

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWNS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114366

Headteacher: Mr John Vousden

Lead inspector: Mrs Helen Hutchings

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th July 2004

Inspection number: 255989

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 484

School address: Rugby Road
Brighton
East Sussex
Postcode: BN1 6ED

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Louise LeSeve

Date of previous inspection: 8th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Downs Junior School is situated in the northern part of Brighton. It is larger than other junior schools nationally and has more girls than boys. The school is housed in Victorian Grade 2 listed buildings with only hard playing space and no field for games. The school serves its local, urban area and most pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school. Pupils' social and economic background is mixed but average overall. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Very few pupils leave or join the school other than at the usual times. Pupils' attainment when they join Year 3 is close to average overall. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is low. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, although currently very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average; the proportion having statutory statements is in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have specific and moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, but a few have physical disabilities. Awards made to the school recently include the Investor in People award in 2002. The school is involved in the national Leadership Development Strategy in Primary Schools and the Sure Start initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7541	Helen Hutchings	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology; history; geography
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
30814	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics; personal, social and health education and citizenship; music; religious education
32539	Elaine England	Team inspector	Science; physical education; special educational needs
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	English; art and design; design and technology; English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school, which is particularly effective in developing pupils' very good attitudes to their learning. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and given interesting work to do. The school is well led by the headteacher, senior team and governing body. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well in most subjects and very well in art and design and games
- Pupils behave well, form very good relationships with others and are very interested in their learning because adults manage behaviour very well and provide a very wide range of extra activities
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well
- The school is very good at ensuring that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well; teachers work well with support staff who make a very good contribution to pupils' learning
- Leadership is good at all levels
- Teachers' planning of lessons does not place sufficient emphasis on pupils using and applying their basic skills, particularly their writing skills, in other subjects
- Homework is not set consistently in all classes and marking does not always inform pupils precisely enough about what they have to do to improve

Since the school was inspected in June 1998, **improvement has been good** and the issues identified in the last report have been dealt with. Teaching has improved significantly and is effectively enabling pupils to achieve well. As a result, standards are higher than at the last inspection. Arrangements for the performance management of staff are in place to meet statutory requirements. Opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils are now good and arrangements for a daily act of collective worship meet requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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 and are reaching standards that are generally above national expectations. There has been a significant improvement this year in the results in the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics. Pupils join the school with a range of attainment but with standards that are average overall. Standards in the current Year 6 are above national expectations. Attainment in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and ICT is above national expectations, but in line with expectations in writing. Pupils also achieve well in design and technology, personal, social and health education. They achieve very well in art and design and games. In geography, history, music and religious education, pupils are reaching expected standards. Provision for pupils who

have special educational needs or learning English as an additional language is very good, and so these pupils achieve very well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are nurtured very well. Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very good attitudes to their work, are confident and friendly, and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils.

Teaching is good and ensures that pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations that pupils can learn quickly and they encourage pupils to do their best. They manage pupils very well so that the classroom environment is one of effective learning. Most lessons are well planned to provide good range of interesting activities, and so the pupils are fully involved in their learning and get a lot done. Support staff work well with teachers and make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Homework, however, is not set consistently. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully and work is marked regularly, but they do not always identify errors, show pupils exactly how to improve or make pupils aware of the standard of their work.

The curriculum is good. Very good opportunities are planned for pupils' learning to be enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school takes good care of its pupils and relationships in the school are very supportive. Very good links have been forged with the local community and other schools and these support the school's work in many ways and help to extend pupil's learning. The school has good resources to support pupils' learning. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but is expensive to maintain because of its age and its listed status, which means that refurbishment has to be undertaken to very high standards.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management and governance are good. Since his appointment, the headteacher has acted quickly to raise standards, and this has already been effective. He has a clear view of how standards can be raised even further and has gained the commitment of the staff to bringing about improvement. Governors are supportive, have a very good understanding of the school and have worked very hard to manage financial constraints imposed by the upkeep of an old building. Clear guidelines for subject leaders enable them to check on the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards. This is beginning to happen, but some initiatives aimed at improvement have not yet been implemented consistently and so the management of the school's performance is currently satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the care and education the school provides. The school has worked hard to build good links with its parents. In response to the questionnaire, some parents expressed concern about how well they are informed about their children's progress, but the inspection found that there are many opportunities for discussing progress with teachers, and reports provide parents with valuable information. Parents also said that homework is variable, both in quality and quantity, and inspectors agree. Pupils have very positive views about the school and particularly enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities. The very well organised school council gives pupils very good opportunities to have their say about the running of the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve standards further are

- Improve the quality of marking so that basic errors and misconceptions are pointed out and pupils are given more guidance about how to improve their work
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply and consolidate their writing in other subjects
- Review current school guidelines for setting homework and ensure that homework is set consistently in line with school expectations

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well throughout the school and, by Year 6, attain standards that are generally above national expectations. Achievement in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics, science and ICT is good. It is satisfactory in writing. Pupils of all abilities achieve well.

Main strengths

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving
- Pupils achieve very well in art and games
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well
- By Year 6, standards are above expectations in reading, speaking and listening, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, physical education and personal, social and health education

Commentary

1. The overall attainment of pupils when they join the school is generally in line with national expectations, but with reading levels that are above national averages. Pupils respond well to good teaching and achieve well across the curriculum so that the level of attainment of the pupils at the end of Year 6 is above national expectations in most subjects.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (26.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.3 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.4 (27.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 133 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2003, pupils' performance, as measured by the average points scored, was in line with schools nationally and with the results of similar schools². The school's improvement trend has been broadly in line with the national trend. There are no national comparative data available for 2004 yet, but standards are significantly higher than last year, particularly in mathematics which has been a specific focus for improvement. There has been good improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science, as a result of rigorous teaching in these subjects. The school has generally met and on some measures exceeded the targets set with the local education authority. This is good improvement over the standards reported at the time of the last inspection.
3. In the current Year 6, standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are above national expectations, but in line with expectations in writing so that there is room for improvement in this aspect of English. Attainment in art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and physical education is also above expectations. In geography, history, music and religious education, pupils are reaching expected standards. Pupils of all abilities do well and

¹ 2003 is the latest year for which nationally validated comparative data are available.

² Similar schools are defined as those with pupils attaining similar levels of attainment in the tests at the end of Year 2.

those who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language achieve very well.

