

INSPECTION REPORT

Finedon Mulso CE Junior School

Finedon, Wellingborough

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122034

Headteacher: Mrs HC Dolan MA

Lead inspector: Mrs Joan Boden

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th September 2003

Inspection number: 256123

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	158
School address:	Wellingborough Road Finedon Wellingborough
Postcode:	NN9 5JT

Telephone number:	01933 680433
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Read
Date of previous inspection:	28 th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This junior school is smaller than most primary schools with 164 pupils on roll. There are twice as many boys as girls in the present Year 6 class. The school serves a very socially mixed community, and all the pupils are of white UK heritage. The school has been through a turbulent period since its last inspection. During that period, eight teachers left and seven joined the school. In addition to this, during the academic year 2002-2003 there were three acting headteachers and an acting deputy. The present headteacher has only been in post for one year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. However, not all parents claim this entitlement because the authority does not provide hot meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties, although a small minority has behavioural difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12301	Mrs Joan Boden	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Music Physical education Educational inclusion Special educational needs
13746	Mr David Russell	Lay inspector	
2911	Mr Eric Steed	Team inspector	English Science Art Citizenship Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Under the strong leadership of the current headteacher, the school is improving. Pupils enjoy school and behave well, and make the most of the opportunities presented to them. However, pupils' achievements overall are unsatisfactory. While achievement in some subjects is good, achievement in English is unsatisfactory and achievement in mathematics is poor. Although the school provides a **satisfactory quality of education** for its pupils there are serious weaknesses in some aspects of leadership and management that are affecting pupils' learning. The school provides **unsatisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The present headteacher, supported well by her deputy, provides strong leadership and has brought stability to the school.
- Although standards in English and mathematics are improving they are still below average in English and well below average in mathematics.
- The impact of teaching in English and mathematics is unsatisfactory overall, but it is good in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, and music.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not have enough support in a significant number of lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good because of the good examples set by adults in the school.
- The school pays good attention to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.
- The school has purposeful and effective links with parents and the wider community.
- The governors are not involved enough in running the school.

Improvement since the last inspection has been **unsatisfactory**. Although standards in art and design, and information and communication technology have improved, standards in English and mathematics have gone down. Some of the weaknesses identified in the last report still remain, largely due to the disruption during recent years.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	E	E	E*
mathematics	E	C	E	E*
science	D	C	E	E

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E – very low*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils enter the school with generally above average standards of attainment in English and mathematics. Their achievement is poor and by the time they are 11, standards overall are below average in English and well below average in mathematics. There are clear signs that pupils up to Year 5 are achieving at a much better rate in English and are reaching the standards expected, taking into account what they achieved when they were seven. Achievement in mathematics varies between year groups. While pupils in Year 4 are achieving well, this is not the case in other year groups. The latest test results indicate improvement in English and mathematics, and a significant improvement in science. However, the information is not yet available to make comparisons with

other schools. Pupils achieve well and reach above the standards expected in ICT, art and design, and music.

Pupils' personal development is **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social development. Pupils have **good attitudes** to school and **behave well**. **Attendance is satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is variable but it is **unsatisfactory overall**. Its impact on pupils' learning in English and mathematics is **unsatisfactory overall**. The main weakness is that some teachers do not keep a careful enough check on pupils' learning to enable them to prepare work that matches the pupils' needs. Higher attainers do not learn enough because they are not sufficiently challenged while lower attainers and those with special educational needs often do not learn enough because they do not understand the work. Teaching in ICT, art and design, and music is good and pupils of all abilities achieve well.

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory overall**. It is enriched by educational visits, visitors to the school and a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, it does not meet the needs of all the pupils because the work is not matched to the needs of individuals or groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs do not get enough support. Child protection procedures are **good**. The school has **good links with parents and the wider community**.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **good leadership**. In the short time she has been at the school she has built up a good team spirit amongst the staff. She has put good systems in place to address weaknesses she identified in teaching and learning. These are beginning to bear fruit, but the **management of the school is still unsatisfactory** because of the weaknesses that remain. The governors are very supportive of the school, but they are not involved enough in making important decisions about how it is run.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They appreciate what the school does for their children and value the fact that the school keeps them well informed. The pupils enjoy school. They are full of praise for their teachers and for the interesting activities that the school provides. They know that if they are worried or have a problem there is always a friendly adult available to help. They would like to be more involved with running the school and would welcome the return of the School Council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English and mathematics;
- Improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics;
- Improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- Develop the role of governors in running the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

