

INSPECTION REPORT

EARLS BARTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Earls Barton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121817

Headteacher: Mrs S Gedney

Lead inspector: Mrs L Moore

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd March 2004

Inspection number: 256012

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	303

School address:	Broad Street Earls Barton Northampton Northamptonshire
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Postcode:	NN6 0ND
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Telephone number:	01604 810371
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T McArdle

Date of previous inspection:	23 rd March 1998
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Earls Barton is a larger than average community junior school, catering for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. Pupil numbers are rising slightly, with few pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times. A very small number of travellers attend the school during the winter months. Most pupils are admitted from the nearby infant school and are mainly from the local area. The majority come from favourable backgrounds and have above average attainment on entry. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average, but the number with a statement of special educational needs is about average. Pupils' needs include specific learning, speech, communication or physical difficulties and autism. The school achieved Investors in People status in 2001 and was successful in renewing this status in 2004. It received School Achievement Awards in 2001 and 2002. The school campus is used by a wide range of community groups after school hours.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21243	Mrs L Moore	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
9883	Mr B Silvester	Lay inspector	
32954	Ms W Hawkins	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs
24891	Mrs J Johnson	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Earls Barton Junior School is a **good** school which is continuously improving because of very effective leadership, management and governance. Pupils are taught well, behave very well and have very good attitudes towards their work. They achieve well and attain above average standards. The school's budget is spent carefully and so the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards have risen and pupils' achievement is now good.
- The headteacher provides very strong, positive leadership and has been instrumental in improving the school since the previous inspection.
- Writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are not used sufficiently to support other subjects of the curriculum.
- Governance is very good; governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are closely involved in planning for improvement.
- Financial management is excellent and funds are well targeted to effectively help the school achieve its educational priorities.
- Pupils usually behave very well and have very good attitudes towards their work.
- There is a very caring ethos, which supports pupils' very good moral and social development.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the high quality team of support assistants.
- The school has developed very effective links with the local community.
- The quality and use of assessment in science and ICT is underdeveloped.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection six years ago and has responded well to the issues raised in the previous report. Educational provision, including teaching, assessment and the curriculum, is now good and leadership, management and governance are now very good. These improvements have resulted in a more effective school in which pupils achieve well.

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	C	A	A
Mathematics	D	B	B	D
Science	A	A	C	E