4. The school looks carefully at pupils' test results and uses this information well to set targets for individuals in English, mathematics and science. Progress is monitored to identify possible underachievement. This information is used quickly to provide appropriate additional support, such as booster classes in mathematics or early intervention for learning difficulties, where this is seen to be needed and has contributed well to the improved standards this year. Data analysis shows some variation between the performance of boys and girls but no identifiable pattern emerges. For example, over recent years, girls have done better than boys in English but by an amount less than the national difference, while in mathematics boys have done better than girls but by a greater amount than found nationally. During the inspection, no discernible differences were seen in the achievement of boys and girls in lessons. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented achieve well, in line with that of their peers, due to teachers' close attention to needs of all individual pupils.
5. The school provides very well for pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils often make very good progress in lessons and achieve standards similar to other pupils, owing to focused planning by teachers and the very good support given by well trained classroom assistants. Pupils' individual education plans are used consistently in lessons to set appropriate tasks which meet pupils' particular needs.
6. The achievement of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is very good. The proportion of pupils who join the school speaking another home language is higher than is found nationally. They make very good progress learning English because lessons begin with carefully structured speaking and listening activities and pupils have talking partners to help them discuss ideas during class discussions. There are very good links with support services and, as a result, individual education plans for these pupils are rigorously monitored each week to ensure that all pupils make progress. Parents are very well supported by interpreters during parent teacher interviews.
7. Pupils use their speaking and listening skills well in other subjects and, as a result, develop these skills further. There are many opportunities for developing writing skills in other subjects but generally, basic spelling and grammar errors are not marked rigorously enough for these tasks to be effective in raising writing standards. Pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, when required to do so, and a number of examples were observed where opportunities were provided to consolidate these skills. There are insufficient opportunities in other subjects for pupils to apply their ICT skills developed in their discrete ICT lessons. This has been recognised by the school as an area for further development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave well. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance levels are satisfactory.

Main strengths

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well
- The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development
- Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are promoted effectively

Commentary

8. Provision for developing pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are happy to come to this school and have very good attitudes to their work. They say it is a friendly place, which they would recommend to other children. In

lessons, pupils work very hard, are motivated and conscientious. They listen well to teachers and each other and, when a question is asked, many hands go up in response.

9. Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. They value and respect the system of sanctions and rewards. A few pupils have been identified as having behavioural difficulties and these are managed particularly well by staff. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. As a result, these pupils do not disrupt other's learning and there is an orderly and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms.
10. There were some concerns at the time of the last inspection about the very boisterous behaviour in the playground. This issue has been a focus for staff recently and good progress has been made. Pupils' play is lively but good-natured. They make very good use of the wide range of activities provided for them and play together well. The 'yellow coats', who are all volunteers from Year 6, provide very good additional support to other pupils in the playground who may be feeling lonely or upset. Pupils do not consider bullying to be a problem in the school. They are confident that, should an incident occur, it will be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	407	21	0
White – Irish	7	0	0
White – any other White background	42	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	1	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0

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

11. No pupils were permanently excluded from the school during the reporting year. The level of fixed-term exclusions is high but this has involved only a few children and the rate has fallen as a result of clear expectations in place for acceptable behaviour. Pupils are confident, friendly and courteous. They are happy to discuss their work with visitors and take pride in the responsibilities given to them. Members of the very effective school council, for instance, take their role very seriously and show great maturity in representing the views of their peers. Relationships between pupils are very good and they treat each other kindly and with respect.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002/03 (%)³

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.7	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

³ Validated comparative data for 2003/04 is not yet available.

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

12. Attendance levels last year were well below those found nationally. However, this year the school has improved its systems to monitor attendance more closely and the overall attendance level is now much better. School staff work closely with the education welfare service in order to identify any problems and rectify them. As a result, the latest attendance figures are similar to those in other schools. Punctuality is very good. Pupils arrive on time in the morning and, throughout the day, lessons start very promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality education, which ensures that pupils are well prepared for secondary school. Pupils achieve well and attainment is improving because of the good teaching across the school, but the marking of pupils' work could be improved. The curriculum is good. Extra-curricular activities and experiences outside normal lessons are very good and enrich pupils' learning. Relationships with parents are good and are very good with the wider community. Arrangements for the care, support and guidance of pupils are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers work well together within year group teams to provide interesting lessons which engage pupils' well in their learning. Overall, pupils' work is marked and assessed satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they encourage pupils to do their best
- Teachers manage pupils very well so that the classroom environment is one of effective learning
- The teaching of art and design and games and for pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language is very good
- Pupils' work is marked regularly, but this does not always identify errors or show pupils exactly how to improve
- Homework is not set consistently

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	20 (36%)	28 (51%)	7 (13%)	0 (0%)	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.

13. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are now consistently good across the whole school and across all subjects. Teaching is very good for art and design, physical education and for pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language. Teachers have particularly good subject expertise in art and they transmit their enthusiasm for the subject very well to pupils. In physical education, the school uses the additional facilities and specialist advice available from the local secondary school with sports college status very well to provide a good a range of activities to engage and motivate pupils.
14. Throughout the school, teachers share their expertise well in year group teams to plan effective lessons. Schemes of work provide good outline plans and detailed learning objectives, and teams turn these into effective plans for individual lessons. Teachers then use their very good

subject knowledge confidently to explain things in ways which pupils understand. In a few lessons only, teachers did not make the year lesson plan sufficiently relevant to their class and their own style of teaching, so the lesson did not flow well. Tasks are planned well at several levels of difficulty to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers also use their good knowledge of the local area to add interest to topics and find interesting places for pupils to visit. Year 4 pupils had visited Newhaven Fort as part of their study of World War II and this experience captured their interest and had a strong impact on their understanding of what it was like to live in wartime conditions. Teachers involve pupils well in local projects, for example in designing a flowerbed as part of a local competition 'Brighton in Bloom'.

