

INSPECTION REPORT

VELMEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Fleet

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116054

Headteacher: Mrs L Wright

Lead inspector: David Westall

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th February 2004

Inspection number: 258271

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:	335
School address:	Velmead Road Fleet Hampshire
Postcode:	GU52 7LG
Telephone number:	(01252) 628 704
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	John Landeryou
Date of previous inspection:	23/3/98

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 335 pupils on roll, aged between seven and 11 years, and they are taught in 12 classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, and two pupils who speak English as an additional language are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The ward in which the school is situated is relatively advantaged, and pupils' overall attainment on entry to Year 3 is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Lead inspector	Science, Art and design, Design and technology
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3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English, History, Religious education, Special educational needs, English as an additional language
15666	Kath Oram	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, Information and communication technology
20671	Jon Palethorpe	Team inspector	Physical education, Music, Personal, social and health education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school which has some very good features. It benefits from a highly effective headteacher, from an able, committed staff and an astute governing body. The quality of teaching is good and pupils do well, as a result. Pupils' personal as well as academic development is fostered strongly, and the school is a caring community where everyone matters. The school's strengths vastly outweigh its areas for improvement, and it provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are listed below:

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and benefits from a very effective governing body.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good and pupils generally progress well in their learning.
- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics, and pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, physical education and in personal, social and health education.
- Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are all very good, and the school makes very good provision for their moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they progress well.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a very high priority.
- The school's partnership with parents is very strong.
- Some subject managers do not have sufficiently systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision.
- Continuity in pupils' learning is not secure in history and religious education.

Overall, the school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1998. Weaknesses in pupils' achievement in ICT, in the deployment of teaching assistants, in elements of strategic planning and in the accommodation have been rigorously addressed and rectified. In addition, statutory requirements are now fully met, in contrast to the situation in 1998. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, and the school has maintained good teaching and very good leadership and management.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, standards are well above average, and represent good achievement.

The table below shows that the results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) in 2003 were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, they were below the average results achieved by similar schools in these subjects. Overall standards were lower than in 2001 and 2002 due to the underachievement of pupils in one of the three Year 6 classes. Pupils in this class had too many different teachers in their earlier years in the school, reflecting the difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers in the area, where living costs are high. All available evidence shows the school did all it could to minimise the disruption to these pupils' education, but its effect was significant in relation to the 2003 test results.

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

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.

Overall, inspection findings are more favourable than the school's SATs results in 2003, more accurately reflect the school's earlier results and show that standards are well above average in English and mathematics in Year 6. These standards represent good achievement, given pupils' above average standards on entry, and reflect good teaching in these subjects. In science, standards are a little lower but are above average and represent satisfactory achievement. In ICT, standards are average in Year 6 but are rising due to improvements in resources and in teachers' expertise. Pupils also achieve well in art and design, physical education and in personal, social and health education, and standards are above average in these subjects in Year 6. Standards are average in history and are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are very good. The school makes very good overall provision for their personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good and means pupils are making good overall progress in their learning, including in English and mathematics. There are particular strengths in teachers' planning and in their use of assessment to ensure that tasks match pupils' needs accurately. As a result, good provision is made for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable. The curriculum provides a rich range of worthwhile learning experiences which benefit pupils' personal as well as academic development. However, in history and religious education, there is too much variability in provision and this impairs pupils' progress in these subjects.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are very good, and the school's partnership with parents is very strong. These factors have a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements at the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Very good overall. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, who provides a clear sense of direction and evaluates its performance rigorously. Her strong commitment, energy and clear thinking contribute significantly to the school's success. The leadership and management skills of the senior management team and year group leaders are good, and the subject managers for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are fulfilling their roles particularly well. All subject managers are conscientious and check teachers' planning carefully but some do not have sufficiently systematic and rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and pupils' standards. Governance is very good. The governors are astute and well informed, and play a key role in shaping the school's work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have positive views about the school. In particular, parents recognise the very effective leadership of the headteacher, and pupils appreciate the hard work of the staff and the opportunities they are given to influence the school's development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do are listed below:

- ensure that all subject managers develop systematic and rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision; and
- ensure that pupils make more consistent progress in their learning in history and religious education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, standards are well above average and represent good achievement, given pupils' starting points on entry to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in English and mathematics in Year 6, and represent good achievement.
- Pupils achieve well in art and design, physical education and in personal, social and health education, and this is reflected in their above average standards in these subjects in Year 6.
- Pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are rising as a consequence.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.

Commentary

Standards on entry to the school

1. On entry to Year 3, pupils' overall standards are above average.

The school's results in national tests (SATs)

2. The table below shows that the results of the SATs in Year 6, in 2003, were above the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, they were below the average results achieved by similar schools in these subjects. The results were lower than those achieved in 2001 and 2002, particularly in English and mathematics, where they were well above the national average in these earlier years. Although the school met its statutory target in English in 2003, in relation to the percentage reaching or exceeding the expected level, it failed to reach its target in mathematics. The school's detailed analysis of its results in 2003 clearly shows that overall standards fell owing to the underachievement of pupils in one of the three Year 6 classes. Pupils in this class had too many different teachers in their earlier years at the school, reflecting the difficulty of recruiting and retaining teachers in the area, where living costs are high. All available evidence suggests the school did all it could to minimise the disruption to these pupils' education but its effect was significant in relation to the test results in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (28.8)	27.0 (26.8)
mathematics	28.1 (28.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 96 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Standards at the time of the last inspection

3. When the school was last inspected, in 1998, pupils' standards were average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils were achieving well in these subjects, but the significant percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 classes was restricting standards, which were lower than in 1997. Standards were above average in design and technology, but were below average in ICT. In all other subjects, standards were average.

Inspection findings

4. Inspection findings are more favourable than the school's national test results in 2003, more accurately reflect the test results in 2001 and 2002 in English and mathematics, and show that current standards in these subjects are well above average in Year 6. These standards reflect good achievement by pupils in all of the Year 6 classes, in contrast to the situation last year, and result from good teaching in these subjects. In science, standards in Year 6 are not as high as in English and mathematics, but are above average. These standards represent satisfactory achievement for all pupils, as a result of mainly satisfactory teaching in the subject. In English, mathematics and science, standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection.
5. In ICT, standards are average and are rising now that improved teaching and resources are enabling pupils to make good progress in their learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils also achieve well in art and design, physical education and personal, social and health education. Attainment in these subjects is above average in Year 6. Standards in Year 6 are average in history and are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Insufficient evidence was available to judge standards in other subjects.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans and the most able pupils also progress well. Pupils' current work shows no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls, and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are doing as well as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Very good overall. Pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and other personal qualities are very good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and provision for their spiritual and cultural development is good. Attendance is above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel valued and show respect for others.
- Relationships are very good at all levels.
- Behaviour is very good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
- The attendance rate is above the national median.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' awareness of other cultures and their understanding of what can be learned from religion.

