

INSPECTION REPORT

LINTON HEIGHTS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Linton

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110672

Headteacher: Mr Rod Halls

Lead inspector: Joyce Taylor

Dates of inspection: 3 – 5 November 2003

Inspection number: 256748

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:	230
School address:	Wheatsheaf Way Linton Cambridge
Postcode:	CB1 6XB
Telephone number:	01223 892210
Fax number:	01223 890059
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Bowen

Date of previous inspection: 18 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is of average size compared to primary schools nationally. Pupils come from well above average social, economic and academic backgrounds. About five per cent are from minority ethnic families. All but two pupils speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is much lower than average. When pupils started school this year, their standards in mathematics were above average and in reading and writing were well above average for their age. These standards have risen during the past few years from generally average or above on arrival at the school. Twenty per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is average. Most of these pupils are a little behind their peers and a few have more significant difficulties. Four of these pupils have a statement of special educational need. No pupils are in public care. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is generally average. In September 2003, four new teachers (half the teaching staff) started at the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4275	Joyce Taylor	Lead inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology.
9505	David Haynes	Lay inspector	
19774	Maura Docherty	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs.
32608	Andrew Cook	Team inspector	Science Religious education Geography History.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked very successfully to raise below or well below average standards in literacy, numeracy and science to well above average standards across the school. Effective leadership and management ensure a clear focus for improvement. Good teaching enables the pupils to achieve well. They are enthusiastic and work hard. Some parts of the curriculum have been neglected during the drive to improve English, mathematics and science. As a result, provision in religious education, geography, history and information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. However, in view of the significant improvements and high standards in several subjects the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in literacy, numeracy and science have improved significantly and now match pupils' capabilities. Standards are above average in the art, music and sporting activities. In these subjects pupils achieve well.
- Skills in English, mathematics and ICT are not used well enough in other subjects.
- In some subjects achievement is unsatisfactory for the potentially highest attaining pupils. In many areas of school life they are not given enough responsibility.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The headteacher identifies clear priorities for improvement and ensures that targets are met.
- The teaching is good and information about the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is used very effectively to help them improve.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is very high.
- New teachers have settled very quickly and are influencing the work of the school effectively.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in 1998. Assessment has improved significantly and has been used most effectively to raise standards to a higher level than reached previously. Achievement is good in English, mathematics, the arts and sporting activities across the school and in science by Year 6. In the other subjects higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough. Satisfactory progress has been made in the other issues for improvement relating to lesson planning for teachers to follow, information for parents and ensuring statutory requirements are met. Co-ordinators now monitor the standards of work but there is room for further improvement in some subjects. Provision for ICT has not improved enough.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

In English, mathematics, science, art and design, music and physical education the pupils achieve well across the school. In history, geography, religious education and information communication technology achievement is unsatisfactory. Over the past few years pupils' standards have been rising as they enter the school. In 1999, when the current Year 6 arrived, the overall standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. These pupils have made very good progress, their standards are above average overall with about half well above average. In Years 4

and 5 standards are above average. The current Year 3 entered with standards that were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. These standards have been maintained.

Standards reached in the National Curriculum tests have fluctuated. In 2001 standards fell because the school accepted some slippage in learning during difficulties recruiting suitable teachers. By 2002 the pupils' achievement was poor and the staff worked very hard to implement improvements. By the time the pupils took their tests in 2003 the standards had risen significantly and were higher than they had ever been. The pupils' achievement was good. In order to reach these targets the school's concentration on geography, religious education and ICT wavered. Insufficient time or attention was given to these subjects and the standards fell to below average resulting in underachievement for the pupils. The highest attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily in the subjects where standards are above average. In the other subjects their achievement is unsatisfactory. The school is now on track to remedy these concerns.

