

INSPECTION REPORT

GROVE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124032

Head teacher: Mr M J Collins

Lead inspector: John Carnaghan

Dates of inspection: 28th June - 1st July 2004

Inspection number: 256295

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 369

School address: Turner Street
Northwood
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
Postcode: ST1 2NL

Telephone number: 01782 234550
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs P Tee

Date of previous inspection: 15th September 1997

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Grove Junior School is a large 7 to 11 school serving an urban area of Stoke-on-Trent. The area it serves is, overall, below average in background. The standards of attainment of pupils as they enter the school are average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. A below average proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds but the percentage whose first language is not English is above average. There are no travellers or looked-after children, and a very small number of refugees. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to other schools but the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average. The majority of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The numbers of pupils who join or leave the school during the school year are below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1352	John Carnaghan	Lead inspector	English, English as an additional language, history, geography.
9974	Daljit Singh	Lay inspector	
23080	Robert Isaac	Team inspector	Special educational needs, science, music, physical education, design and technology, religious education.
30457	David Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) art and design.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Grove Junior School offers a **good education**. Although standards in tests fell to well below average in 2003, the school has taken energetic action and current standards have improved. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers encourage pupils strongly and plan lessons well but marking does too little to promote pupils' learning. Although assessment of pupils' work is undertaken, the results are not always used to promote higher standards. The way the school nurtures pupils and fosters their personal and academic development is good. Pupils enjoy school life and behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils are involved in all aspects of school life, participating keenly in the school council. Leadership and management are good and have a firm emphasis on providing a warm and caring environment and raising standards in this disadvantaged area. The governing body supports the school and has ensured that statutory requirements are met. Expenditure per pupil is less than in other schools, and it gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' standards were well below average in 2003 national assessments, but there is evidence that they have improved in recent months.
- Teaching is good and promotes good learning.
- The head teacher leads the school well and has promoted recent improvements in standards.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes; relationships are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Assessment and marking are unsatisfactory. They are inconsistent and do not provide clear enough information to promote learning.
- The school cares well for pupils and is starting to involve them in seeking their views.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of out-of-school activities.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Links with other schools are good.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school has addressed the issues raised by the previous inspection well. Many aspects of the curriculum have seen marked improvements and the significant amount of new building and refurbishment that has taken place has considerably improved the environment for teaching and learning. While there have been some recent fluctuations, pupils' standards have risen, matching the improving national average.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The standards of children as they start the school are average. By the time pupils reach Year 6 standards are still at the national average. **Achievement is satisfactory.** Results fell markedly in 2003. This was due to considerable staff absence and an intensive building programme, both of which had a particularly strong effect on this group of pupils. Current standards are better than the 2003 test results because the building work is complete, staff absence has fallen and there has been a sharper focus on improving teaching in order to better promote pupils' achievement. Year 6 test results over the last five years have improved at the same rate as the national upward trend. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good support and encouragement. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls or different ethnic groups.

Pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good and pupils enjoy their life at school. These have a powerful positive influence on pupils' learning. Development of moral, social and cultural awareness is good; spiritual development is satisfactory. Attendance is average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons consistently promote pupils' achievement. Teachers handle pupils with assurance and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They plan well and are very encouraging to pupils in their efforts to learn. Teaching is very inclusive; it is organised so that all pupils, regardless of their learning needs, receive strong support in lessons. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to give help to pupils who most need it and ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to learn. In some lessons work is insufficiently adapted to meet all pupils' learning needs. The way in which pupils' work is marked is inconsistent and often gives too few indications to pupils on how to make improvements. Pupils participate enthusiastically in their learning and are receptive to teachers' high expectations of both behaviour and academic performance.

The school curriculum is satisfactory; it is balanced and has strengths, such as the provision for music. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. There are good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities and trips. There is good support and guidance to help pupils' personal development. Guidance to help pupils improve in lessons is variable. It is best in English and mathematics, where assessment provides the school with information which is beginning to be used to set basic improvement targets for pupils. However, assessment is unsatisfactory. There is less assessment of progress in other subjects and, consequently, these subjects offer very little help to help pupils to improve. Pupils are involved in the running of the school through the school council. The school has good links with the local community and with other nearby schools. Links with parents are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The head teacher and management have been heavily engaged in recent years in ensuring that the building works are completed satisfactorily. Now that this is complete, providing spacious and pleasant accommodation, there is a renewed sense of purpose for the school, which is expressed in the good school improvement plan. This clear vision is shared by staff and governors. Methods of self-evaluation are generally effective and the school is starting to take action to tackle perceived

