

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST. MARY'S JUNIOR MIXED SCHOOL**

Baldock

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117385

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Rix

Lead inspector: Alison M. Cartlidge

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003

Inspection number: 257844

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Junior mixed
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	242
School address:	St. Mary's Way Baldock
Postcode:	SG7 6HY
Telephone number:	(01462) 892156
Fax number:	(01462) 896772
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. John Cottee
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

This is a Church of England school of average size that has been growing steadily in recent years. It serves mostly white British pupils from a wide mix of social backgrounds that are average overall. Attainment on entry to the school is above average in most years and the school has an average number of pupils with a range of special educational needs. No pupils have English as an additional language and the level of pupil mobility is average. There is a broadly equal number of girls and boys overall, although the numbers are not balanced within year groups. The school received a 'Schools Achievement Award' in 2001 and is part of the 'Healthy Schools' initiative.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The effectiveness of St. Mary's Junior Mixed School is satisfactory.** The new headteacher has a clear understanding of how the school needs to improve and has established many new procedures to help raise standards. However, achievement in mathematics and of higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and **the school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides good leadership in setting an accurate agenda for school improvement and raising standards;
- Pupils' attainment is good in art and design;
- Members of staff are caring, include pupils with special educational needs effectively and have a good partnership with parents;
- The school enhances pupils' learning by providing a wide range of interesting educational visits and after class activities that stimulate pupils' interest effectively;
- Attainment in mathematics, writing, investigative science and information and communication technology (ICT) is below average and pupils do not achieve as well as they should over time;
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' attainment and progress to ensure that their teaching meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able; and
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and standards by subject co-ordinators is newly established and is having a limited impact on raising standards.

**The school is not as effective as it was at the time of the last inspection in 1998**, with pupils' attainment being lower than at that time in English and mathematics. Whilst attainment in ICT remains weak, recent improvements in provision enable pupils to achieve well in lessons. The previous key issues have been dealt with appropriately and there have been many recent improvements in facilities and procedures. These have not been in place long enough to have a significant impact on standards.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	B	C
science	C	B	B	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.*

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** However, higher attaining pupils in particular do not always achieve well enough. Whilst standards are on target to be broadly average overall by the end of Year 6 in English and science, they are below average in mathematics and ICT. Attainment in art and design is good and attainment in the other subjects sampled is satisfactory. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Up until 2003, pupils' attainment has been above average overall and rising in line with the national trend. By the end of Year 6 in 2003, pupils' attainment was very weak due to an unusually large number of pupils having learning, emotional or behavioural difficulties and the school's targets in English and mathematics were not achieved. Pupils do not use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum sufficiently.

**Pupils' personal qualities are good and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.** The school provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility by raising money for charity and through sharing their ideas on the school council. Pupils behave well in most lessons and during playtimes and their attitudes towards learning are satisfactory. They are enthusiastic about many aspects of school life but are sometimes inattentive when teaching is not inspiring. Rates of attendance and punctuality are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.** Teachers are enthusiastic, have good relationships with the pupils, manage their behaviour effectively and provide clear instruction at the start of lessons. However, there are weaknesses in the use of assessment to plan work that consistently meets the needs of all pupils when they are working individually or in groups, slowing the learning of higher-attaining pupils in particular.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, with good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning during visits, after-school clubs and sporting activities. History and physical education are especially enhanced by these activities. However, the provision in mathematics is unsatisfactory and opportunities are missed for developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through other subjects. There is a good curriculum for personal, social and health education and healthy lifestyles are promoted very effectively. The school takes care of pupils' personal needs well, making them feel safe and confident. There are good links with parents and the local community and the recent community project that provided a cookery course for pupils and their parents was a success. There is good provision for including pupils with special educational needs, especially in literacy, and well-trained teaching assistants provide valuable support in many lessons.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The headteacher provides good leadership for the work of the school** and her vision for school improvement is shared with all members of staff and governors. The recent appointment of some good teachers is having a positive impact on the quality of learning. The roles of governors and subject co-ordinators are developing and **management and governance are satisfactory overall.** Financial planning is thorough and funds are directed at areas of greatest need.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Pupils and their parents support the work of the school, find members of staff to be friendly and have noted several improvements since the appointment of the new headteacher. Some parents shared concerns about bullying and the information provided on pupils' progress. The inspection team found reporting arrangements and procedures for preventing bullying to be effective.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Raise attainment and achievement in mathematics, writing, ICT and investigative science;
- Improve the effectiveness of assessment procedures and ensure that teachers use information on pupils' attainment and progress to provide suitably challenging work for pupils' differing capabilities, particularly for higher attaining pupils; and
- Enable subject co-ordinators to monitor teaching, learning and standards more rigorously.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Include in the school prospectus the parents' right to withdraw pupils from acts of collective worship.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** However, higher-attaining pupils do not always make enough progress and throughout the school there is underachievement in mathematics. Whilst standards are on target to be broadly average by the end of Year 6 in English and science, they are below average in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Attainment in English and mathematics is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school did not achieve the targets set for pupils in 2003 in English or mathematics.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well in literacy;
- Attainment in art and design is good;
- Additional provision is made for gifted and talented pupils to develop their skills in sport but not in other areas of the curriculum;
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory;
- Pupils' investigative skills in science are underdeveloped;
- Standards in ICT are improving but remain below national expectations; and
- Pupils' achievement in writing, mathematics and science has not been consistent, leading to some underachievement over time, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.

#### Commentary

1. National test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were very weak, indicating well below average attainment in English, mathematics and science. This year group was very different from previous years, when attainment was above average overall and rising in line with the national trend. In 2003, about half the pupils had learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties and these factors had a big impact on the progress they made over time. In addition, previous weaknesses in schemes of work and assessment procedures and some turbulence in staffing, especially amongst senior members of staff, had a negative impact on achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.9 (29.0)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.6 (28.8)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.4 (29.4)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics because teachers do not plan to build on what pupils already know, leading to work being too hard for lower attaining pupils or too easy for more capable pupils.
3. In science, pupils are given insufficient opportunity to plan their own investigations, select resources and methods of recording their findings, making them too dependent on adults and preventing higher attaining pupils in particular from thinking for themselves and developing enquiring minds.