Pupils' personal development is good. It is supported well by the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils are happy at school and enjoy their lessons. They are very confident and behave well. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education overall with considerable strengths in English, mathematics, science, the arts and physical education. In all classes teaching is good and in some it is very good. In most subjects pupils learn well and make good and sometimes very good progress. Information about their progress is used very effectively to speed learning in English, mathematics and science. Where learning is less successful, in geography, history and religious education the curriculum is uneven. Lessons do not always take account of the needs of the highest attaining pupils and not enough work is recorded in pupils' books in some subjects. Resources for ICT are insufficient. Pupils cannot practise skills often enough. English, mathematics and ICT are not extended sufficiently through other subjects. The school has identified these concerns and plans to improve provision are already in place. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. There are good activities outside lessons.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. Although support for some subjects has faltered, the school has made significant improvements, appointed strong teachers to join the already successful team and formed plans to remedy its weaknesses. Staff and governors share a very strong commitment to improvement and ensuring that the pupils enjoy school. Co-ordinators are effective in most subjects and are developing the necessary management skills in the others. Currently, there is not enough monitoring of teachers' planning in some weaker subjects to ensure enough is expected of all pupils but particularly those who are capable of very high standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the work of the school and have no significant concerns although one or two correctly identified ICT as a weaker subject. Opinions were sought from all pupils who feel their school is good and learning is enjoyable. They identified a laddish' attitude to some playtime activities that some found difficult.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the provision in ICT, geography, history and religious education.
- Ensure higher attaining pupils are challenged satisfactorily and become independent learners.
- Develop the use of ICT, English and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Improve the playtime behaviour of some pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, music, art and design and physical education across the school and pupils achieve well. In all year groups almost forty percent of the pupils reach above average standards and about ten percent reach very high standards in these subjects. In the other subjects while most pupils achieve satisfactorily the highest attaining pupils underachieve. Standards in history and design and technology are average. In geography and religious education standards are below average by Year 6 but are generally average in other year groups. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are below average across the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have significantly improved in National Curriculum tests and school based tests.
- The pupils are learning at faster than the average rate in English, mathematics and science.
- Although pupils reach high standards in some subjects, in others their standards are average or below and some of them underachieve.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (25.1)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	29.5 (26.0)	27.0 (26.7)
science	30.6 (26.2)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. Since 1998 standards on entry to the school have risen from generally average to above or well above average. Over time the junior school maintained the standards until a downward drift began in 2001 and the standards fell sharply in 2002. The highest attaining pupils were underachieving although the rest achieved satisfactorily. In 2003 the standards rose significantly as the table above shows. Almost all pupils reached or exceeded average standards. Over 40 per cent reached above average standards in English and mathematics and 60 per cent in science. These improvements are linked to very good monitoring. Targets are set for each child and they are all expected to make faster than average progress during the course of a year. During the time this system has been in place these high targets have been met.
2. Across the school the pupils' current standards are above average overall in English, mathematics, science, music, art and design and physical education. The higher attaining pupils are stretched satisfactorily although they sometimes start with the same tasks as others, which slows their progress on some occasions. In previous years pupils in Year 6 received a restricted curriculum, particularly in religious education (RE), history and geography, while their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and science were extended. This no longer occurs but the curriculum has not yet been sufficiently revised to ensure they are properly challenged. As a result, coverage of these subjects is uneven. Not enough is recorded in books to show progress and the school uses the schemes of work in a way that does not always meet the needs of the pupils. The standards are below average in geography and RE and the pupils are underachieving. In Years 3 to 5 the standards are average. Not enough work

is written down and some recorded work is the same for two different year groups. When the pupils discuss their work, however, it is clear that their knowledge and understanding reach average levels. They could learn more effectively in these subjects and the potentially higher attaining pupils are underachieving.

3. Standards in ICT are below average across the school. The pupils are experienced in some aspects of work because of very good use of resources at home. However the broader curriculum is not covered. As a result ICT is infrequently used across the curriculum. The school has taken very good action to remedy this. More resources have been purchased, a new and well informed co-ordinator has been appointed and a very clear action plan is in place.
4. Generally pupils apply their literacy skills well in other subjects when opportunities are made available. There are, however, too few occasions when pupils write at length or in different styles, for example in history and religious education. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practice skills of personal writing with the chance to record their own perceptions and interpretations of events and beliefs. Mathematical skills, also, are not used enough to support other subjects. There are few charts, graphs or calculations in science, geography or design and technology. Learning in mathematics is not strengthened by applying it in different subjects and aspects of school life.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Those with slightly lower standards than their peers are given strong support. They achieve well and generally reach average standards in tests. The few pupils with more significant difficulties are given equally strong support and are achieving well. The current Year 6 has a higher proportion of these pupils than other year groups and it is likely that about ten percent will not reach average standards when they take their National Curriculum tests in the spring. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Several of these pupils are very able and work at higher than average levels. Good provision for pupils with weaker skills in English ensures they make rapid progress. Overall boys and girls do equally well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Levels of attendance are very good. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is very good and well above the national average.
- Behaviour is good although sometimes it becomes rough at lunchtime.
- Relationships are good at all levels and pupils are confident and have high self esteem.
- Pupils and parents feel some dissatisfaction with lunchtime arrangements.
- The highest attaining pupils do not have enough responsibility for their own learning.

Commentary

6. Pupils like school and attend regularly; they are punctual and quickly settle in to the daily routine. Attendance has been consistently above the national average and for the last reporting period was well above average. Satisfactory systems are in place to analyse reasons for absence. There is a regular application of the behaviour policy by all staff and there are very high expectations of good behaviour in all year groups. Pupils live up to these expectations almost all of the time. They play together well in mixed groups and are well supervised but there is no organisation to their play and this can lead to boisterous games of football. They maintain that bullying or other forms of harassment are rare and that if any unpleasant incidents occur they know what to do and are confident that staff will deal effectively with any problems.

7. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is fully integrated into school life. A house system operates and awards are made each week in the 'Ceilidh', a family assembly. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and demonstrated well in class and when moving about the school. Feelings, values and beliefs of others are addressed in religious education lessons and PSHE, which includes role-play where pupils discuss situations and feelings from different viewpoints. The school supports national and international charities and pupils are concerned for those less fortunate than themselves. Throughout the school, teachers value the questions and answers pupils give and this helps them develop their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.

8. The pupils' social development is very good. Through the school assemblies a sense of community is fostered and all are valued. Pupils eagerly accept the responsibilities offered for the day-to-day running of the school, this was particularly evident with those nominated to look after the chickens. There are too few opportunities, however, for the higher attaining pupils to take responsibility for their own learning, by running projects or clubs for example. The school council is an established and effective body for obtaining pupils' views and provides good opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility. Council minutes show the pupils are concerned that those who have packed lunches have no table to sit at, a practice that also concerns parents. These pupils sit with lunchboxes on their knees at the edge of the hall and not enough thought has been given to these arrangements.