15. Teachers are particularly skilled in conducting question and answer sessions. They involve pupils very effectively in explaining ideas and concepts to one another. For example, when Year 6 pupils were investigating function machines in mathematics, the teacher questioned pupils in detail to draw out their understanding. In all classes, pupils have very good relationships with teachers and with one another and teachers use praise well to encourage pupils. Behaviour management is very good. Expectations are made explicit and are seen to be fair by pupils and the result is a secure environment for learning where pupils' views and inputs are valued. Teachers also give pupils time to think about their responses within this purposeful environment so that pupils are comfortable when they make mistakes as part of their learning.
16. Generally, there is an interesting range of activities planned within each lesson which keeps pupils motivated. Pupils were achieving well in a Year 3 science lesson about the way water is drawn up through a celery shoot because of the relevance and practical nature of the lesson. Teachers make sure lessons move at a good pace and set high expectations of what will be achieved within the lesson. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson where pupils were assembling scrapbooks of their chosen location, pupils were told clearly what they should have achieved by a certain time and this was pointed out to them on the classroom clock. These high expectations were also evident in a Year 4 literacy lesson where pupils were told that, by the end of their group discussion, they must be able to explain their views in detail. Sometimes the opening part of the lesson and teacher exposition is too long and reduces opportunities for pupils to undertake their own tasks when they find out for themselves how much they have understood.
17. Very good use is made of support staff. Teaching assistants keep a vigilant eye on any pupils who may be struggling with their understanding of what they are being taught. They help by breaking up learning into manageable steps so that pupils can acquire knowledge at their own pace. Most teaching is very good for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers provide appropriate work, model expectations and use additional resources to enable all pupils to achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Individual targets are tracked closely to ensure that progress is maintained and that learning is appropriate for the pupil's needs. A particular strength is the behaviour management strategies used, which enable pupils with social and behavioural needs to manage well within the classroom environment.
18. The school's guidance on homework is not implemented consistently. The current expectation of one homework task per week falls short of national guidelines and is not adhered to in all classes. Pupils said they do not think homework is important and that it does not matter if it is not completed. Where homework is used well, it enhances pupils' learning. For example, research on garden 'minibeasts' by Year 4 pupils was very good. Homework books are used well by some parents and teachers as a means of communication, but this is not consistent.
19. The quality of teachers' marking, whilst satisfactory overall, is variable. Marking of pupils' writing is not consistent in all subjects so that basic errors are left uncorrected. Some marking

in pupils' books is diagnostic and gives pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work, but in other books marking is not precise and is less helpful. There are some good examples of pupils using self-evaluation, for example in ICT, where pupils record their own development of skills. Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their progress against their targets effectively in reading, but this is not the case in mathematics.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well. Very good extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' learning. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good for most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for pupils learning English as an additional language is very good
- Staff are very well qualified and very effectively deployed
- Accommodation and restricted outside space is difficult to manage
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects

Commentary

20. All aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education are planned for and taught well, and so the school provides a broad and rich curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well in most subjects and reach standards that are above national expectations. Personal, social and health education, including aspects of sex education and drugs and alcohol abuse, is planned well as part of a discrete programme and is also taught within other relevant subjects such as science. The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection and good use is being made of national guidance.
21. Good planning ensures that pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding step by step and provides an interesting curriculum. This has improved since the last inspection. Year group teachers plan well together to ensure equality of provision across parallel classes in each year group. However, planning does not include enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. Links are very good with the main feeder infant school and the two main secondary schools to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Joint projects help pupils to make a smooth transition between one phase of education and the next.
22. The curriculum provides very well for pupils who have special educational needs. Programmes are in place to support these pupils, and practical work is well integrated within the curriculum to provide motivation and many opportunities for success. Teachers have a good awareness of the targets within pupils' individual education programmes and their progress is monitored closely to make adjustments to provision if the expected progress is not being made. Provision for pupils who are identified as gifted and talented is developing and class teachers make good use of questioning and a range of open-ended tasks to provide appropriate challenge. The needs of talented pupils are very well met through the extra-curricular provision, especially in sports and music.
23. Some good links are made between subjects to add extra relevance to pupils' learning and, where these are in place, they enhance pupils' achievement. For example, in Year 3, the science topic of light and shadow provided the stimulus for some very good creative writing and art work. The dance curriculum is also linked well to other subjects, including Tudor dance linked to history.
24. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school provides very good additional opportunities to enrich pupils' experiences and provide further interest. Extra-curricular activities are an important factor in developing pupils' very good attitudes to school and supporting their good achievement. For example, visits to local places of interest including Newhaven Fort add relevance to subjects such as history. Residential experiences develop

pupils' social skills well. Sports and music extra-curricular activities are strengths of the school. The school provides a wide range of lunchtime and after-school sports clubs and pupils participate successfully in competitive sports with other schools. Pupils' interest in music is developed well; almost a quarter of pupils have instrumental music tuition and the school choir and orchestra are popular with pupils.

25. Very good links with other schools and organisations further enhance the curriculum. Year 3 pupils produced good work on robots in collaboration with Sussex University. Activities planned with local secondary schools, for example making pizzas, help pupils to feel confident about their transition to secondary education. Links with the local secondary school with sports college status have had a significant impact on teachers' understanding and the school's provision for physical education. Lack of outdoor space for sports is overcome by the use of the games field at the secondary school, and games and swimming lessons take place there, where pupils take full advantage of the very good facilities. Music provision is enhanced by good liaison with local education authority music service, for example, many pupils were involved in music workshops with pupils from other schools during the inspection.

Accommodation, resources and staffing

26. The match of well-qualified teachers to the curriculum is very good, and their subject expertise is much improved since the last inspection. Support staff are well trained, deployed very well, and make a significant contribution to the achievements of the pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language. Support staff also make valuable contributions to whole-school issues, such as formulating the school's travel plan and setting up the school garden.
27. The quantity and quality of resources for most subjects are good, except in physical education, where the lack of equipment for various games makes them unsatisfactory. The library, although small, contains a good selection of books, which have been carefully sorted and improved.
28. Accommodation is adequate, but the school has to work hard to create an environment which enables pupils to achieve well. This is especially true when various weather conditions have an impact on the old Victorian building, which is expensive to maintain, for example parts of the roof leaks during rain. The state of repair of some of the toilets is a cause for concern amongst a majority of the pupils, and inspectors share their views.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of its pupils. Good systems are in place for the induction of new pupils and the school values pupils' views.

Main strengths

- Staff have a caring approach to pupils
- Procedures for health and safety are effective
- Arrangements for child protection are good
- The induction of new pupils works well
- The school council is very well run and effective

Commentary

29. The school is a caring place where pupils feel well looked after. This supports pupils' general well-being and is appreciated by parents. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are very good. Pupils know where to go and who to see if hurt or feeling unwell. Pupils feel confident that they can seek out and find support from an adult. As one older pupil commented, "There is always an adult there for you in this school". Levels of supervision are high across the

school. The 'buddy' scheme in place for older pupils to take care of younger ones not only gives a sense of responsibility to the older pupils but provides good support to younger children. Entry into the school at Year 3 is managed well. Pupils are given good opportunities to visit and familiarise themselves with the school, staff and other pupils. As a result, pupils settle quickly into the life of the school.