1. By the age of 11, standards in English are **below average** and standards in mathematics are **well below average**. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall in these subjects. Pupils lower down the school are achieving at a better rate and standards are improving. In science, pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate and reach **average** standards. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls during the inspection, although for the past few years girls have tended to do better than boys in national tests. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in ICT, art and design, and music.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at age 11 are not high enough in English and mathematics.
- Pupils develop sound scientific knowledge by planning and carrying out their own investigations.
- Pupils have above average computer skills and a good appreciation of how ICT is used in everyday life.
- Pupils' singing and performing skills are good.
- Pupils' drawing and painting skills are above average.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (25.7)	27 (27)
mathematics	24.5 (26.4)	26.7 (26.6)
science	26.9 (28.3)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. One point represents approximately one term's progress.

2. There has been an overall downward trend in English, mathematics and science since 1999. There was an improvement in 2001 in mathematics and science, but in 2002 standards in all three subjects were well below the national average, and in the bottom five per cent when compared to similar schools. Pupils made very little progress from when they were in Year 2. In English, the trend from 1998 to 2001 was for girls to do better than boys. However, in 2002 boys did significantly better than girls. In mathematics, the difference in performance fluctuated from year to year. In 2002 boys performed significantly better than girls. Science presents a stronger picture of performance, although in 2002, as with English and mathematics girls' performance dipped. The latest test results indicate improvement in English and mathematics and a significant improvement science. Since 1998, the school's average point score for all subjects has been below the national average.

3. The achievement of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 is unsatisfactory in writing and poor in mathematics. Despite the new and dynamic leadership during the past year by the headteacher and her deputy, these pupils have suffered from the cumulative effect of weak teaching in the past. The fresh approach has not yet had an impact on standards because there are still weaknesses in teaching. All except the highest attaining pupils in Year 6 have poorly developed mental arithmetic skills. This affects their ability to solve problems. The school has put a strong emphasis on reading and this is paying off. Standards in reading are improving throughout the school. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach average standards overall. Pupils in Year 4 are achieving well because of the much sharper teaching. Inspection evidence indicates that there is no significant difference in the achievement rate of boys and girls.

4. The school met its targets exactly for English and mathematics in 2002. However, these were very low, just 52 per cent in both subjects. Based on these results the targets for 2003 were much higher and were not reached.

5. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might because they are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils with special educational needs do not always achieve as well as they could because they are not supported well enough in some lessons and find the work too hard. Gifted and talented pupils do not achieve as well as they might because the school does not have a policy for recognising them and meeting their needs.

6. Pupils achieve well in ICT, art and design, and music. They reach above average standards because the teachers are confident and constantly seek to improve standards. The work is planned in an imaginative and exciting way that captures pupils' interest and gets the best out of them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

7. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Pupils have **good** attitudes to school and to learning. They settle quickly at the start of lessons and concentrate well. Behaviour is **good** and pupils form **good** relationships with members of staff and with each other. Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Pupils enjoy school and display positive attitudes to work, although for some pupils this is dependent upon the quality of the teaching in the lesson.

- Relationships are good throughout the school community.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Teachers set good examples to pupils in the way they treat everybody with respect, and this rubs off on the pupils.
- Spiritual development is good, and cultural development is satisfactory.
- Good monitoring systems enable the school to fully analyse pupil attendances for each year group.
- The majority of pupils arrive promptly with close monitoring of late arrivals.
- Records of pupils taking holidays during term time need improving.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

8. Attendance over the last three years is consistent and closely matches the national average. Unauthorised absences are marginally above the national average. The school actively promotes good attendance. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality effectively. Monitoring records allow the school to analyse the attendance by year group and to identify any negative trends.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
164	8	0

Commentary

9. The school has worked hard and successfully to promote good behaviour. Pupils and their parents have received the school's written expectations of behaviour and this is now good across the school. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and most work hard. Where teaching is interesting and relevant – as is usually the case – pupils approach lessons and activities with enthusiasm. When, in a minority of lessons, teaching is less effective and a small number of pupils become inattentive and drift off task. Positive attitudes to lessons remain constant throughout the school day. Because of this there are very few distractions and this enables pupils to sustain concentration.

10. No examples were seen of aggressive or of oppressive behaviour. Pupils are very clear that when very occasional acts of poor behaviour occur the headteacher deals with them quickly and effectively. Boys and girls of all ages mix amicably together and older children care for younger ones where needed. Personal development is good. This is based firmly in the good relationships that have been established in the school and in the manner in which pupils' moral and social development is promoted. Not enough is done to raise pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity and the multi-cultural nature of British society. The school knows this and has sound plans in place for improvement.