9. Pupils' moral development is very good. The school has a clear behaviour code, which is displayed in all classrooms and around the school. Pupils are given opportunities to explore and develop moral concepts and values. All staff promote principles such as fairness, integrity and respect through their relationships and interactions with pupils. The pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies provide opportunities to reflect on a range of issues including their own and others' experiences. The school celebrates special occasions and gives pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way they impact on peoples' lives. The school is linked to Mafumbuka School in South Africa and this extends pupils' knowledge of a different culture. Their knowledge and understanding of their own culture is good but their awareness of the richness and diversity of multicultural Britain remains underdeveloped.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.6
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.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
213	1	0
6	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0

Asian or Asian British – Indian
Chinese
No ethnic group recorded

1
2
5

0	0
0	0
0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education overall. There is very good provision for literacy, numeracy, science, the arts and physical education. In the other subjects provision fluctuates in quality and is unsatisfactory in geography, religious education and ICT where work is not built on systematically enough. Good opportunities are provided to enrich the curriculum outside lessons and interesting visits and visitors help to bring the curriculum alive.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good across the school and the pupils learn well. There are very thorough procedures for assessing pupils' progress and speeding their learning in literacy numeracy and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good questioning by teachers and pupils moves learning forward well.
- Potentially higher attaining pupils are not always appropriately challenged.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks that match the needs of the pupils.
- Assessment procedures are used very effectively to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Very good subject knowledge supports some excellent teaching.

Commentary

10. Teachers ensure that lessons are lively and interesting. There are high expectations that the pupils will listen carefully and work hard. The pupils enjoy their work and are interested in what they are learning. Teachers have focused very successfully on developing questioning skills. Many instances were observed during the inspection when teachers asked pupils how they knew something or why something happened in a certain way. Open questions that required pupils to explain, in science for example, resulted in deeper thought and personal responses to the learning. The pupils themselves confidently questioned when unsure or curious. This level of interest and the detailed responses from teachers enables pupils to learn well.
11. In some subjects, teaching and learning in lessons are good but the work over time from a series of lessons does not move the pupils forward fast enough. Teachers ensure those of differing abilities are challenged through discussion. However, pupils do not record enough work, their independent tasks are often the same across the class regardless of their ability and sometimes tasks are the same across two year groups. As a result, while most achieve satisfactorily sometimes the older pupils in the two-year group do not, and the highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This results in unsatisfactory standards by Year 6 in geography and religious education. In ICT resources are insufficient and pupils have too few opportunities to make progress across the school.
12. Assessment procedures are very thorough for English, mathematics and science. Teachers identify the levels reached by individual pupils and set targets for the end of each year that mean they will make faster than average progress. Each half term progress is reviewed and any problems are resolved. The system works extremely well and has significantly supported the rapid rise in standards across the school. The assessment system is based on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the National Curriculum for science. Lessons are planned to teach the next stage of each programme. This does not always identify the individual needs of pupils, particularly the very highest attainers, who sometimes receive the same tasks as their peers. They are questioned at a higher level in discussions and class lessons and as a result they often already understand the task that follows and find it easy. Where they are given work of a higher standard they become excited and focused, as was seen in mathematics in Year 6.
13. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in science and English where teachers had strong knowledge of the subjects and were extremely clear about how to move the pupils forward. In

these lessons pupils achieved very well because the teachers reacted immediately to situations arising from pupils' questions.

14. Homework is set across the school. The pupils and parents understand the system well and the work supports the learning in lessons well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (6%)	2 (6%)	16 (50%)	11(34%)	1(3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Subjects have an appropriate balance of time but some are not planned well enough. Provision is very good for English, numeracy and science and good for the arts and physical education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very rigorous provision for English, numeracy and science has significantly raised standards.
- Provision for art and design, music and physical education is good.
- Planning strategies for history, geography and religious education are unsatisfactory.
- Resources for ICT are insufficient.

Commentary

15. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is brought alive by clubs, visits, visitors and additional features such as chickens and a greenhouse. Provision in some subjects, in particular English, mathematics and science, is very strong and enables the pupils to learn quickly. Good attention is paid to art and design, music and physical education providing varied and interesting opportunities for the pupils that extend their learning well. The school has developed a new overall curriculum plan that shows all subjects will receive an appropriate balance of time during the year. This is a good development on earlier years when some subjects were overshadowed by literacy, numeracy and science.
16. There are weaknesses, however, in the way termly blocks of work are planned in religious education, history and geography. Lessons are based on a two-year cycle and pupils in two year groups may cover the same work, sometimes at the same level. The curriculum does not take enough account of the developing skills particular to each subject. This results in lessons providing new information but not always building on pupils' understanding of how to interpret the knowledge from, for example, a geographical point of view. In these three subjects the pupils do not record enough work in their books to show the progress they are making. They reach average standards in history because of greater understanding by teachers of how to move their learning forward. Lessons are not always planned to ensure pupils make good progress. As a result achievement is unsatisfactory, particularly for the potentially highest attaining pupils.
17. The resources for ICT are unsatisfactory. There are not enough computers for groups of pupils, or a whole class, to work together learning new skills quickly. The school has already identified a budget to remedy this and some new resources are already in place. Each pair of classes has an interactive white board for skills to be demonstrated and to aid teachers in lessons. This is working well.

18. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and receive the help that makes them confident and successful learners. Very thorough records of progress are kept to show how fast pupils are learning and parents are fully involved at all stages.
19. The accommodation is very clean and tidy and maintained well by the caretaker. The staff have worked hard to make the building stimulating and welcoming and the site includes attractive gardens and a chicken run.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is good. The school cares well for its pupils and there is generally a high level of attention to matters of welfare and health and safety. Parents are very happy with the care and welfare the school provides for their pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff know the pupils well and provide a high level of personal support.
- There are good induction and transfer procedures.
- Measures to reduce boisterous play by some pupils have not been effective enough.

Commentary

20. Child protection procedures are sound and all teachers and classroom support staff are aware of their responsibilities. The levels of playground supervision are good and there is a selection of play equipment but this is not always used effectively, which is a contributory factor to the amount of boisterous play at lunchtimes.
21. Standards of maintenance and cleanliness are good and this instils high values in the pupils who show respect for property and resources. Teachers know their classes well and provide a good level of personal support, involving parents where necessary. Pupils are confident in approaching adults if they need help and refer fondly to the school secretary as 'queen of the cold packs'. There is a clear and consistently applied reward system that encourages good achievement in all aspects of personal and academic development. Regular celebration assemblies are held where achievements both in and outside school are recognised.
22. The school council has contributed well to the development of the school and some suggestions have been implemented. In particular there has been an attempt to improve safety by changing parking arrangements when pupils are dropped off and collected from school. Suggestions to reduce boisterous playground behaviour have been attempted but have not been successful. Induction arrangements for pupils entering school are good. They ensure the pupils are confident when they start and establish a good home-school relationship. There are good procedures for transferring to secondary school and counselling for those who may be anxious about the move.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a satisfactory partnership with parents and the community and good links with other schools. The views of parents were positive in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are supportive of the school and run an active Friends Association.
- Regular assemblies for parents keep them involved and informed.
- Pupils' annual reports contain insufficient information about their progress.
- There are good links with other schools that benefit the pupils.

Commentary

23. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire show that they are very satisfied with the school and are particularly pleased that their pupils like school. Regular newsletters issued by both the school and governors are informative and easy to read. Good use is made of e-mail as a means of communication and parents are pleased to respond in the same way whenever possible. Whilst information for parents is sound, the pupils' annual report does not provide them with a clear statement about the progress their child is making. Several parents commented on this in their questionnaire and indicated they would like more information. Parents are welcome in school and particularly appreciate the weekly 'Ceilidh' parent assemblies. They feel comfortable about approaching the school and there are good procedures in place to deal with any concerns but they seldom have to be used. An active Friends Association supports the school well by providing good social opportunities for parents and pupils and by providing finances for learning resources.
24. The school maintains good relationships with the local secondary school and this helps pupils transfer smoothly. Links with the local community to broaden experiences are satisfactory and limited use is made of the school premises by outside organisations. Links with a local agricultural college are good and have been used effectively to enrich learning opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good with significant strengths in some areas and other aspects that require attention.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads and manages the school well.
- Weaknesses in key subjects have been resolved rapidly and very effectively.
- Effective teachers have been appointed to provide strong leadership in areas of weakness.
- There is good leadership in several subjects and aspects of the school's work.
- Co-ordinators in some subjects have not received enough support to be sufficiently successful.
- Governors are strongly committed to the school.

Commentary

25. The headteacher leads the school well. Key aspects of the work of the school are evaluated very thoroughly, for example the pupils' performance in statutory and other tests. When the falling standards in literacy, numeracy and science were recognised the school responded with very clear and effective action. The problem arose because of difficulty in recruiting suitable staff and an acceptance of lower than appropriate standards for the highest attaining pupils. A detailed and rigorous programme of improvement was implemented linking frequent assessments of clear targets. This led to a rapid rise in standards and good achievement for all the pupils. Since this programme was introduced half the staff have changed but the clear expectations remain high and are acknowledged by all the teachers. The staff share a common commitment to ensuring the pupils achieve well in these subjects.
26. The learning in some other subjects is not evaluated so well. Teachers' planning is not reviewed diligently enough. Consequently, although their overall standards raised concern no-one noticed that tasks for the highest attaining pupils had become less challenging. A new, informed co-ordinator to help particularly gifted and talented pupils has been appointed and a plan to challenge these pupils has been developed. Other areas of concern identified by the school, for example the provision for ICT, have resulted in the appointment of a new co-ordinator with the expertise the school needs to ensure these aspects are improved. All co-

ordinators are keen to lead their colleagues well. There is already very good leadership of assessment and the new co-ordinators in English, mathematics, science and ICT are usefully influencing the work across the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led well and ensures these pupils are included in the full life of the school. Those subjects where standards are below average have not received enough attention. Time and support from senior staff have not ensured that these co-ordinators receive the necessary training and opportunities to improve the provision.