Commentary

Attitudes and behaviour

7. When pupils were asked their views about school, they placed working hard and the many challenges they are given at the top of their 'lists' of the things they liked most. From Year 3 to Year 6, all pupils have a very keen sense of belonging in a vibrant and effective learning community where staff, pupils, parents and governors work in partnership. Those pupils interviewed spoke with some authority about the way they were helped to learn. They were very aware of the parts played, not only by staff, but also by parents and governors, in making the school an exciting place to learn and to grow. Because pupils feel valued and involved in all aspects of school life, and because they know their own views are taken into account and acted upon, they respect others and value the opportunities they are given. Challenged by good teaching, they work conscientiously, strive to do their best and have positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils thrive on the competitive element introduced in some aspects of their work, in sports and through involvement in national competitions.

8. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are trusted to work independently and to carry out duties in class and around the school. The well-established school council gives them a voice and a forum where their views can make a difference. They see the decisions they have made bring about changes for the better, for example, in the form of the 'Buddy system' and in provision for playground games. They also feel they have some ownership of the school rules and of disciplinary matters. The school's very strong promotion of equal opportunities – at all levels – means that pupils are well motivated and are able to invest all their energies in constructive ways. They say that all pupils have the opportunity to be 'good at something' in school, and their views show respect for much more than academic achievement. Behaviour is very good and incidents involving bullying or racial harassment are very rare indeed.
9. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have very positive attitudes to learning. They work hard to overcome any difficulties, show good perseverance and join enthusiastically in the full range of activities. They value the help they are given, work well with all staff and with other pupils, and do their best to apply what they have been taught.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.2
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.

Attendance

10. Attendance is good and the very good monitoring of registers ensures that all absences are accounted for accurately. Unauthorised absences are close to the national average and arise mostly from unauthorised holidays in term time. Punctuality is satisfactory, overall, but a small minority of pupils arrive late in the morning and this can be disruptive to class routines.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

11. The school provides very well for pupils' moral and social development, and good provision is made for their spiritual and cultural development.
12. Through their daily interactions with pupils and through the good relationships and teamwork that characterise the work of all adults in the school, staff present themselves as good role models. The ethos of the school encourages all pupils to respect others and to help in any way they can. Their moral and social development are underpinned by the very good relationships that exist at all levels. All staff and many parents and governors give generously of their time to enhance pupils' experience of school, not only in regard to teaching and learning but also through a broad range of extra-curricular, social and enrichment activities. Their example is not lost on the pupils, who value others' efforts on their behalf and who emulate the altruistic and caring attitudes of their elders. In lessons, in sports, in clubs and in musical activities, pupils are taught to work together co-operatively and constructively, and to recognise the value of both individual enterprise and team effort. The school's work in support of various charities helps pupils to develop a sense of moral and social responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. The direct involvement of pupils in the work of the school, as senior pupils, school councillors and 'Buddies' helps them to become mature and responsible. For example, they are given confidence and a sense of accomplishment when they see changes that they have initiated take shape in the school grounds. Their 'guardianship' of the school rules and their involvement in making moral judgements about their own behaviour and about the behaviour of others, make a strong contribution to their moral development and to their understanding of what is right, what is wrong and what is fair. The school's very good provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship also makes a very strong contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

13. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Through assemblies and through religious education lessons and, most notably, through opportunities for reflection and self evaluation in PSHE, pupils are encouraged to understand themselves, to understand and respect others' values and beliefs and to create patterns of meaning for their own lives. The school's strong links with local Christian churches and their clergy mean pupils have regular opportunities to visit places of worship and to talk with 'experts' about religious matters. In religious education, pupils focus on aspects of spirituality such as prayer in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Overall, however, more emphasis is placed in religious education on learning about religion than on what is to be learned from religion: little of the work seen gives pupils a strong understanding of the power of faith to inspire, motivate and bring comfort to believers.
14. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. A rich programme of visits and of visitors supports pupils' work, particularly in history, geography, music, and art and design. In English, pupils are introduced to fiction and poetry of good quality by past and contemporary authors and are encouraged to read widely. All pupils have regular opportunities to take part in drama productions and in presentations in assemblies, while role-play is also used to good effect as a learning tool to enhance pupils' understanding of the curriculum, for example, in history. Many pupils benefit from opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and to perform before audiences in the school 'ensemble'. Through involvement in community events, pupils learn to value local traditions, while links with local churches and lessons in religious education develop their awareness of the meaning and significance of festivals, celebrations and special events important in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to learn about other countries and other cultures, and some pupils have 'pen friends' in Ukraine. Overall, however, there remains scope to develop pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural dimension of contemporary British society and to learn more about the contributions made by other cultures to the arts and to literature.

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	295	0	0
White – Irish	2	1	0
White – any other White background	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

15. **The quality of education provided is good.** Teaching is good and means pupils are making good overall progress in their learning, including in English and mathematics. There are particular strengths in teachers' planning and in their use of assessment to ensure that tasks match pupils' needs accurately. As a result, good provision is made for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most capable. The curriculum

provides a rich range of worthwhile learning experiences which benefit pupils' personal as well as academic development. However, in history and religious education, there is too much variability in provision and this impairs pupils' progress in these subjects.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the teaching is good and pupils learn well. Assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, overall, and means pupils generally progress well in their learning.
- Teachers' planning is usually very good.
- Assessment procedures are very good and are used effectively.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, including by teaching assistants.
- Some teachers need to increase their knowledge about religious education and history, so that pupils make more consistent progress in their learning in these subjects.
- Teachers' marking sometimes provides pupils with insufficient guidance about how to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	9 (18%)	24 (50%)	14 (29%)	2 (4%)	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.

16. The table above shows the teaching observed was good, overall, as it was when the school was last inspected. Good, or better, teaching was evident in seven out of every ten lessons, and unsatisfactory teaching was rare. The four teachers who serve as senior managers demonstrated consistently good or better teaching and provide very positive role models for their colleagues.
17. Across the school, teaching is characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils like and respect their teachers and it is obvious that these feelings are reciprocated. Teachers' planning is mainly very good, and they know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Overall, teachers' knowledge about the subjects they teach is good, although some teachers should increase their awareness of the need for continuity in the development of pupils' key skills and knowledge in history, and should interpret the locally agreed syllabus for religious education more effectively. Teachers' knowledge and expertise in teaching ICT has improved very significantly since the last inspection and, consequently, pupils make much better progress in their learning in the subject. The management of behaviour is consistently good, resources are well prepared and teachers organise their lessons so that time is used well. Pupils respond positively to this good teaching by listening attentively to their teachers, concentrating on their tasks and generally making good progress in their learning.
18. In English and mathematics, the teaching is good and means pupils do well in these subjects. Planning takes very good account of the needs of all pupils, and teachers are quick to identify any weaknesses in pupils' performance and to take effective remedial action. In both subjects, teachers are confident enough to be innovative, and this makes learning interesting for the pupils. For example, drama and role-play help to enrich pupils' learning in English, while practical sessions in the hall help pupils to grasp mathematical ideas through well focused activities.