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' achievement is good and results in all three subjects have shown a marked improvement over the past five years. The results of last summer's tests at the end of Year 6 were high in English, particularly in reading. The similar schools grades in the table above indicate, however, that pupils did not make as much progress in mathematics and science between Year 2 and Year 6 as pupils at similar schools. The main reasons for this are the variation in the attainment levels of the different year groups and, in the case of science, variations in the quality of teaching in Year 6, which have since been resolved. Calculations of progress made by current Year 6 pupils since their Year 2 tests indicate that the school actually provides good added value. Current standards in Year 6 in reading, mathematics and science are above average, whilst in ICT, writing and other subjects inspected standards are average. Most pupils try very hard in lessons and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the high quality team of support assistants and also achieve well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Attitudes and behaviour are very good in lessons and at play. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching, learning and assessment have all improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Lessons are clearly planned and include appropriate learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. A good range of teaching methods is used, which encourages and engages the pupils, although the challenge for the higher attaining pupils varies too much. As a result they sometimes achieve very well but occasionally their achievement is barely satisfactory, particularly in science and ICT. Assessment information is generally used well by teachers to plan appropriate work for different pupils in English and mathematics, but less so in science and ICT. Support staff make a valuable contribution and all staff have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum is satisfactory as pupils' skills in writing, mathematics and ICT are not used enough in other subjects. Pupils are very well cared for and a very wide range of activities enrich the curriculum, including a number linked with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The headteacher is totally dedicated to the school and provides very strong leadership and clear strategic thinking which encourages the whole school community to work together towards further improvement. She is highly respected by staff, pupils, parents, governors and the community. Senior staff support her well in monitoring and working to improve standards in the school. Subject co-ordinators are keen and work hard, although some have not yet had time to fully establish effectiveness. The governors are committed to the school and have been instrumental in working with the headteacher to ensure significant improvements to the school since its last inspection. Management is effective and financial management is excellent, with funds being well targeted to effectively help the school achieve its educational priorities. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel their children like the school, and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Expectations of work are high and teaching is good. They gave few negative views, although there was some concern about pupils' behaviour including bullying. However, the inspectors found behaviour to be very good overall and any unacceptable behaviour to be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Pupils also show good levels of satisfaction. They like being in school and feel safe and secure. They feel they work hard and teachers help them to learn well. They like the way they are trusted to do things on their own. On the questionnaires, only one third of pupils found their lessons interesting and fun. Inspection findings indicate that some activities were lacking in challenge and interest, particularly for higher attaining pupils and in the mathematics lessons for lower attaining pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Develop the use of writing, mathematics and ICT within the other subjects of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality and use of teachers' assessment in science and ICT.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and pupils are now achieving well in English and mathematics.
- In English, standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 6 and have improved well since the previous inspection.
- In mathematics, pupils are achieving particularly well in mental work and problem solving.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of high quality support.
- Standards in ICT have not improved as much as in English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (27.0)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.2 (27.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.2 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 86 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Results in English, mathematics and science have shown a marked improvement over the past five years. This improvement in standards reflects the similar improvements in teaching, learning, leadership and management that have taken place over that time. The school attributed the unusual decline in results last year to an element of ineffective teaching at the top end of the school that is no longer evident, and to the lower attainment on entry of that particular year group. Standards have risen overall since the previous inspection and pupils' achievement is now good because of the very effective work of the headteacher and governors. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average and the school's records show that these pupils have achieved well. Calculations of progress made by pupils between their Year 2 tests and those in the current Year 6 indicate that the school provides good added value.
2. Standards in ICT are broadly average and have not improved at the same rate as in English, mathematics and science, partly because of limited resources. This issue is a priority for development. In English, standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 6 and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average because of the way these skills are used well in other subjects. Standards in writing are average and the school has put in place strategies to improve pupils' achievement in writing. In mathematics, pupils are achieving particularly well in mental work and problem solving because these aspects are promoted well in lessons. Standards in science have improved overall since the last inspection and are now above average although inconsistencies in marking mean pupils do not always have effective advice to help them improve. Most pupils try very hard in lessons and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the high quality team of support assistants and also achieve well.
3. In history, geography, design technology and art and design, standards are average and in aspects of music observed they are high.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is very good. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The social and moral development of the pupils is very good and is reflected in the pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and they are very willing to take responsibility.
- Pupils' relationships with others are very good.

Commentary

4. Pupils have a very good attitude to their work. They get on well with the task given, concentrate and persevere. There is a calm, friendly atmosphere in the school. This is reflected in the very good relationships between pupils and also between pupils and adults. Pupils of all ages work and play together well. The very good attitudes and relationships observed have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning.
5. The school's provision for spiritual and cultural education is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils participate in day and residential visits to places of educational interest. Visits are made to the local churches as well as the Sikh and Hindu Temples. A range of visitors comes into school to speak to the pupils about cultural and spiritual matters.
6. The very good social and moral education provided, including lessons in personal, social and health education has a clear and positive impact on the very good behaviour observed. A significant minority of parents had concerns about bullying but this was not supported by the inspection evidence. There had been three recorded bullying incidents since September 2003, all of which were handled effectively, and there was only one fixed-term exclusion in the year prior to the inspection.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
289	1	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
4	0	0

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

7. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibilities in their class and around the school. The school council is effective and their suggestions and decisions are beginning to have an impact on the day-to-day running of the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.9	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

8. The level of attendance is well above average and the level of unauthorised absence is broadly average. Most pupils are very punctual and holidays in term time are appropriately discouraged.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good overall. Teaching and learning are good, and there are particular strengths in the care given to pupils, including provision for their personal development, and also in the provision of activities which enrich the curriculum.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment have all improved since the previous inspection and are now good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are effectively planned and include clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils.
- Support staff provide a valuable contribution and all staff have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Assessment results are used well to show what pupils have achieved and what they next need to learn, particularly in English and mathematics, though the resulting provision for higher attaining pupils is inconsistent.
- Teachers plan very well for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well directed and highly effective.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	5	13	6	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

9. The good quality of teaching and learning reflects the input of an improved leadership and management system, including effective classroom observations, high quality performance management systems and high staff morale. Lessons are clearly planned and include appropriate learning objectives which are shared with the pupils. A good range of teaching methods is used, which encourages and engages the pupils, although the challenge for the higher attaining pupils varies too much. As a result they sometimes achieve very well but occasionally their achievement is only satisfactory. Examples of this were seen in mathematics, science and ICT. High expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are shown by all staff. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, the teacher's expectations were not high enough. This, together with the slow pace and ineffective questioning, meant that pupils did not achieve as well as they should.

10. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection, where it was identified as a key issue for improvement, and it is now good overall. The systems used across the school link together to form a reliable system for tracking the progress of individual pupils and also different groups. This enables senior staff to identify areas for improvement and groups of pupils in need of particular support or challenge and has a beneficial effect upon achievement. Assessment results are used well to plan appropriate work for different pupils in English and mathematics, but less so in science and ICT, where the current system does not provide sufficient information to ensure consistently good achievement by the pupils.
11. Teachers make very good use of assessment in their highly effective planning for pupils with special educational needs. Deployment of support staff is efficient and results in pupils making rapid progress towards achievement of their individual targets. Teaching assistants are well trained and many have specific skills to support pupils and they are highly effective in doing so. A particular strength is the quality of the relationships sustained by the adults that maintain pupils' resolve and motivate them through their difficulties.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but enriched by a very wide range of activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning for personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' overall development.
- There are many and varied opportunities for pupils to participate in activities linked with the local community.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; resources to support these pupils are good and contribute to their achievement.
- Writing, mathematics and ICT are not used enough to support learning in other curriculum areas.
- A very good and varied range of visits and visitors supports learning effectively and pupils are prepared well for secondary school.
- Well-qualified teachers and the contribution of support staff enhance provision.
- Inadequacies in accommodation have an adverse effect on learning in some subjects.

Commentary

12. The quality of the curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection. Whilst it enables pupils to achieve well overall, particularly in reading and mathematics, it is only satisfactory because not enough use is made of key skills in writing, mathematics and particularly ICT across subjects. Subject policies and schemes of work are now in place and the good planning for personal, social and health education continues to be effective so that pupils' behaviour and attitudes add to their positive approach to their work. The school's involvement in a project for developing pastoral care, the input of a trained counsellor and the provision of training days on 'circle time' have enhanced the curriculum.
13. Older pupils are taught in ability groups in mathematics, which ensures appropriate support and challenge for pupils of all levels of attainment. In literacy and the other subjects pupils are taught in mixed ability groups, with most teachers providing an appropriate range of support and challenge. Both arrangements provide tasks which are usually matched well to the needs of the range of pupils in the class, resulting in good learning and achievement. In a Year 3 science lesson based on the importance of magnetism in recycling, for example, the expectations for analysis and recording were appropriately matched to need. In a minority of subjects, like ICT and some mathematics and science lessons, this level of provision is not yet evident and in

these subjects higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and their achievement, though satisfactory, is limited.

14. The curriculum is monitored appropriately and adapted as needs become evident. In literacy, for example, extended writing has recently been promoted. The school has also developed and enriched the curriculum by extending the range of visitors, visits, role-play, drama and extra-curricular opportunities. These cover a wide spectrum of activities and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and recall. Pupils in Year 6, for example, talk clearly about their learning in history and geography from Year 3, quoting what they have discovered from local visits, Tudor and Saxon days and the experience of what it was like to be a chambermaid or butler in Victorian times. Residential visits in Years 3 and 6 contribute well to pupils' social development. Sport, art and design, music and French clubs are well attended by pupils. The positive impact of eighty pupils who attend choir practice was clear in assembly, where the quality of the singing was enhanced by the input of a descant part. Pupils are prepared well for secondary school and the 'bridging projects' done in English, mathematics and science are an important part of this. Independent learning is also developed well through the annual 'Governors Challenge'.
15. Staffing provision is good overall. There is a good mix of young and more experienced teachers who are deployed well, together with individual support for pupils who are not coping well with the demands of the classroom. The number and quality of support staff are also good, with particularly effective deployment in literacy, ICT and the library. Learning is supported well overall.
16. The accommodation and practical resources are now satisfactory, although movement between the different buildings on the school site is difficult. This is of particular concern at the beginning and end of the day, when pupils need to leave the school through the car park. Good use is made of the school buildings, with no significant time wasted through movement between lessons. Classrooms and corridors are attractively decorated and some rooms have been restructured since the last inspection. Strengths are evident in music, through the provision of a specialist room that is used for a good range of instrumental teaching. The combined use of a room for a library and an ICT suite, the temporary classroom, some classrooms having a lack of water facilities and the lack of field for outdoor games restrict achievement, although the school works hard to minimise this where possible. Cross-curricular use of ICT is limited by lack of classroom computers. There have been good improvements since the last inspection.
17. The school has a good range of resources to support learning for pupils with special educational needs, including a useful range of computer software designed for pupils with specific learning needs. Independence is encouraged through use of a specially designed laptop with predictive text, allowing pupils with poor keyboard skills the opportunity to keep pace with subject knowledge and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and health and safety provision for the pupils is very good. The support, advice and guidance given to pupils are very good. The involvement of pupils, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- Child protection procedures are well established.
- Regular health and safety checks and risk assessments ensure that the school environment is as safe as possible.
- Monitoring systems for pupils with special educational needs are highly efficient.