11. Pupils enjoy school and take part in the many activities open to them. Older pupils explained that they view the wearing of school uniform as showing their pride in belonging to the school. They appreciate the good range of clubs, visits and visitors that are arranged for them and are keen to show visitors the displays of recent visits. They feel that they work hard. Pupils use the library independently and are pleased to be able to use classroom computers for research purposes on request. They see Circle Time discussions as good opportunities to put forward ideas and concerns. Older pupils regret the demise of the School Council because it has reduced their opportunities to contribute to the running of the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12. The quality of education provided is **satisfactory overall**. However, there are weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum that are affecting pupils' learning in English and mathematics. There are satisfactory procedures for recording how well pupils have done at the end of each year. However, teachers do not keep a careful enough check on whether individuals or groups of pupils have really understood what has been taught in lessons. The accommodation is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

13. The quality of teaching is **unsatisfactory overall**. While there is good and very good teaching in some subjects the impact of teaching on pupils' learning in English and mathematics is **unsatisfactory overall**. The best teaching is in Year 4 where the teacher moves all the children on very effectively by matching the work accurately to their needs. Pupils in one of the Year 5 classes achieve very well in English because the teaching is particularly good. The use of assessment information to plan further learning is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is too variable across the school. This reflects ineffective management in the past.
- Some teachers have only recently adopted the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. Although they have had very good support, some weaknesses remain.
- Overall, teachers do not match work accurately enough to the learning needs of individuals and groups of different ability.
- There are elements of good teaching in all classes.
- Teachers create a pleasant atmosphere for learning through their warm and friendly approach.
- Teachers are good at developing pupils' skills in ICT, art and design, and music. As a result, pupils achieve well in these subjects.
- The frequent staff changes over recent years have affected pupils' learning.
- The marking of pupils' work is not always good enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in twenty lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	9	7	1	1	0

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

14. The quality of teaching is not as good as was reported at the last inspection. However, this has to be seen in the context of frequent changes of staff, including senior managers, over the past few years. Although the teaching seen was good overall, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is unsatisfactory in English and mathematics. In most other subjects, the teaching enables most pupils to achieve at least at a satisfactory rate. In ICT, art and design, and music, pupils achieve well because the teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic. This enables them to teach confidently. This is not always the case in English and mathematics. The main weakness is that teachers do not take pupils' previous learning into sufficient account when they plan future work.

15. The teaching of literacy varies between classes. It is best in Year 4 and in the co-ordinator's class in Year 5. While teachers throughout the school are good at developing pupils' reading skills, some teachers do not always pay enough attention to correct punctuation and spelling when marking pupils' work. As a result, pupils carry on making mistakes. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Overall, it does not focus enough on indicating to pupils how they could improve their work.

16. The teaching of numeracy is best in Year 4. Pupils in this class are developing good skills of calculation because these are reinforced regularly. The teacher is also good at encouraging pupils in Year 6 to find different ways of answering the same problem. This does not happen in all classes. The mental warm-up session is not always used effectively to sharpen pupils' calculation skills. As a result, most of the pupils in Year 6 have difficulty working out sums in their heads and this holds them back in solving problems.

17. In both subjects, some teachers plan their lessons for all the pupils to start from the same point even though large numbers of pupils have special educational needs. This means that higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and so do not achieve as well as they might. It also means that lower attaining pupils, including those with identified learning needs, lose interest and concentration and do not make enough progress in their learning. Although pupils with special educational needs have appropriate individual learning plans, teachers do not use them well enough when planning work.

18. Some good features of teaching are present in most lessons. Teachers generally adopt a lively approach that captures pupils' interest from the start. They prepare their lessons well and use a good range of resources to make the work interesting. They are good at using well-focused questions to draw out pupils' ideas and develop their understanding. However, in some lessons they do not ensure that all the pupils are listening and have understood.

19. All the teachers have good relationships with the pupils. This creates a good atmosphere for learning because the pupils develop their self-esteem and confidence. They are not afraid to try to answer questions even though they may not be sure of the answers. The pupils' good behaviour is a reflection of the good examples that teachers set for them in treating everybody with respect.