weaknesses. However, improvements in assessment have not had sufficient impact on teaching and learning. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met and have an understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, working hard to challenge and support it. However, they do too little independent monitoring of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy that the school provides a caring and safe environment for their children. They have no significant concerns, but a minority feel that they are not kept sufficiently informed about their children's progress. Inspectors find information to parents is satisfactory. Pupils like their school and find it a happy place. However, a few showed concerns about bullying when interviewed. Inspectors find these incidents are rare and that they are dealt with very well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further.
- Develop assessment further so that it helps teachers and pupils understand more clearly how to raise their achievement.
- Ensure that marking of pupils' work promotes learning more effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement across the school is satisfactory. The standards pupils attain are broadly similar to the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work of current pupils are similar to the national average. This represents an improvement in standards in the last year.
- Results in national tests in 2003 were well below the national average and well below average in comparison with similar schools.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with standards that are generally average. Standards by the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. The exception to this was in 2003 when a combination of long-term staff absence and disruptive building works led to a sharp drop in the standards reached in the national tests. Strong action taken by the school has done much to rectify this fall. Early indications are that the 2004 national test results show clear improvement over those in 2003, although there are as yet no national averages for comparison. Overall, standards at the school represent satisfactory achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.1 (26.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	26.7 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 112 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Pupils make a good start to their education in Year 3. Clear assessment of their abilities as they enter the school enables teachers to focus on raising their standards. With good teaching, standards improve. In English, for example, the quality of pupils' work seen in books indicates satisfactory progress in Year 3 and the quick adaptation of pupils to the expectations of their new school. The development of pupils' confidence and independence enables them to learn well and is a valuable foundation for success in their studies as they move through the school.
3. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards have improved at a similar rate to other schools, so that current standards are similar to the national average. Teaching is effective, which means improvement in standards is evident in all four years. Pupils contribute well to the improvements in their standards; their mature attitudes and strong concentration are positive influences. The promotion of learning through an understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses is good, although not enough is done to develop individual targets for pupils in each of their subjects.

4. Although there is no systematic co-ordination, a range of subjects make a good contribution to the development of pupils' language and literacy skills. Many subjects give opportunities for pupils to write in different styles; for example, when they write reports on life in Tudor times in history lessons. Geography teaching actively promotes the development of pupils' research skills when working on rivers of the world, showing pupils the best ways to quickly find relevant information in text-books. This provision has made a good contribution to the improvement in standards in English. However, the school gives too little emphasis to the development of vocabularies which are relevant to specific subjects.
5. The contributions that other subjects make to the development of numeracy skills are satisfactory. Science, geography, design and technology and other subjects all use mathematics in their schemes of work. Again, there is no systematic planning to promote the development of numeracy skills in the other subjects of the curriculum.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve better than their peers. This is because teachers know their pupils' needs very well and are supported by good individual education plans. Tasks are modified to meet individual pupils' needs and teaching assistants provide effective support in class or in separate sessions. Pupils move up or down the special educational needs register depending on their progress, and this encourages their achievement. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily. Pupils who are above average in ability and those who are gifted and talented also achieve satisfactorily, assisted by work in lessons that has the correct degree of challenge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' positive qualities are fostered by good moral, social, cultural provision, and satisfactory spiritual provision. These factors ensure that pupils learn in a productive, welcoming and friendly environment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have a thirst for learning and actively engage in activities inside and beyond lessons.
- Pupils have pleasant and purposeful dispositions, caring attitudes and serve their school in a mature and responsible manner.
- Behaviour is good.
- Pupils mature particularly well in their moral, social and cultural development, and the school provides well for this.

Commentary

7. High expectations of behaviour are implemented through a very clear set of school rules and very good teacher management. Good attitudes and behaviour mean that pupils want to learn. Pupils usually have very good attitudes in lessons. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and tackle work enthusiastically. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them in classrooms are good. These positive relationships underpin pupils' confidence and self-esteem, encouraging them to learn. There were very few exclusions in the last year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	340	1	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	14	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

8. Most pupils invest their time wisely and take an active part in activities beyond lessons. They play different sports, visit places of interest and extend their learning through the lunchtime and after-school clubs. This ensures a positive and stimulating environment, and enables pupils to feel confident in their learning and valued as individuals.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.5
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.