27. Management of the school is good. Plans for future school improvements are clear. Areas of concern have been correctly identified and sensible strategies are already in place to continue moving the school forward. The headteacher and governors have managed the staffing situation well. Newly appointed teachers have the skills that the school needs. The teaching is monitored effectively and this has resulted in an improvement in questioning strategies, particularly in English. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The secretary manages her role very effectively and is very welcoming to pupils, parents and visitors. She works well to support the staff.
28. The governors are very effective in supporting the school and take their responsibilities seriously. Each class has a 'governor friend' who visits regularly to help and sometimes monitors the work of the classes. Governors link with subject co-ordinators to help in developments and extend their own understanding of the way the pupils learn. They follow improvements closely using reports from the headteacher and their own members or committees to judge the quality of improvements. They actively support and challenge the headteacher by questioning plans and providing ideas and information from within their own professional expertise. This was particularly useful while the new assessment strategies were developed. Through these activities governors are very well informed and able to make useful suggestions when improvements are planned.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	489786	Balance from previous year	12205
Total expenditure	474503	Balance carried forward to the next	27488
Expenditure per pupil	2063		

29. The management of finances is good. Priorities are identified and funding made available. For example in maintaining the numbers of support staff to support those pupils with slightly lower standards than their peers. This has enabled almost all pupils to reach average levels. The school applies the principles of best value well and gives good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good; this is an improvement since the last inspection.
- Standards and achievement are good.
- Strong, highly focused leadership ensures all staff work to clear priorities.
- Very good use of assessment data has raised standards and improved achievement.
- There is a lack of opportunity for independent work for the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

30. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Apart from the dramatically improved recent results there has been a steady upward trend except for 2002, where staffing problems contributed to poor performance in the National Curriculum tests. This improvement is set to continue owing to good teaching, particularly from some of the newly appointed staff, the very good deployment of teaching assistants and appropriate planning. The school has recently appointed a strong co-ordinator who has clear priorities for developing the subject and is confident the school will achieve its targets.
31. Standards are good across the school and pupils make good progress. They are 'set' for literacy according to prior attainment and work is targeted at a satisfactory level. Planning ensures that support is given to the wide range of learning needs in these sets, including those with higher attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. For example, special educational needs pupils in Year 6, who took the end-of-year test in 2003, achieved the nationally expected standards. Good support is provided for less experienced or lower-attaining pupils through the effective deployment of teaching assistants, who work to help everyone achieve the lesson's objectives.
32. Standards in speaking and listening are very good. Pupils listen well in lessons, raise interesting questions, and contribute ideas from their own knowledge. Such personal contributions are always received well by staff. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to talk together and discuss ideas before they feed back to the rest of the class. This good practice allows the involvement of all as the lesson unfolds. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages pupils to explain their ideas and indicates how well they understand new ideas and concepts.
33. Reading standards are good. In Year 6 pupils read fluently and confidently, using punctuation to bring emphasis and additional meaning to their reading. They tackle unfamiliar words with a range of skills, for example inferring the meaning of a word from the overall sense of a sentence. They are coming to understand the more literary language from working with the teacher on the details of their reading. They also consider deeper meanings at the heart of the stories they read. For example, a less experienced reader summarised the story of "Flat Stanley" by explaining that Stanley could still feel normal, though flat, assuring the inspector that "Stanley was not hurt, just flat", a point that Stanley was trying to prove throughout the book.
34. Standards in writing are good. By Year 6 many pupils have developed a good fluent handwriting style and are beginning to understand the conventions of different types of writing. They recognise, for example, the difference between autobiographical and biographical texts and are

able to use this knowledge to write in these styles. Pupils do not write for their own purposes and higher attainers are not given enough opportunity to work more independently to take ideas presented in the lesson to a higher level. Not enough opportunities are given for constructing longer pieces of writing to develop the skills of composition and text structure, or to editing work to make the meanings clearer. Too often work is highly directed by the teacher, and marked before pupils have achieved a final draft and improved their work independently, drawing on newly acquired skills.

35. Teaching and learning are good overall, some lessons are very good and one lesson observed was excellent. Planning identifies what pupils of different ability need to do to achieve the learning objectives. Teachers set a good pace and are very encouraging. Most teachers adopt well regarded strategies known as “guided reading” and “guided writing” to help pupils read with comprehension and collaborate on producing writing of a high standard. In some classes these approaches are not fully exploited, and therefore are having less impact on pupils’ overall achievement. Teachers’ marking is inconsistent and, in many instances, uncritical. In the best practice teachers identified what progress had been made and how work might be improved.
36. The school has recently appointed a co-ordinator, who has a clear vision of how the school can improve all aspects of the subject. She takes the lead in monitoring teaching, learning and overall achievement through classroom observations and regular checking of pupils’ work in books. She has already produced a strong action plan, with good emphasis on aspects that require improvement. For example, from an analysis of end-of-year tests in Year 5, she has already identified the need to improve pupils’ writing of longer texts, with a stronger focus on composition and the overall effect on a reader. Her findings have been communicated to the teacher of these pupils who are now in Year 6. Spelling and handwriting standards across the school are other areas for development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Pupils are encouraged to talk together in pairs and groups in lessons in other subjects. Good questioning allows them to explain their thinking, which they do with clarity and skill. Pupils do not make enough use of their literacy skills in other subjects. In history, geography and religious education, for example, they are not given enough opportunity to explore new ideas through their own writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has worked very successfully to restore standards in numeracy to a high level.
- Pupils achieve well and make fast progress as they move through the school.
- Leadership and management are good and are supporting further improvement.
- There are too few opportunities for the highest attaining pupils to excel at mathematics.
- Mathematics is not used well enough across the curriculum.