The curriculum

20. The curriculum is **unsatisfactory** because the poor quality of assessment used in planning fails to give consistent equality of access to all pupils. The quality of accommodation and the quantity of resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, but it is not planned well enough to meet the learning needs of all the pupils in English and mathematics.
- There are good links between subjects, so pupils see the relevance of what they are learning.
- Writing across the curriculum is used effectively.
- ICT is used well in other subjects.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced through a good range of visits and visitors to the school.
- The lack of artefacts does not support understanding and speaking skills in individual subjects.
- The school has a dedicated computer suite, swimming pool and adequately resourced library.
- The school playground needs more play equipment to make it more stimulating for pupils.
- The use of the hall as a thoroughfare for pupils moving between the library and classrooms restricts the use of the climbing equipment.

Commentary

21. Although the curriculum fulfils statutory requirements, pupils do not enjoy full equality of access and opportunity because the use of assessment is poor in planning for the needs of all pupils. This failure in provision has resulted, in extreme cases, in pupils of known higher and lower abilities receiving identical work over periods of time. Similarly, in unsatisfactory lessons, the lack of focus in planning results in learning opportunities being directed at only one group of pupils, so denying access to other pupils, including those with special educational needs.

22. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education in Circle Time discussions and as opportunities occur in other subjects. The school has identified the need to include additional aspects of multi-cultural education in the current year's curriculum. Literacy skills, particularly speaking and listening, are developed effectively across the curriculum. Not enough opportunities are taken to develop numeracy skills. Some subjects, such as history and art are linked very effectively to the ICT curriculum. Standards are rising overall in some subjects because the school follows closely the programmes of study for these subjects. However, insufficient attention to assessed needs is preventing pupils from being challenged to attain their personal potential.

23. The good provision for extra-curricular activities has a positive effect on pupils' acquisition of good relationships and social skills. These contribute to their enthusiasm for school.

24. The school has an adequate number of qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Budget restrictions have resulted in a cutting back of support staff. Currently, there are

not enough classroom assistants to support the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The two classroom assistants provide an extra pair of hands in the larger classes, but they are not always used effectively. The headteacher agrees that these staff need further training. Teaching resources are readily accessible and carefully controlled and reviewed. All classrooms have at least one computer for general use. ICT lessons are held in a well-designed, fully networked computer suite. Pupils work independently, at their own pace, in a well laid out library. The school makes good use of its swimming pool to meet all pupils' needs. The school playground has few stimulating features. However, this is being addressed through productive links with the community. The use of the hall as a thoroughfare between the library and classrooms is adversely affecting pupils' learning. It restricts the use of climbing equipment in physical education lessons.

Care, guidance and support

25. **Good** provision ensures that pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are met. Monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development is **unsatisfactory** and does not always allow satisfactory provision for support and guidance. The manner in which the school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety and child protection issues are handled sensitively.
- Teachers take note of pupils' suggestions and respond to improvements.
- Staff do not pass on sufficient information to subsequent teachers about pupils' achievements and personal development.

Commentary

26. This is a caring school. All the staff give high priority to child protection and pupil safety. There is close liaison with external agencies to support vulnerable children when necessary. The headteacher, as designated person responsible for child protection, is fully trained in this area. All staff are fully aware of procedures to follow when identifying areas of concern. The school systematically prepares risk assessments for matters around the school and external visits. There are sufficient staff trained in First Aid.

27. There are **good relationships** between teachers and pupils. Teachers listen to pupils' suggestions and make every effort to respond to their requirements. Pupils accept responsibilities readily, and take their duties seriously. Several pupils in Year 6 would like more responsibility. In some situations there are limited opportunities for them to use their initiative. Inspectors endorse the school's view that independent learning is an area for development.

28. Across the school, assessment procedures are inconsistent. There are times when teachers do not realise pupils are experiencing difficulties with their work. Pupils do not always receive the support and guidance that they need. Monitoring of pupils' performance is not always effective. Insufficient data is available to evaluate pupils' achievement. Consequently, unrealistic targets may be set for pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

29. There are **good** links with parents. Links with the local community are **good** and greatly enrich the curriculum. Links with other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have positive views of the school and are kept well informed about school events and pupils' progress.
- The school tries hard to involve parents, although not all respond.
- The school has a wide range of constructive links with the community.
- Transfer procedures and links with secondary schools are good.

Commentary

30. The school works hard to maintain constructive links with parents. However, many of the parents are unwilling to involve themselves. The school keeps them well informed about school events and about their children's progress. Reports are sufficiently detailed, giving general comments on achievement in curriculum areas. The school consults parents formally on important matters such as increasing the length of the school day. Parents appreciate the fact that their views are sought and this strengthens the relationships. The school prospectus is easy to follow and gives prospective parents useful information.