4. Resources for ICT have recently been improved and members of staff have received training to enable them to teach the pupils effectively. Whilst pupils' attainment is improving, standards are below average and there are still gaps in their knowledge and skills.
5. There is some underachievement evident in pupils' writing, because higher-attaining pupils are given limited opportunities to work consistently at an appropriate rate and pupils often make careless errors in spelling, punctuation and the presentation of their work.
6. The school has rigorous procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs and for supporting their literacy development. Effective specific teaching by the co-ordinator responsible for special educational needs and focused support from teaching assistants during lessons enable these pupils to make rapid progress in improving knowledge and skills.
7. The school has identified pupils with particular sporting talent and has enabled these pupils to join a specific summer school, in addition to providing numerous opportunities for taking part in sporting competitions with other schools. In other subjects, gifted and talented pupils are not always given enough support to reach their potential.
8. Other areas of focus for the inspection were history and religious education where standards were found to be satisfactory.
9. There are many examples of good quality artwork on display in the school. For example, in Year 5, pupils designed and made attractive clay plaques, using interesting relief patterns, and in Year 3, pupils' self-portraits show good attention to detail. Pupils are taught a wide range of interesting skills and are encouraged to produce finished products of good quality.
10. The school has made a realistic evaluation of pupils' achievement, has identified areas of weakness in standards and has clear action plans to bring about improvement. Pupils do not use the skills they have learned in literacy, numeracy and ICT enough in other subjects. Ninety-six per cent of parents are happy with the standards their children achieve.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

**Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupil's attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good.** Pupil's behave well and enjoy taking part in school activities. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory** overall, with strengths in the promotion of social and moral skills.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very keen to come to school and punctuality is very good;
- Relationships are good throughout the school and pupils work together sensibly in lessons;
- Pupils are enthusiastic about taking part in out of school activities;
- Behaviour is particularly good at lunch times and in the playground when pupils play together well;
- The good provision for moral and social development teaches pupils to respect each other's feelings and to learn how to take responsibility for aspects of school life;
- Pupils support a wide range of charities;
- Members of the school council are confident, articulate and enthusiastic and have been effective in helping to improve school resources and facilities; and
- Older pupils are not always attentive in class and do not always take responsibility for their own learning.

## Commentary

11. The school has a good ethos with good expectations for behaviour and has maintained the good standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils behave well and support each other effectively at lunchtimes and playtimes. A 'buddy' system is successful in helping new pupils to feel happy and secure, and there are many instances during the day when pupils help each other. In lessons, pupils work together sensibly, but they do not always listen well when the teacher is talking or take responsibility for improving their own work. This affects the pace of learning as it means that sometimes pupils are not clear about what they have to do when they start work and make careless mistakes.
12. The school is successful in promoting moral and social skills, enabling pupils to have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are taught to appreciate that there are many children less fortunate than themselves and they support a wide range of charities to help these children. There is a wide range of visits and visitors, including a residential visit for some Year 6 pupils. Pupils are keen to participate in the good range of clubs offered by the school. A thorough programme for personal, social and health education means that pupils gain a clear understanding of their responsibilities and they are given good opportunities to work and play together. Pupils contribute to the running of the school in various ways. For example, they write class rules and run the school tuck shop. A well-organised school council means that pupils are able to make suggestions about what they like or dislike about the school. These procedures contribute well to pupils gaining good levels of confidence and self esteem. Pupils report that they find this valuable and feel that members of staff listen to their views carefully.
13. The small number of exclusions in the previous reporting year were handled appropriately. Concerns about bullying were expressed by 11 per cent of parents. Inspection findings are that the school has provided pupils with a clear understanding of what to do if they feel that they are being bullied or harassed. There was no evidence of this during the inspection, and the school's records show that such incidents are rare.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	234	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

## Attendance

14. Parents support the school very well in ensuring that rates of attendance continue to be very good and well above the national average. There is little unauthorised absence. Punctuality is

very good, with many pupils arriving early, giving a prompt start to each day. The school has efficient systems to ensure that absences are followed up so that learning does not suffer.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.2
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.*

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.** The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall and the school takes good care of pupils' personal needs. The school has effective links with parents and the local community.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses in assessment procedures, which mean that work does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Explanations at the start of lessons are clear;
- Teachers develop good relationships with their pupils and manage behaviour effectively;
- Questioning is used effectively at the start and end of lessons to involve all pupils;
- Well-trained teaching assistants provide good support in most lessons, especially for pupils with special educational needs;
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to work collaboratively;
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory resulting in work not always being closely matched to pupils' needs;
- Teachers' target setting and marking of pupils' work, are variable in quality, and are not followed through sufficiently by teachers or the pupils;
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not always high enough, especially for higher attaining pupils;
- Teachers do not make good use of their time when pupils are working independently; and
- In some subjects, there is an overuse of worksheets, limiting pupils' opportunities to apply their literacy skills purposefully.

### **Commentary**

#### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	1 (3%)	16 (48%)	14 (43%)	2 (6%)	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.*

15. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection, with about half being good and a small percentage being unsatisfactory. The needs of pupils are not fully met in all lessons, leading to variable rates of learning across the school and from subject to subject.

Teaching in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a clear understanding of weaknesses in teaching and has identified areas for action in the school development plan.

16. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and in many lessons, their enthusiasm motivates pupils well. This was seen to good effect in a mathematics lesson in Year 5, where the teacher's enthusiastic approach inspired pupils to try their best. Teachers have good expectations for behaviour and plan a good range of activities that encourage pupils to work together in small or large groups. Introductions to lessons are often good. When introducing new topics, teachers explain concepts clearly and they are good at breaking down new skills into small parts so that they can be learnt step by step. This helps less capable pupils in particular to understand new ideas quickly. The quality of questioning is good, encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to explain their ideas clearly. However, teaching in the middle of lessons when pupils are working independently is less effective. Here, teachers often flit from pupil to pupil, helping them with individual difficulties rather than making better use of their time by giving focused support to a group of pupils, as recommended by the literacy and numeracy strategies. In addition, work provided at these times does not always match pupils' differing needs and this means that not enough is expected of higher attaining pupils or the work is too difficult for the less capable.
17. Hard-working teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, especially in ICT, where a recent training course has increased confidence levels significantly.
18. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, with arrangements lacking rigour and not being followed by all members of staff. As a result, teachers are unclear about what pupils already know, and consequently they do not always plan work that meets their differing needs. In subjects such as history, geography and science, there is often insufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils, with all pupils doing a similar piece of work whatever their prior learning. In these subjects, too many pieces of work are completed on unchallenging worksheets, limiting pupils' opportunities to write purposefully. In mathematics, commercial schemes of work are followed too rigorously and plans are not adapted sufficiently to reflect what pupils already know. This means that on occasions, work is either too hard or too easy for different groups of pupils. In contrast, assessment is satisfactory in ICT. Lessons are well planned and organised and teachers take account of weaknesses in pupils' attainment. Weaknesses in assessment procedures have resulted in a mismatch between the targets being set in English and mathematics and what pupils achieve in tests. Whilst there are individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics, these are not followed consistently. The school has suitable plans to review the progress made towards these targets each term.
19. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they do not consistently add written comments or targets to help pupils understand how they can improve. In addition, when helpful comments have been made, these are not followed up to check that pupils have made the necessary changes.
20. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is very effective in teaching small groups withdrawn from lessons because she has a clear agenda, keeps up a cracking pace that holds their interest and sets challenges that make them want to succeed. Assistants have been trained to lead small groups withdrawn for intensive instruction in literacy skills. The quality of instruction at these times is good, guided by specific programmes of study that ensure pupils build on success in small steps. However, progress in mathematics lessons is often unsatisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, as for other groups, because work is not consistently planned to match their needs and capabilities. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is carefully monitored so that the targets in their individual education plans are well informed, regularly reviewed and adjusted where necessary.

21. The quality and quantity of homework is satisfactory overall, and parents and pupils are generally happy with the provision. There are some examples of good practice, when the activity is made especially purposeful. For example, pupils in Year 5 worked particularly hard with their parents preparing 'playing cards' showing different sorts of information for a computerised database they were going to make in an ICT lesson.

## **The curriculum**

**The curriculum is satisfactory overall**, with good opportunities for extending pupils' learning outside lessons during visits, clubs and sporting activities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and reasonably well balanced;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned and taught effectively;
- A wide range of educational visits and after-class activities is organised to stimulate pupils' interest in school;
- Opportunities are missed to develop literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through other subjects; and
- Planning is not adjusted consistently to meet the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics.

### **Commentary**

22. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection when some subjects lacked schemes of work. There are now satisfactory schemes of work for all subjects, including ICT which was previously unsatisfactory. A good scheme of work has been developed for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education. It gives teachers clear guidance over a broad range of relevant concerns and is well linked to provision in other subjects, such as science and religious education. Planning in all subjects is guided by official recommendations, and pupils' interest in learning is boosted by an imaginative programme of visitors, educational visits and special events. History is particularly well served, with pupils visiting museums, sites of historic interest and taking part in drama events.
23. Teachers in each year group plan together to ensure that all pupils cover the same work and this is an improvement. However, a weakness is that planning is not consistently adjusted for pupils of differing attainment in each class; this is a significant weakness in mathematics. In other subjects, there is too much use of unchallenging worksheets, requiring all pupils, for instance, to copy or colour drawings. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills through other subjects. Nevertheless, pupils are suitably prepared for the next stage in their education overall.
24. Many pupils take part in the good range of after-class clubs and activities on offer. There are clubs for chess, cross-stitch and cookery. The school choir performs in area events and further afield. Provision for sport is very good, with two football and two netball teams. Pupils are successful in competitions outside the school and the girls' athletics team won the district sports competition last year.
25. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as it was at the previous inspection. These pupils are provided with individual education plans with specific targets to guide their development, mainly in behaviour, language and mathematics. Support in class is planned so that they take full part in the main activities with other pupils. The school has recently drawn up a register for gifted and talented pupils, although provision is in the early stages of development,

led by a newly appointed co-ordinator. Several gifted and talented pupils took part in a locally organised sports summer school.

26. There has been some disruption in recent years caused by several changes of staff, including the headteacher. The school now has a full complement of permanent, suitably qualified teachers and looks forward to a period of development. For instance, the recently revised schemes of work now give new members of staff the guidance they need for their planning. Good use is made of an additional teacher to free subject leaders to monitor and develop their subjects, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching assistants have been given additional training, and they are making a good contribution to pupils' learning as a result.
27. The school has identified the need to improve access to the parts of the building that are difficult to reach in a wheelchair. Well-considered plans for improvement are in place to ease access to most areas, including the grounds.
28. Educational resources are satisfactory overall. Sound use is made of the new computer suite and interactive whiteboard to improve pupils' skills in ICT. However, the computer suite is small for whole classes and is kept locked when not booked for a class, preventing informal use by groups at other times. Work on a purpose-built library is to begin shortly, as the present library area is inadequate and the book stock is old, with many out-of-date information books.

### **Care, guidance and support**

**The school takes good care of the pupil's personal needs.** It promotes their welfare, health and safety effectively and provides a secure and caring environment. The school is good at taking pupils' views into account.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Child protection procedures are effective;
- Security and safety are effectively promoted;
- The school promotes healthy eating and living lifestyles very effectively;
- The headteacher is a good role model and is strongly committed to supporting the pupils' personal development;
- Members of support staff know the children well;
- The buddy system is effective in helping the younger pupils to become familiar with the school and its practices; and
- Pupils are fully involved in the work of the school.