Commentary

18. Regular risk assessments and health and safety surveys are carried out. The school is working towards a Healthy School Award and encourages healthy snacks at break time, for example, the drinking of water is encouraged and water fountains are available. The school participates in a Healthy Attitudes Project, which is sponsored by a national company. There are three fully qualified first-aiders and a well-equipped medical room. The school nurse visits regularly to carry out health checks and talks to Year 6 pupils about sex education. Year 3 pupils are taught about dental hygiene, which supports their work in science well. The school did have five 'walking buses' to enable pupils to walk safely to school, instead of being transported. Unfortunately, only one of the 'walking buses' is still operational.
19. The headteacher and her deputy are responsible for the implementation of the child protection policy and have achieved the necessary training. There is a child protection governor who has also been trained. The headteacher leads the training on child protection issues for all staff, both teaching and non-teaching.
20. The school has very effective induction arrangements for pupils. Year 2 pupils, from the adjacent infant school, spend two afternoons with their new teacher, prior to transfer. There are strong links between staff and the headteacher of the infant and junior schools and this ensures a smooth transition. The exchange of information about the pupils is very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure when they are there.
21. The school has highly effective administrative systems that ensure the progress of pupils with identified special educational needs is closely monitored. Class teachers set targets for individual educational plans (IEPs) twice yearly and are fully involved in monitoring progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator and headteacher are highly effective in ensuring appropriate external support is matched to pupils' identified needs. The system for monitoring pupils with statements is robust. As result of the high level of care and support many pupils have made better than expected progress.
22. In the pre-inspection pupils' questionnaires, a significant minority said that they did not think there was an adult they would go to if they were concerned. However, inspection findings indicate that pupils are happy to approach staff if they are in need of help or support. Teachers know the pupils well and give them very good support, advice and guidance. The pastoral support co-ordinator responds to the needs of pupils and takes some of the pressure off teachers. There are close pastoral links with parents, especially with the parents of pupils with learning or behavioural needs.
23. All pupils have responsibilities in their class and older pupils are given a wider role across the school. For example, there is an elected head boy and head girl in Year 6, and there are monitors for a wide range of roles. Year 4 pupils operate a 'buddy' system with the new Year 3 pupils, who have just entered the school. Year 3 and Year 6 pupils go on residential visits. The school council meets monthly. There are two representatives from each class on it and they report back to their classes as well as putting forward the views of their peers. A leader of the school council was elected by secret ballot during the inspection week. Pupils raise money for charities like the National Children's Home and initiated ideas to raise money for the Blue Peter Appeal.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The links with the local community are very good. The school's links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A thriving parent teacher association is very supportive and helps to fund improvements in the school, which assists the pupils' progress and achievement.
- The school is seen as the hub of the community, has close links with local churches and a wide range of community groups make use of the school.
- Pupils' annual reports, except for the reporting on English and mathematics, are impersonal and do not give targets for improvement.