31. The school actively encourages strong links with the local community to enrich its learning environment. Links with the local prison provide knowledge about drug addiction. Prisoners share their experiences with older pupils to highlight some of the dangers and consequences of getting involved with drugs. There are strong links with the local church.

32. The school has good links with its feeder schools. This enables them to provide good induction procedures to ensure that pupils settle easily into their new environment. Transfer arrangements and links with the secondary school are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

33. The headteacher provides **good** leadership. The school has been through a turbulent period over the past few years and is not as effective as it was at the time of the last inspection. Although the headteacher has put in place good systems for raising standards, there are still **weaknesses in the management** that are affecting pupils' learning. The governors' input into running the school is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve, and she has the determination to raise standards.
- The headteacher does not shy away from making difficult decisions.
- The headteacher has drafted in specialist support from the local authority in order to address the weaknesses in teaching and so raise standards.
- The deputy gives very effective support in running the school.
- There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff and a commitment to raising standards.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The poor use of assessment information in planning future work means that some pupils are not fully included in all lessons.
- Budget restraints have led to a cutback in support staff, which means that there is not always enough support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Although the governors are very supportive of the school, they do not hold it to account for its performance.
- Performance management is not fully in place.

Commentary

34. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. However, this has to be seen in context. There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection, with many temporary appointments to fill the gaps between teachers leaving and new staff starting. In addition to this, in the year 2001 – 2002, the school had three acting headteachers and an acting deputy. This has greatly affected the rate of progress that the school has been able to make. Standards had fallen significantly when the current headteacher took up her post in September 2002. The lack of stability had also led to significant behavioural problems and low staff morale.

35. The headteacher quickly identified many serious weaknesses and took very positive action to address them. However, although she put into place good systems, it is too soon for them to be effective in eradicating all the weaknesses that she identified. She has been very successful in creating a pleasant atmosphere in the school. Positive behaviour management changed pupils' attitudes and they are now keen to learn. Staff feel valued now and there is a good team spirit.

36. A key weakness is that the school has not tackled rigorously enough pupils' under achievement. The results of the end of key stage tests show a downward trend since 1999. Although pupils perform well before they start in Year 3, their progress has not been monitored closely enough to alert teachers to the fact that standards are slipping.

37. There are weaknesses in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Although lessons are observed, there is too little evaluation of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The exception to this is the monitoring by the local authority numeracy consultant. She gives very clear guidance about what teachers need to do. The unsatisfactory marking of pupils' work has not been picked up.

38. Performance management is not fully in place because of the many staff changes over the past two years. However, all staff have job descriptions and their training needs have been identified.

39. Most of the teachers with responsibilities for leading subjects work very hard. However, apart from the English co-ordinator, most do not have the opportunity to monitor standards of teaching and learning through direct observation. This limits their abilities to influence standards by giving on-the-spot advice.

40. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Until the headteacher's appointment, the Code of Practice routines were not followed and identification of such pupils was inadequate. Although these pupils are now picked up and have appropriate learning plans, they do not always receive enough support in class. The school does not yet have a policy for gifted and talented pupils and, as a result, their needs are not fully met.

41. The governors' involvement in running the school is unsatisfactory. They are very supportive of the school and many of them visit the school on a regular basis. They do not, however, hold the school to account strongly enough for the standards it achieves or seek out vigorously enough the reasons for under achievement. The school development plan is satisfactory overall, but it does not extend beyond the current year or set out a strategy for raising standards in the long term.

42. Management of the school's budget is satisfactory overall. Specific grants are used appropriately and there are adequate resources to teach all subjects of the curriculum. The administration officer gives excellent support in the day-to-day running of the school. The school makes the best use of all the funding it receives. In addition, the good relationships with the local community mean that work is often done free of charge.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	436,728	Balance from previous year	9,320
Total expenditure	421,328	Balance carried forward to the next	15,400
Expenditure per pupil	2,666		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

43. Provision for English is improving, but it is still **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the last inspection standards in English have fallen from above average to well below average.
- The results of national tests have been consistently below or well below average for the past five years.
- When compared with similar schools, standards are in the bottom five per cent.
- When compared with their attainment at the age of seven, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The use of assessment in planning for individual needs is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers are dedicated to raising standards, and standards are starting to rise under the deputy head's leadership.
- Teachers make good use of literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils up to Year 5 display above average standards in listening skills during English lessons.

