

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHDOWN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Bath

LEA area: Bath and North East Somerset

Unique reference number: 109004

Headteacher: Mrs T Austin

Lead inspector: Mr D J Curtis

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th February 2004

Inspection number: 257519

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: 184

School address: Mount Road
Southdown
Bath
Postcode: BA2 1LG

Telephone number: 01225 424761
Fax number: 01225 334181

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Bailey

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Bath in Somerset. There are 184 pupils on roll in eight classes. A very small number of pupils come from minority-ethnic families and currently no pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils (28 per cent) identified with special educational needs is above average and, of these, 10 have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Thirty-five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The number of teachers who have left or joined the school in the last two years is high.

The school received the *Investors in People* award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20893	Mr D J Curtis	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education and physical education
9052	Mrs H Barter	Lay inspector	
16038	Mrs J Bavin	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an **acceptable standard of education** and gives **satisfactory** value for money. The high turnover of teachers, together with pupils' unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality, are barriers to achievement. This school has serious weaknesses in the standards achieved.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement in mathematics and science is unsatisfactory. Standards are well below average.
- Achievement in English is satisfactory because the teaching of key skills is now good.
- There is significant under-achievement of girls in mathematics and science.
- Assessment is not sufficiently focused on identifying gaps in pupils' learning.
- The good teaching seen in lessons during the inspection has halted the year-on-year decline in standards and is contributing to slowly improving standards.
- The school has received national recognition for its very good work on drugs awareness.
- Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.
- The school cares well for its pupils, including those with special educational needs.

The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the previous inspection because standards in English, mathematics and science have fallen significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Standards achieved are **unsatisfactory**. Based on the school's testing of pupils at the start of Year 3, standards on entry are well below average. In Year 6, standards in English are well below average but are improving slowly as the result of better teaching and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and science are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are weak. Too many worksheets hinder pupils' learning. In both subjects, there is significant under-achievement by girls. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and achievement is satisfactory. In religious education, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and achievement is satisfactory. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good.

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

The grade E means that the results in 2003 place the school in the lowest 5 per cent of all schools in English and of all and similar schools in science.*

Pupils' personal development is **good**. Their attitudes to school are satisfactory. Behaviour is good. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** and too many pupils arrive late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides an **acceptable quality of education**.

Teaching and learning throughout the school are **satisfactory overall**. The good teaching observed in lessons during the inspection is having a positive impact on the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, it is promoting stronger attitudes to learning, with the result that standards show signs of improvement. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work are unsatisfactory. Teachers are not using assessment consistently enough to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning and to set targets which are focused on individual improvement.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use and apply their ICT skills in other subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Opportunities to enrich pupils' learning outside the classroom are satisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, although the ICT suite is underused. The school makes good provision for pupils' care and welfare. Links with parents and other schools are satisfactory. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management in the school are **satisfactory**.

Governance is satisfactory. There are strengths in the governors' support for the school and the welfare of pupils but they are not sufficiently focused on raising standards. The leadership and management of the headteacher are satisfactory. She has a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils. The leadership and management of subject leaders are satisfactory, with strengths in their understanding of how their subjects need to develop. However, they have insufficient time to carry out their roles to good effect.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Although parents feel that the school is caring, they have significant concerns about staffing instability which is affecting the standards that their children achieve. Parents and pupils have concerns about the fairness of the system of rewards for behaviour. Pupils like school, particularly the creative and physical activities. They are unhappy about inconsistent expectations of teachers relating to their work and behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English and standards and achievement in mathematics and science;
- raise the achievement of girls in mathematics and science;
- give subject co-ordinators more time to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects;
- ensure that there are consistent expectations of pupils' work and behaviour;
- improve the assessment of pupils' work;
- improve attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **well below average**. Achievement is **satisfactory**, except in mathematics and science where it is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average.
- Girls are underachieving in relation to boys in mathematics and science.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' presentation of work is not to a consistently-high enough standard.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.1 (23.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.2 (23.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	24.5 (24.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The results of the 2003 national tests continue the year-on-year trend of falling standards since 1999 when the school was last inspected. In addition, the results show that the trend of the widening underachievement of girls in relation to boys in mathematics and science continues. In English, the results placed the school in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools. In science, the school was in the bottom 5 per cent of all and similar schools nationally.
2. The school tests pupils at the start of Year 3 and results indicate that standards are well below average. In the current Year 6, standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science. However, the decline in standards has stopped. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own analysis of pupils' performance that there will be an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 or above in the 2004 national tests. The higher proportion of good teaching seen in lessons is contributing to slowly improving standards. As a result, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory.
3. In English, pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their literacy skills in writing for a range of purposes and different audiences. In addition, teachers do not consistently reinforce expectations of pupils using and applying key writing skills when they write in other subjects. Pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support literacy is very limited.

¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the Level attained by each pupil, for example in mathematics, is given a score – a Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 1 tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, is 27.

4. In mathematics, pupils' mental arithmetic skills and knowledge of times tables are not of a high enough standard. In addition, they do not spend enough time on using and applying their mathematical knowledge in solving problems and carrying out mathematical investigations. There is an overuse of photocopied worksheets which do not challenge or extend mathematical thinking. ICT is not used sufficiently to support pupils' numeracy skills. In many lessons, girls are not motivated by teaching and feel 'left behind' in lessons and this is a key factor in their underachievement.
5. In science, pupils spend too much time working on commercially produced worksheets which do not challenge or make pupils think scientifically. Much of the work consists of filling in missing words or phrases which does not develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. This work does not motivate girls and contributes to their underachievement.
6. Standards in ICT are average. Pupils are confident in the key skills required by the National Curriculum. However, they have insufficient opportunities to use and apply these skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teachers do not make sufficient use of the ICT suite to link pupils' ICT skills to their work in literacy and numeracy. In religious education, standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils show particular confidence in discussing key features of Christianity and other major faiths.
7. The above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs make good progress as measured against the targets set in their individual education plans and their achievement is good. Pupils benefit from good teaching and the very effective support given by learning support assistants. Very sensitive and highly focused intervention in lessons means that pupils' self-esteem is raised and this contributes significantly to the good progress made.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are **satisfactory**. Their behaviour is **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show positive attitudes in lessons, especially in paired and group work.
- Pupils behave well in most lessons and when moving around the school.
- Pupils do not take sufficient care or pride in the way they present their written work.
- Older pupils who were interviewed feel that the implementation of the school's behaviour policy is unfair.
- Despite the school's best efforts, attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

8. In most lessons, pupils are keen and anxious to work hard and please their teachers. They show good determination and a willingness to succeed, especially in those lessons when they are very clear about what they are expected to do. Pupils respond particularly well when they are encouraged to answer questions and/or work in pairs. Similarly, when working in groups, pupils are keen to co-operate and work together successfully. These positive attitudes make a strong contribution to pupils' social development, especially in recognising and valuing the opinion of others.
9. The majority of pupils in the school behave well in lessons and when moving around the school at break and lunchtimes. In lessons, they respond well to the school's assertive discipline² policy when it is implemented consistently. However, not all pupils feel that they are treated fairly because not all teachers are consistent in their approach. Older pupils' views support the

² Assertive discipline has three main parts: clear unambiguous rules; continuous positive feedback to pupils when they are successfully keeping to these rules; and a recognised hierarchy of sanctions which are consistently applied when rules are broken.

concerns of a significant proportion of parents who completed questionnaires and/or attended the parents' meeting, especially in relation to the use of detentions that these are not fair when a 'blanket' detention is given to the whole class. As a result, these pupils feel unfairly treated and it does have a negative impact on their learning.

- A weakness in the school is that pupils do not take sufficient care or pride in the way they present their work. This is partly due to the excessive use of worksheets which pupils say they do not like using. In addition, teachers' marking and expectations of how pupils should present their work are not consistently high enough. As a result, work is often poorly presented, including handwriting, graphs in mathematics and charts and tables in science. Unsatisfactory attitudes towards presentation of work are a contributory factor in standards not being high enough.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.6
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.

