceptance that when someone else speaks, all others must listen carefully. Lessons run smoothly and pupils concentrate well. Teachers prioritise the development of speaking skills as a tool for improving writing and a large part of lessons is spent on talking activities that stimulate ideas and rehearse suggestions for written work. Teachers' model examples of speaking and writing well and stimulate pupils with their suggestions. Individual pupils are pushed that little bit further to extend their spoken contributions, so that more interest is added or vocabulary is used in a more effective way. As a result, higher attaining pupils reach standards in their oral work that are better than would be expected and the majority of other pupils, including many of the pupils who speak English as an additional language, attain the expected level. As pupils spoken ideas flourish, their writing improves. Overall standards in writing are in line with expected levels.

30. Basic skills in reading, writing and spelling are well taught at the school. Pupils' attainments when they join Year 3 are clearly understood and, despite the fact that many pupils do well in Year 2 tests, the school clearly understands basic skills in English are not well established for many. Teaching prioritises the development of these skills, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education and also allowing all pupils equal opportunities to do as well as they can in all subjects of the curriculum. Reading skills are particularly well developed and the majority of pupils attain standards that exceed expectations. Teachers and learning support assistants provide very effective help and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs benefit greatly from the well-planned interventions used. Teachers plan well for these pupils and there is good liaison with the special educational needs co-ordinator to ensure that targets set for pupils are

realistic and success measured accurately. Careful monitoring of how well pupils are doing means that progress is continuous and consistent. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

31. A focus on the development of basic skills ensures that pupils are equipped to learn well in other subjects. Pupils use reading skills well to access new information, and learning from books stimulates their interest in many topics. Writing skills are consolidated and extended through many subjects, although at times, the need to write in some subjects is a little off putting for pupils who struggle to write well.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths

- Pupils' achievements are good
- Teaching is good and encourages pupils to learn well
- There are good resources for the subject and ICT is used effectively to help pupils to learn effectively
- The subject is led very effectively
- The use of investigations and problem solving has improved since the last inspection

Commentary

32. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in Year 6 national tests in 2003 was well below the national average and below average in comparison with similar schools. Current standards of work, however, are much better and in line with expectations at the end of Year 6. Test results in 2003 were affected by staffing issues and weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge in one Year 6 class. The school has dealt effectively with these issues. Good teaching is now enabling pupils to learn well and the majority are on track to achieve the predicted proportions at levels 4 and 5 in the 2004 tests.

33. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. During their years in the school, pupils' mathematical skills are sharpened and their understanding deepened to ensure that they consolidate previous learning and reach the nationally expected levels for their ages with more confidence. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were using partitioning to reinforce their understanding of addition with larger numbers. Setting of the pupils according to their ability contributes to their achievement; all make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, because of targeted support from both the teacher and learning support assistants.

34. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Where teaching is very good, teachers have strong subject knowledge, which results in good questioning. The structure of lessons means that the pace is usually appropriate, particularly in the use of starter activities, which encourage mental agility, and the clear explanation of the learning objective. Resources are used well, as for example in a Year 4 lesson on time when individual clocks were used to consolidate pupils' understanding. ICT was used particularly well during the inspection, for example in a Year 6 lesson on pie charts and a Year 3 lesson on bar charts, where pupils entered their own data and used a spread sheet program to interpret and create their own charts. Pupils feel comfortable about asking for help if they need it. They have a very good attitude towards the subject, being well motivated and focused on the task set. Where teaching is satisfactory, but has weaknesses, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, and time and resources are not used to their best advantage, which means pupils are not fully engaged. In some lessons seen, the teacher did not explain the task clearly enough before the pupils attempted it, so they needed more individual support, which slowed the rate of learning. When opportunities arose for assessment, pupils and staff made good use of them, but the conclusions to lessons were sometimes used only for this purpose and not as an

opportunity to move pupils on in their understanding. Good use of literacy was seen in most lessons, with a focus on key mathematical words.

35. The quality of leadership and management are very good. All staff are purposeful about raising standards. Examples of good teaching are shared with the whole staff and there is very effective support, especially for newly qualified teachers. Support staff receive numeracy training. Assessment is very good and leads to a clear understanding of what pupils' know and can do in order to plan for new learning. Teaching and learning are very effectively monitored through planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and some classroom observation. National test results are analysed very carefully to confirm strengths and weaknesses in attainment and make curriculum and teaching changes. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is a major focus in the school improvement plan. However, while references to numeracy are occasionally made in other subjects, there are very few overt connections made between the use of number skills to improve learning in another subject. Moreover, pupils do not make these connections independently, needing great encouragement to try out their number skills to solve problems outside of mathematics lessons. None the less, improvement since the last inspection has been good and mathematics investigations are now a regular feature of lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