### **Commentary**

29. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with child protection issues. They understand the need for vigilance and the steps to take if needed. Site inspections are carried out regularly, identifying potential hazards and taking the necessary action. All members of staff are safety conscious and watch for the security of the pupils. Pupils run the school shop each morning, selling healthy snacks.
30. Members of staff know the children well and are well equipped to offer personal support when it is needed. Led by the headteacher, members of staff provide effective role models and promote high standards of behaviour. For example, during the inspection members of staff were seen pre-empting incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention, maintaining good control. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have any concerns or problems at school. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle quickly with effective support from members of staff and older pupils. However, the school receives limited

information about what pupils have already learned prior to joining the school, to help plan suitable work.

31. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are given close and caring support in school, guided by regular contact with external specialists. Good personal relationships develop because adults are consistently positive, patient and encouraging. Teaching assistants know these pupils well and give them good academic and personal support during lessons. As a result, they are trusting and develop confidence in their academic work.
32. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to share their views and ideas. Last year, the council was extremely successful in its activities with an involvement in a number of initiatives including the provision of litter bins, the school shop and ideas for healthy eating. Pupils also helped to devise class rules and to organise fund-raising for charities.
33. Good quality care, support and guidance have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

**The school has good links with parents and the local community.** The recent community education cookery course involving some parents and their children was successful. Overall, there are satisfactory links with other schools, although these are not well established with the feeder infant school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very positive about the work of the school;
- An active 'Parents and Teachers Association' serves the school very well;
- Many parents are involved in the life of the school;
- The quality of information for parents is good overall; and
- Community education cookery classes were successful.

### **Commentary**

34. Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting supported the school and its work. They believe that it has many strengths. They feel that they are consulted and listened to in the development of the education and of their children.
35. Information provided is of good quality. Newsletters, curricular information and reports are all extremely useful in providing parents with a full picture of the progress and achievement of their children. Some reports of very high quality detail what the pupils know, understand and can do and include good information about pupils' progress, demonstrating that those teachers know the pupils very well. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to annual reviews and kept informed through the year of their children's progress.
36. Parents and other members of the community are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and a good proportion respond positively. They help in the classroom and around the school as well as on school trips and visits. The Parents and Teachers Association is particularly active in fund raising and social activities. Many visitors from various walks of life speak to pupils in assemblies and the school holds regular services in the local church. The school values highly the support and contributions made by all parents and members of the community and this support enhances the children's learning and development effectively.
37. Earlier this year, funding from a specific grant was used to run two successful community education cookery courses. They were well attended with 15 adults and 20 children attending

the seven weekly sessions. Parents and members of staff confirm that there were a number of substantial benefits gained from the programme in developing healthy lifestyles.

38. The school enjoys very positive partnerships with a wide range of groups and specialist agencies in the community. The children are keen to be involved with these activities. For example, the choir enjoys performing concerts for the elderly. The school has identified the need to extend the links with the feeder infant schools to improve the curricular links and enhance the transition process for pupils moving to the school.
39. There was no clear judgement about the quality of the partnership with the parents and the local community at the time of the last inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The quality of leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher provides good leadership for the work of the school and has clear plans for school development. The roles of governors and subject co-ordinators are developing and **management and governance are satisfactory overall.**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a realistic understanding of how the school needs to improve;
- There is a strong commitment to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs;
- The administration of day to day finances is good;
- The recent appointment of some good teachers is having a positive impact on school improvement;
- The headteacher has developed opportunities for co-ordinators to have a greater impact on raising standards;
- Unsatisfactory assessment procedures and a lack of rigour in tracking pupils' progress, means that weaknesses in attainment are not identified early enough;
- Many new developments have not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards; and
- Developments are not monitored with sufficient rigour.

### **Commentary**

40. The headteacher provides effective leadership for the school and has established a clear agenda for school improvement. The school development plan includes a helpful review of previous developments and identifies aspects of the school's work in greatest need of improvement over the next few years. This aspect of the school's work has improved since the last inspection when development planning lacked rigour. The headteacher is well respected by other members of staff, governors and parents and inspires them to work towards the common good of the school. Several subject co-ordinators and governors have new roles and responsibilities but are enthusiastic and committed to raising standards. The school's self-evaluation is fairly realistic and honest about its overall effectiveness.
41. There is a strong commitment to including pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator is experienced and well qualified and organises provision effectively. There is a good mix of in-class support from teaching assistants and specific teaching in small groups. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The school is persistent in seeking the help of specialist agencies for pupils presenting difficulties. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is spent well for their benefit.
42. The governance of the school is satisfactory overall. Members of the governing body are keen to increase their involvement in monitoring the work of the school and are aware of current



strengths and weaknesses in provision. They support the school and are keen to ensure that standards are raised. Statutory duties are fulfilled, with the exception of a minor omission in the school prospectus where parents are not told they have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. At the time of the last inspection, the governing body did not ensure that the curriculum for ICT met statutory requirements; this has been rectified.

43. The school makes effective use of funding to support new developments and achieve educational priorities. A very large carry-forward was accumulated prior to the appointment of the present headteacher and this funding has been allocated towards improving facilities in the school and supporting educational developments such as purchasing ICT equipment, increasing the number of teaching assistants and building a library. The budget for the present financial year shows a substantial reduction in carry-forward is planned.
44. The school has not monitored pupils' progress through the school closely enough for weaknesses in attainment in year groups to be identified and acted upon swiftly. However, test results at the end of Year 5 and Year 6 are analysed appropriately. There are suitable plans to improve target setting and review the progress towards pupils' individual targets each term.
45. The headteacher has a good understanding of general strengths and weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum and uses performance management effectively to develop members of staff professionally. Teaching assistants have benefited from rigorous training in ICT.
46. The school has been successful in maintaining full staffing levels despite there having been some turnover, especially of senior members of staff, in the last two years. Some good appointments have been made and these members of staff are contributing well to school improvement. The headteacher is working hard at improving the workload on teachers by providing time away from teaching for co-ordinators to develop their subjects. Whilst the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is satisfactory, the school is aware of the need for co-ordinators to monitor teaching, learning and standards more rigorously to ensure that new strategies are being followed through successfully by all members of staff.
47. Ninety per cent of parents agree that the school is led and managed well and have noted several improvements since the appointment of the new headteacher. Slow progress since the last inspection in developing effective schemes of work and thorough assessment procedures, together with staff changes, have hampered continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
48. The school is not as effective as it was at the time of the last inspection in 1998, with pupils' attainment being lower than at that time in English and mathematics. Whilst attainment in ICT remains weak, recent improvements in provision enable pupils to achieve well in lessons. The previous key issues have been dealt with appropriately and there have been many recent improvements in facilities and procedures. These have not been in place long to have a significant impact on standards.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	547,697
Total expenditure	562,237
Expenditure per pupil	2,372

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	210,415
Balance carried forward to the next	195, 875

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, guided by the National Literacy Strategy;
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop speaking skills;
- Most pupils are keen readers;
- Assessment procedures are not detailed enough to identify what individuals need to learn next;
- Teachers are not firm enough in requiring pupils to correct and improve their written work; and
- Literacy skills are not developed systematically through other subjects.