30. Local guidelines about child protection issues are followed and staff are aware of the procedures if a concern should arise. Further training in this area is planned for some staff. Adults work well with outside agencies to support those pupils who need it. Effective arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety of all in the school. All necessary risk assessments take place and regular safety checks are carried out. Pupils are made fully aware of safety issues including sun safety and safety in the school environment, for example in physical education.
31. The school successfully promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence as they meet regularly to discuss suggestions and concerns. Pupils assist staff in drawing up class rules and they are observant of class and school rules. The school council is well established and arrangements for its operation are very effective. Pupils take great pride in both having their say on the school's work and also in raising money for charity.
32. Pupils are well known to their teachers and have access to good levels of advice and guidance. Provision has improved since the last inspection because of better systems to monitor progress in English, mathematics and science in particular. Teachers help pupils to improve their work in class effectively. Pupils are encouraged to set personal targets and they use self-assessment strategies well. Marking does not always point out to pupils how to improve the quality of their work. Pupils' achievements are recognised very well in a number of ways, including weekly assemblies, certificates and articles in the school newsletter and along the achievement corridor.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents. The quality of links with the local community and other schools is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides
- The school provides very good information for parents
- Homework is not set inconsistently
- Very good links exist with the local community
- The school works very closely with other schools locally

Commentary

33. Parents are very happy with the care and education their children receive at the school. The school has worked hard recently to build good partnerships with parents and has retained to good position reported in the last inspection report.
34. Parents receive very good information about what is happening in school through well presented newsletters and regular contacts with staff. The school's brochure and governor's annual report to parents are informative and fully meet legal requirements for their content. Reports are issued in the summer term prior to an open afternoon. These reports are clearly written and they provide very good information for parents about their children's progress. The school's arrangements for homework are currently inconsistent, with differences in the quality and quantity of work set. Parents expressed dissatisfaction with this situation, which restricts their opportunities to support their children's learning at home.

35. The school seeks and values parents' views through the use of regular questionnaires. Attendance by parents at the twice yearly consultation meetings and weekly assemblies is very high, although meetings to explain areas of the curriculum are less well supported. Some parents attending the meeting or commenting on the inspection questionnaires expressed the view that they would like to see a stronger school uniform code. The school had recognised this through its own survey earlier in the year but has not yet found an effective way of dealing with the issue because a significant number of parents want to retain the status quo.
36. Parents are supportive of the school's work by helping on trips, in classrooms and with extra-curricular clubs. A useful group of volunteers known as Parent Helpers at Downs helps to recruit and train other helpers. The school's Parents' Association, although fairly recently set up, is already very strong and active. Many fund-raising and social events have been arranged and these are very well supported by both parents and the local community. Funds raised have helped to buy useful extra resources for the school.
37. The school has very good links with the local community, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are fully involved in major local events such as the Brighton Children's Festival Parade where they recently designed and made costumes for an entry depicting 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe'. Pupils regularly perform in concerts and take part in sports' events within the local area. Local commerce and charitable organisations such as Brighton Lions also provide very good support to the school. The school works closely and very successfully with other schools in the area. Good links with the infant school ensures that transfer is managed well and pupils settle quickly. The school has worked hard to build up very good curriculum links with local secondary schools in areas such as physical education and ICT. This helps to broaden pupils' experiences further, as well raise their attainment in these subjects. Staff work closely with those in other schools to ensure that the transition of pupils to secondary schools is a positive experience for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and governance are good overall. The headteacher leads the school well. Since his appointment, he has acted quickly to raise standards and has been successful. Governors are supportive and have worked very hard to manage financial constraints imposed by an old building. Management is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a strong lead in welcoming, including and supporting pupils of all abilities and backgrounds
- Some initiatives aimed at improvement have not yet been implemented consistently
- The school has very good induction procedures for staff
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

38. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. Since his appointment, he has shown good leadership and adopted a determined approach to raising standards. The headteacher, in partnership with the deputy headteacher, has a clear vision about what the school needs to do to improve. He has effectively built a strong staff team with a common understanding of key priorities for the school. The headteacher has had a strong influence on the good management of pupils with complex behaviour difficulties. He works incessantly to support teachers and pupils when difficulties occur. He has established effective systems to enable all pupils to benefit from the provision the school offers and, as a result, pupils of all abilities and

backgrounds do well. The commitment that all staff have to this aspect of the school's work contributes strongly to the very good ethos.

39. The school has identified its strengths and areas for development through a structured self-review, with the support of the local education authority. This has informed the school improvement plan and is the result of a close working partnership forged between the governing body, the headteacher and staff. The plan is successful in identifying the most important things the school needs to do to improve standards further. It shows clearly what needs to be done. Clear guidelines for subject leaders are in place, which enable them to check on the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards further. This has already been effective in raising standards in mathematics. Some aspects of management aimed at improvement, however, have not yet been implemented consistently. For example, the marking of pupils' work still has weaknesses. Checking on the quality of teaching and learning has been mainly limited to English, mathematics and science and so improvement in standards in other subjects has not been as rapid.
40. Systems for the appointment and retention of staff are very good. The headteacher and governing body ensure that vacancies are filled by high quality staff committed to the school's expectations. Very good induction procedures ensure that all staff soon get used to how the school works. They are supported very well in their professional development to enable them to become confident teachers.
41. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those learning English as an additional language is very well led and managed. In order to meet the diverse needs of these pupils, staff have undertaken additional training and good practice has been incorporated into school procedures. Management of pupils who find it difficult to relate to other pupils and staff has been a focus, as has improved use of ICT to support individual pupils. A particular success has been a new ICT program trialled with Year 5 pupils to improve reading and spelling. Its use has now been extended with equal success to Year 3.