Commentary

38. The school has worked very hard to raise the standards in mathematics from the below average level noted across all year groups in 2002. Very thorough assessment procedures that check against high targets have strongly influenced the improvements. Staff recognised that considerable underachievement and slippage in standards year on year, meant pupils fell further and further behind. Following a period of rapid activity the standards were restored to their previous level. Since then they have exceeded earlier levels and now, in numeracy in particular, are very high. Almost all pupils are on line to reach or exceed average standards in

their National Curriculum and school based tests. In Year 6 almost sixty percent are likely to reach above average standards. In other year groups more than 50 per cent reach above average levels.

39. Pupils work in sets grouped according to their ability and in each case the pupils in the lower set work at an average level while the higher attaining pupils work at an above or well above average level. Across the school there are pupils who make twice the expected progress in numeracy within each year. Although the pupils are expected to work hard they still thoroughly enjoy mathematics and are confident learners. Those pupils who learn at a slightly slower rate than their peers work alongside very effective learning support assistants who explain and repeat instructions and information to ensure pupils understand. Pupils with special educational needs, work at a slower rate and at lower standards than the rest of their group. They follow very similar programmes but receive constant support and achieve well.
40. Pupils with the potential to work at very high levels are not always provided with enough challenge when they work at their own tasks. The teaching is good overall and in lessons teachers question these pupils carefully and provide advanced information that challenges them. When individual tasks are set the highest attaining pupils often already thoroughly understand the work. Unlike their peers they need not always consolidate it but can move on to use and apply the learning in new and sometimes practical situations. At this stage teaching sometimes falters as all pupils in the set usually receive the same work. In their books there is, therefore, no evidence that some are exceedingly able mathematicians. When these pupils are set advanced tasks that enable them to demonstrate their understanding, as in a data management task in Year 6, their true, very high level of expertise is revealed. The new co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and appreciates the need for this level of opportunity to become an everyday part of the pupils' mathematical learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

41. There are missed opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy, measurement, data handling and problem solving in other subjects such as ICT, design and technology and science

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well; standards at the end of Year 6 have risen significantly in the last year and are above average.
- The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a successful start in developing the subject.
- Science investigational skills are underdeveloped.
- Higher-achieving pupils in Years 3 to 5 need to be challenged further.

Commentary

42. Standards have risen significantly. This is in part due to a clear scheme of work and a detailed programme of revision for pupils in Year 6. Standards in Year 6 for higher achieving pupils have also improved. However, in other year groups the standards of these pupils match their peers. Investigational skills throughout the school are satisfactory but are given less attention than other aspects of the subject. Some evidence of these skills was seen, for example in Year 5 work on electricity where pupils could make predictions, identify the need for a fair test and draw conclusions from their work.
43. Teaching is good. Varied vocabulary is introduced to the pupils to ensure they understand and can use correct terminology appropriately. They are expected to record their own ideas. Pupils

are encouraged to talk about their own perceptions and why they believe things work in particular ways. Individuals, who have a higher level of knowledge, are encouraged to share their insights and explain them to others. Teachers use these opportunities to reflect on pupils' learning and what needs to be taught next. Where teaching is satisfactory but less exciting the pupils are not challenged so well. They may be able to accomplish the task fairly quickly and are not expected to move on fast enough.

Example of outstanding practice

In one lesson pupils in Year 6 were learning about the changing position of the sun.

The teacher encouraged the pupils to think about the shape of the sun. He used extremely effective strategies to support the different needs of all pupils and ensured those with lower attainment discussed the vocabulary and examples of spherical objects. As pupils were encouraged to think about proving the spherical nature of the sun, higher attaining pupils suggested that photographs would reveal a sphere. The teacher immediately used a computer-linked camera to show live pictures of a sphere from the class collection. The pupils could see at once that the pictures looked two-dimensional and were highly motivated to speculate further. This was inspirational teaching and pupils were engrossed in high quality learning.

44. The co-ordinator is new in post. He is effective, has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has written a useful and detailed action plan. This shows clearly how the school is set to improve the teaching of investigational skills and the provision for higher achieving pupils. The plan also outlines how the co-ordinator will monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some aspects of teaching ICT are unsatisfactory and pupils do not experience the full range of the programme of study.
- ICT does not contribute well enough to the learning in other subjects.
- Resources are insufficient.
- The recently appointed co-ordinator has extremely good knowledge of the subject and the standards the pupils should reach.
- The action plan highlights the steps towards necessary improvement.

Commentary

45. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and in these the teaching was satisfactory and good. However, the work in books and discussions with pupils indicate that they are not yet experiencing the full range of the programmes of study. The school has too few computers to teach the full requirement in this subject. Progress since the time of the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.
46. In the well taught lesson, pupils demonstrated above average skills and knowledge. They had good opportunities at home to learn many applications and the teacher built on these effectively. Pupils learned new skills with confidence and accuracy and effectively integrated them into a history lesson to allow them to communicate information about the Romans. Because of lack of resources, however, they worked in groups of six, sharing a lap-top. The teacher used all the school's lap-tops and also borrowed the staff's personal equipment to resource the lesson. In another lesson pupils discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a range of long-distance communications. Discussion indicated that a very high percentage of

pupils already knew how to send an e-mail, a fact which had not influenced the planning of the lesson. These pupils did not experience any of the key activities of a properly resourced practical session. Work in books across all year groups, shows that much of their curriculum is based on paper exercises rather than using ICT hardware.