#### **Commentary**

49. Standards are lower than at the last inspection. Year 6 test results rose to well above the national average in 2001 and 2002 at the expected level (Level 4) and the higher level (Level 5), but there was a sharp fall in 2003. The school explains this as being due to an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. Action has been taken to raise standards and they have improved, though not to the previous high level. At the beginning of the present year, standards in Year 6 are average in speaking, listening and reading but below average in writing. Pupils with special educational needs in literacy achieve well because they are given good quality individual help and their progress is closely monitored. The achievement of other pupils is satisfactory overall, with no significant difference between that of boys and girls, though there is under-achievement in writing.
50. There is no formal scheme of work for drama or speaking and listening but daily literacy hour discussions and presentations are used well to develop skills. Pupils listen attentively, with the occasional exception of some older boys. Class presentations in assemblies give pupils good opportunities to speak to a large audience, sometimes acting a part. Most pupils speak clearly in Standard English, explaining their ideas with little prompting. They have a good range of vocabulary and this is reflected in their writing.
51. Pupils interviewed showed strong interest in reading. Their reading books are generally well matched to their capability and most read aloud with expression and understanding. It is a good feature that pupils with special educational needs are guided to choose books likely to have strong appeal. However, one higher-attaining reader chooses simple adventure stories for private reading, and a closer check needs to be kept on the pace, range and level of difficulty of the books pupils choose for themselves. Understanding of how to use a library is generally low, reflecting the currently inadequate library provision, though this is soon to be improved with a new purpose-built library.
52. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully express their meaning clearly in writing for a wide range of purposes. There are good examples of poetry, and stories are often brought to life with atmospheric descriptions, quick action and dramatic dialogue. However, standards of handwriting are inconsistent, with much untidy work, and some older pupils have not developed a joined style. Longer pieces are generally well structured, using paragraphs and a range of sentence patterns. Nevertheless, the quality is too often affected by careless errors in spelling and punctuation.

53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In spite of the good teaching seen in most lessons during the inspection, significant factors reduce the effectiveness of teaching over time. Lessons include clear targets and study texts are well chosen for the quality of their language and their appeal to boys and girls alike. Teachers offer good models of speaking and writing. They explain language features clearly and spread their questions well to involve pupils across the ability range. Pupils are particularly keen to use their writing tablets to try out ideas and spellings. Routines are well established, so pupils waste little time when settling to individual work. They behave well and stay on task. Teaching assistants give good support, mainly to lower attaining groups. In some lessons, opportunities are missed for using pupils' ICT skills.
54. However, teachers do not focus their help on specific groups as they work and tend instead to move about the class, which means that pupils do not benefit evenly from intensive instruction. They mark pupils' work regularly, giving much good guidance and encouragement, but do not consistently follow up marking with tasks designed to help pupils learn from their mistakes. Pupils do not use a dictionary and thesaurus often enough and teachers are not firm enough in requiring them to check and improve their own work. As a result, what is learned from regular spelling tests and handwriting exercises is not practised in daily work. The focus of lessons is often changed too quickly, so that pupils do not have enough repeated practice in any one type of reading or writing. Overall, the check on how well individuals and groups are learning is not close enough.
55. Management of the subject is satisfactory. However, provision is not as effective as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school has recognised the weakness in writing and has taken satisfactory action that includes teaching Year 6 pupils in two sets according to their capability, allowing teachers to plan for the narrower range of needs in each set. Two teaching assistants give additional help to the lower set in lessons and this is proving successful in boosting the confidence and skills of lower-attaining pupils. Small groups are withdrawn at times for intensive instruction aimed at boosting their basic skills, and this is well managed. A weekly award of a trophy for good achievement in writing is proving successful in stimulating interest. Nevertheless, the lack of thorough and comprehensive assessment procedures is affecting standards, particularly in writing. A more detailed system is planned and pupils have individual targets but at present, teachers lack the detailed information on individuals' strengths and weaknesses needed to guide future work. There are suitable plans to review targets each term.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

56. Stronger links are needed between the current targets in literacy lessons and the tasks set in other subjects. There are examples of good writing in history, for instance in the Year 5 letters seen through the eyes of survivors of the Titanic disaster, where the writing has been planned, improved and corrected for display. Year 6 pupils develop their skim-reading skills when researching facts in a range of reference books. However, in many subjects there is an over-use of worksheets that set simple but time-consuming tasks such as copying or colouring in line-drawings when many pupils are capable of more demanding work.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attainment is below average by the end of Year 6, and pupils are not achieving as well as they should given their capability;
- Whilst pupils' number skills are satisfactory their ability to use these skills in practical applications is unsatisfactory;

- Although teachers are enthusiastic, the quality of teaching is variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory;
- Teaching is most effective at the beginning of lessons, with teachers explaining concepts clearly and successfully involving all pupils' in their learning through a range of fun activities and good questioning;
- Teachers do not assess learning effectively so that planned work is not matched closely enough to pupils' previous learning;
- Commercial schemes or units of work are followed too closely and are not varied sufficiently according to what pupils already know;
- Teachers do not do enough direct teaching of pupils or groups of pupils in the middle of numeracy lessons, spending most of the time helping pupils when they are stuck; and
- Areas identified for improvement by the subject leader have not been followed through or monitored rigorously enough. This means that they have had a limited impact on provision.