42. Governance is good overall. Governors are supportive of the school and bring to it a range of personal and professional expertise. There is good communication between the headteacher and governors both formally and informally. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher and other staff once a week, and other members drop into school as required. There are good relationships with the headteacher, but governors are prepared to question and provide the necessary degree of challenge in their capacity of critical friend to ensure that decisions are tested and thought through. Governors also keep in touch with the workings of the school through their visiting programme, which is linked to the school improvement plan priorities. There is a strong sense of partnership with the school through the various links the governors have made, but there is also a clear sense of accountability through governors' oversight of performance management procedures. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The result is governors who have a very good knowledge of the strengths of the school and aspects requiring further development.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	999,390
Total expenditure	1,032,253
Expenditure per pupil	2,133

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9,441
Balance carried forward to the next	(-32,863)

43. Financial management is satisfactory overall. The school's financial situation has been affected by the state of an old building, which is in need of constant repair. The budget has been carefully managed. Governors have produced a three-year financial plan, using a transition grant, which projects the school to be in credit at the end of the next financial year. The school has recently been successful in gaining additional funding to refurbish the library and the computer suite. Day-to-day financial arrangements are sound and all issues resulting from a local education authority audit have been addressed.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in speaking, listening and reading
- The quality of teaching is good and teachers involve pupils well in their learning
- Marking of pupils' work does not always identify what pupils need to do to improve
- Leadership and management are good
- Pupils' literacy skills are used effectively in other subjects, especially to promote speaking skills, but there is no consistent expectation about the quality of written work

Commentary

44. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Although results in national tests for pupils in Year 6 have varied from year to year, owing to the differing levels of pupils' attainment on entry, progress and teaching are now consistently good, as are leadership and management. The 2003 tests results were in line with results nationally and when compared to similar schools. The results for 2004 have not yet been fully validated nationally but the results received by the school indicate that standards have improved significantly.
45. In the current Year 6, standards in speaking, listening and reading are above expectations. Standards in writing are in line with expectations. Pupils' achieve well overall, with satisfactory achievement in writing. The school has identified writing as a key area for improvement and has already implemented plans to raise standards. These are beginning to take effect because, by Year 5, standards in writing are above expectations. Despite the good teaching seen in Year 6, these pupils have not managed to reach this standard due to their lower earlier attainment.
46. Pupils achieve good standards in speaking and listening because of the sense of security that the school creates through its caring ethos and through the ways in which teachers involve pupils in discussions. When speaking to pupils, teachers give them time to think before replying about their responses to questions. For example, in a Year 3 class, the teacher asked a pupil to explain the different meanings of the word 'pop', and encouraged the pupil to think before giving the answer. As a result, the pupil explained that the word could be used to describe a fizzy drink, or a group who played popular music. Among older pupils, discussions show judgement and maturity and pupils are confident when making formal spoken presentations.
47. Throughout the school, pupils read aloud with understanding and talk in a lively and interesting way about their favourite stories. Pupils' good use of expression when reading aloud and makes listening to them a very enjoyable experience. Pupils in all age groups have a good knowledge of authors. This is because classroom displays promote reading with posters and printed biographies of authors like Michael Foreman. Pupils regularly take books home to read by themselves or to share with their families. These opportunities are used well to promote the love of books and to support the development of reading skills. Many pupils can locate information in non-fiction books. For example, one boy in a Year 3 class located a library book on 'communications', and then used the contents and index and to find the correct page for information about the telephone. By Year 6, pupils use thesauri to help them in their writing and dictionaries to correct spelling.

48. Overall, standards in writing are beginning to improve. Pupils in Year 3 are developing good skills and this is leading to continued improvement in standards. Spelling rules are taught well. Pupils with average or higher levels of attainment choose words carefully, taking care to achieve an intended effect. Almost all pupils produce well sequenced stories and accounts. By Year 6, pupils of average and above average attainment can vary the lengths and grammatical structure of their sentences to add interest to their writing. They are careful in their choice of words, choosing from a list, which is in line with expectations for their age. Handwriting is taught well. Pupils write in a neat, joined hand when they are completing specific exercises to improve the standard of handwriting, but this is not always maintained when writing in other subjects.
49. In the majority of lessons, the quality of learning is good, and sometimes very good, supporting the good progress pupils make over time. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It is a result of the pupils' keenness to learn, their enjoyment of English, and of good or very good teaching. The relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults are very good. Because pupils and their aptitudes and learning difficulties are well known, mutual confidence and trust support the best learning. Teachers have a firm, friendly and collaborative approach which is the driving force of the best teaching, together with good planning of lessons where work is set that is appropriate for the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are effective because they know pupils well and provide those who need it with well-focused support. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well. Where teaching was satisfactory but had weaknesses, teachers spent too much time explaining the lesson, which reduced the amount of time for pupils to work independently. As a result, less work was completed on time. Although there are some very good examples of marking, it is inconsistent overall and often pupils are not told what to do next to improve their work. Target setting is being developed, but targets when they are set (and pupils remember them) are not sufficiently individual and detailed, and they are too long term to be a driving force for immediate action by pupils.
50. English is led and managed well and the school has a strong and effective view of the importance of literacy and a good vision of the priorities for the subject. Resources are good and are used well. Although there are insufficient fiction books in the library to challenge and excite higher attaining pupils, there are plans to develop the library further during the next academic year.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Literacy skills are used and developed well in many other subjects. Speaking and listening skills, for example, are developed in a variety of ways. In art, pupils evaluate their own sculptures; in science, pupils regularly present their work to the class; and in mathematics, they are asked to explain the reasoning behind their calculations. Pupils have written in a range of styles and have been inspired to write poems of good quality, based on paintings by famous artists. Drama is used to good effect in many subjects. However, opportunities are missed in subjects such as history and geography to develop pupils' writing further. In general, pupils' written work in other subjects is not marked accurately to improve their literacy skills and basic mistakes such as incorrect spellings are left uncorrected. Consequently pupils have mixed messages about the quality of written work expected. This does not help in raising standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved considerably this year

- Good teaching enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well
- Detailed analysis of test results identifies areas for development
- Marking is inconsistent and homework is not set regularly enough
- Very good leadership motivates a strong staff team.
- ICT is not used enough to develop pupils' mathematical understanding

Commentary

52. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards were below the national average, and also below average when compared with similar schools. However, the trend has been upwards for the last three years and the unvalidated results for 2004 indicate that standards are much improved. This improvement is reflected in the work seen, both in lessons and in pupils' books, where standards are now above expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achieve well in lessons and their good progress over time leads to good achievement by Year 6.

53. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Where teaching is very good, teachers have strong subject knowledge and, through good questioning and explanations, they develop pupils' understanding very effectively. There is a strong focus on the use of correct mathematical terminology, which constantly reinforces the work learnt. The needs of different pupils are met effectively because careful lesson planning means that work is matched well to pupils' abilities and prior attainment. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, receive very good support from their teachers and from teaching assistants. Self-assessment is regularly encouraged, for example as seen in a Year 6 lesson on function machines, which helps teachers to understand pupils' perceptions about their learning. Pupils are constantly expected to explain their methodology, which they do with confidence and success. Very good relationships and behaviour contribute to a good learning climate in the classroom. Where teaching was satisfactory but had weaknesses, teachers' explanations can be too long and reduce the opportunities for independent work. Noise levels can be too high so that pupils' concentration is affected. When they are working with one group of pupils, teachers are not always aware of the slow rate of progress and difficulties of some other pupils.
54. Leadership of the subject is very good. The recent focus on pupils' achievement has driven up standards, and this has been achieved by checking on the quality of teaching and learning and introducing a whole-school policy on teaching calculations. Leadership is knowledgeable about teaching and curriculum development, motivates staff and pupils, and is committed to staff development by leading training. Management is good. Pupils' performance is monitored and analysed, and this information is used to identify those pupils who need further support. Good assessment of pupils' progress on a daily basis informs the teacher of the next steps required in learning. However, marking is inconsistent, with some staff giving helpful guidance on how pupils can improve, but others not doing so. Pupils do not have individual targets so it is difficult for them to take responsibility for their own learning because they do not know what the next step should be. ICT is not used sufficiently to develop pupils' mathematical skills, but this is an area already included within the subject's action plan.
55. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. All of the nine weaknesses raised in the last report have significantly improved, except the use of ICT and the overall quality of marking. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, and so standards are now much higher. Whilst homework is now set, it is not regular enough to make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. The use of mathematical skills across the curriculum is satisfactory, but is still an area for development identified by the school as there are not yet sufficient ways of developing pupils' skills further through relevant application in other subjects. Some examples were seen in science, where Year 3 pupils constructed a bar chart recording the length of shadows, and Year 5 pupils recognised the need to make accurate measurements of water in millilitres. In Year 5 design and technology, good use of bar graphs was evident within a topic on healthy eating. In religious education, Year 3 pupils were given Elizabeth Fry's dates of birth and death and were able to work out mentally how old she was when she died. A novel idea was seen in a Year 5 registration period, where the pupils indicated whether they were present by giving the multiples of six in the correct order.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Investigational work is a strength of the science curriculum
- Teacher's scientific knowledge is good
- There is good support for pupils who have special educational needs
- Assessment, marking and feedback to pupils are not used well enough to raise standards
- Teachers do not make best use of links with other subjects, especially mathematics and ICT

Commentary

57. Pupils achieve well and the standards of work in pupil's books are above levels expected nationally. The 2003 results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were above national averages and also above those of similar schools. The unvalidated results in the 2004 tests show slight further improvement. Since the last inspection, improvement has been good.
58. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to make appropriate links to earlier learning. Many teachers summarise learning well so that pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their own achievements and understanding. Teachers find interesting ways to teach science and include plenty of practical investigations. Where pupils are involved in practical work, they are enthusiastic and eager to learn and so they make good progress. Year 3 pupils were very motivated when conducting an experiment to test whether water could be transported through celery, and Year 5 pupils were very engaged in a lesson to find out which soil contained most air. As a result, in both these lessons, pupils learnt a lot. Many pupils have good prior knowledge and explain their understanding of the subject well. For example, a Year 4 pupil explained that 'electricity could be made by fast flowing water spinning round'. On occasion, some teachers spend too long explaining the work to the class, leading to lack of pace, or stop pupils in their work unnecessarily. Pupils' science work is displayed very well in classrooms and around the school.
59. Overall, pupils' work is not marked well enough. There is too little feedback to pupils on what they have done well or what they can do to improve. Some errors and poor spelling are left unchecked. Skills covered in mathematics and ICT were not utilised well and consolidated in science. However, self-assessment sheets are used well by the pupils at the end of a unit of work.
60. The subject is led and managed well. Leadership is enthusiastic and is systematically ensuring good provision for teaching of the subject. Data analysis has been developed so that the progress of pupils is monitored closely as part of the school's drive for improvement. The more practical approach to the subject which has been introduced is very effective. Other new approaches include a written end-of-year test for Year 4 pupils and new assessments based on key skills. Science is resourced well, with new ICT equipment purchased recently.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident in their use of computers
- The curriculum is designed well to interest pupils
- There is not enough use of ICT in other subjects
- Leadership is very good and good management has helped teachers to develop their skills and confidence in teaching ICT in the computer suite

Commentary

61. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above national expectations. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 and their standards are at least above expectations for their age. Achievement is particularly good for older pupils who did not benefit from the programme of work which is now in place for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
62. Pupils are confident in their use of computers and have very good attitudes to the subject. They listen very carefully to the instructions being given and are keen to complete the task set for

them. Currently, pupils have to share a computer in the computer suite and pupils work well with a partner, readily taking turns and helping each other so that their progress is not restricted by a lack of computers. Pupils handle equipment with care and remain calm when they encounter technical problems. Pupils' attitudes contribute well to the good progress they make.

63. Teaching programmes are based closely on national guidance. Pupils in Year 6, for example, use simulation and control technology to input instructions to make their on-screen robots perform several movements simultaneously. Pupils in Year 6 also demonstrated their skills very effectively in a project to make animated books for children in the feeder infant school. This involved pupils combining a range of skills including editing functions and combining sound effects as well as commentary. The finished products are highly imaginative and should provide young children with a lot of enjoyment as part of their induction into the junior school. Pupils in Year 4 competently extended a database, which they had completed for themselves as part of a science topic, into a branching database which could be used by younger children to classify insects.
64. Teaching is good even though teachers are still developing their own confidence in the teaching of this subject in the computer suite. Teachers provide clear and careful demonstrations and explanation of the work to be tackled. They make good use of the available intervention software to check, support and monitor pupils' work as they work on-screen. Teachers are supported well by teaching assistants who help identified pupils and more generally around the computer suite. Pupils use any spare time they may have to improve their keyboard skills, without having to be reminded. Pupils monitor their own progress through a series of self-evaluations for each unit of work. A robust system for teachers to assess pupils' skills and understanding is under development and includes opportunities for teachers to compare one another's assessments.
65. Leadership is very good and has very successfully supported teachers to improve their subject expertise and increase subject provision. Surgery sessions for staff and a lunch-time club have effectively raised confidence of both staff and pupils. There is a clear and ambitious view about how the subject is to be developed further, as funding permits. Planning for this is good, being detailed and realistic. The school has been proactive in seeking out additional funding. Good links with a local secondary school are providing valuable technical support. Improvement since the last inspection is very good as provision has changed from unsatisfactory to good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The school is still developing its work in ICT, with the current suite being extended for the next academic year and the current, unreliable machines replaced. The school has identified the next stage of development as extending the use of ICT as a learning tool for other subjects and many subjects have included this in their action plans. Pupils apply their skills satisfactorily when required to do so. For example, Year 3 pupils chose appropriate pictures of the sun from a database to illustrate their word processed descriptions of the weather in geography. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply their skills acquired in discrete ICT lessons in other subjects, and for them to consolidate the knowledge, skills and understanding gained in their ICT lessons in relevant everyday contexts. This is partly because of restricted access to computers but also because teachers do not plan for enough use of computers as a frequent part of learning. The new laptops with radio links and the installation of more interactive whiteboards over the summer holiday will enable this to be undertaken more easily than has been the case until recently.
67. There are some examples of the use of ICT in other subjects, for example in geography and history. Pupils are provided with good models of the use of ICT in notices and displays around the school. In many lessons, there is reference to appropriate Internet sites which pupils might wish to use, but these were not observed being used by pupils in their classroom, even though computers were available. In mathematics, an ICT program was being used well by a parent helper to help a pupil who had been absent catch up with work missed. In music, a video was used effectively as a stimulus for pupils to make their own sound effects. A range of programs

has been bought to provide appropriate activities for pupils who have special educational needs and these are used very well. Additional programmes are being purchased for pupils to develop their skills in monitoring external events, such as temperature in science.