47. Teaching of many subjects is enhanced in four classes by the use of computerised whiteboards. Teachers demonstrate on a daily basis the application and capability of ICT in learning. Some very effective teaching, for example in science and history was strongly supported by teachers using these resources. Lack of computers however, means that such good demonstrations are not built upon by the pupils' own investigations. Lack of resources is having a serious impact on the quality of teaching and learning overall.
48. A very able and experienced co-ordinator has recently been appointed to the school. He has produced a very good action plan with the appropriate priorities set out clearly in all aspects of the subject, including the development of resources. His plans include a mobile lap-top network so that each class will have at least one literacy or numeracy session with the lap-tops. Part of his responsibility is to link subject development with the school's initiative for 'gifted and talented' pupils, which is intended to develop the subject for the most able pupils in all aspects of their learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

49. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. There are some examples of ICT in literacy, however, with pupils editing and writing on the screen for displays of special books. Some pupils, for example, are also producing the school comic. Homework tasks and some presentations of edited writing are enhanced by the use of ICT.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 6.
- The same topics are covered by two year groups with insufficient challenge for higher achieving pupils.
- Teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory.
- The amount of work in some year groups is not enough.

Commentary

50. Work in geography does not develop the pupils' skills and understanding systematically. As a result they do not achieve as well as they could and by Year 6 the standards are below average. For example, recent work undertaken by Years 5 and 6 has been on the topic of water; pupils have looked at the uses of water and identified sources of water around the school. Work in books shows that both year groups covered the same tasks at a Year 5 level. It does not show how older and more able have been moved on. It is not possible to identify the highest achieving pupils in either year group from the work they produce. Teaching in lessons was satisfactory and during discussions the pupils of all ability groups were challenged satisfactorily. In one lesson they used aerial photographs and ordinance survey maps to identify key features of settlements. This lesson provided satisfactory opportunities for pupils to learn and consolidate skills during the practical activities. Overall, the pupils do not record much in their books so cannot judge their own progress. Some of them have difficulty recalling earlier work as there is little to prompt them.

51. Leadership and management of geography have not been a priority owing to the school's understandable focus on literacy and numeracy. However, the subject is not led well enough. There has not been any recent monitoring or evaluation of the subject that could identify the underachievement although a portfolio of work is being kept by the co-ordinator. Topics have been mapped out over a two year cycle which ensures appropriate coverage of geographical knowledge but nevertheless does not challenge the older pupils well enough.

History

Provision for history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The same topics are covered by two year groups with insufficient challenge for higher achieving pupils.
- The amount of work in some year groups is not enough.
- Good questioning promotes interest in the subject.
- The use of educational visits supports learning in the subject.

Commentary

52. The leadership and management of history are unsatisfactory. There has not been any recent monitoring or evaluation of the subject though a portfolio of work is being kept by the co-ordinator. The topics covered by the pupils are not supported by a clear expectation of the standards they should reach and as a result the more able pupils underachieve.
53. The teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory overall and some was good. In one lesson observed, good questioning and enthusiastic teaching, meant the introduction to a new topic on the Romans generated good ideas from the pupils. Pupils also raised good questions that they wished to follow up in their own research. Discussions with Year 6 pupils showed they generally enjoy history and particularly remember the work done on the 1960s and World War Two when they were given more independent tasks and links were made across the curriculum. For example, pupils made 'air raid shelters' in design and technology. Pupils also remember educational visits they have made including those to Duxford and Kentwell Hall for an Elizabethan day. They are able to recall differences between their own way of life and that of Elizabethans. Although the pupils' standards are average, insufficient challenge for the higher achieving pupils means that overall these pupils do not do as well as they could.

Religious education

Overall the provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The same work is covered by two year groups with insufficient challenge for higher achieving pupils.
- The amount of work in some year groups is not enough.
- Sensitive teaching enables the pupils to understand and respect a range of different faiths.

Commentary

54. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall and some was good. However, the overall standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 6 are below average. Topics are organised so that two year groups cover the same work and often the tasks are at the same level. This means that some more able pupils do not learn as well as they could and their

achievement is unsatisfactory. While the school was working to raise standards in the core subjects, time was taken from the religious education programme in Years 5 and 6 to give greater emphasis to literacy and numeracy. As a result, last year's Year 6 left with insufficient coverage of major faiths. The current Year 6 also have not been given a wide enough range of opportunities, including visits to different places of worship, and meetings with people with different faiths. The amount of time given to the subject still varies through the school and in some younger classes pupils have made faster progress than in Year 6.