9. There are many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and responsibility both in and beyond lessons. One example is the school council, where pupils were observed sharing innovative ideas about improving the school provision. Prefects and house captains in Year 6 support teaching and learning and work alongside staff, providing care and guidance for younger pupils. These experiences enhance learning, support constructive relationships and ensure pupils learn in a friendly environment, fostering good moral, social and cultural development.
10. The underlying messages, promoted consistently through the school, about the importance of living together harmoniously and respecting others, make a real impact. They are reinforced through assemblies, residential visits and through social activities beyond lessons. This contributes powerfully to pupils' personal development, particularly to their moral, social and cultural development, all of which are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education that the school provides is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is thoroughly assessed but the results are not fully used to help improve standards. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. The way the school cares for pupils is good. There are satisfactory links with parents and good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. There is strong consistency in teaching and over a third of lessons seen were excellent or very good. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is thoroughly planned to meet all pupils' learning needs.
- Teachers engage closely with pupils, encouraging them in their efforts.
- Pupils work very hard and with good independence.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not offer sufficient encouragement to make improvements.
- Very good relationships encourage pupils to help one another in their learning.
- Assessment provides a range of information but teachers do not consistently use this to set targets.

Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are good. More than six out of ten lessons seen were good or better and over a third were very good or excellent. Teachers and pupils collaborate well in their learning and the atmosphere in classrooms is positive and energetic. The quality of monitoring of lessons has improved in the last year in some subjects and is starting to ensure that good practice is starting to be shared. Teachers are largely consistent in the way they approach lessons and manage pupils. In this way, pupils know what to expect and what will be expected of them. This establishes very effective classroom routines so that lessons progress at a good pace.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	10 (34%)	8 (26%)	9 (30%)	2 (7%)	0	0

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

12. Lessons are well planned and follow a common pattern. Teachers use their informal knowledge of pupils' abilities as well as the results of assessment to place pupils in appropriate groups. Activities planned for groups vary but generally have the correct degree of challenge so that pupils from the whole range of abilities are kept at 'full stretch' in all parts of the lesson. Lessons build well on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning, showing an awareness of their varied learning needs and offering appropriate support in classrooms. Lessons are also well prepared so that resources are ready, which reduces the waiting time in lessons to a minimum.
13. Relationships in classrooms are very positive. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, teachers are careful to engage with all pupils in questioning and discussion. Pupils' efforts are

quick to earn praise; when they have difficulty, there is friendly encouragement and good advice. This frequently enables them to overcome any problem. Secondly, pupils demonstrate mature attitudes both to their work and towards one another. They work very well in pairs and small groups, taking turns if necessary and supporting one another in their tasks. Finally, teachers manage pupils with skill and assurance so that good learning routines are established and adhered to, ensuring no time is wasted.

14. Most teaching is lively and dynamic. Teachers usually show infectious enthusiasm and pupils are swept along with a real pleasure in learning. At the end of lessons, there is usually a good summary of what has been learnt and this gives an additional opportunity for pupils to be praised for their efforts. Teachers are alert; their very high expectations of behaviour and performance are invariably met by pupils, who are always eager to please. Teachers work hard and with considerable success to develop pupils' independence as learners.
15. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The school has developed procedures to assess pupils' progress and systems are in place to record progress over time, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This influences the setting of pupils and the provision of support and planning of lessons. However, the results are not regularly used to involve pupils in setting clearly focused targets for their improvement. Pupils in Year 6 have had targets set in relation to their national test subjects but this is the exception. In other subjects, assessment is limited. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and unsatisfactory, overall. The style and emphases in marking vary between teachers. At its best, it is thorough and includes detailed, friendly comments that assist pupils' achievement but this is rare. Most work is marked but, while there are encouraging comments, there are few indications of what pupils should do to improve on their National Curriculum level. One result of this is that the presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent and often very poor. Initial assessments provide valuable information for early identification and intervention of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use assessment procedures effectively to monitor these pupils' progress.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and so they learn well. Strengths include carefully matched activities and extremely good relationships between pupils and staff. Teaching assistants make good use of the information arising from individual education plans. Throughout the school, staff attitudes to pupils with special educational needs are inclusive and all pupils are fully integrated in mainstream classes. Assertive discipline strategies are in place for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Class teachers consistently employ these techniques to maintain a well disciplined learning environment. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and learn as well as other pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good opportunities for enrichment and good accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accommodation is much improved since the previous inspection.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are good learning resources in the school.
- There is no systematic planning to promote literacy and numeracy in all subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

17. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. In the last few years, teachers have concentrated on establishing a high-quality curriculum in English and mathematics. In this, the school has been successful. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have become well established and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. The schemes of work for music and personal and social education are excellent. The planning for English, mathematics, ICT, design and technology, physical education and religious education is good. The schemes of work for art and geography are satisfactory; but those for science and history are unsatisfactory.
18. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The range of extra-curricular activities is broad and includes clubs for girls' and boys' football, netball, badminton, hockey, cross-country running, cricket, athletics, chess, dance, choir, orchestra, book fairs and homework. Members of the local community come into school to provide opportunities that enrich the curriculum. There are good links between the work undertaken in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are involved in numerous fund-raising events for various worthy causes and charities.
19. Teachers make good efforts to ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum. They take positive action to ensure that pupils are fully included in all activities. The school has a good awareness of the social and cultural diversity of the pupils' backgrounds and all pupils are valued and given equal opportunities to learn. Through their planning, teachers generally make good provision for pupils of differing abilities.
20. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Provision complies fully with the special educational needs Code of Practice. Pupils with special educational needs study the full range of National Curriculum subjects and the work is matched carefully to meet their individual needs and abilities. Teachers include these pupils fully in school life and the good levels of support ensure that they are able to study all the subjects on offer. This makes a very good contribution to the school's ethos.
21. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The school has an experienced and well-qualified group of teachers. The school also employs a number of education support staff and peripatetic musicians. The head teacher is supportive to new teachers joining the school, enabling them to quickly contribute to maintaining and enhancing standards.
22. The accommodation is good. The building programme to improve the accommodation has been successful. The school benefits from large, roomy, well-lit classrooms with good storage space. Refurbishment of the ICT facilities over the last few years has ensured that ICT accommodation and resources are very good. There is insufficient outdoor accommodation for physical education. However, teachers take pupils to local sports centres for some physical education lessons. The cleanliness and good condition of the buildings and grounds create a positive learning atmosphere.
23. Learning resources are good. There has been considerable investment in improving those in ICT, and the quality of the new equipment is excellent. This is having an increasingly strong impact upon the overall quality of teaching and learning. There are a good number of textbooks, non-fiction and fiction books to support teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

The way the school cares for pupils is good. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive is good. The involvement of pupils in the school's work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good systems for monitoring pupils' personal development ensure good support and guidance.
- The school council is developing as an effective forum for pupils' voices to be heard.

Commentary

24. The head teacher and staff provide a caring and stimulating environment where pupils feel secure, valued and confident. Within this environment, pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities which enable them to develop their physical, intellectual, emotional and social skills. Pupils learn with confidence and are encouraged to develop as mature, disciplined and responsible citizens of school and community. Appropriate arrangements for child protection and health and safety ensure the school community learns in a safe and secure environment.
25. Teachers, both inside and beyond lessons, encourage pupils to have high expectations of themselves, their work, behaviour, attendance and punctuality. Pupils strive to live up to these ideals and this does much to enable them to develop positive self-esteem. Teachers ensure that every child has equal access to the learning opportunities on offer. They encourage and develop care and respect in the ways pupils treat one another.
26. The school seeks, values and, where appropriate, acts upon pupils' views through a school council. A few concerns expressed by pupils about bullying were very minor. Very little bullying takes place; when it does, the school deals with it very effectively. Pupils are confident that the school is increasingly acting upon their concerns and recommendations.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and other nearby schools are good. The school provides, develops and maintains an active partnership with parents and the wider community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents who attended the parents' meeting and reported through questionnaires are positive about the school.
- Good links with the local community extend pupils' understanding of the wider world.
- There are good transition arrangements to local high schools.

Commentary

27. There was a good response to the inspection questionnaire. It was readily apparent at the meeting for parents prior to the inspection how appreciative they are about most aspects of school life. Inspectors generally agree with parents' positive views about the school, although a few were disappointed with the information that they received from the school. The inspection finds that the information the school provides for parents is satisfactory.