HUMANITIES

68. In humanities, work was sampled in **geography and history**. Pupils follow a unit of work in either history or geography each term. During the inspection it was only possible to observe lessons in geography in Year 3 and history in Years 4 and 5 and it is, therefore, not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays around the school indicate that standards are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the standards reported in the last inspection.
69. In both subjects, teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good. These lessons were amongst the last few for each topic and teachers had planned interesting tasks for pupils to draw together their earlier learning. In Year 3 geography, pupils were compiling scrapbooks about places of their choice, with particular reference to the leisure activities visitors might be enjoying appropriate to the weather conditions. Pupils used atlases well and were able to show the position of a number of countries and capitals they had already studied. Year 5 pupils used their skills of interpretation in history to identify Egyptian gods given a series of sources of information, in conjunction with earlier findings. In history, teachers provide a very good choice of stimulus materials within their classroom displays, including teachers' personal photographs and examples of clothing, which gives pupils a 'real feel' for the era being studied. There were some examples of pupils having written about aspects of their topic, for example writing as an evacuee child to a mother as part of World War II in Brighton. However, overall there were limited examples of pupils recording their own findings or opinions in an original way, rather than recording their outcomes within a prescribed framework.
70. Pupils spoken with were enthusiastic about the subjects, particularly about the field trips. Year 4 pupils' achievement in history was considerably enriched by a visit to Newhaven Fort because they had an opportunity to 'experience' what life was like during the war and during air raids in particular. In both subjects, there is a good range of visits and visitors into the school to bring the subjects to life for pupils and enhance their understanding.
71. The current leadership and management arrangements for both geography and history are relatively new. Good progress has been made in both subjects and action plans have been completed to develop the subjects further, for example to develop links with ICT for geography and to purchase data logging equipment. National guidance is used well to ensure that the curriculum meets requirements. However, medium term plans have not yet been made directly relevant to the school, although there are examples of teachers' shared lesson plans. Planning does not always ensure that learning is focused precisely on pupils' previous attainment and the school's expectations of achievement for each year group. Teachers work effectively together to plan lessons using the generic guidance provided by the co-ordinators. To date, monitoring of teaching and learning is limited, although teachers have moderated some samples of pupils' work to help to ensure consistency of teacher assessments. Pupils' assessments are made by individual teachers but these are not recorded as part of a whole school approach to monitor progress.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes towards this subject
- Very good use of resources and artefacts contributes well to pupils' understanding
- Teachers' assessments are not used well enough to monitor pupils' progress
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development

Commentary

72. Attainment in religious education meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of different world religions. For example, they understand aspects of Sikhism such as showing respect for the Guru Granth Sahib and what a Gurdwara looks like. Their achievement in this subject is good.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, which enables them to use effective questioning to develop pupils' understanding. All lessons observed made very good use of resources. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on Sikhism, the teacher showed a chauri and a rumalla and explained how they were made and their function. The pace of lessons was brisk, with appropriate time targets set for pupils' work. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and good support is offered to all pupils, particularly to those who have special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they respond well to the tasks set, participating enthusiastically in lessons. Very good links are made across religions wherever possible. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on the purpose of angels, pupils' understanding was developed because the teacher made the link between Gabriel and the message delivered to Mary and Jibreel's message to Muhammed. Occasionally, an opportunity was missed to develop pupils' knowledge because an aspect of the topic was not fully explored, or sometimes teachers' direction of the lesson was too long. During good questioning, teacher intervention in the answer came too soon, so that pupils were not given enough chance to show what they already knew. Overall, the subject constantly gives good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.
74. Leadership is good, with a clear vision for the future concerning pupils' progress and achievement. Enthusiasm for the subject is conveyed to staff and pupils. Good support is offered to other staff through training and information in meetings. Knowledge about the curriculum and ideas for teaching the subject are very effective. Management is satisfactory because, whilst the pupils' work is assessed against the 'I can' statements of the eight point national assessment scale in their books, the results of these are not recorded anywhere so that progress can be monitored.
75. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A policy for religious education is now in place, the achievement of pupils is good and the shortage of resources has been addressed. However, there are still inconsistencies in marking and the amount of recorded work, which is not as much as expected.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is very good.

Main strengths

- Standards are well above expectations and all pupils achieve very well
- Teaching is very good
- The school provides a very wide range of interesting activities
- Leadership is very effective

Commentary

76. Pupils attain a very good level of competence in all aspects of the subject and all groups of pupils achieve very well in relation to their average skills when they start in the school. Pupils enjoy the subject and this is evident in the way they concentrate and strive hard to improve in

lessons. From the time they enter the school, they learn to mix their own colours. As they move through the school, they become increasingly skilful so that when using watercolours in their still life paintings they vary the tone of fruits and flowers very effectively. Pupils show a very good degree of care in all of their work and are justifiably proud of their achievements.

77. The quality of teaching is very good. All lessons are carefully planned and resources and teaching assistants are used effectively to ensure that all pupils are interested and able to develop their skills very well. Pupils have a very good knowledge of famous artists and sculptors like Matisse and Moore. Lessons are very well planned to give pupils the experience of working in the artist's style. For example, when visiting Brighton beach, Year 6 pupils designed and made sculptures out of natural objects in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. They took digital pictures of their work. When discussing these during a lesson, one pupil identified that the sculpture her group created was not true to Goldsworthy's style as they had used a scarf found on the beach, which was man-made. Together with an enthusiasm for the subject that is infectious, the direct teaching of skills is very effective and ensures that work is of a very high quality. It enables all pupils to make very rapid progress and achieve very well.
78. The very wide and high quality learning opportunities for artwork planned by the school ensure that pupils become very familiar with using a wide range of media for a variety of purposes. For example, pupils in Year 4 designed and made costumes and larger than life figures based on the children's book 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe', when they took part in the Brighton Children's Festival Parade of children's classical literature.
79. The subject is very well led and managed and has improved the quality of provision since the previous inspection. Very high standards have been maintained. The action plan rightly identifies the recording of assessment as an area for development, although in the lessons seen and work scrutinised, pupils are reviewing their work regularly. Art is used well to support pupils' social and cultural development as most lessons focus on working creatively in groups and looking into the deeper meanings of art as a response to differing cultural values.