- The school has worked hard to improve attendance rates since the previous inspection, with the result that there has been year-on-year improvement. However, attendance rates remain below the national average despite the school's best efforts. In addition, too many pupils are regularly late for school.. A significant minority of parents do not support the school or their children in valuing the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Both are factors that contribute to standards not being high enough.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
179	11	0
1		
1		
1		
1		
1		
1		

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

- The number of exclusions since September 2003 has fallen to four and relates to pupils who show physical abuse to staff or other pupils. This is the result of the school taking more positive action in relation to behaviour management.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, including the very effective use of learning support assistants.
- Teachers do not consistently identify gaps in pupils' previous learning in order to plan future work.
- Marking does not tell pupils how to improve their work, especially their presentation.
- Good teaching of key skills in English is leading to an improvement in standards and achievement.
- Effective and recent in-service training has contributed successfully to a higher proportion of good teaching, which has led to improving standards in English and mathematics.
- The overuse of worksheets in mathematics and science has a negative impact on pupils' learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons³

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	3	12	7	1	0	0

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

13. The school has an above average proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Teachers match work carefully to their specific learning needs, which contributes to the good progress they make in lessons and over time. Highly-skilled learning support assistants provide very effective support in lessons. A significant strength is the way in which they recognise the needs of individual pupils and the sensitive intervention when they see an individual requires additional help. As a result, all pupils are included fully in lessons.
14. The school has recently made a good improvement in assessing the progress of each year group through end-of-term assessments. As a result, the school can now predict more accurately the future performance of each year group. However, teachers are not consistently identifying gaps in learning of individual pupils, with the result that work is not always matched closely to their learning needs. Teachers assess pupils' work against the learning objective for each lesson based on colour coding. Green means achieved, yellow partly achieved and red not achieved. Similarly at the end of many lessons, teachers ask pupils to show by using 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' how well they have done in the lesson. What is not clear is how teachers use the results of these day-to-day assessments to amend their planning to ensure that those pupils who have not achieved the learning objective are able to catch up. The school has identified this as an issue and is starting to address it through in-service training.
15. The school has adopted a marking policy based on colour-coded marking of pupils' progress against the lesson objective (see paragraph 14). However, inspection evidence, especially from the analysis of pupils' work, indicates that teachers' marking is not addressing the significant weakness in the way pupils present their work. Poor handwriting and presentation

³ One lesson was not graded as it was observed for less than 30 minutes.

go unchallenged, as does the misspelling of key words in mathematics and science, such as 'rectagle' (rectangle) and 'disvlove' (dissolve). As a result, key errors are reinforced and pupils take insufficient care and pride in their work and this contributes to standards not being high enough.

16. Recent in-service training, together with the enthusiastic leadership of the co-ordinator, have seen an improvement in the teaching of key skills in English. As a result, there are clear indications that standards are beginning to improve after a period of year-on-year decline. The key skills of reading and writing are now being taught successfully, with the result that pupils read fluently and accurately. In writing, they know how to use punctuation and grammar correctly. However, a weakness remains in that having been taught these skills, pupils do not use and apply them sufficiently when writing for a range of different purposes and audiences.
17. The school is currently receiving in-service training as part of on-going support from the local education authority on 'What makes a good lesson?' This training has led to a significant improvement in the proportion of good teaching seen during the inspection. There is clear evidence that this good teaching is having an impact on the slow improvement in standards in English and mathematics. The sharing of lesson objectives with pupils is having a positive impact on developing stronger attitudes to learning.
18. In mathematics and science, teachers rely too heavily on commercially-produced photocopied worksheets when giving pupils work. Many of these are undated and are often incomplete and not sufficiently well marked. Pupils themselves do not enjoy using them. In science, pupils are often expected to fill in one-word answers or short phrases which are a test of comprehension rather than the development of key skills, knowledge and understanding. The use of these worksheets is a contributory factor to standards being well below average in these subjects.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Curriculum enrichment is **satisfactory**. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write fully in English or other subjects.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computer skills in all subjects.
- There has been a successful writing project for Year 6 boys.
- The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The ICT suite is underused as an important resource for the school.