55. Where teaching and learning are good the pupils are sensitively encouraged to discuss their responses to images representing different faiths. In one Year 3 lesson a teacher introduced the pupils to images of Hindu Murtis. The teacher ensured pupils displayed respect and led them into thoughtful talk about prayer. In another lesson, in Year 5, pupils were able to explore the idea of stewardship through the Muslim belief that all are trustees of the world.
56. Although religious education has not been an area of recent development, the co-ordinator has provided satisfactory leadership through a difficult time. Resources have been reorganised and supplementary schemes have been put in place. Topics have been allocated over a two year cycle and this provides some structure to learning. Informal discussions and advice about ways of delivering the curriculum have taken place but this has not yet had a significant impact on the standards of the oldest pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

57. Insufficient work in art and design was seen to form an overall judgement on provision. Standards of work displayed and recorded in school are above average. Pupils are provided with a suitable range of art and design activities. In painting their work is exciting and detailed. They use appropriate starting points, such as prints of the work of famous artists to complete work that is of an above average standard. In Years 3 and 4, work shows an attention to the colour and form of jungles and forests that is very thoughtful. The older pupils, particularly, convey in their paintings the movement created by stormy weather convincingly. In Years 5 and 6, careful technical work has enabled the pupils to develop an understanding of perspective. Work in Year 5 is thoughtful and accurate, relying heavily on a system for managing an illusion of depth in a picture. The pupils have extended their learning by creating their own images of people in the foreground against a background of receding streets. In Year 6 the pupils have moved on to imaginative views of receding countryside. The results are pictures and designs that are attractive and colourful as well as convincing in their illusion of depth. Pupils with special educational needs are given particular encouragement and produce thoughtful pieces of work.
58. The school provides additional art and design activities through a clay club. Last year an arts week was greatly enjoyed by all and work of high standards was produced.

Design and technology

59. Insufficient work in design and technology was seen to form an overall judgement on provision. Standards in completed work are average. In Year 6 pupils were making moving toys. They used an appropriate range of constructing skills and the work was linked to ideas for mechanical movements. Good use was made of ICT resources. The teachers made a video recording of the pupils, making exaggerated mouth movements, to aid them in the selection of favourite movements to incorporate in their model. The work of last year's Year 6 shows that a satisfactory standard was reached although the design aspect is less developed than the pupils' skills of making.

Music

60. Insufficient work in music was seen to form an overall judgement on provision. Standards in one lesson were well above average and musical performance in school assemblies was of good quality. Pupils have alternate lessons each week, one with their own teacher and another with the co-ordinator. Many learn instruments and play well, for example guitar, brass and woodwind, and all pupils in Year 3 have the opportunity to learn recorders. The school has a jazz group, which plays in local festivals and pupils have performed in the Barbican with the London Symphony Orchestra. Extra-curricular music activities including instrumental tuition enable pupils to reach above average standards.
61. The co-ordinator's teaching of the subject is inspiring. In the one lesson observed he helped pupils achieve very high standards in music-making with four groups beating out different rhythms, a chorus, and another group playing chords on chime-bars, with a final layer of music provided by the teacher's double bass accompaniment. Every pupil worked hard and contributed to the overall success of the performance and enjoyed a great sense of achievement.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned well and pupils enjoy their learning.
- There are good opportunities for extra-curricular sport and various professional sports clubs make a good contribution to learning.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject well.

Commentary

62. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, one of games and the other of dance. In these lessons achievement was high and pupils showed enthusiasm for learning and keenness to improve. Around ninety percent of pupils are able to swim the required 25 metres or more by the time they leave the school. In the other areas of dance, gymnastics, athletics and games pupils have full access to appropriate programmes of study.
63. In the lessons observed teaching and learning were good. In the dance class, pupils moved well in response to the music. Work was linked to a topic in history on the Roman invasion of Britain, and they worked hard, singly and in pairs to suggest the stormy waters of the Channel. In the other lesson, pupils built up the skills needed to achieve a moving pass in rugby. They ran, changed direction, listened to the feedback from the teacher and improved the skill of sending and receiving the ball accurately. In both sessions teachers encouraged them to greater effort, building in challenges for the more able. In the games lesson more talented pupils worked together learning skills at a higher level. This was particularly good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well because they are able to interpret the tasks at their own level and strive to achieve improvement. In one lesson the teacher focused, not only on the development of skills, but also on the importance of sporting behaviour, which supported pupils' personal and social development well.
64. Pupils have good opportunities for extra sports outside the school day, including a range of clubs supervised by staff. They clearly enjoy their sports and their personal achievements outside school are impressive. These activities include, for example, badminton, trampoline, cheer-leader baton work, cricket, rugby and football. The school has strong links with the village and county sports club, and some pupils compete in club-level games.
65. The recently appointed co-ordinator for the subject is effective. He brings a wealth of experience and expertise, particularly in cricket, rugby and football, for both boys and girls. He has improved planning and through strong links with local clubs has enriched the curriculum

with additional resources, including expert coaching opportunities. He has also produced an action plan for physical education, which includes the development of assessment procedures. Currently there is no assessment system in place, though some video recordings of lessons have been made to help staff understand what is expected of each year group.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

66. Insufficient work in PSHE was seen to form an overall judgement on provision. Standards of work seen were good. The school supports pupils effectively in their personal development. Lessons include sex education and education about the dangers of drug misuse. Pupils are provided with good information to help them make decisions about their own lives. Specific lessons and opportunities during assemblies to consider personal issues are now regular features in the curriculum and are used effectively. Lessons are based largely on discussion and pupils are given good opportunities to listen, think, and speak for themselves as they explore a variety of relevant issues. They consider ideas about themselves, the way they conduct their lives and how to deal with difficult situations that might arise, such as the consequences of aggressive behaviour.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4

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