28. The school values its wider community and sustains a secure partnership that ensures that teaching and learning are strengthened by its links. For example, there are very close ties with the local church, ambulance and music service and high school. Productive partnerships help to enrich and extend provision, especially in music, and enable pupils to learn and develop as individuals. These links promote co-operation and prepare pupils for life in the community. Whilst the school works hard to promote learning about other faiths and cultures, opportunities for visits to other places of worship are under-developed.
29. The work of the Achievement Zone, part of the 'Excellence in Stoke-on-Trent' programme, is a pivotal link and contributes extensively to developing and improving learning in the school. A number of initiatives, including the training of support staff, support and guidance for disaffected and vulnerable parents and workshops and activities for pupils, all help in enabling the school to raise achievement. This link also supports a happy and productive transition to high school and provides opportunities for parents to support both their children's and their own learning.
30. A wide range of outside agencies provides good support for pupils with special educational needs. Parental agreement is always sought and records are clear, informative and regularly updated.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the head teacher and other key staff is good. Management is good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a clear vision shared by the head teacher and management team for the continuing development of the school.
- Induction procedures for new staff and newly qualified teachers are very good.
- The governing body does too little independent monitoring of the school.
- Provision for the continuing professional development of staff is very good.
- Finances are well managed.
- The monitoring role of coordinators in some subjects is underdeveloped.

Commentary

31. The school had been successful in raising standards since the last inspection, but an improving trend was halted in 2003 when the national test results fell. The head teacher and management team focused immediately on the key areas of English and mathematics and created strategies for raising standards in these core subjects. The head teacher leads by example. He has created a good team of teachers and non-teaching staff who are committed to school improvement and work effectively as a team to raise standards. All leaders provide good role models for other staff in their refusal to be complacent.
32. School improvement planning is good. A reflective and analytical management team work together well to pinpoint areas for improvement and to plan future developments systematically. The main targets set concentrate on rectifying weaknesses identified since the fall in standards in 2003. Progress against the targets set for school

development is monitored regularly and decisions for future action are made on the basis of evidence collected. The school's evaluation is a thorough and accurate reflection of its current state and is well used to inform future developments. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is becoming established, but in other subjects it is less developed. Systems of performance management are embedded well in the school structure. The provision for the continuing professional development of staff is very good. Induction procedures for newly qualified and new staff are very good, with clearly defined support, very effective mentoring procedures in place and good training.

33. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet regularly and are keen to support the school. They are regularly consulted about all significant issues relating to the school and its future. Governors were involved in the school improvement plan as it evolved, under the leadership of the head teacher. The strong bonds that exist are beneficial to the school and governors offer firm support to staff, particularly the head teacher. However, governors have very few methods of finding out independently about the school so tend to lack detailed information. There are no systems for monitoring what the school does so the governors largely rely on what the school tells them. Informal links keep the governing body reasonably informed and they have a sound grasp of the main issues facing the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	984,949	Balance from previous year	32,650
Total expenditure	964,953	Balance carried forward to the next	52,646
Expenditure per pupil	2,353		

34. Systems of financial management exhibit good budgetary control and reflect the school's educational priorities well. The school improvement plan is costed and the head teacher and administrative staff regularly monitor budgets. Reports are given to governors at regular meetings and specific grants are spent appropriately. Administrative staff are very effective at reducing the workload of the head teacher and ensuring that financial procedures are rigorously applied and monitored. The carry forward shown in the table above has been used to maintain staffing levels in a time of falling rolls and to procure ICT materials. The school applies the principles of best value well and uses its resources effectively.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good. Lessons are thoroughly planned and teachers have high expectations.
- Results in 2003 tests were well below average.
- Assessment of pupils' work is not consistently used to set clear targets for pupils and teachers.
- Effective monitoring of teaching and learning is leading to a recovery in standards.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

35. In national tests in 2003, the results of pupils in Year 6 were well below average. Girls' results were similar to those of boys. Over the last five years, standards at the end of Year 6 have improved at the same rate as the rising national trend. The fall in results in 2003 has been carefully analysed by the school and there is clear evidence that two factors proved a handicap to this particular group of Year 6 pupils. Considerable long-term staff absence and the extensive building programme both affected these pupils' achievement. Attainment in Year 6 has improved this year and current standards are average and similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. Both current standards and the long-term results in national tests indicate that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the good support they receive. The achievement of the small number of those from ethnic minorities is satisfactory.
36. In speaking and listening, standards are average. Pupils speak confidently and thoughtfully, knowing that teachers and other pupils will listen them to with respect. Classrooms are orderly and quiet. This atmosphere encourages good verbal communications. In reading, standards are also at the national average. A school library has been established since the previous inspection. This encourages pupils' enjoyment of stories and they make good use of the variety of interesting books that the school provides. Pupils regularly take books home. They talk in a lively way about their favourite stories and, when reading aloud, are reasonably fluent and use good expression. In writing, standards are also similar to national averages. The presentation of written work is of an average standard and it is well punctuated. Pupils use a wide and imaginative vocabulary. They write at length, sustaining ideas well.
37. Teaching is good; this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. Learning is also good. This is a result of the keenness of all pupils to learn, their enjoyment of English, very strong and constructive relationships and good teaching. Teachers know their pupils well, and a collaborative approach characterises teaching and fosters learning. They have very high expectations of performance and behaviour, which pupils are keen to meet. The National Literacy Strategy is well understood and applied. Planning of lessons is good and, as a result, work is carefully adapted to individual learning needs so that pupils are kept at full stretch in all parts of the lesson. Teaching assistants know pupils well, and provide those who need it