## Commentary

57. Standards of attainment have fallen since the last inspection and are now below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils come into school with above average standards. These are not maintained and pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
58. National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 have fallen in the last two years from previous well above average levels. In 2002, test data shows that over time, pupils had made only satisfactory progress when compared with similar schools, although attainment was above the national average. Test results for 2003 are significantly lower than in 2002, with only 59 per cent of pupils achieving the level expected for their age (Level 4), and 18 per cent achieving the higher Level 5. Although this year group had been identified as being less capable than other year groups, with more pupils having special educational needs, an analysis of test results shows that many pupils made unsatisfactory progress over time. The school's statutory targets at the end of Year 6 were not achieved in 2003. The current Year 6 is more capable and is on target to achieve better results than in 2003, but a scrutiny of their work shows that progress over time has not been as good as it should have been, leading to levels of attainment that do not reflect pupils' capability. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.
59. Pupils have a sound understanding of basic number concepts, with younger pupils having a good understanding of addition and subtraction as well as 'place value'. However, older pupils are not confident about applying their number skills practically. When they are faced with a problem that involves a calculation, many pupils find it hard to identify the best strategy to use, especially when the problem involves more than one calculation.
60. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are significant weaknesses in its quality which adversely affect learning. Teaching does not always take sufficient account of what pupils already know, leading to work being either too hard or too easy for some pupils. The school's assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not provide teachers with enough information to help them match work to pupils' needs, meaning that time is wasted at the start of the school year trying to find out at what level to pitch work. The school is making use of a commercial scheme of work as well as national numeracy strategy lesson plans to support teachers, but these are being followed too rigorously, without sufficient adaptation to the capability of different groups of pupils.
61. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants, but the work that they are given does not always meet their needs because it is too difficult for them to complete independently. As a result, although they may complete a task with adult help, their learning is not secure.

62. Work is regularly marked, but teachers rarely add written comments to help pupils understand how they can improve. Individual target setting is inconsistent and under-developed. Taken together, these factors mean that few pupils have a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. There are suitable plans to review individual targets each term.
63. Teaching is most effective in Year 5, where both teachers are successful in planning work for the different levels of ability in the class. In a very good lesson where pupils were learning about fractions, learning was supported very effectively by the very good use of resources, carefully differentiated work and a very enthusiastic approach to introducing new concepts. As a result, pupils responded very well. They worked very hard at an appropriate level for their capability, making very good gains in knowledge.
64. Strengths in teaching throughout the school include the good management of behaviour; the effective use of teaching assistants and the effective use of carefully planned homework. Introductions to lessons are well organised, with explanations and questioning used effectively to involve all pupils and to ensure that they understand what they need to do. However, once pupils are working independently, teachers spend too much time flitting from pupil to pupil, rather than giving focused support to a group of pupils. This is a missed opportunity for direct teaching.
65. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory and provision for the subject is not as effective as at the time of the last inspection. The recently-appointed subject leader has made a good start on bringing about improvement by beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and by using test data to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject. However, previous initiatives have not been successfully followed through, meaning that they have had only a very limited impact on provision. For example, an initiative to use written targets in workbooks and to make sure that the purpose of lessons is shared with pupils has not been implemented effectively.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

66. Teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in different curriculum areas. For example, pupils take measurements in science and in design and technology lessons. In numeracy lessons, pupils make good use of their ICT skills, especially in the area of data handling, with displays showing a range of graphs, pie charts and tables.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory** overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a clear understanding of what needs to be improved;
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills by taking measurements;
- Younger pupils' knowledge and understanding are above average;
- Pupils' investigative skills are underdeveloped;
- Limited use is made of ICT and graphs to present findings from investigations; and
- Teachers do not make use of information on what pupils already know when planning work.

### **Commentary**

67. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, with weaknesses in investigative work. Up until 2003, the trend in National Curriculum test results had been upwards, keeping pace with the national trend. In 2002, the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 4) and the higher level (Level 5) was above average. In 2003,

results dipped due to the year group having an unusually large number of pupils with special educational needs. Younger pupils demonstrate better knowledge and understanding than older pupils. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

68. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. However, higher-attaining pupils make less progress than they should in lessons because they often complete the same work as other pupils and are insufficiently challenged. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to take a full part in lessons. However, they do not always manage to complete their written work in the time available.
69. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with an example of a good lesson being observed in Year 5. In this lesson, rapid and focused questioning enabled pupils to draw on their previous experiences to help predict and explain what was happening during an investigation into condensation. Overall, the quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection.
70. Throughout the school, teachers are skilled at managing pupils' behaviour and make good use of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs so that they can take a full part in practical activities. Effective use is made of pupils' measuring skills. For example, in one lesson in Year 4, pupils measured the distance cars travelled over various surfaces as part of an investigation into the impact of friction.
71. Whilst teachers' lesson planning is clear and detailed, not enough account is taken of what pupils already know, can do and understand to ensure that pupils are challenged enough. In particular, pupils are given insufficient opportunity to plan their own investigations or choose equipment and ways of recording findings. Teachers do not expect enough of pupils when they are considering what the findings from an investigation show and why, and teachers' marking does not show pupils how to improve.
72. Leadership is good and management is satisfactory. The new and enthusiastic co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how the provision for the subject needs to be improved and has developed good ideas to support teachers in their assessment and lesson planning. There are plans to enable the co-ordinator to monitor the effectiveness of new developments and to increase awareness of what is most successful and where further support is required. The subject was not led and managed effectively at the time of the last inspection. Assessment procedures are informal and are unsatisfactory in supporting teachers in planning for pupils' differing needs.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of teaching is good, helping to raise standards, although pupils' attainment is still below average due to previous weaknesses in provision;
- Teaching assistants are very well trained, enabling them to give very effective support in lessons;
- Lessons are well organised and learning is made purposeful through the good use of practical activities;
- Teachers are good at breaking down key skills into smaller components to help pupils learn;
- Subject leadership is good, with recent improvements being well managed and having a good impact on provision throughout the school;
- There are missed opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum; and
- The ICT suite is too small for large groups of pupils.