19. The teaching in ICT is considerably more effective than at the time of the last inspection, and is good. Teachers confidently teach pupils a range of relevant skills, and pupils become engrossed in their lessons. Teaching is also good in physical education and in personal, social and health education, and means pupils progress well in their learning in these subjects. In science and religious education, the teaching is a little less effective, but is satisfactory overall and enables pupils to achieve soundly. In science, in particular, there is a wide variation in the quality of teaching. For example, in a very good lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher clearly had very good knowledge of the subject and used skilful questions so that pupils were working at the edge of their capabilities. In contrast, unsatisfactory teaching was evident when a lack of clarity in a teacher's explanation contributed to pupils' slow pace of learning in a younger class.
20. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements about the quality of teaching in other subjects. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work clearly shows the teaching enables pupils to achieve well in art and design. In history and religious education, although there are some weaknesses which are stated above, the teaching enables pupils to make broadly satisfactory progress in their learning.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Class teachers plan tasks specifically matched to pupils' individual learning needs and capabilities when it is deemed necessary. Usually, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported in class lessons according to need and are helped to respond well to challenging work through the skilled support of teaching assistants or class teachers. When the school was last inspected, teaching assistants were not deployed or used well to support pupils with special educational needs, but this is clearly no longer the case. All staff make sure that pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and play a full part at every stage of a lesson. Where appropriate, some pupils with special educational needs also benefit from short periods of intensive and very effective teaching on their own or in small groups, most usually on work related to their targets. Teaching assistants also run occasional lunchtime sessions on various aspects of literacy, numeracy and social skills for some 'targeted' pupils, some of whom are not yet on the special needs register. The school receives good support from external specialists who carry out assessments, advise and train staff, and help teachers plan appropriate work for pupils when relevant. All strands of special needs provision are fully informed by assessment; as a consequence, teaching is effective and pupils make good progress.

Assessing pupils' progress

22. Teachers use thorough assessment procedures very effectively to track progress and match tasks and the curriculum to the needs of pupils. They make constant checks in lessons to assess pupils' understanding of what is being taught and give well-judged feedback which provides both encouragement and advice about how pupils can do better. There are simple but effective systems in place for involving pupils in assessing their own progress and setting targets. For example, at the end of each lesson, pupils give themselves a grade for their level of understanding of the topic and tidy their books away into trays which indicate if they need more or little help with this area from the teacher. The teacher then plans support as needed. Overall, the school's assessment practice is a key strength. Its only weakness lies in the variable quality of teachers' marking. Although marking is satisfactory, overall, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to provide feedback which informs pupils about how to improve their work.

The curriculum

The breadth and quality of the curriculum are very good, and there are very good opportunities for enrichment. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities is provided.
- Overall, the curriculum is very well planned.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively through a wide range of opportunities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There are very good opportunities for enrichment, including through extra-curricular provision.
- Continuity in pupils' learning is not secure in history and religious education.
- Overall, the accommodation is good, and the outside environment is very good.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is broad, relevant and fully meets statutory requirements. Sufficient time is allocated to promote the key skills of literacy and numeracy, and this time is used well. Teachers take care to interrelate learning across different subjects, and this generally works well. Planning is very good, overall, and is based on a carefully considered long-term curriculum map which indicates what is to be taught and when. This ensures that, in the vast majority of subjects, pupils develop their skills and understanding in a progressive way as they move through the school. However, the history curriculum does not always ensure continuity in pupils' learning, across the school, and variations in teachers' interpretations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education mean that progression in pupils' learning in the subject is sometimes impaired. Equal opportunities are promoted very strongly in the curriculum, and pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have the same access to the curriculum and enrichment activities as their peers.
24. Personal, social and health education is taught both as a discrete subject and through an integrated approach across the curriculum. Both the curriculum and teachers' expertise are very well developed, and the school's arrangements in this area are very good. As a result, pupils gain the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to be responsible citizens, both now and in the future.
25. An annual visits and visitors programme of activities for each year group ensures that all pupils experience a broad range of enrichment activities. These include both local visits and visits to further afield, including a residential visit to Dorset for Year 6 pupils. Visitors include the nurse, police constable, heath ranger, vicar and fireman, and parents with specialist knowledge, for example, about ICT or a particular religion. All visits and visitors are carefully planned to support and enrich the topic being studied. In addition, pupils benefit from a very good range of opportunities for learning outside the school day.
26. Overall, the accommodation is good. Improvements have been made to the accommodation since the last inspection, particularly with the extension to the hall and library. The buildings and grounds are accessible to users of wheelchairs. The school grounds are extensive and have been utilised very well to create an interesting and enriching environment. The adventure playground equipment, apart from being extremely valuable for pupils to play on, is an excellent example of the work of the school council. Pupil members did everything from planning how to raise the money to selecting and ordering the equipment.
27. The school has ample staff, and they have the ability and expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum effectively. Learning resources are well organised and are good, overall.

Care, guidance and support

Very good overall. The care and welfare of pupils are given a very high priority. Pupils are confident in seeking guidance and support when necessary, and adults are sensitive to their needs. The school regularly seeks and acts on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive very good pastoral care.
- Very good use is made of pupils' assessment information to provide well-targeted advice and support.
- Health and safety matters are very rigorously monitored.
- The school has excellent arrangements for consulting with pupils.