Commentary

24. Information for parents is satisfactory overall. Parents receive regular newsletters and information letters. Use is made of notice boards and the school has a website. Information is given termly on the future curriculum and how parents can help their child at home. There are parental evenings to give information on sex and drugs education but not on the subjects the pupils are studying. The pupils' annual reports give targets for improvement in English and mathematics but not in other subjects. The reports meet statutory requirements, although they are rather impersonal except for English and mathematics. There are two formal opportunities a year for parents to discuss their child's education with the class teacher.
25. The parent teacher association organises a wide range of fund raising and social events. The funds raised are used to enhance the pupils' education by providing additional resources. The school encourages parents to help in school and up to 12 per week take up this opportunity. Parents are invited to special events, like open evenings, art exhibitions, sports afternoons and shows put on by the pupils. Parents were generally happy with the homework provided. The homework diary also acts as a line of communication between home and school for some parents.
26. A wide range of community groups, like the Parish Council, the Beavers, Earls Barton Music and a junior church group, use the school to meet. All the community has been involved in the attempts to improve road safety in the vicinity of the school. There are strong links with Earls Barton Music, including a joint production at the Castle Theatre at Wellingborough. Pupils participated in the 'Churches Together' open-air concert. There are good links with local churches. The pupils attend services in the two largest churches in the village and clergy come in to take assemblies.
27. Elderly members of the parish are invited into school for the harvest festival celebrations and they are given harvest festival gifts by the pupils. The school's pupils are coached by staff from the local tennis club and the Rushden and Diamonds Football Club. The school received sponsorship for the fluorescent bibs supplied to participants in the 'walking bus'.
28. The Year 6 pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary school. They spend time in their new school before transfer and there are bridging projects in English, mathematics and science. Records are passed on and there are good links with staff of the high schools. Graduate teachers do teaching practice in the school; and there are good links with the primary cluster of schools and a Beacon Status school. Students come into school to carry out work experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and that of other key staff is good. Management is good. Governance and financial management are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong, positive leadership and has been instrumental in improving the school since the previous inspection.
- Governance is very good; governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are closely involved in planning for improvement.
- Financial management is excellent and funds are well targeted to effectively help the school achieve its educational priorities.
- The headteacher and governing body provide very high quality strategic direction for special educational needs.
- A few subject co-ordinators are new or temporary and have not yet had time to establish their effectiveness.

Commentary

29. The headteacher is dedicated to the school and provides very strong leadership and clear strategic thinking which encourages the whole school community to work together towards further improvement. Her very effective leadership style reflects her excellent clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school. She is highly respected by staff, pupils, parents, governors and the community. Senior staff support her well in monitoring and working to improve standards in the school. Subject co-ordinators are keen and work hard, although some have not yet had time to establish their effectiveness.
30. Some of the key issues from the last inspection have been turned into strengths. For instance, the school improvement plan is now a comprehensive working document which is produced by full consultation between staff and governors, addresses well the school's identified priorities, and is very closely linked to the school budget. The governors are committed to the school and have been instrumental in working with the headteacher to ensure significant improvements to the school since its last inspection. Management is effective and financial management is excellent, with funds being well targeted to effectively help the school achieve its educational priorities. All statutory requirements are met.
31. The special educational needs committee of the governing body is very effective. They meet twice per term to provide strategic direction to the provision of special educational needs. They ensure that very good provision is maintained and that the allocated budget is spent to best effect. The headteacher is committed to inclusion and ensures that staff are very well supported through training and resources to deliver a suitable curriculum for all pupils. The quality of the leadership and management of special educational needs ensures that this provision is a strength of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	648,875	Balance from previous year	73,965
Total expenditure	662,610	Balance carried forward to the next	59,960
Expenditure per pupil	2,317		

32. The expenditure per pupil is slightly lower than the average for junior schools. This, when viewed in the light of the above average standards and good achievement, together with good educational provision and very good leadership and management, indicates that the school provides good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are well above average by the end of Year 6 and have improved since the previous inspection, although writing standards are only average and writing is not yet used enough in other subjects.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. They are well developed in English lessons and well planned in other curriculum subjects.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly in literacy lessons, because of very good support.
- The subject has been well monitored and pupil performance data, particularly in reading, is well analysed and used effectively to raise standards.

Commentary

33. Standards are above average in English when pupils enter the school in Year 3. By the end of Year 6, standards have been maintained at an above average level. Given the variations in attainment in different year groups, achievement is good overall because of good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of well-targeted support.
34. Reading is systematically taught throughout the school, and a good stock of books is readily available outside classrooms and the library. By Year 6 most pupils read very well and can confidently discuss characters and plots. They make predictions about how the book might develop. A designated librarian encourages pupils when selecting new books. The library is an attractive area and pupils know how to use it for research. Home school reading logs are well used to encourage parents to support their children's reading. Teachers also monitor carefully through a daily system of guided reading in class. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively through teachers' annotations and a twice-yearly formal assessment.
35. Standards in writing are average. The overall trend is upwards, although there have been fluctuations in recent years that have reflected the ability of pupils in each year group and the increasing percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The school is taking effective measures to improve the teaching of writing. Lessons emphasise a framework to structure pupils' writing and this supports learning effectively. Marking and feedback are focused and enable pupils to make improvement. In several lessons observed, however, while most pupils were making satisfactory progress there was little challenge for the more able, except to complete more of the same writing tasks. Handwriting, when directly taught, is neat and cursive. However, expectations are not consistent for pupils' independent work. Model handwriting and presentation of visual aids in teacher-led sessions were unclear at times.
36. Teachers give pupils opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in lessons through whole class and smaller group activities; these are planned well and include drama activities, such as Year 5's pleas to the Oracle as part of their exploration of myth. As a result of the systematic emphasis placed on this aspect of English, pupils are confident speakers and give due attention to listening, asking questions to further develop ideas.
37. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported during literacy lessons by the high quality planning of the class teacher and the contribution made by skilled learning support