## **Commentary**

73. Provision for ICT was identified as a key weakness at the time of the last inspection. This is no longer the case, with improvements over the last year having a good impact on pupils' achievement. There is a new, well-planned curriculum and the newly resourced ICT suite, coupled with good quality teaching, means that pupils are learning effectively. As a result, pupils' attainment is improving rapidly although it remains below national expectations by the end of Year 6.
74. Despite recent improvements and the good progress that is now being made in lessons, older pupils still lack basic skills. They know how to load, save and print programs, but their keyboard skills are weak. They are beginning to find their way around a CD-ROM in order to access information, but this is still in the early stages of development. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to produce simple PowerPoint presentations about their residential visit to Wales, and they produce an interesting range of graphs and pie charts based on surveys covering topics such as the amount of traffic on the road outside school. Word-processing skills are satisfactory, with pupils throughout the school using ICT to write for a range of purposes. By Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of how word-processing techniques can be used to vary the presentation of their work and make it attractive to an audience. These skills are seen to good effect in displays around school.
75. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and well organised. They are especially good at teaching new skills in simple small steps so that all pupils understand. This is good practice, although it means that on occasions, the pace of learning of more capable pupils could be quicker. Nevertheless, teaching takes good account of the previous weaknesses in attainment and is carefully matched to pupils' needs. There is a clear focus on improving pupils' confidence levels and in giving them good opportunities to try out new skills for themselves. Teachers ensure that activities are purposeful, where possible linking their work in the ICT suite to other curriculum areas. For example, good links were made between ICT and history as pupils in Year 6 learnt how to use a CD-ROM to help them find information about the Victorians. Pupils respond well to teachers, although the lack of space in the ICT suite means that pupils find it hard to concentrate for a whole lesson and they do not always listen as well as they should.
76. Leadership of the subject is good, with both the co-ordinator and headteacher having a strong commitment to improving provision. The co-ordinator is a very good role model for the use of ICT and improvements over the last year have been carefully managed. There has been a good emphasis given to improving the confidence of members of staff. A very detailed training course was undertaken by teaching assistants. This has had a good impact on the work of the school, as they are now able to provide good quality support in lessons, often working with groups of pupils on ICT activities. The co-ordinator has worked hard to identify clearly on termly plans what pupils in different age groups should be learning, given their capability. This has helped less confident teachers to have a good understanding of what they should be teaching and has had a good impact on learning.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

77. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The ICT co-ordinator and headteacher have a good understanding of areas that still require further improvement, including the need to ensure that resources in the classroom are used efficiently to practise skills taught in the ICT suite. At the moment, there are variations in the use of classroom resources, meaning that there are missed opportunities to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum. Nevertheless, there is some good practice, especially in the way that ICT has been used to develop data handling skills in mathematics. Displays around school show to good effect the way that pupils have used their ICT skills to produce graphs, pie charts and tables based on mathematical surveys.

## HUMANITIES

Overall, provision for the humanities is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The schemes of work offer broad coverage in each subject;
- An interesting programme of visits, visitors and practical experiences stimulates pupils' interest, especially in history;
- Project folders are well presented and show clear development of understanding; and
- Over-use of worksheets limits pupils' learning, particularly in geography.

### Commentary

78. A sample of pupils' work from last year was examined in each subject, together with work currently in progress. Three lessons were observed in each of history and religious education. No lessons were seen in geography.
79. As at the time of the previous inspection, standards meet national expectations in geography and the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards in history also meet national expectations, though they are lower than at the previous inspection when they were above the expected level. In all three subjects, a weakness which affects standards is that tasks are not consistently adjusted to challenge pupils at different levels of attainment. In many instances, seen in the inspection and in previous work, all pupils were given the same simple task, such as labelling a diagram or colouring in a line-drawing. Such tasks ensure that pupils with lower attainment or special educational needs are able to take a full part, but pupils with the potential for higher attainment are not fully challenged. Though they generally perform these tasks well, they only meet the expected level by Year 6 when they have the potential to exceed it. The lack of formal assessment procedures for each of these subjects means that teachers do not have the information needed to plan appropriate tasks for pupils of differing capabilities and this is unsatisfactory. Whilst pupils have opportunities to carry out history and geography research during some ICT lessons, some opportunities are missed to make further use of ICT in class.

### Geography

80. The curriculum is well planned to cover a wide range of topics, including the study of two overseas countries. There are some good links with other subjects, such as art and design and technology. Pupils show sound understanding of the effects of climate and culture on ways of life, correctly interpreting evidence in maps, diagrams and charts. Understanding of maps develops well, though skills in map drawing are not developed consistently. Pupils respond well to the challenge of fieldwork, such as the local traffic survey carried out by Year 5. They recorded their findings in graphs, using ICT, and expressed their concerns in well-argued letters to the local council. In much other work, though, the over-use of worksheets limits opportunities for pupils to plan and develop their ideas, especially in Year 6.

### History

81. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a broad understanding of major features of the ancient civilisations of Greece and Egypt, and of significant periods of British history. Factual information is clearly stated and they make reasoned deductions when interpreting evidence in pictures and objects. They respond well through imaginative writing, when they see through the eyes of people living at the time. This approach is deepened very effectively through drama, reflected in their written accounts of school visits. During the inspection, very good use was made of a school assembly to motivate learning. A Year 5 class showed very good



achievement in performing a presentation on World War II, including songs and dance and covering a wide range of topics. Many Year 6 pupils show good factual recall in class discussions, but tasks are not designed to extend the learning of the more capable beyond the level expected for their age.

82. Teaching was satisfactory in the lessons seen. Teachers give clear explanations of the lesson's purpose, manage pupils' behaviour well and use questioning effectively to review pupils' understanding. Topics are well resourced to raise interest, for instance through a videotape explaining farming methods in ancient Egypt. Pupils generally pay close attention when studying such resources and so they are successful in identifying significant information. However, not enough is expected of them in explaining their findings, exploring cause and effect and justifying their reasons.
83. The subject is well planned to include a programme of visits to museums and places of historic interest. Some involve pupils in drama activities, allowing them to work together well and experience very effectively at first hand the ways of life of former times.