Commentary

19. The school successfully plans for the entire National Curriculum and religious education. Staff work hard and successfully to ensure that pupils with special educational needs benefit from the whole curriculum. This is successful because work is planned carefully for them and meets their needs well. Additionally, the school uses special language resources that help pupils with particular literacy difficulties to make good progress in small steps. The small group of learning support assistants works closely with teachers and with each other. As a result of this close liaison, pupils are very well supported in lessons where they have learning support assistants.
20. New subject leaders have correctly identified the need to plan the curriculum with more links between subjects. They understand that because this is not done consistently, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write and develop their ideas on paper fully in subjects such as history and geography. Similarly, while pupils have the level of ICT skills expected for their age, they have too few opportunities to use and apply these skills in other subjects.

21. The new literacy co-ordinator has introduced a successful writing project for a group of boys in Year 6 who were identified as at risk of not achieving as well as they could. The boys involved were highly motivated through links with Bath Rugby Club. They wrote club songs, letters and sports' reports. These activities increased their skills significantly over a short period of time. They remain justifiably proud of their achievements.
22. The school places significant emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and health education and its policy to implement this is very good. Through its effective implementation by teachers, pupils' social and moral development are good.
23. Currently, teachers are not making sufficient use of the ICT suite to support pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. Too few literacy or numeracy lessons are planned to be taught in the ICT suite, with the result that it stands empty and unused, particularly during the mornings. This is an inefficient use of a valuable learning resource and is a factor in pupils not using and applying their ICT skills in literacy and numeracy.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. All pupils are provided with **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. The way in which the school seeks, values and acts on pupils' views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares for individual pupils and their needs well.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils with behaviour problems are supported well but pupils and parents have concerns about the fairness of the reward systems.
- The school council is a satisfactory forum for pupils to express their views, although some older pupils feel that they are not listened to as well as they might be.

Commentary

24. This is a caring school where pupils are happy and well supported because staff know them well and have good relationships with them. Most parents agree that their children are well cared for and that staff listen to their concerns and work hard to support the pupils as individuals. The school understands the nature and difficulties of pupils' backgrounds very well and works effectively with families, carers and outside agencies to ensure pupils' care, welfare and safety.
25. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported in the classroom by teachers and learning support assistants.
26. The school works hard to support pupils who have problems with their behaviour and deals well with any bullying. Pupils say that the 'tick system' helps them to understand what they have done wrong. They are less convinced about the usefulness of detentions, particularly when these are applied to whole classes for the misdemeanours of a few pupils. Parents are also concerned that there is unfairness in a system which rewards pupils who show small improvements in behaviour while those who behave well all the time go unnoticed. Inspectors find that while pupils who have significant behaviour problems are given good support to overcome their difficulties, the perception of unfairness amongst other pupils weakens the overall quality of support and guidance offered.
27. Through the school council meetings, pupils are given good opportunities to offer ideas about how the school can be improved. Some older pupils, however, are frustrated that some requests, such as seats for them in assembly, are not listened to seriously and acted upon.

Discussions with pupils reveal that they would like more opportunities to discuss how they feel about their work and progress; for example, they are positive about targets which help them to know how to improve but are frustrated that the quality of support they receive to enable them to make progress is variable between classes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory**. There are **good** links with the local community. Links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are satisfied with the school, although some are concerned about the standards achieved by their children.
- A number of parents find the annual progress reports hard to understand.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by the school's links with the community.
- There are good links with local secondary schools.