Commentary

28. There is a clear understanding that pupils cannot learn effectively if they have problems or concerns, and all adults play their part by providing sensitive support. The open relationship with parents ensures that issues affecting pastoral care are shared so that staff are well prepared to support individual pupils. The headteacher is particularly skilled at talking to pupils who may have problems, either with attitudes to school or to their peers. Her reminders to pupils about the choices they can make about their behaviour and their work, coupled with her sensitivity to their needs, provide a very effective way of enabling pupils to increase their self-esteem and their desire to improve. Her expertise provides an excellent role model for other adults in the school, and they follow her good example so there are trusting and supportive relationships between pupils and staff.
29. All adults are well briefed about child protection matters and have annual reminders about appropriate procedures. Teaching assistants are used to cover lunchtime duties and this provides a continuity of care that has made playtimes more enjoyable for pupils and has also resulted in fewer minor accidents. The teaching assistants have attended training to help them to support pupils with particular medical needs, and they have shared their learning with the teachers so that all staff are well informed.
30. Health and safety matters in school are dealt with rigorously and thoroughly. A comprehensive range of risk assessments are in place and the buildings and grounds are frequently inspected. Documentation is not only scrupulously maintained but also carefully monitored and evaluated so that opportunities for improvements can be identified and implemented. Pupils are appropriately reminded about the importance of safe practices in lessons such as physical education and they learn to be helpful and considerate when moving around the site. First aid is sympathetically administered and pupils with particular medical conditions are enabled to play their full part in school life.
31. The well-established school council provides a very effective means of considering pupils' views about school and how it could be improved. Pupils are enabled to take the major responsibility in carrying out projects they have asked for, such as the outside activity trail, and their views on how the discipline policy should be operated has resulted in changes which make pupils feel it is fairer. They are particularly proud of their increasing role as 'buddies' to other pupils who might feel left out at playtimes. The high profile given to the school council makes all pupils feel that they have a part to play, and makes a positive impact on their attitudes to school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good overall. The school's partnership with parents and with the adjacent infant school are very good. Links with other schools and with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are regularly consulted to discover their views.
- Parents are very well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of community links.
- Links with the adjacent infant school promote continuity in pupils' learning.

Commentary

32. The school strongly values parents' views and keeps them well informed. Each year, parents are asked their views about a range of subjects, including through annual surveys to discover parents' perceptions of the school's overall performance. This very good practice means the school is constantly reviewing how well it is fulfilling its aims, is able to evaluate the impact of changes and to act on any concerns or suggestions raised. Surveys on homework have enabled the school to shape its provision, not only to support learning but also to help maximise parental involvement. A survey on parents' perceptions on the school's preparations for SATs has enabled it to gauge how stressful pupils found the experience. This constant re-evaluation has made a significant difference in improving the school experience for both parents and pupils.
33. Parents receive a very good range of information about the school and its activities. Regular newsletters and an attractive website keep parents up-to-date with events. Information about what is to be taught is shared at the beginning of each year and updated termly. In addition, there are opportunities for parents to attend workshops to learn more about how subjects, such as mathematics, are taught. Parents also receive termly summary reports on their children's effort and attainment, which they can discuss with the teacher. Annual written reports provide detailed indications of progress, as well as children's own assessments of their strengths and weaknesses. This comprehensive range of information keeps parents clearly informed about their children's learning and targets for improvement.
34. The school has established very good relationships with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. All value the school's efforts on behalf of their children, and almost all attend meetings arranged to review their child's targets or to meet specialists involved in the support. The Learning Support Manager ensures that liaison with the feeder infant schools and with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer secures the best possible arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
35. Good use is made of the local area and the expertise of members of the community to provide a rich range of experiences for pupils. Members of the school council have talked to the local council about how they planned and improved play facilities, and have successfully raised the school profile with activities such as carol singing at Christmas and preparing a winning carnival float. Business links are strong, with pupils participating in the Young Enterprise Scheme and the school benefiting from sponsorship and donations from local companies. There are good links with other primary and secondary schools which provide opportunities for pupils to mix with others in sporting and musical events. The school works very productively with the adjacent infant school to ensure continuity of provision and co-operative development of the extensive shared site.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Very good overall. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, who provides a clear sense of direction and evaluates its performance rigorously. The leadership and management skills of other key staff are good, overall, and school governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills.
- Teamwork is promoted strongly and the senior management team, the year group leaders and the managers for special educational needs, English, mathematics, science, ICT and PSHE all fulfil their roles well.
- The school benefits from a very effective governing body.
- Some subject managers do not have sufficiently systematic and rigorous procedures for evaluating provision.

Commentary

Leadership

36. **The headteacher is providing very good leadership**, as she was when the school was last inspected. She has high expectations for pupils' academic and personal development, and communicates these well so that the school has a clear sense of direction. Her strong commitment, energy and clear thinking ensure that the school's ambitions and goals remain in sharp focus despite the frequent staff changes which result from difficulties in recruitment and retention in the area. The headteacher leads by example and provides a positive role model through her tenacious work to secure school improvement. She knows the staff well and works effectively with them, recognising and praising their achievements, and providing good advice and support when these are required. Teamwork is promoted strongly, and staff develop their skills and shared understandings, not only from guidance from the headteacher and senior staff, but also from the expertise and insights of teaching assistants. The headteacher is firmly committed to running an equitable and inclusive school where each individual matters, and this is evident in the care which is taken to support staff and all pupils. The headteacher is held in high regard by staff, governors, pupils and parents. For example, parents' questionnaire returns show they believe the school is well led and managed, and this was also reflected in the very positive remarks made during the pre-inspection parents' meeting about the clear sense of direction provided by the headteacher.
37. The headteacher has worked effectively with the governors and staff to create strategic planning which identifies well-judged priorities based on clear school aims. Although the plan identifies a wide range of initiatives, these are spread over a four-year period; and timescales for the completion of tasks are more realistic than at the time of the last inspection. The plan is very thorough, and individual initiatives are planned in considerable detail so all staff and governors know what is to be done, when, how and by whom. The plan is having a beneficial effect on school improvement.
38. The school currently has two acting deputy headteachers, since the new permanent post holder will not take up her appointment until the Summer Term 2004. Both teachers are fulfilling their new roles well and form part of an effective senior management team. These senior staff, together with a third, provide good leadership in each of the three learning modules in the school, which all include four classes and cover the whole age range of pupils. In common with year group leaders, they regularly meet their teams and promote consistency and good practice by fostering effective teamwork. All subject managers are conscientious and enthusiastic, and are making valuable contributions to the quality of planning and assessment in their subjects. The leadership of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is particularly effective, and subject leadership is satisfactory overall. However, weaknesses in the rigour of monitoring procedures are inhibiting leadership in a range of subjects.

Management

39. Overall, the management of the school is very good. The headteacher analyses the results of statutory and non-statutory testing very carefully and ensures that staff are aware of areas for improvement as well as good achievement. She checks teachers' planning, examines examples of pupils' work and very regularly observes lessons. Her programme of lesson observations is particularly demanding and impressive, and she provides staff with well-focused feedback which has a beneficial impact on their professional development. Senior

staff manage their teams well in the year groups and in the three learning modules, and ensure that teachers carefully evaluate provision. In addition, there are particular strengths in the management of provision in the core subjects and for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, the work of the subject managers is sound, but there is scope for improvement in some subjects. Although all subject managers monitor planning well and most have collected some examples of pupils' work, their evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' standards, is not sufficiently systematic or rigorous in history, art and design, design and technology, physical education and music.