Commentary

44. Since the last inspection, standards have fallen significantly from above average to well below average. In the current Year 6 class, despite the school's efforts, standards remain below average, but there are positive indications that standards are now rising. Standards elsewhere in the school are at least average overall. The most recent national test results show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level for their age rose by 11 per cent. However, overall standards were still well below average, with significantly fewer pupils reaching the higher level.

45. Pupils up to Year 5 display above average standards in listening skills during English lessons. Consequently, teachers in these classes do not have to repeat instructions and little time is lost. This follows on from the very much-improved level of behaviour now in the school, an upsurge in the quality of teaching and the good relationships that exist between pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Pupils' speaking skills are below average overall, although a significant minority of pupils are very articulate. Most teachers are aware of this and readily accept opportunities to extend vocabulary and to provide opportunities for pupils of all abilities to contribute orally in lessons. The school makes a positive contribution to speaking and listening skills by arranging interesting visitors and visits, including theatre visits, which enable pupils to interact safely with other adults.

46. On entry to the school pupils' reading skills are generally above average. Over the past year, the school has worked hard to address under achievement, particularly that of the older pupils. As a result of making reading a priority, pupils in Year 6 have been helped to make satisfactory progress and are on course to attain average standards at the end of the key stage. In other classes the drive to improve reading has resulted in at least average standards across the school. The improvement in the library provision has resulted in attracting pupils to use it for reference purposes, but pupils are not yet secure in the retrieval of fiction and non-fiction books from the shelves. Other reading skills are taught progressively as pupils move through the school.

47. In Years 3 to 5 standards in writing are average overall. In Year 6 they are below average. Although the school now benefits from the expertise of the deputy head, whose good understanding of the subject and good practice have contributed well to the recent rise in standards, there has not been time to address all the weaknesses in teaching and so retrieve their standards on entry. The position is further complicated by a third of the class having special educational needs – many for literacy. Support for the significant number of pupils with special educational needs throughout the

school is unsatisfactory so these pupils struggle. While additional literacy support is available, this does not always address the specific support required by individual pupils.

48. The quality of the teaching seen varied between very good and unsatisfactory, but overall the impact of teaching on pupils' learning as they move through the school is unsatisfactory. All teachers provide work aimed at certain groups of pupils, but there is little evidence to show that the given work is always appropriate for all pupils in each group. The 'one size fits all' approach applies too often. Teachers do not check regularly enough on the progress of individuals or groups of pupils to enable them to plan suitable work to take learning forward. Marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Too often extravagant language is used – 'Excellent' and 'Brilliant' when work clearly could be better. This sends the wrong message to pupils and it has not been picked up in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Marking does not tell pupils clearly what is expected of them, or how to improve.

49. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. In the short time she has been at the school, she has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy is implemented in all classes, which was not previously the case. She has given good support to those teachers who are at the early stages of using the strategy. However, although she has monitored classroom practice and given useful feedback to teachers on techniques, she has not yet focused enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Teachers need more guidance on matching work accurately to the needs of all pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers make good use of literacy skills across the other subjects of the curriculum. In history, speaking and listening skills are developed well through role-play and through interviewing people about life in the past. They have good opportunities to find information from books, and to write about what they have learnt. In science they learn different ways of presenting information, for example, in note form or prose.

MATHEMATICS

51. Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although standards are showing signs of improvement they are still well below average.
- Standards have declined markedly since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement as they move through the school is poor.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory except in Year 4.
- Teachers of the older pupils do not match work accurately enough to pupils' needs.

Commentary

52. Standards in mathematics are well below average. This represents a decline since the last inspection. It is confirmed by the national test results of recent years. In the latest tests, although there was a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for their age, overall standards were still well below average. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to reach similarly low standards.

53. The quality of teaching is variable, but it is unsatisfactory overall. The best teaching is in Year 4 where pupils learn well because they are highly motivated by the teacher's lively approach. In this class, pupils of all abilities achieve well because the work is matched accurately to their needs. The right level of challenge means that they build on success and this spurs them on.

54. This is not generally the case, particularly in the older classes. Here, teachers deliver too many lessons with all the pupils doing the same work. This means that higher attaining pupils are not

challenged sufficiently while lower attaining pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, struggle because they do not understand the work. The result is that pupils of all abilities do not have the opportunity to perform to the best of their abilities. Marking is unsatisfactory because it does not indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve. This has not been picked up in the monitoring of teaching and learning.