Commentary

28. The school's links with parents are satisfactory. Parents appreciate the caring environment in which their children are happy. They feel that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and are pleased that the school's organisation and the classroom environments have improved. However, some parents are concerned about the impact that staffing changes and frequent use of supply teachers have had on their children's achievement. While parents recognise that pupils with special educational needs are well supported, some are concerned that their children are not achieving as well as they should.
29. Parents receive a satisfactory range of information, including regular newsletters about school events. However, some find the reports are too full of educational jargon and do not give them a clear enough indication of the standards that their children are achieving. However, they agree that teachers are helpful in explaining the reports at consultation meetings. Inspectors find that reports are satisfactory but agree that some of the educational language used may not be easy for parents to understand.
30. The school has good and established links with the community and uses these well to make pupils' learning interesting and to extend pupils' knowledge of their own environment and culture. The local church, for example, is used for visits linked to pupils' work in religious education and to celebrate church festivals. The school has developed strong links with the rugby club, which offers pupils access to coaching facilities and competitive events. Fundraising events organised by the small but active 'Friends of Southdown Junior Association' are well supported by parents and by members of the local community.
31. Links with the nearby infant school are satisfactory, including established transition arrangements for pupils coming into the school in Year 3. Links with the main receiving secondary schools are good. Good use is made of these links to extend pupils' learning, for example at literacy summer schools, French days and 'Football First' coaching. The school provides good work experience opportunities for Year 10 students and sixth formers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The significant turnover of teachers is a barrier to pupils' achievement and to consistency in the leadership and management of subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides caring and supportive leadership for pupils.
- The school does not always evaluate its work rigorously enough.
- New subject leaders have a good understanding of how to improve their subjects.
- Staff share a high commitment to valuing all pupils.
- Governors are supportive of and contribute to the school's positive ethos.
- The headteacher and senior management team work effectively with the local education authority in implementing initiatives to secure school improvement.

Commentary

32. The senior management team and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management of the school. Their strengths result in pupils' positive attitudes to learning in most lessons, pupils' good behaviour and the school being an orderly community. The headteacher is passionate about the well-being of all pupils. She successfully leads a team that shares a commitment to the personal and social development of each individual. She is a visible presence in the school and has the trust of pupils. The headteacher and senior management team use advisory support from the local education authority to good effect in addressing the school's identified weaknesses. The result of this is that the significant decline in standards has now stopped and there are clear signs of early improvement. In particular, recent in-service training on the quality of teaching and how to assess pupils' work are having a positive impact on slowly improving standards.
33. The school development plan is a full and lengthy document that seeks to address raising standards. However, the focus on how to do this is not always precise and unambiguous. Most importantly, the means of measuring the success of various initiatives is not always absolutely clear. Another barrier to raising standards and achievement has been the high number of recent staff changes, particularly amongst subject co-ordinators which has led to inconsistencies in the way subjects were previously led and managed. Nevertheless, the new subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics, science and ICT have a good understanding of how to improve their subjects and the energy and determination to implement change. It is too soon for their work to have had much impact on the school, but they have made a good start in seeking to raise standards. Their role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, together with standards and achievement is constrained by not always having the time to conduct planned lesson observations.
34. A good system of visits means that governors maintain close links with the school. Most governors are aware of the school's strengths and the need to raise standards but sometimes hold different views regarding the best way forward. Everyone has the best interests of pupils at heart. However, the specific means of raising and sustaining improved standards, enhancing pupils' achievements and measuring success is not always clear and shared. The school bursar works closely with the headteacher and governors to provide satisfactory financial management. They make good use of community links to support spending and careful financial planning. This has enabled the school to improve resources since the previous inspection, especially for ICT.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	533,781	Balance from previous year	59,562
Total expenditure	525,299	Balance carried forward to the next	68,044
Expenditure per pupil	2,968		

35. The carry forward into the current financial year was aimed at maintaining staffing levels so that classes could be taught in year groups. In addition, it is intended that the deputy headteacher should not have a class so that she can support pupils, particularly in Year 6 where the two classes could be taught in three groups for literacy and numeracy. The projected carry forward to the next financial year is £18,000. The school finances are carefully managed and controlled by the effective contribution of the school bursar, working with the headteacher and governors.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average but beginning to improve.
- Teaching of key skills is well planned so pupils learn at a brisk pace in lessons.
- Expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting are inconsistent in English and other subjects.
- The school is successfully enhancing pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The subject is led with energy and enthusiasm but the co-ordinator's monitoring role is limited.
- The library is poorly sited and has too few books.