36. The provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, pupils used ICT to create patterns and then rotated them through 90, 180 and 270 degrees. In design technology, the skill of measuring accurately was required to fulfil project designs. A mathematical program was used in an ICT lesson, and timelines were on display in history.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' investigative skills are effectively developed
- Developments are well managed as part of the whole school improvement plan
- Pace in some lessons is slow and pupils lose concentration

Commentary

37. Standards in science at the end of Year 6 are at expected levels. In the 2003 national tests, the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level was similar to the national average, but overall results were lower than the national average because too few pupils attained at the higher level. The school has concentrated successfully on developing pupils' investigative skills to ensure that higher attaining pupils reach suitable levels and lower attaining pupils develop science enquiry skills to support their progress towards expected levels. As a result, standards are improving and pupils' achievements are now satisfactory.

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers seek to make work varied and linked to other subjects. For example, as part of their work on the human body, Year 5 pupils learnt about healthy eating and different food groups, designed posters and leaflets about healthy food and led a school assembly about their findings. They thought about the food they ate and, as a result, the food they chose to have in their packed lunches became more varied and healthy. Teachers have a secure understanding of the curriculum and use correct scientific terms. Careful questioning and discussion ensure that the pupils have understood new concepts, such as air resistance and create suitable keys to explain their work. In a few lessons, teaching had weaknesses because the pace of learning was slow and pupils lost concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make sound progress. Lessons have a clear focus that is discussed with pupils so that they recall what they learnt previously and know what they are about to learn. Pupils respond well to investigative work. Investigations are written up well using a good scientific framework. Pupils record investigations with the help of useful and clear scientific diagrams that are labelled well.

39. The subject is well managed and this has contributed to a greater emphasis on scientific enquiry throughout the school. Overall leadership is satisfactory. Progress is monitored each term

by assessing the level of a piece of each pupil's work in scientific enquiry. Pupils are regularly involved in helping to assess their own work. This information is used well to establish challenging targets for pupils. Since the last inspection the school has purchased a scheme of work that is being used successfully as guidance for assessment. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths

- The subject is very well led and managed
- Teaching and learning are good
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects
- The subject is well resourced

Commentary

40. Pupils reach standards in ICT that are in line with those expected nationally. Since the last inspection, standards have risen considerably and all pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced all aspects of ICT, for example word processing, accessing the Internet for information, graphical modelling, producing graphic presentation and programming a moveable toy. Most pupils use ICT confidently. In Year 3 pupils know how to change the colour, font and size of text. By Year 5, pupils use a wider range of applications, such as desktop publishing templates to edit and annotate files. They all print their finished work independently.

41. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching methods are imaginative and thorough, leading to a high level of interest from most pupils. For example, in one lesson seen, pupils learnt how to program a Lego robot car by inputting various instructions. Teachers ask searching questions which enable pupils to predict what to do next. Pupils work well in pairs and those who have special educational needs are supported well and fully involved in lessons.

42. Leadership and management of ICT are very good. The school is well equipped with resources, for example interactive whiteboards, digital cameras, data projectors and a variety of software. The poor provision of resources identified as a key issue at the last inspection has been well addressed. Pupils now have access to the computer suite three times a week and the ratio of computer per pupil (1:6) is above the national recommendation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

43. The skills pupils learn in ICT are used well in other subjects. They use the Internet for research, for example to learn about the lives of children in the Victorian period. Pupils use encyclopedia programs to find out more information about India.

HUMANITIES

44. Due to inspection priorities and limited time, one **geography** lesson was seen, where teaching and learning were good. From work samples and discussions with pupils, it is evident that the full programme of study for the subject is covered and pupils develop a suitable understanding of places, environments, land features and weather patterns. Residential and local field study opportunities enable pupils to apply their geographical skills to collect and record information. The subject is suitably planned and regularly taught.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strength and weakness

- Pupils use a good range of sources and evidence bases to draw conclusions about past times and events
- In some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough

Commentary

45. Standards in history at the end of Year 6 are at expected levels and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The detailed scheme of work for each year group is based on national guidance, and this gives pupils a good coverage of the National Curriculum.

46. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and plan their lessons carefully to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In Year 3, pupils learn about the religious beliefs of the Ancient Greeks and relate these to their own beliefs. In Year 6, pupils empathise with poor children in Victorian times when they learn about their working conditions from the Internet. Since the last inspection, pupils have had more opportunities to interpret evidence and sources. For example, they know that artefacts such as the pyramids give first-hand information on how the Ancient Egyptians used to live. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are well supported in class, but tasks for the more able pupils are insufficiently challenging and they do not learn as well as they could.