with well-focused support. However, not all work is well marked; some has clear analytical evaluation and easily understood advice but too much marking lacks helpful comments. Assessment is improving and the school has gathered much useful data. However, this information is not consistently used to set individual targets to help pupils learn.

38. The provision for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The learning needs of these pupils are well known and teachers adapt work appropriately. In this way, these pupils have the same access to the curriculum as all other pupils. Their achievement across the subjects of the curriculum is as good as other pupils.
39. English is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and of the school's needs. The subject scheme of work is good. It draws fully upon the National Literacy Strategy. The departmental action plan is a thorough response to the worrying fall in results in 2003 and is having an effect in improving standards.
40. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have been maintained. Teaching has improved and the establishment of a school library is a positive factor.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Development of language and literacy in other subjects is satisfactory. The influence of the National Literacy Strategy feeds effectively into the approaches to teaching in a number of areas like geography and science. Literacy skills are promoted through the use of subject specific language. However, the school does not actively promote the use of English across all subjects of the curriculum. Reading is well promoted but the correction of technical errors in the use of language through marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and largely unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall, but work is not always suitably matched to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Results in 2003 tests were well below average.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and relationships with staff are good.
- There is insufficient application of mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

42. Standards by the end of Year 6 had been improving steadily since the last inspection, but they dropped sharply in the national tests in 2003 when they were well below average. This was largely due to the impact of two factors: firstly, staff absences which adversely affected all mathematics groups; and secondly, a period of extensive rebuilding and renovation which disrupted teaching and learning through the school. The school took immediate action to remedy these disappointing results, and indications from the most recent, unconfirmed, national tests are that standards are rising. Standards at the time of the inspection and the long-term results in national tests indicate that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
43. Teaching and learning are good overall, and in some lessons very good. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils and pitch work at an appropriately challenging

level. As a result, pupils put more effort into their work and are keen to succeed. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. High levels of enthusiasm from the teachers, good relationships and secure subject knowledge help to keep pupils motivated and involved. Teachers also ensure that classroom management is consistently good. The teachers set mathematical problems related to everyday life, and this enables pupils to think and discuss their ideas with others. Teaching assistants work well with pupils who have special educational needs and with other groups of pupils. Teachers respect the pupils and value their contributions in lessons. This was demonstrated in one very good lesson in Year 6 when the enthusiastic and experienced teacher consistently challenged pupils and praised them for their diligence and application. The sessions at the end of lessons are usually evaluative and provide teachers with a clear picture of pupils' progress during the lesson. Assessment procedures are developing soundly and the information that is gathered is slowly being used to diagnose areas of further development. Marking is regular, but it does not consistently indicate steps for improvement.

44. The mathematics curriculum is broad. Lessons show a high focus on number work. Mental and oral work is good, especially in the higher sets in Years 5 and 6. However, while mental strategies are often taught well, there is no clear expectation of what pupils should know by the end of each year, or of how rapidly they should be able to calculate. Pupils are organised in sets based on prior attainment, and the school is currently evaluating the benefits of teaching in sets. Teaching methods and materials are not always adapted well enough to meet the learning needs of all pupils within the sets.
45. The subject co-ordinator is committed to raising standards throughout the school. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Under the leadership of the head teacher and subject co-ordinator, monitoring of teaching and learning is developing and this has improved the quality of teaching. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. There are a limited number of curriculum areas where a link has been established with mathematics, although some numerical skills, problem-solving and data handling appears within other subjects. The computer suite is being used increasingly to support numeracy. However, opportunities to develop numerical skills tend to occur coincidentally rather than as part of systematic planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Standards attained in 2003 tests were well below average but have improved and achievement currently is good.
- Science schemes of work do not allow pupils learning to develop progressively.
- Targets to help pupils improve are not being set.