55. It is clear from the declining standards that the subject has suffered from poor leadership and management over recent years. Despite the low standards, the National Numeracy Strategy has only recently been fully implemented. This means that some teachers are still at an early stage of using it and do not fully understand important aspects. As a result, pupils' mental skills are not as sharp as they should be. The school has had very good support from the local authority numeracy consultants, but their input has not yet had sufficient impact on the quality of teaching. The school puts most of its efforts into number work, and there is insufficient coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. This means also that pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their number skills in solving problems.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

57. Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision and standards have improved significantly over the past year.
- Good emphasis is placed on pupils carrying out their own investigations.
- Planning does not always include assessment opportunities that check pupils' understanding.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring of the subject.

Commentary

58. The school has worked hard to quickly return standards to a satisfactory level following the well below average results of the 2002 national tests. Standards are now in line with those found at the last inspection. The work in pupils' books shows a structured approach to developing investigative work and the standard of complementary illustrations is often above average. In carrying out investigations, higher and average attaining pupils plan fair tests to produce reliable results. Higher attaining pupils draw conclusions from their results. Written work is usually well presented.

59. Teaching in the lesson seen was good. The teacher displayed good subject knowledge. This gave her the confidence to use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking skills and take their learning forward. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress because they were supported well during practical activities. The relevant use of diagrams and models both held interest and aided understanding. Opportunities to introduce and explain scientific vocabulary were quickly accepted. The good relationships promote a secure atmosphere where pupils are ready to learn. They behave well and co-operate willingly in sharing ideas and materials.

60. A weakness in the teaching is that, although pupils' books are marked regularly, the marking does not indicate what pupils need to concentrate on next. Pupils need more systematic information about how to improve their work. There is insufficient evidence of the use of numeracy or ICT to show independent learning.

61. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in raising standards through the support that she gives and the example she sets to other teachers. She has

produced good guidance that helps teachers to ensure that pupils' enquiry skills are developed appropriately through coverage of the programmes of study. Although the co-ordinator monitors progress from the results of end of unit tests, she has yet to ensure that teachers keep an ongoing check on pupils' learning and use this information to match work more accurately to their needs. Although pupils make satisfactory progress overall, higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might because not enough is expected of them. The co-ordinator needs time to monitor standards of teaching and learning in individual classrooms in order to gather information on how to raise standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected by Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good, and this enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well as they move through the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well.
- Pupils benefit from attending the after-school computer club.
- Pupils' social skills are nurtured well through group work.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- The school has a well equipped computer suite.
- The school makes good use of the expertise available.
- The curriculum is planned very effectively to support learning in other areas.

Commentary

63. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school because the teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to deliver lessons confidently and competently. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those expected of pupils the same age. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

64. The curriculum co-ordinator is in a strong position to lead the subject because she has very good subject knowledge that enables her to support other colleagues effectively. The computer suite enables teachers to use their time efficiently because, with the use of the overhead projector, they can explain and illustrate procedures to the whole class. Thus, higher attaining pupils can get on, while teachers and support staff help those pupils who do not pick up the ideas so quickly. The school also makes very effective use of the expertise of non-teaching staff, such as the administration officer and the cluster technician. They contribute very well to lessons because they can sort out technical problems with the pupils and let the teachers get on with teaching.

65. Learning is enhanced through the after-school computer club, which boys and girls are keen to attend. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development as they have good opportunities to work collaboratively to prepare presentations.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The school gives pupils good opportunities to practise their skills in English, history, and art and design. Pupils learn to apply what they have learnt to real life situations, such as designing informative and eye-catching posters in their study of World War 2, or controlling a robot to perform different functions. ICT is not used enough in mathematics.

HUMANITIES

67. Religious education was not inspected. No lessons were seen in geography and the focus of the inspection meant that insufficient evidence was collected to enable a judgement to be made on provision and standards.

History

68. Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They enjoy the subject and work hard.
- The teaching seen was good.
- The school makes good use of primary and secondary sources.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The subject makes a good contribution to furthering effective links with parents and the local community.

Commentary

69. Standards in Year 6 are as would be expected of pupils of the same age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Most pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate. Pupils have sound chronological knowledge of the periods that they have studied. They use historical language well, speaking in the past tense when describing events and using the ideas of change over time, cause and effect and similarity and difference to explain events. Work in pupils' books shows secure links with writing and art skills.

70. The quality of the teaching seen was good. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to the school to bring the subject to life. The lively and imaginative approach by teachers captivates pupils' interest and spurs them on to find out more information for themselves. Parents and other members of the local community contribute well to pupils' learning through first-hand accounts of life in the past.