Commentary

36. The results of the national tests in 2003 placed the school in the bottom 5 per cent of all schools in the country. Standards have declined steadily over the last three years. Current inspection findings indicate that standards have improved slightly to well below average (E* to E) pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Inspectors' analysis of pupils' work supports the school's analysis that there has been a small improvement in pupils' attainment and progress. This is because of recent developments in teaching, which include the introduction this term of identifying specific learning intentions for different groups of pupils, and sharing them with pupils. Pupils appreciate this and are disappointed that not all teachers pay equal attention to the process.
37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have a positive impact on slowly improving standards. Teachers make sensible use of the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that key skills in punctuation and grammar are taught systematically. This makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and the satisfactory achievement of other pupils. During the inspection, teaching in lessons was mostly good and on one occasion it was excellent. The excellent lesson was characterised by:
 - very tight planning so that learning proceeded at a brisk pace;
 - excellent communication skills on the part of the teacher;
 - very well timed and sensitive support from teaching assistants;
 - 'zero tolerance' of anything other than 100 per cent attention from pupils.
38. While teachers' marking is beginning to give pupils helpful information on how to improve, some comments such as 'pay more attention to your punctuation and spelling' are too vague to be very useful. Expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation vary but are usually far too low. Pupils have too few opportunities to develop ideas fully on paper or to produce pieces of extended writing.
39. Leadership and management are satisfactory and contribute to the fact that standards are improving albeit very slowly. The new literacy co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards. For example, she recognises the shortcomings of the library and has correctly identified this as an area needing much improvement. She has led a successful project to raise standards for a group of Year 6 boys, which has positive implications for more pupils in the future. The school has successfully begun to focus on encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills, so teachers are providing a good starting point for their next priority, which is to improve writing. However, this focus needs to be

addressed with increased urgency. The co-ordinator's role in improving provision for the subject has been constrained by losing planned lesson observation times. In spite of recent strengths in subject leadership and the halting of a further decline in standards, overall there has been unsatisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use and apply their writing skills in English or other subjects by developing their ideas in extended pieces of work. This is because it is not planned for and too many subjects use printed worksheets excessively. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' handwriting and careful presentation of work. In addition, teachers do not reliably remind pupils clearly enough of the importance of using key skills when writing in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Girls are underachieving in comparison to boys.
- Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are not high enough because the mental/oral starter in numeracy lessons is not taught to a consistently high standard.
- There is an overuse of worksheets that do not challenge or extend pupils' mathematical thinking.

Commentary

41. The results of the 2003 national tests were well below the national average and continued the year-on-year decline in standards since the previous inspection. In addition, the results continued the trend of the widening gap of underachievement by girls in comparison to boys. Standards in the current Year 6 remain well below average, although the school's prediction that a higher proportion of pupils will achieve the nationally expected Level 4 or above in the 2004 national tests is supported by inspection evidence. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Girls are underachieving in comparison to boys because they are not sufficiently motivated by the teaching of numeracy. In discussion, they say that they feel 'left behind' in lessons because the 'bright boys understand quickly'. In lessons, girls appear to be bored and somewhat disinterested. In lessons where the behaviour of a small number of boys is challenging and takes up much of the teacher's time, girls tend to 'switch off' because they are not rewarded for their efforts.
42. There are weaknesses in pupils' mental arithmetic skills and in their knowledge and use of multiplication facts. This is the result of the mental/oral starter session within the numeracy lesson not being taught successfully or indeed at all. Pupils are not challenged to think quickly enough and to have rapid recall of key number facts. In one successful session in Year 4, the teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard linked to a laptop computer. She wrote a simple program where, for example, ' $9+7$ ' would appear, then underneath at random the name of a pupil would appear. This method held the attention of pupils and motivated them to succeed. As a result, they made good progress in rapid recall of key addition and subtraction facts. However, this lesson was the exception rather than the norm. In many lessons, instruction lacks pace and challenge, with the result that pupils lack interest and motivation.
43. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory, with the teaching of pupils with special educational needs good. During the inspection, teaching in lessons varied from very good to satisfactory. There is too wide a range in the quality of teaching across the school and this contributes to standards not being high enough. There is evidence that the teaching of the four rules of number as a process is strong and pupils know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide when using sums. However, they have insufficient opportunities to apply these skills in