assistants. As a result, they achieve very well in lessons. Teachers ensure that resources are practical and enable pupils full access and inclusion to the curriculum. Pupils use small laptops with predictive text to record their ideas for writing and as a result are enabled to take a full part in all parts of the lesson. Teachers are particularly sensitive to include pupils with special educational needs in the direction of their questions during the final review section of literacy lessons, and thus ensure that pupils' achievements are recognised.

38. Teachers plan their lessons well, sharing their learning objectives with the class, and maintain a good dialogue with the learning support assistants, who contribute well to pupils' learning. Teachers confidently deliver the three-part lesson structure recommended in the national literacy strategy. Their good subject knowledge ensures clear explanations during the teacher-led section of the lesson. They maintain a crisp pace. Grammatical and literary terminology is used frequently and the pupils have a clear understanding of specific vocabulary. When pupils do not they are expected to use a dictionary. Teachers' questions are well matched to pupils' ability. Effective use is made of assessment; pupils are encouraged to read with greater understanding of a text, as teachers intervene with comment that deepen and enrich pupils' comprehension. Teachers mark writing with references to pupils' identified personal and group targets. There is greater scope, however, for the use of ICT in lessons and to refine further the level of challenge in written activities.
39. Leadership and management are shared between two members of staff, and this is a highly effective partnership that is a considerable improvement since the time of the last inspection. Standards, achievement and teaching are now systematically monitored. There is thorough analysis of pupil data, and teachers have been well supported in levelling pupils' work against national curriculum criteria. This information has been well used to set group targets within classes and has been developed further into individual short term achievable targets that pupils understand.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. The national literacy strategy has been implemented well in terms of English lessons and the model of teacher and pupil interaction is used in many curriculum areas, resulting in sustained practice of speaking and listening skills. For example, pupils were enthralled in a history lesson when they were encouraged to question, at length, "Alice", a Victorian child from a local lace school. They listened carefully and asked pertinent questions. The writing that followed was in the form of a report with suitable headings and sub-headings, but in general not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to practise a range of writing across the different subjects of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of number and use these skills well when solving problems, particularly during mental mathematics sessions.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of their pupils' needs.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and pupils are achieving well.
- Teachers make good use of learning objectives to help pupils to understand what they will be learning.
- Assessment is used well to help teachers plan appropriate work for most pupils.
- Limited use is made of mathematics to support other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

41. The results of recent national tests were above average at the end of Year 6. Inspection findings show a similar picture, with achievement being good. This indicates an improvement since the previous inspection. Problem solving is introduced by teachers into some other aspects of mathematics; for example, when learning about money. As a result pupils are able to make use of their good enquiry and investigation skills in another situation and this is effective in enhancing learning. Standards in the aspect of mathematics that covers shape, space and measures are also above average.
42. Most pupils achieve well, particularly when teachers have clear and high expectations for all levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Most teachers provide challenging work or specific timescales to maintain the concentration and perseverance of the higher attaining pupils, although this provision is inconsistent. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve so well in Years 3 to 5 when they are given the same work as the rest of the class, as they find the work relatively easy and lose interest. However, the current arrangement for teaching Year 6 pupils in sets is effective and provides particularly good levels of challenge for the higher attainers.
43. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers generally plan their lessons well, including appropriate learning objectives that are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. However, there is inconsistent use of the opportunity to refer back to the objectives in the plenary session at the end of the lesson, in order to help the pupils identify what they have learned. Lessons start well, with teachers initially encouraging the pupils to think hard and solve simple number problems. Most teachers skilfully extend this activity into preparation for the main part of the lesson, making use of carefully targeted questions to check pupils' understanding.
44. The subject is led well, by a keen co-ordinator who ensures that a good range of resources and good advice are provided to support teaching and learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Insufficient use is made of mathematics to support other areas of the curriculum. A small number of graphs and charts were noted in science work and the ICT curriculum includes the use of spreadsheets, but overall this element of cross-curricular work is limited.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are returning to their previous level and are again above the national average.
- Assessment procedures are not yet in line with the good standards evident in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- ICT does not yet support learning effectively across the science curriculum.
- Management and leadership are good and have had a positive impact on raising achievement.