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Monitoring of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, because the co-ordinator has focused on whether or not pupils are spending enough time on the interpretation of historical evidence and sources. The balance of the curriculum provision has therefore improved and pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop knowledge alongside historical skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led and managed effectively
- Religious artefacts are used well to promote understanding
- Some pupils are demotivated by the need to write down what they learn

Commentary

48. Standards in religious education meet the expected levels of the agreed syllabus and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of the expectations of the agreed syllabus and a secure knowledge of other faiths and their beliefs and practices is established well in the provision. The deputy head teaches religious education in many classes, providing release time for class teachers. She has a good idea of standards throughout the school and there is a consistency in the development of pupil's knowledge and understanding. She supports other colleagues well in planning and preparation of lessons. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The subject has not been a priority for development over the recent past, but the quality of the provision has been steadily maintained since the last inspection.

49. Practical resources and religious artefacts are well used to add interest to lessons, motivate pupils and promote effective learning. In a lesson about the Qu'ran, pupils found the holy book in its safe place, held and handled it in an appropriate way and learned about how the book would be used by actually using it. This was a very positive experience for the pupils that supported good learning. Pupils were less enthusiastic when they had to write down what they had learned. Not enough

thought was given to using varied methods of recording what had been learned that would consolidate pupils' understanding of a religious education theme. Learning in religious education was slowed for some pupils who found the writing and spelling process a chore rather than an aid to their understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

50. One **design and technology** lesson was observed during the inspection, and examples of pupils' work were inspected in displays around the school and in their books. A short discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator. The scheme of work is based on national guidance. There is evidence in pupils' books of the whole process of thinking, designing, choosing, creating and finally evaluating the use or purpose of the finished product, and how well it performs in comparison with the original intention. This greater emphasis on evaluation represents good progress since the last inspection. In the lesson observed, pupils were creating their own musical instruments, with the more able pupils encouraged to undertake the construction of an instrument which made use of different units to produce more than one sound. While pupils were able to discuss what they were intending to do, their level of skills was such that they needed a great deal of support to carry through their intentions. Questions directed at the teacher were cleverly manipulated so that the pupils themselves were encouraged to come up with the answers to their problems, if at all possible. Displays were seen based on pneumatic monsters in Year 3, designing purses in Year 4, pollution posters with moving parts in Year 5 and Aztec head dresses in Year 6.

51. The timing of lessons and essential inspection priorities meant that it was impossible to observe any lessons in either **music** or **physical education**, although they took place during the inspection. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their experiences and the specialist music teacher was interviewed. A good lunchtime instrument rehearsal was observed and pupils sang well in assembly. Dance lessons took place and pupils were involved in outdoor sporting activities in lunchtime clubs. Pupils enjoyed all of these well-planned activities. Residential trips provide opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities and there has been an overnight camp at the school. Both subjects have suitable time slots in all classes and are regularly taught.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths

- Standards of work seen are above national expectations
- Displays around the school are bright and colourful and celebrate the pupils' achievement
- Pupils enjoy lessons and approach their work with enthusiasm

Commentary

52. Two lessons were observed during the inspection and a wide range of art work from every year group was displayed well, creating a good environment in which to learn, as well as encouraging the pupils and valuing their efforts. From this evidence, standards are above national expectations at the end of Year 6, and pupils' achievement is good. For example, in a Year 6 display, the work of Cezanne was used to illustrate how to approach observational drawings of fruit, and the finished work produced with chalk and oil pastels was of a good quality. Evidence of the pupils evaluating their work was also seen.

53. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning were at least good. Strong subject knowledge and the expertise of staff made a good contribution to the development of the pupils' skills, and staff enthusiasm was infectious and transferred to the pupils. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is a strength, as was observed in a Year 6 lesson based on creating patterns and designs in the style of William Morris. Pupils enjoyed the freedom of creating, then redesigning and improving, their patterns and moving those images through flipping and rotating. Whilst there was a connection with numeracy and rotational symmetry, this was not made clear enough to the pupils, and so many were not as aware of the connection as they should have been, and did not develop their understanding of

this concept. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used previous learning very well when discussing how to apply patterns to the pupils' clay pots. Pupils worked well with the tools available and some referred to their sketches made previously in their art books. All pupils made good progress in both lessons and enjoyed creating their own masterpieces very much.

54. The subject is led and managed well, with the co-ordinator's role being one of facilitator. A training session on display is organised every September and clearly pays dividends. Resources are good and are organised into topic packs that contain the appropriate stimuli for that topic. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development through studying such topics as Egyptian masks and African art. A new style of assessment is currently being trialled in Year 5 that focuses more appropriately on recording individual achievement and progress. Art has not been a focus for development recently, but even so standards have remained above national expectations and this represents good progress since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

55. Only one lesson was seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as **very good**.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).