Commentary

47. In the national tests in 2003, the results of pupils in Year 6 were well below average. Girls' results were similar to those of boys. This year group was handicapped by a high proportion of teacher absence and disruptions caused by the building refurbishment programme. Attainment in Year 6 has improved and standards are currently average. They are also similar to the standards achieved in the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are good. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because their curriculum is carefully tailored for their needs and they are taught well. Pupils who are more able achieve well because teachers have increased the amount of challenging work they are given.
48. Pupils carry out a range of experiments, selecting equipment, making observations and recording their findings accurately. They can successfully explain their work, showing a good understanding and using the correct scientific language, such as when discussing the orbit of the moon or phenomena such as an eclipse. They understand the concept of fair testing. They have access to books of good quality and other research sources such as the Internet, and make good use of these.
49. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are usually well planned, with teachers throughout the school making good use of practical activities. Teachers are careful to emphasise correct scientific terminology and this helps pupils to a greater understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear instructions and helpful, lively demonstrations of concepts. They provide much well-directed help and support. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed but, when teaching was less effective, it was usually because pupils were not allowed to participate enough in practical activities. Pupils' written work in science helps improve standards of literacy. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, help improve standards of numeracy. ICT features increasingly in lessons. Teachers use good resources such as the interactive whiteboard and the networked computer suite to enhance science lessons. Teachers usually mark pupils' work regularly, sometimes adding useful comments of support and advice to help them improve. Good arrangements are made for assessing the pupils' work and good records are kept of pupils' attainments, but teachers rarely set targets to help pupils improve.
50. The science curriculum includes a good proportion of work which is experimental and based upon practical research, but the scheme of work lacks detail or an overview of the work planned in each year group. Leadership and management are satisfactory, being informed and enthusiastic. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates work throughout the school and has organised a good bank of resources very well. As a result, the school has effective strategies in place to raise standards further. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.
- Teaching methods and limited subject knowledge sometimes limit learning.
- The new ICT suite supports teaching and learning well.
- There is limited use of ICT across the curriculum.
- There is too little monitoring of teaching and learning.

- Pupils are enthusiastic and willing to learn.

Commentary

51. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.
52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils show a lively interest in their ICT lessons and in discussions with visitors. Their behaviour is unfailingly good and they appreciate the support of teachers and support staff. Teachers are enthusiastic and engage the learners appropriately by consolidating key vocabulary and helping them to practise their keyboard skills. Although teachers have benefited from training and exhibit commitment to using ICT, not all are entirely secure in their knowledge of how to apply the subject and this can affect pupils' progress. Teaching methods are not always well adapted to meet learning needs of all pupils in the classes. Assessment procedures are developing appropriately. However, the use of assessment information to inform teaching and learning and the tracking of pupils' progress are underdeveloped.
53. The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. He has a firm grasp of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a determination to raise standards further. He provides extensive training sessions for all members of staff. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning, but this is not widespread. A very detailed and well-focused action plan recognises current deficiencies and provides a very useful tool for further improvements.
54. The creation of a large, spacious ICT suite, the training programmes for the teachers and teaching assistants and the acquisition of new software are all successful moves that place the school in a strong position to move forward rapidly in the future. The first whiteboard has been purchased and this is planned to further enhance pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in ICT. Consequently, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator indicate that opportunities are provided for pupils to extend their learning through using computers in other subjects like English and history. However, such opportunities are not extensive enough. For example, pupils have too few opportunities to word process information.

HUMANITIES

Geography and religious education were inspected in full and are reported in detail below. History was sampled.

56. No **history** lessons were observed during the inspection. Much history work is based on major themes and topics. These link effectively with other subjects like art and design, ICT and geography. The subject promotes research and investigative skills well and pupils produce large quantities of work, often within a wide cultural context. There is a lack of artefacts to promote historical understanding. The subject is not monitored by the co-ordinator and plans for its future development lack focus and coherence.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding.
- There is little effective or systematic assessment of pupils' work.
- Little monitoring of the subject takes place.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well.