40. The school's policy for the performance management of staff is being implemented effectively. Targets properly reflect both whole school priorities and individual needs; and all staff, including teaching assistants, have ample opportunities to benefit from training courses. Provision for the induction of recently qualified staff is good, and reflects the caring and supportive ethos of the school.
41. The Learning Support Manager, the headteacher and the special needs governor together provide effective management of special needs provision. The day-to-day management of operations in special needs work is carried out very effectively and efficiently by the Learning Support Manager. She has built up a strong and effective team of hard-working and well informed learning support staff who often give willingly of their own time and who adopt a very professional approach to their work. In the spirit of togetherness that characterises this school, parent helpers and governors also make an effective contribution to pupils' learning by helping with reading and by supporting pupils in class. All statutory requirements in regard to special educational needs provision are met.
42. Financial planning is good. Strategic plans are carefully costed, the annual budget is debated rigorously at governors' meetings and the principles of best value are applied well. The governors have deliberately augmented the budget for the current year with carried forward funds to enable the school to retain its established organisation of 12 classes. They appropriately plan to review the situation carefully in relation to school numbers and available funding for the next year. All financial procedures are carried out efficiently, and benefit from the good expertise of the school finance officer and the very effective support provided by the chair of the finance committee of the governors.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	842,339
Total expenditure	803,152
Expenditure per pupil	2,355

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24,244
Balance carried forward to the next	39,187

Aids and barriers to raising achievement

43. Very effective leadership and management, together with good teaching, are the key reasons why pupils achieve well at this school. The main barrier to achievement is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers because of the high cost of living in the area. For example, pupils underachieved in one Year 6 class in the SATs in 2003 because they had too many different teachers in their earlier years at the school.

Governance

44. The governance of the school is very good. The governors are highly committed and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and governors help to guide the school's work through strategic planning which takes careful account of the school's policies and aims. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are all well informed, and members of the governing body often attend staff training days to keep abreast of developments. The chair of governors visits regularly, works well

with the headteacher and his fellow governors, and has very good leadership skills. The chairs of the committees of the governors all fulfil their roles very well, and governors are not afraid to ask the headteacher challenging questions to hold the school to account. They have rectified weaknesses in the school prospectus and in the information provided in their annual report to parents which were identified when the school was last inspected, and ensure that statutory requirements are now fully met. In summary, the governors are astute, have a good understanding of the school's most significant strengths and areas for development and, while being highly supportive, also fulfil very well their roles as critical friends to the school.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and means pupils achieve well.
- Standards are well above average in Year 6.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- The English subject manager is very effective in her role.
- The quality of teachers' marking is too variable.
- In lessons with a reading focus, independent work is too easy for the more able pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

45. Standards in English are well above average in Year 6 and are a significant improvement on the average standards found when the school was last inspected. Against the national trend, standards are currently slightly better overall in writing than in reading. In recent years, through an 'Improving Standards Project', the school has responded energetically and effectively to address relative weaknesses identified in pupils' performance in writing, most particularly, by boys and, more recently, in girls' reading. Following results which were well above the national averages in 2001 and 2002, the results in 2003 were lower, largely because the performance of one particular group of pupils was affected by a lack of stability in staffing. Indeed, although the results for 2003 remained above the national average, they were below the average results of similar schools. On the basis of its analysis of the performance of pupils currently in Year 6, the school anticipates that 2004 should see standards rise again, with about half of the pupils expected to exceed the standard set nationally for pupils of their age. Inspection evidence confirms high overall attainment and finds no significant difference between the achievements of girls and boys. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well in English, including the very few for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
46. The majority of pupils in each year group listen attentively, express themselves clearly and respond to questions well. They have a wide general vocabulary and are also familiar with the specialist terms needed to discuss their work in different subjects. In English lessons, as pupils move up through the school, they become increasingly confident when asked to talk about the texts they read. By the age of 11, most pupils can identify the techniques used to engage readers in fiction and non-fiction texts, explain the characteristic structures and features of different kinds of writing, and talk in considerable detail about the characters and events in particular works of fiction. The knowledge and understanding they glean by talking about their reading also helps them when they write. As a consequence of effective teaching, which makes strong links between reading and writing, most pupils are able to match the style, structure and language of their own writing to particular purposes and audiences. At the same time, a thorough grounding in routine skills such as spelling and handwriting, together with an understanding of grammar and punctuation, mean that most pupils also achieve a high standard of technical accuracy in their writing. Lower-attaining pupils sometimes struggle to develop their ideas in a logical order, are unsure how to join ideas in complex sentences, and are less secure in their understanding of punctuation, grammar and spelling than higher-attaining pupils.

47. By the age of 11, most pupils read fluently and accurately when reading for pleasure or for information, both in lessons and in their own personal reading. They experience little, if any, difficulty understanding texts related to their studies. Most have well developed preferences for particular authors and kinds of fiction, and most turn readily to dictionaries, thesauri and other information sources, including the internet, to find things out. They use reading skills such as skimming and scanning competently to locate information, are capable of making concise but relevant notes, and can communicate their findings clearly in their own words. In an extension of the 'Improving Standards Project' which successfully raised standards in writing, the school is currently focusing closely on provision for reading with a view to ensuring that all pupils read widely and are suitably challenged by what they read. Inspection evidence shows that the project is already beginning to have a beneficial impact, overall, both on pupils' wider reading and on their comprehension skills. However, in Years 3 and 4, neither the texts chosen for pupils to work on independently, nor the questions related to them, are challenging enough for the most able pupils in the year groups.
48. Teaching is good. All teachers benefit from the very good, detailed medium-term plans which give direction and purpose for their daily planning. In addition, certain well-established routines, procedures and practices – and regular monitoring of these by the headteacher and the literacy co-ordinator – serve to ensure a high degree of consistency in teaching and learning across the school. Assessment is thorough and informs both teaching and learning. School, year group and individual targets focus the attention of staff and pupils alike on what next needs to be achieved in order to improve and to raise standards, and expectations are generally high. The fact that parents are also aware of pupils' targets means that, with rare exceptions, they also support the school's efforts by helping their children at home. In the best teaching seen, teachers modelled reading and writing effectively and involved pupils directly in improving on their own, and others', work. All teachers give pupils useful feedback during lessons, and some provide well-judged written comments through their marking. However, the quality of marking is variable, and some teachers miss opportunities to advise pupils about the strengths and areas for improvement in their work. Well-trained teaching assistants make an important contribution to the development of literacy in the school. In lessons, they give good quality support to those groups and individuals who need it, often working with lower-attaining pupils and with pupils who have special educational needs. In addition, and often in their own time, they run extra lunchtime sessions for pupils who need short-term but very specific support with a particular aspect of literacy. Class teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that all pupils have full entitlement to the curriculum for English. All pupils are given equal opportunities to join in discussions and to share their work with others.
49. Pupils' language and literacy skills are promoted well in work across the curriculum. Statutory requirements for English are fully met and pupils benefit from a broad interpretation of the programmes of study which includes regular opportunities for drama, role-play and special events. The reference library has been enlarged since the last inspection and is used to good effect to promote the development of reference skills and of independent research. There are particularly strong and relevant cross-curricular links between English, history and information and communication technology (ICT).
50. The subject manager is a good role model in her own teaching and is very effective in her role. She has benefited from support from the headteacher and from the Local Education Authority's literacy consultant, both of whom have also worked hard to develop the English curriculum and assessment systems and to raise standards. The subject manager routinely monitors standards, teaching and learning, and has a very clear understanding of what next needs to be done. She has been very effective in supporting her colleagues through joint planning and team teaching. All staff are given appropriate training and advice. As a result, the teaching of English has coherence and consistency, and teachers' subject expertise is generally good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and means pupils achieve well.
- Standards are well above average in Year 6.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and highly motivated about mathematics.
- The subject is well led and pupils' progress is carefully monitored.