71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils lack individual writing targets to improve their work and raise the current satisfactory quality of writing in history. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor standards of teaching and learning in classrooms. This limits her ability to influence standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Two lessons were seen in music. Inspectors have also taken into account the quality of the music performed in the celebration assemblies prior to the inspection, and in the collective acts of worship during the inspection. Although no art and design lessons were seen during the inspection, the displayed work enabled a judgement on standards to be made.

73. No lessons were seen in design and technology, and physical education. The evidence of past pupils' work suggests that provision is satisfactory and that pupils reach the standards expected for their age. Provision for physical education appears to be at least satisfactory. The pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular sports as well as good input from the local football club. The school has its own swimming pool and older pupils attend the public pool. Inspectors were informed that all pupils can swim at least the required 25 metres by the time they leave at 11.

Art and Design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed national expectations in the work displayed and in pupils' sketchbooks.
- Achievement has been good in Years 4 to 6.
- The quality of drawing and painting is above average.
- These skills are used effectively in other curriculum subjects.
- ICT is employed well to aid pupils' understanding of the design process.
- The subject is well led, but there are no systems to check up on the quality of teaching and learning in different classes.

Commentary

75. Standards have improved since the last inspection. All pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. They exceed the standards expected for their age. No teaching was seen, so a secure judgement on teaching cannot be made.

76. Pupils are enthusiastic about the experiences they receive through art and are eager to show and discuss the displayed works. It was good to find that the studies of the works of famous painters had resulted in pupils producing their own images in the style of the chosen painter rather than merely copying an example of the painter's work. By the time pupils enter Year 6 they use sketchbooks well to record images that interest them and to investigate the application of colour, texture, pattern and shades. Drawing skills are developed well through illustrating work in other subjects. The art club is very popular. The pupils who attend gain enrichment experiences that involve them in the investigation of a range of more unusual media.

77. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. It makes a strong contribution to cultural knowledge and understanding, for example, a study of the images of the Madonna and Child in the works of artists from a variety of cultures. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very well qualified to lead the subject. She is enthusiastic, has high expectations and supports her colleagues well. Although she monitors standards of output through the examination of finished work, she does not have opportunities to monitor standards of teaching and learning in classrooms. This limits her ability to give on-the-spot advice in order to raise standards further.

Music

78. Provision in music is **good**.

- Standards in singing are above those expected of pupils of the same age.
- Pupils achieve well as they move through the school.
- Teaching is good overall. There is a wealth of expertise amongst the staff that enables the subject to be taught confidently and competently.
- The school makes good use of the peripatetic music service to enhance learning.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
- The subject is used well to strengthen links with parents and the wider community.

Commentary

79. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. Boys and girls of all abilities achieve well and reach above average standards in singing. This is because the teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and this rubs off on the pupils. The pleasure they get from singing

is obvious, and they concentrate very well, for example when singing rounds. Whole-school singing, such as occurs during assemblies, strengthens the relationships between pupils and teachers because they all join in and there is a sense of fun. Even the pupils who are known to find it difficult to behave sometimes, listen and join in because they are so well motivated.

80. The subject is led and managed well. The school gives music a high priority. The well-planned programme of work as pupils move through the school provides for the systematic development of pupils' music-making skills. Many pupils take advantage of the extra opportunities provided for instrumental tuition, including recorder, ocarina and violin. This supports their learning very well as they develop a good understanding of musical notation. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development as they listen to, appreciate and perform a wide range of music. The choir's performance at local festivals contributes well to community life while, at the same time, boosting pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school follows good practice in giving discrete timetabled time for the development of pupils' personal, health and social education (PSHE).
- Teachers accept opportunities to teach aspects of PSHE in other subjects of the curriculum, for example in drama lessons.
- The programme to present the harmful effects of illegal drugs is good.
- The school has a sound policy for promoting good race relations.

Commentary

The teaching of PSHE through other subjects helps pupils to realise its importance in all aspects of the curriculum. There are satisfactory procedures to teach sex education for pupils in Year 6. The programme to present the harmful effects of illegal drugs is good, using the experiences of ex-drug addicts to bring to pupils' attention some of the results on their lives of using drugs.

In response to the Mcpherson Report, the school has written a sound policy aimed at helping pupils to understand the need for good inter-racial relationships in modern British society. Through the close involvement and good support of the Local Education Authority's Racial Equality Team, the pupils' understanding has been further strengthened.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	6
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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