solving problems and carrying out mathematical investigations. In addition, the overuse of worksheets does not challenge or extend pupils' mathematical understanding. Teachers' day-to-day assessment does not sufficiently identify gaps in pupils' learning from previous lessons and there are missed opportunities to teach groups of pupils in lessons who need additional support in order to catch up.

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have contributed to the halt in the decline in standards and to the early signs of improvement. The co-ordinator, who was appointed in September 2003, has drawn up a good action plan aimed at raising standards in the subject. His own analysis has identified weaknesses in mental arithmetic skills and inconsistencies in teaching the mental/oral starter session. As the result of the new end-of-term assessments, gaps in learning within a year group have been identified. These have led to targets being set for each year group so as to address these gaps in learning. This initiative is having an impact on the projected improvement in standards. However, the co-ordinator has insufficient time to monitor teaching and learning in the subject in order to have an even greater in-depth understanding of strengths and weaknesses.. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. Pupils do not use their numeracy skills sufficiently in work linked to ICT and the ICT suite is not used effectively to support learning. Pupils use and apply their skills in science when measuring and recording the results of investigations and experiments. However, their presentation of graphs and charts are often of poor quality.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Girls are underachieving in comparison to boys.
- There is an overuse of worksheets, which does not develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils do not take sufficient care or pride in how they present their work.

Commentary

46. The results of the 2003 national tests placed the school in the bottom 5 per cent of both all and similar schools nationally. These results continued the year-on-year decline since the previous inspection in 1999. In addition, the trend of the widening gap of underachievement by girls continued. The school has not paid sufficient attention to teaching and learning in science, and standards in the current Year 6 remain well below the national average, with little evidence of improvement. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Too many girls are not motivated by the teaching of science and this is the main factor contributing to their underachievement. The school has not analysed sufficiently the reasons why standards are in decline through a rigorous analysis of the results of national and optional tests.
47. Teaching overall is unsatisfactory, although some good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, there is an overuse of worksheets which are basically reading comprehension exercises requiring one word or short phrases as answers. Teaching does not provide pupils with sufficient time to develop key skills in investigative and experimental work. In addition, teachers' expectations as to how pupils should present their work are too low, with the result that pupils produce untidy work, including badly-drawn graphs, charts and tables. Incorrect spelling of key scientific words is not addressed, with the result that pupils repeat errors. In the good lessons observed during the inspection, there was a stronger focus on

investigative science and pupils showing that they can record their own work to an acceptable standard when given the opportunity.

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who was appointed in September 2003, has subsequently been absent for a period of time which means that he has had little time to have an impact on the subject. In addition, he has had little time to monitor teaching and learning in the subject or to analyse in depth the factors contributing to the year-on-year decline in standards. However, he has revised the policy and his action plan is aimed at raising standards through analysing the weaknesses in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient use is made of the ICT suite to support pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Pupils' key skills are good, including use of the Internet.
- Teaching of key skills is good.
- Pupils are frustrated by problems with the reliability of computers in the ICT suite.