Commentary

51. Standards are well above average in Year 6, and are a significant improvement on the average standards found when the school was last inspected. Current standards broadly reflect the school's national test results in Year 6 in 2001 and 2002, which were also well above the national average. They are higher than in 2003, when staffing difficulties meant that pupils in one Year 6 class underachieved and the overall results were above the national average but were below the average results of similar schools. Current standards represent good achievement for pupils in all Year 6 classes, including for pupils with special educational needs.
52. Good use is made of a variety of mental arithmetic exercises at the beginning of lessons, and Year 6 pupils demonstrate very good number skills. They achieve well in work on shape, space and measures. For example, they can measure and draw angles to the nearest degree, know the angle sum of a triangle and the sum of angles at a point, and can understand and use the formula to calculate a rectangle's area.
53. There are a number of reasons why pupils achieve well in mathematics. The leadership in the subject is strong and good systems have been developed to monitor standards closely. Areas of potential weakness have been addressed. For example, pupils' mental calculation strategies have been improved after the school identified a relative weakness and provided staff training. The good quality of teaching and learning is another positive feature. Teachers have been encouraged to be creative with their teaching and this has ensured pupils are engaged and enthusiastic, work hard and are willing to try out new ideas. For example, in a lesson on probability seen during the inspection, Year 6 pupils quickly learned the definitions and were able to apply them well after a stimulating introductory session.
54. A strong feature of the lessons is the way in which teachers set challenges for pupils and introduce a competitive edge to games and activities. Pupils rise to this and readily offer solutions, explain their thinking and share their ideas with others. Good use is made of whiteboards in all classes for the quick recording of answers and for the teacher to check for accuracy and understanding. Pupils are given many opportunities to practise what they have been taught, and the pacey style of delivery by teachers ensures a lot of ground is covered during lessons. Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers and support pupils with special educational needs particularly well during mathematics lessons. Overall, pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to use ICT to support their learning in mathematics.
55. Pupils use their mathematical skills well to support learning in other subjects. For example, charts and graphs are used to illustrate findings in science and record data in geography and history, and pupils use their measuring skills in design and technology.
56. Assessment is well used to check pupils' understanding. For example, there is a well-established system where teachers ask pupils to assess their own progress at the end of each lesson. All teachers provide pupils with good feedback about their performance during lessons. However, while their marking is effective in recognising pupils' good achievement, it sometimes fails to identify what pupils need to do in order to improve further. There are

regular tests which feed into a review of pupil progress and help teachers to plan work which accurately reflects pupils' needs.

SCIENCE

The quality of provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some very good and good science teaching.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- There is a wide variation in the quality of teaching, and there are weaknesses in some science lessons.

Commentary

57. Standards are above average in Year 6, and reflect the pattern of the school's above average results in the national tests over the last four years. The test results were above the average results of similar schools in 2002. However, they were below these results in 2003 when pupils underachieved in one Year 6 class because they had too many different teachers during their earlier years at the school. Current standards represent satisfactory achievement, in all Year 6 classes, for pupils of all abilities. Standards have risen in science since the last inspection, when they were average.
58. Across the school, standards are generally above average for pupils' ages. This is exemplified in Year 3, where pupils have a good understanding about magnetism; and in Year 4, where they can conduct experiments systematically to discover which materials have the best thermal insulation properties. In Year 5, pupils have a secure understanding of the principles of fair testing, while Year 6 pupils have a good understanding about electricity and can suggest sensible ways of changing the brightness of bulbs. Year 6 pupils use microscopes effectively to study flowering plants, and know the functions of the main plant organs. A weaker element in pupils' performance, in some classes, lies in their inability to draw pertinent conclusions from the experiments they conduct.
59. The quality of science teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. This wide variation means that pupils' progress is rather uneven, across the school, from their mainly above average starting points on entry to Year 3. Overall, however, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in the development of both their scientific knowledge and their investigation skills. The most effective teaching observed, in one Year 6 class, was characterised by the teacher's very good knowledge of the subject, and his skilful use of questions to stimulate pupils' scientific thinking so they were working at the edge of their capabilities. Well-planned lessons are commonplace across the school, and most teachers introduce and reinforce scientific vocabulary well. An analysis of pupils' completed work, together with lesson observations, shows that some teachers tend to over-direct their lessons so that pupils have few opportunities to devise and test their own hypotheses, and to decide on their own methods for recording their results. Occasionally, teachers do not use questions as well as they should to check pupils' understanding and, in the single unsatisfactory lesson seen, a lack of clarity in the teacher's expectations contributed to the slow pace of learning. Whilst teachers' marking is generally satisfactory, opportunities are missed in some classes to provide pupils with feedback which helps them to understand how to improve.
60. Pupils' skills in English are generally promoted well in science, and they are expected to use the correct scientific vocabulary. Their mathematical development also benefits from work in science, particularly through careful measurements and the presentation of results in tables and graphs. Pupils' ICT skills are satisfactorily promoted and utilised.