### **Religious education**

84. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the basic principles of several world religions and sound knowledge of Christianity, which remains a constant strand through the scheme of work. They show a sound grasp of similarities and differences in comparing the main beliefs, celebrations and forms of worship of the religions studied. Most have a broad understanding of significant parts of the Old and New Testaments, as well as stories from Hinduism. They identify correctly and explain in simple terms the significance of sacred objects and religious customs.
85. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching. In the best lessons, questioning is used well to probe understanding and pupils are keen to explain what they know. Teachers prompt them sympathetically to extend their ideas and link new learning to their own life experiences. In discussions, pupils listen carefully and show respect for the ideas of others. They collaborate well on shared tasks, though the lack of challenge in such work was a weakness in two of the lessons seen, slowing learning over time.
86. There are good links with the programme for PSHE, giving pupils good support in developing personal values and beliefs. Visitors from other religions and regular visits to the local parish church give pupils strong first-hand experiences. School assemblies extend their understanding of worship, and broaden their knowledge of the festivals of other religions. The subject leader provides a good role model for teaching in the subject.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

This aspect of the curriculum was not an area of focus for this inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form judgements on overall provision in these subjects.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attainment is above national expectations in art and design;
- Pupils are enthusiastic about games and participate in the many after school activities; and
- The school is successful in competitive sport.

#### **Art and Design**

87. Artwork on display indicates that attainment is above national expectations and pupils achieve well throughout the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 produce good line drawings of moving figures and of facial expressions, and they paint careful, detailed pictures of buildings around the school. In Year 3, pupils produce atmospheric pictures of trees in a mist, using paint and chalk. Pupils' attainment has improved since the time of the last inspection when the work of older pupils was satisfactory.
88. Two lessons were observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good in the other. In the good lesson in Year 4, the teacher and teaching assistant supported pupils well, enabling them to concentrate and produce good quality work as they explored the use of line to create patterns and shapes representing animals and vegetation. In the satisfactory lesson in Year 5, the opportunity was missed to teach specific skills before asking pupils to complete a task and to encourage them to show independence by finding their own resources. In both lessons, teachers managed behaviour effectively and had good relationships with the pupils, resulting in good attitudes towards learning.
89. In Year 5, some very good quality clay containers show that the three-dimensional aspect of the art and design curriculum has improved since the time of the last inspection. Colourful and detailed wall hangings depicting 'The Creation' use a wide range of techniques in textiles and make a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual development.
90. There has been recent training for members of staff in art and design and parents are pleased with the quality of work produced by their children.

### **Design and Technology**

91. Work seen during the two lessons observed indicated that attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 make satisfactory plans showing the intended dimensions for models and use a range of skills to join materials together. Attainment was similar at the time of the last inspection, although at that time there were weaknesses in pupils' designing skills and this is no longer the case.
92. Teaching was satisfactory in one lesson in Year 6 and unsatisfactory in the other in Year 3. In the unsatisfactory lesson, despite the teacher having a good knowledge of the subject, a lack of pace and challenge meant that pupils' interest was not maintained and they did not extend their learning enough. In the lesson in Year 6, pupils benefited from some useful instruction about what gives structures strength and they incorporated some of these ideas into their own designs.
93. The curriculum has been revised recently and parents have noticed improvements in the quality of provision. The subject makes a good contribution towards pupils' social development as they learn to co-operate with each other over joint projects.

### **Music**

94. No lessons were observed during the inspection but singing in assemblies was sweet and tuneful. Parents have noticed an improvement in provision for the subject.

### **Physical Education**

95. Pupils' attainment in the one games lesson observed in Year 6 was in line with national expectations. The brisk teaching of skills enabled pupils to learn how to pass the ball effectively.
96. The school provides a wide range of very well supported additional sporting activities such as soccer, netball and athletics clubs and the school is successful in competitions with other schools. For example, a team of girls won the district sports competition this year. Pupils enjoy

games and are keen to take part in the many opportunities offered. The school has good facilities for outdoor games. It is not possible to make a judgement on pupils' attainment in swimming by the end of Year 6 because there were no lessons on the timetable during the inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a new, well-planned programme for personal, social and health education that meets pupils' needs effectively;
- Teachers allocate time for the teaching of different aspects of citizenship;
- Circle time is used effectively to help pupils develop self-esteem and to think about their responsibilities in school and society; and
- The 'Healthy School' award has made an important contribution to learning.

### **Commentary**

97. The school has made good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including citizenship, sex and drugs education. Over the last year the school has developed clear and relevant policies which show expectations and reflect the caring ethos of the school. Skills are taught effectively through a range of activities, including circle time, specific citizenship lessons and incidentally in subjects such as science and religious education.
98. No lessons in citizenship were seen during the inspection, but the school shows that it values this aspect of the curriculum by allocating specific lessons to the teaching of skills. Samples of work show that pupils cover a good range of topics that enable them to develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. For example, in Year 3, pupils learn about how to handle conflict and why it is good to be a part of a community or family. Activities such as the drawing-up of class rules and the school council help pupils to contribute to the day-to-day life of the school, making them feel that their views are valued and respected.
99. The quality of teaching in circle times is good. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' self-esteem and helping them to appreciate each other's strengths. In these lessons, discussions are handled sensitively, with all pupils successfully encouraged to participate. There is a happy and supportive atmosphere, which means that pupils are not scared about talking about how they feel. Teachers show a good understanding of pupils' needs, and there is a good focus on encouraging them to think about the needs of others.
100. Improvements over the last year have been well managed, with the co-ordinator providing good leadership, especially in the development of policies and planning documents. There is a strong, shared commitment to developing pupils' personal skills effectively. The school won a 'Healthy School' award in 2002, reflecting the emphasis the school has placed on ensuring that pupils develop good values and leave school well prepared for their later experiences in life.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).*