Commentary

49. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' key skills are good and they know how to load and save programs to and from folders and how to print their work. They are confident in using the Internet and have a satisfactory understanding of spreadsheets. In Year 6, pupils show good skills in creating multi-media presentations. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply these key skills, especially to support their learning in literacy and mathematics. Teachers make insufficient use of the ICT suite, especially in the mornings, as a resource to teach literacy and numeracy.
50. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with strengths in the teaching of key skills. There are varying degrees of confidence amongst the staff in the use of the classroom interactive whiteboards as a means of explaining and demonstrating new learning. Where used successfully, interactive whiteboards motivate and stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In lessons in the ICT suite, key skills are taught successfully. However, pupils are often frustrated by reliability problems, which were summed up by one pupil's comment, 'Since the dawn of time the computers in the suite have malfunctioned'. Pupils expressed particular concern that their previous work gets lost and they lose vital information they have saved.
51. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator appointed in September 2003 has drawn up a detailed action plan to address strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There is a strong initial focus on in-service training for teachers, especially in the use of the interactive whiteboards so that they can be more effectively and efficiently used as a teaching resource. In addition, he has a clear understanding of the need to develop pupils' use and application of ICT in other subjects, and this is the main thrust of his work for the immediate future.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. Currently, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use and apply key ICT skills in other subjects, especially in literacy and numeracy.

HUMANITIES

53. The inspection focused on **religious education**. Although no lessons were seen, inspectors spoke with pupils and subject leaders about **geography and history** and looked at displays of pupils' work. Subject leaders have a good understanding of how to improve the provision for their subjects. Inspectors' discussions with pupils endorsed the co-ordinators' views that, while the National Curriculum is covered, it is not planned to allow for depth of understanding. Pupils have superficial knowledge of historical figures and periods, and their knowledge of styles of music and different musicians is limited.
54. Understandably, recent geographical work is recalled more readily than work undertaken in the past. Pupils in Year 6 discuss the pros and cons of a local by-pass with the level of understanding of environmental issues expected for their age. However, their less practiced map skills are not as confident as is customary for pupils in Year 6.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject.
 - The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
 - Teachers have good subject knowledge.
55. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. The previous inspection report found that standards exceeded the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The reason for the apparent decline in standards is linked to the school's recent heavy focus on literacy and numeracy, together with the high turnover of teachers. Pupils enjoy the subject and talk enthusiastically about Christianity and other main religions. They show a good understanding of the life and work of Jesus and of stories from the Old Testament, such as that of Joseph. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, including key stories and festivals from these religions. As a result, their understanding of other faiths makes a good contribution to their cultural development.
56. Teaching is satisfactory, with strengths in teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and make good use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest, such as the use of artefacts and video extracts. Discussion of key ideas is encouraged and in a Year 5 lesson effective use was made of a pupil who read a Bible story to the class. This particular activity promoted the key skills of reading to an audience and listening to a story teller.
57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is currently ensuring that there is a good range of resources available to support teaching and to promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

58. No lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology, music or physical education. Discussions were held with pupils and examples of work were analysed. Pupils are justifiably proud of the slippers they have made in **design and technology**. These products are well made. However, their plans and evaluations are poorly presented and written. There are examples of good **art and design** work on display, including some detailed pencil portraits of Henry VIII and paintings in the style of Monet's bridge. However, pupils' evaluations of their own and others' work, while sensitive and enthusiastic, indicate the difficulties many pupils have in expressing themselves. They do not discuss their work with the level of confidence and subject knowledge expected for their age. Pupils talk enthusiastically about **physical**

education lessons and show particular interest in gymnastics, dance and swimming. The school provides pupils with their full entitlement to the physical education curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has received national recognition for its work in promoting drugs awareness.
- The subject features strongly in promoting pupils' social and moral development.

Commentary

59. The school has received national recognition based on a case study of its good practice in PSHE and drugs awareness. As a result, the case study will appear on either the Government's website at www.teachernet.gov.uk or in the back of the new 'Drugs Guidance' which is issued to schools. The school places a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' awareness of the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco as a key focus of its PSHE work. In addition, through discussions, pupils are encouraged to talk through issues that affect their daily lives both in and out of school. 'Circle Time'⁴ is used particularly well to give pupils the opportunities to talk about feelings and issues. Through these discussions, teachers develop successfully pupils' social and moral awareness.

⁴ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. It is agreed by all pupils that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