Commentary

46. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, national test results were below average but in subsequent years they rose significantly, being first above and then well above those of similar schools. Results in 2003 were average but well below those of schools with similar prior attainment on entry to Year 3. The decline in standards is attributed to an element of ineffective teaching at the top end of the school and this is no longer evident.

47. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average, as they were at the time of the previous inspection, indicating that a return to high standards is on the way. These pupils entered Year 3 with above average standards and overall have achieved satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well through the effective support of teaching assistants. Pupils in Year 6 of average attainment, for example, understand that the distance of an object from a light source affects the length of its shadow. However they are not able to explain the reason for this clearly, whereas higher attaining pupils are able to explain shadows confidently and are beginning to question ideas about light, such as how light produces heat.
48. The quality of teaching is good and the inconsistencies evident during the last inspection have been eradicated. All teachers are now effective in planning work that is well matched to the needs of the range of pupils in mixed ability classes, enabling them to be able to access tasks and achieve satisfactorily. In the most effective lessons pupils are encouraged to play an active part in the planning of investigations. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, mixed ability groups of pupils planned how to find out the effects of various conditions on the evaporation of water. Pupils were animated during their discussions, the resulting learning was good, social skills were developed and the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject was clear. In the majority of lessons, however, pupils' input into the planning of investigations is more restricted and consequently their skills of scientific inquiry are less well developed than the other areas of learning in the programme of study. Teachers mark pupils' work well although the quality of comments to help promote learning can be variable.
49. Leadership and management are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection, when there was no subject co-ordinator. The good practice put into place since then has contributed to the improvement in standards prior to 2003. Teaching and learning are now monitored regularly and schemes of work and resources are also now appropriate. Assessment procedures, while satisfactory overall, are not effective in relating to National Curriculum levels or setting targets for pupils' improvement. The use and support of learning by ICT is still underdeveloped. School facilities have improved but are still not adequate to fulfil the demands of cross-curricular support. There are sound links with other subjects, for example, design and technology through food preservation aspects during work on micro-organisms. Literacy and numeracy are generally used well to support learning but there are some missed opportunities to use pupils' data handling skills in investigative work. Science has improved overall since the previous inspection

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst teaching is now good overall, monitoring and assessment are not yet fully in place.
- Higher attaining pupils are often not appropriately challenged.
- Lack of resources means that ICT does not yet support learning in other subjects effectively.
- The technician and librarian support pupils' learning well.

Commentary

50. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now average. Pupils in Year 6 use desktop publishing appropriately to present fictitious articles related to Earls Barton and prepare simple presentations that involve buttons and sound, for example. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although higher attaining pupils achieve less well than other pupils because of lack of challenge. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. All pupils benefit from the effective support of the technician or the librarian during lessons.

51. In the lessons observed, teaching was good. These lessons were well prepared and executed and despite the awkward shape of the room, pupils worked hard, maintained concentration and learning was good. The collaboration and mutual support of pupils working in mixed ability pairs was also good and contributed well to social development.
52. Leadership and management are satisfactory. After a time of instability there is now a new co-ordinator, who has assessed the quality of the provision and provides good support to individual teachers. However, regular monitoring of teaching and learning are not yet securely in place. There are basic assessment procedures in place but these do not relate to National Curriculum levels nor do they provide learning targets for pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. A number of activities use and enhance pupils' literacy skills well, as do spreadsheet applications for numeracy. Pupils understand the purpose of a web browser and use e-mail to communicate with pupils at a French school in Niort. However, the use of the Internet for resource material is limited because classrooms are not equipped with computers and the ICT suite is heavily used for skills teaching. This lack of equipment has an adverse effect on the support of learning in other curriculum areas.

HUMANITIES

History, geography and religious education were sampled.

54. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching in **history** can be made as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Attainment of pupils in Year 6 is in line with national expectations as it was during the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound knowledge and recall of their studies from Year 3 onwards and show good appreciation of the visits, visitors and role-play that have enriched their learning well. These include Saxon and Tudor days and a visit to a Victorian house, where pupils dressed in role and experienced what it was like to be a chambermaid or a butler, for example. Appropriate skills of inquiry are evident in the scrutiny of work as well as appreciation that interpretation of history can include bias. The pupils' letters to Queen Elizabeth and King Phillip of Spain regarding the Armada illustrate this clearly. The standards of higher attaining pupils have improved since the last inspection because work is now more appropriately matched to pupils' needs. Overall pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory achievement over time. The lesson observed was of good quality and likely to be memorable as the teacher dressed in role as Alice, a Victorian lace maker and was questioned by the pupils. Pupils' work and more impressively their recall of work, together with teachers' discussions indicate that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with a temporary co-ordinator in place during a time of absence of the permanent post holder. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
55. No **geography** lessons were observed during the inspection but the scrutiny of work and more impressively the recall of the pupils suggest that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection.
56. Standards are now average and have improved since the previous inspection. Input from the local education authority has ensured that the subject policy and scheme of work are now appropriate and this has had a positive impact on standards. Pupils in Year 6, for example, can identify the advantages and disadvantages of proposed changes on the environment and recognise the wide variety of aspects related to the India of today. Pupils in Year 6 speak confidently about their learning and have good recall of the topics covered in the last four years. The contribution of visits, for example to the River Ise, two residential visits and the variety of methods used have made a positive contribution to learning. Literacy skills are used well, as in the use of balanced arguments related to environmental issues, as are numeracy skills in estimation the speed and widths of rivers during fieldwork. Overall achievement has improved

since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is temporary and has not yet had time to make an impact on the provision, although she has already identified areas for development. These appropriately include the further development of the use of ICT, a portfolio of pupils' work, cross-curricular links and the further development of geographical skills of inquiry. Overall good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

57. In the only lesson that could be observed in **religious education**, teaching was satisfactory and standards were average. Well focussed discussions helped the pupils in Year 6 understand the origins of the festival of Divali and encouraged them to empathise with the characters in the story.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design technology and music were sampled. Physical education was not inspected.

58. Two lessons of **art and design** were observed. Pupils' work on display around the school was studied and a portfolio of past achievements examined alongside the subject co-ordinator's management file. The schemes of work for the school were checked to ensure coverage. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6. Pupils have access to a wide range of media and benefit from an annual competition and summer exhibition. Pupils' work recorded in the portfolio was well presented and showed good attention to detail, particularly in the studies of light and shadow inspired by a study of pre-Raphaelite art. There were few examples of pupils working from stimuli other than from a Western Art tradition. Overall, standards have improved since the previous inspection. Art and design displayed around the school is colourful and creative. The observational drawing by pupils in Year 6 of shoes shows the development of technique and expands into fine brushwork. The subject is being managed satisfactorily.
59. The lessons observed painted a contradictory picture of teaching and learning, as one in Year 3 was excellent but a lesson in Year 6 was unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lesson the teacher's subject knowledge was insufficient and expectations were low, consequently pupils did not achieve as well as they might have. In the inspirational lesson with Year 3 the teacher enthusiastically demonstrated elongating the face in portraiture. The teacher made reference to Modigliani at the outset but included modifications of digital portraits to focus pupils on capturing the effects of elongation on the features of the face. Throughout the lesson pupils were engaged in a continuous cycle of experimentation and evaluation. All pupils were engrossed as they produced large scale, pastel portraits, some of which were instantly recognisable.
60. No lessons of **design technology** could be seen, but pupils' work was studied and a portfolio of past achievements scrutinised. The subject co-ordinator's management file and schemes of work were examined. Standards are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 6. For example, pupils have designed and made slippers from a variety of textiles. Pupils' designs were innovative and personal; a particularly striking slipper was based on a design by Salvador Dali. The finish on the slippers was mostly good. Pupils' evaluation of their work is sometimes superficial, without a real reflection on what could be improved and how. Nevertheless, standards have improved and represent satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and the subject is being managed satisfactorily.
61. No **music** lessons were seen. However, the high quality of singing in assemblies, very high number of pupils taking instrumental tuition and very good use of music to support other lessons and activities within the school indicate that many pupils are competent musicians. In addition to a wide variety of instrumental lessons taught by adults, there is a recorder group which is run by the pupils. Pupils' musical talents are used well in school performances and the choir has developed good links with local music groups, taking part in concerts and other events.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

62. Pupils' education in personal, social, health and citizenship forms an appropriate part of the overall curriculum provision. It includes both a formal teaching programme, including "circle time assemblies" and the development of personal relationships through incidental guidance and support as situations arise. In addition, the school has recently set up a system of pastoral support for those pupils in need of this provision. This results in an inclusive ethos within the school where pupils are valued and supported both academically and personally, within a secure and very caring environment.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
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	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	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	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