Commentary

57. Standards in Year 6 are in line with expectations and similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory, but those with special educational needs achieve well as they are well supported.
58. Work is planned to enable interesting topics like India and tropical rain forests to be covered in depth. This engages pupils' interest and by the end of Year 6 they demonstrate good map skills and clear understanding of the nature of different environments and the challenges that local inhabitants face. They understand natural processes, such as how rivers create their valleys.
59. Teaching is satisfactory and this is similar to the previous inspection. Learning is also satisfactory. This is partly due to pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment in learning. Teachers encourage pupils to undertake research. This fosters great breadth in the study of places and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural understanding. For example, work on India encompasses wildlife, religious festivals, food and architecture. Teachers have high expectations of performance and behaviour, which pupils are keen to meet. However, not all work is well marked; it is generally encouraging but lacks sufficient detail to promote the development of geographical skills effectively. There is no systematic assessment of standards; it is left to individual teachers to administer tests so practice is inconsistent and does not promote learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language is good.
60. The leadership and management of geography are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a developing understanding of the subject and has implemented improved schemes of work. However, there has been little monitoring. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and improvement is satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are above expectations.
- Teaching is good and teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

61. Pupils attain better than expected standards by the end of Year 6. Many develop a good understanding of facets of different world faiths. Pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs make good progress in their learning. The few pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language also achieve well, as do those who are gifted or more able.
62. In studies of Islamic art, pupils in Year 6 gain a good understanding of how Muslims believe that the human form should not be represented artistically. They develop spiritually as they look at PowerPoint presentations of intricate paintings in a mosque whilst hearing recordings of the Muezzin calling the faithful to prayer. Pupils in Year 3 know that the Islamic time of Ramadan involves fasting in daylight hours.
63. Teaching and learning are good. Where teaching is effective, it is because lessons are well organised and teachers have very good knowledge of the subject. Teachers generally match the work carefully to the abilities of different groups. They help pupils to reflect upon life, and to develop a greater self-knowledge. Because teaching is often committed, knowledgeable, and vibrant, it enthuses learners. Discussions about existence are inclusive and the teachers are well informed, so pupils learn much about respect and tolerance as well as gaining religious knowledge. Teachers make good opportunities to include references to other subjects such as mathematics and geography when teaching religious education. Lessons usually end with good closing sessions to check pupils' understanding and share conclusions. The artefacts used to assist religious education teaching are good.
64. Subject leadership is very good. The school has adopted the locally agreed syllabus to provide a basis for planning. Religious education makes a good contribution to literacy and numeracy. World faiths are taught in some depth. Assessment systems have recently been put in place and are satisfactory. Acts of worship make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school has made good progress in raising standards and improvement since the previous inspection has been good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education was inspected in full and is reported in detail below. Art and design, design technology and music were sampled.

65. **Art and design** was not a focus of the inspection and is not, therefore, reported on in any detail. However, examination of some previous work, discussions with staff and a survey of displays throughout the school indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met. Some examples of art and design work on display around the school were noted to be of good quality.
66. No lessons in **design and technology** were observed during the inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work, as is the subject coordinator. Design and technology work on display indicated standards that are broadly as expected. The school lacks resources for this subject. There has been no monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is not formally assessed.
67. No **music** lessons were observed during the inspection. The school choir performs regularly at local and regional competitions and standards in choral singing are above average. In an assembly, pupils sang hymns well, in the round and in harmony. There is an excellent scheme of work in the subject. Provision for music in extra-curricular clubs is good.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than national expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good and lessons are well planned.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The way teachers use facilities, both on and off-site, is good.

Commentary

68. Pupils attain better than expected standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils are well aware of health and safety issues, for instance the need to have a “warm-up” and a “cool-down” before and after exercising. In athletics sessions, older pupils are precise and fluent in throwing, jumping, running and balancing. Younger pupils are accurate in throwing balls but less able to catch them.
69. Teaching and learning are good. Good teaching is characterised by good discipline, good planning and very good class management.
70. Subject leadership and management are good. The scheme of work is well written and despite the school’s lack of playing fields, teachers compensate well by enabling pupils to use two local sports centres. The provision for sport after school in extra-curricular clubs is very good.
71. The school has maintained standards since the time of the previous inspection. Improvement has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

72. It was not possible to see any lessons in this area. The school has a good policy for teaching personal, social and health education and has a strong focus on the development of pupils as individuals. There is an excellent scheme of work. The school council is valued by pupils and makes a contribution to their involvement in the school. Planned lessons in the subject, resulting from a carefully constructed scheme of work, have a positive impact on pupils’ personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
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	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).