Design and technology

Provision in design technology is good.

Main strengths

- Standards are above expectations by Year 6
- The quality of teaching is good
- Leadership and management are good

Commentary

80. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is above national expectations and they achieve well in relation to their average skills when they start at the school. This is good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils say they enjoy the subject. This is because they are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their design and technology skills. Other subjects are used well to develop skills further. For example, pupils in Year 3 had made 'pop-up' books while studying a 'minibeast' topic in science. By Year 6, pupils work accurately with materials and components, paying attention to the function and quality of the product. For example, pupils in Year 6 have worked with fabric on making slippers. They learnt about the different types of stitching and other qualities, like fraying.
81. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. The good planning and pace of lessons and the effective use of teaching assistants ensure pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. The direct teaching of skills ensures that work is of high quality. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what makes things work. For

example, a pupil had made a moving model of two ballerinas. By turning the handle on the model, the dancers were raised and lowered as well as making them turn together. The pupil explained how making a cam, which was off centre to the axle, caused the effect.

82. The subject is led and managed well. Recently there has been a focus on developing pupils' evaluations of their products by creating more accurate design briefs. As a result, pupils suggest with accuracy how their designs can be improved. The action plan appropriately prioritises the development of assessment of pupils' learning.

Music

Provision in music is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in developing their composition skills
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and their attitudes are good
- Pupils' progress is not formally monitored
- Opportunities for extending skills in activities beyond class music are taken up by a large number of pupils

Commentary

83. Standards attained at the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well overall. For example, pupils in a Year 6 lesson explored the relationships between sounds and used these to interpret in sound a storyline from a short film clip. Composition is a strength and was a focus for lessons seen during the inspection. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is in line with the expectations for their age overall, but their attainment in singing is below expectations. Some pupils who benefit from instrumental lessons given by peripatetic staff achieve very well and attain standards that are above national expectations.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' very good musical skills are used well to encourage pupils to develop their own skills. The pace of lessons is good. Each lesson consists of several different activities which keep pupils interested and focused. During the course of lessons, very useful feedback is given to pupils to help them to improve. Sometimes the pupils themselves suggest how their performance or composition could be improved. Generally, pupils enjoy lessons and respond well and with enthusiasm to the practical tasks they are set. On occasions, however, some boisterous pupils can disrupt the flow of the lesson, and the amount of learning is reduced. In singing, opportunities are sometimes missed to improve the rhythm and pitch of a significant minority of pupils, for example in a Year 4 lesson when singing a selection of songs connected with World War II.
85. Leadership and management are good. The subject is taught by a part-time specialist who supports other staff by contributing ideas about music for assemblies, dance, and drama. Leadership is focused on pupils' achievement and is very knowledgeable about developments in the music curriculum. The five peripatetic staff who teach instrumental lessons to nearly a quarter of the pupils are managed well. Pupils' performances and compositions are recorded to assess their progress, but no written record is then made to chart progress over time. Many pupils participate in the extra activities provided, such as choir, orchestra and instrumental lessons on violin, guitar, 'cello and brass instruments.
86. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All of the issues identified have been dealt with, although standards in singing are not as good as at the time of the last inspection.

Physical Education

87. During the inspection there were limited opportunities to observe physical education lessons. Games lessons were observed but other aspects of the physical education curriculum were not seen. It is not, therefore, possible to form an overall judgement about provision.
88. Standards achieved in the games lessons seen were above expectations, with very good teaching. Teachers use a range of activities to engage and motivate pupils, and pupils remain interested throughout the lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on relay races, pupils worked hard to improve their skills in passing and receiving a baton. Pupils made good improvement during the lesson by following a sequence of well-planned tasks to guide them in improving their skills.
89. Outside space is insufficient and makes curriculum organisation difficult. This disadvantage is overcome well by the use of facilities at a local secondary school with sports college status. Pupils travel there by bus for some games lessons and Year 5 pupils receive swimming lessons there.
90. The subject is led and managed well and very good use is made of subject specialist advice and support, based at the sports college. This liaison has enabled the school to receive training, support with planning and the use of the college facilities. Physical education is enhanced very well by a wide range of after-school and lunch-time clubs and competitive

events. Resources for physical education are unsatisfactory, with poor gymnastics apparatus and poor games and athletics equipment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was inspected in full and is reported below. Citizenship is not taught as a separate subject, although elements of citizenship are included in the personal, social and health education lessons.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Provision in PSHE is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a high level of importance on pupils' personal development
- Pupils participate in these oral-based lessons with maturity and sensitivity
- The assessment of pupils' skills and understanding is unsatisfactory

Commentary

91. This subject is taught mainly as an oral-based course and so there was little work to examine. In the lessons seen, pupils achieved well in the topics they were studying. As it was near the end of the school year, pupils in Year 4 were considering their development over the past year and the areas of their lives where they had had success. They then considered next year and discussed the things they were looking forward to, and their worries, in a very mature and thoughtful way. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 were considering how they would cope with transition to secondary school in the next academic year. The very good relationships between staff and pupils meant that staff could reassure pupils about the future and allay any fears in a supportive way.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers support pupils well when drawing out their ideas and this encourages them to participate in discussion without any inhibitions. Planning is good, and teachers make very good use of reflection in lessons, for example in Year 3 where a sensitive response from a pupil included, 'I was sad and that made someone else feel sad'. The care of pupils and their personal development through support and praise is a high priority in the school and underpins the school ethos. On occasions, an undercurrent of chatting was not checked by the teacher and this affected the achievement of a small minority of pupils.
93. Leadership of this subject is good and management is satisfactory. Staff work well together and are supportive of each other in the whole-school teaching of PSHE. A strong commitment to staff development for the benefit of the school has been shown in the action research on emotional literacy. Staff are good role models for their pupils. There is no formal monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress in their developing skills and understanding. Information on sex education and drugs and alcohol abuse is taught through both science and PSHE. The school adheres closely and effectively to the local education authority's scheme of work.

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	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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