61. The headteacher and the subject manager work together effectively to ensure that science provision is well led and managed. Very regular lesson observations are undertaken, particularly by the headteacher. The subject manager checks teachers' planning, analyses examples of pupils' work and their test results, and has conducted focused discussions with pupils and staff to discover their views about teaching and learning in science. Effective assessment procedures are in place, and the subject manager keeps a careful watch on teachers' assessment records to check pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a consequence of this thorough monitoring and evaluation, the headteacher and the subject manager have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and are taking action to reduce the variability in pupils' achievements across the school. For example, the subject manager has worked with individual teachers to improve their planning, has observed their lessons, provided constructive feedback and taught demonstration lessons in their classes to reinforce good practice. Through his strong commitment, enthusiasm and very good teaching skills in science, he provides a very good role model for his colleagues. The subject manager and the headteacher appropriately recognise that there is still work to be done to make provision even more effective, and are addressing the situation well. Science resources are good and are very well organised.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection and are still rising.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and the effective use of up-to-date equipment.
- The subject is well led, and pupils' progress is carefully monitored.

Commentary

62. An effective programme of staff training, the good use of support staff and the development of computer bays across the school have all made major contributions to improvements in pupils' ICT skills, which were below average at the time of the last inspection. Current standards in Year 6 are average, overall, but are still rising as the effects of improved teacher expertise and resources have yet to fully impact on pupils' attainment. It is clear that pupils are now making good progress in their learning in the subject, in contrast to their underachievement at the time of the last inspection. Indeed, there is some evidence of very good achievement by some Year 6 pupils when they develop 'Powerpoint' presentations using sound and pictures.
63. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in ICT, and effective use is made of digital projectors to demonstrate new techniques and programs. Teachers use good questioning skills to involve the pupils, and a brisk pace to the learning helps all pupils achieve well. Pupils confidently open programs, can change text, font and effects and are able to save their work. Due to their good literacy skills, from their earliest years in the school, pupils are able to work quickly, read instructions, select text to transfer and amend this in their own words. A good feature of ICT lessons is the way in which pupils take notes during demonstrations and refer to them when working independently. Pupils become engrossed during ICT lessons and enjoy working with computers. They understand what is expected of them because teachers give them clear instructions and generally set high standards. Pupils are confident when working independently or co-operating on projects. They make rapid progress in acquiring new skills and techniques, and eagerly demonstrate their growing knowledge.
64. In general, teachers' planning ensures pupils develop key ICT skills systematically. However, because pupils are now making rapid progress, existing plans sometimes need to be updated more frequently to make sure they continue to provide sufficient challenge. In

control technology, for example, the planned activities currently inhibit the acquisition of skills to a higher level in Years 3 and 4.

65. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory, overall. It is used, for example, to consolidate pupils' numeracy skills in mathematics, for writing tasks in English, to record science investigations and to access the Internet for research.
66. The subject is well led and managed. There is careful monitoring of pupil progress and this information is used to update the scheme of work and to inform priorities for development.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of provision in geography. It is clear that the subject is well planned and that good systems enable teachers to assess pupils' progress.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits and visitors are used to good effect to bring history to life.
- Planning does not always ensure continuity in pupils' learning in the subject.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are underdeveloped.
- There are effective cross-curricular links between history, English and ICT.

Commentary

67. Evidence from an analysis of pupils' completed work, and from the single history lesson seen, shows that standards are broadly average and represent mainly satisfactory achievement. For example, in the lesson seen in Year 6, pupils were able to empathise with children evacuated to the countryside during the Second World War, and they also showed a satisfactory understanding of the viewpoint of parents compelled by circumstances to send their children away from home.
68. Further evidence from pupils' written work, from curricular planning, from discussions with the current and previous subject managers and from displays and photographs shows that, in some respects, pupils' experience of history is both rich and relevant. For example, during a visit to the 'interactive' Tudor village of Little Woodham, pupils in Year 5 saw, and experienced, the lives and the language of the poor in Tudor times. A planned visit to Hampton Court has the potential to also acquaint them with a much more privileged way of life during the same period. Pupils in all years benefit from similar enrichment activities linked to the various topics they study.
69. There are, however, significant weaknesses in teachers' interpretations of the planned curriculum. For example, there are sometimes marked variations in the range and depth of studies in history, even within the same year groups. In Year 3, for instance, much more time has been allocated to recording what has been learned about Invaders and Settlers in one class than in the other two; and, in Year 5, a study of Ancient Greece apparently covered very few aspects of Greek life but led to a substantial piece of work on Greek 'dips' in food technology. At the same time, cross-curricular links with English were exploited to good effect to familiarise pupils with Greek myths and fables and to give them the chance to write their own.

70. Inspection evidence shows that teachers' individual interpretations of existing plans do not guarantee that pupils will cover even the most significant aspects of any one period of history or, indeed, that pupils will be in a position to build progressively on the various key skills set out in National Curriculum guidance.
71. There is insufficient evidence to support an overall judgement of the quality of teaching. The only history lesson seen demonstrated satisfactory teaching and enabled pupils to make sound progress in their learning. Assessments are made and recorded at the end of each unit and inform teachers' monitoring of pupils' progress. History has not been a priority for development for some time, and the previous subject manager, charged with many responsibilities, has been unable to monitor teaching and learning directly for the past three years. Nonetheless, she has supported colleagues with planning and resources, and has drawn up the existing curriculum plans as a framework for development. The new subject manager has monitored planning and assessment, and sensibly aims to provide more detailed guidance for teachers by drawing on materials produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to supplement existing plans. The subject manager appropriately recognises there is scope to develop more rigorous and systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. School-based resources are satisfactory and a collection of suitable artefacts is gradually being developed into a school 'museum'. Pupils have good opportunities to link their studies in history with their developing skills in ICT. They routinely use CD-ROMs, the Internet, as well as printed sources, to find things out, and an impressive ICT lesson in Year 6 involved pupils giving PowerPoint presentations of their findings.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teachers need to develop their expertise further in the subject.
- Insufficient emphasis is given to teaching pupils what can be learned from religion.
- The school has strong links with local Christian churches.

Commentary

72. Evidence from the lessons seen and from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that, by the age of 11, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and represents satisfactory achievement. Current standards in Year 6 reflect those found at the time of the last inspection. However, both lessons and written work strongly indicate that there are marked differences, not only in the time spent on religious education, but also in the depth and range of coverage. The range of work seen shows evidence of much attention to learning about religion, and also to the use of empathy to identify with others' feelings. For example, in Year 3, pupils identified well with the feelings of the Magi who travelled to see the infant Jesus, and recorded their ideas in the form of a class poem. However, in most of the work seen, far more emphasis is placed on learning about religion than on what may be learned from religion. Indeed, self-reflection and self-knowledge, where they occur, emerge far more frequently in the context of personal, social and health education than in religious education lessons.
73. By contrast, in a Year 6 lesson on the Passover meal or 'Seder', religious feelings and a sense of spirituality were cleverly invoked when pupils re-enacted the rituals of the celebration, complete with candles, prayers and readings from the scriptures. After this experience, their questions explored the strength of Jewish religious faith just as surely as the historical significance of the event. In a lesson in Year 3, pupils were given appropriate opportunities to consider 'why people pray to God?' and to write prayers of their own. On one

occasion, a Muslim pupil performed Wudu, the ritual cleansing undertaken before prayers can be said, bringing home to his peers the seriousness of his own faith. Clergy from various local Christian churches are regular visitors who share their own thoughts about faith with pupils by leading assemblies and, sometimes, by team-teaching in lessons. There are, however, many examples of work which is, at best, superficial. In Year 5, for example, a lesson on the Five Pillars of Islam moved quickly from the question of faith when pupils were asked to turn their attention to designing effective posters and to considerations of linguistic style.

74. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in religious education. However, the range of work seen in religious education reveals a significant variation in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject, and in their confidence to teach it. As a consequence, progression in pupils' learning is compromised by the diversity of practice and expectations.
75. The headteacher has been the subject manager for religious education until quite recently. She has built up suitable artefacts and resources to support the teaching of the three major faiths that form part of the curriculum, and she has also monitored both teaching and learning. A new subject manager has recently assumed responsibility for the oversight of provision. In seeking to improve teaching, learning and standards, it will be advisable to ensure that:
- all staff are fully familiar with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and are helped to explore religious issues in suitable depth and detail;
 - planning is improved so that teachers are more aware of the content and issues to be covered; and
 - the rationale for cross-curricular links is made clear and time for religious education safeguarded.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN

The quality of provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are above average, and represent good achievement.
- Teachers' planning ensures the progressive development of pupils' key skills in art and design.
- The monitoring role of the subject manager needs further development.

Commentary

76. Overall, pupils achieve well in art and design, and standards are above average, including in Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make the same good progress as their peers.
77. In Year 3, pupils have learned about the work of Henri Rousseau, and their own jungle pictures show good colour mixing skills and reflect elements of the artist's work. In Year 4, pupils have achieved sound standards when making simple 3D images and have used ICT and collage techniques very well to create pictures stimulated by the work of David Hockney. Year 5 pupils have made carefully observed drawings of natural and made materials, and have achieved well when learning about the work of the 16th century artist Arcimboldo. In Year 6, pupils have made interesting interpretations of Picasso's 'Guernica' painting, and can talk convincingly about the symbolism in the painting. These pupils have also achieved

well when creating batik pictures and when drawing a range of tools, using soft pastels and charcoal.

78. Insufficient lessons were observed in art and design to make a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning in the subject. Teachers' planning ensures the progressive development of pupils' key skills, and there are thorough assessment procedures.
79. The subject manager took up her role in September 2003, and has a good overview of teachers' planning. She is enthusiastic about the subject and readily provides her colleagues with advice. She checks teachers' records of their assessments of pupils' work, but does not yet have sufficiently rigorous procedures for evaluating pupils' standards through her own direct examination of work samples from across the school. Resources for art and design are good and have been organised very efficiently by the subject manager.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement about provision in design and technology. However, an analysis of some examples of pupils' completed work and teachers' planning, together with discussions with the subject manager, mean that some judgements can be made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Class teachers made useful assessments of the achievements of individual pupils.
- The subject manager does not have sufficiently systematic and rigorous procedures for evaluating pupils' standards, across the school.

Commentary

80. No design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. In Years 4 and 6, no examples of pupils' completed work had been kept by the school so it is also impossible to judge the standards achieved by the oldest pupils in the school. However, completed work was available for examination for pupils in Years 3 and 5. In these classes, this work shows pupils make sound progress and achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages. For example, in Year 3, pupils demonstrate sound standards when creating pictures which have moving parts, facilitated by simple levers, sliders or 'pop up' mechanisms. They have also made sound progress when evaluating the effectiveness of a range of commercially made gift boxes; and their own boxes, made from card on wooden frames, show satisfactory making skills. In Year 5, pupils have made sound designs for money containers, having examined and evaluated a range of purses and wallets, noting the particular materials and fastening methods to be used.
81. Planning for the subject is thorough, and all teachers carefully assess the achievements of pupils at the end of the units of work, using a simple grading system. The subject manager has worked hard to formulate planning for the subject which ensures that pupils' skills are developed progressively. She also organises resources efficiently and willingly provides her colleagues with advice. However, she does not have sufficiently systematic and rigorous procedures for evaluating pupils' standards across the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards are above average in Year 6.
- The teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Good attention is paid to health and safety issues.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

82. Standards are above average in Year 6, representing an improvement on the average standards found when the school was last inspected. In the last report, criticism was made of the hall, with too little space and hazardous pillars, and of very little competition against other schools. Very good progress has been made in relation to these issues. The hall has been enlarged and offending pillars have been removed, providing a good and safe area for physical activities. There is now a good range of extra-curricular activities, including competitions and tournaments against other schools. In these activities, and in lessons, careful attention is paid to aspects of good conduct within team games, thus making a good contribution to pupils' moral and social education.

83. The quality of teaching ranges between satisfactory and very good, and is good overall. The best aspects of teaching include:

- clear explanation and demonstration of skills being taught, with a good emphasis on quality of movements, leading to improved performance;
- plenty of opportunity for pupils to practise and improve their skills;
- good attention to health and safety issues, including wearing the correct clothing for activities, and the safe transport of gymnastic apparatus; and
- very good social interaction, with pupils working in pairs and groups, usually with boys and girls working well together.

Overall, the teaching enables pupils to achieve well. However, the pace of a minority of lessons is sometimes a little slow, and this limits pupils' progress in these lessons.

84. The subject manager ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered appropriately, including swimming. Almost all pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 able to swim 25 metres. Assessment opportunities are identified well, and make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievement. However, the subject manager's insight into the quality of teaching and learning is hindered by few opportunities to monitor lessons.

MUSIC

There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of provision in music. However, evidence from the small number of lessons seen, from singing in assemblies and from discussions with the subject manager mean that some judgements can be made.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject manager has very good teaching skills in music.
- Whole school singing in assemblies lacks vigour.
- The monitoring role of the subject manager is underdeveloped.

Commentary

85. In the few lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, and was mainly satisfactory. In these lessons, pupils' standards were mainly average, representing satisfactory achievement. However, in the best lesson seen, which was very well taught by the subject manager, Year 6 pupils achieved well when holding their part in a four-part song. In contrast, whole school singing in assemblies was disappointing and lacklustre. Arrangements for the subject manager to monitor the quality of provision are underdeveloped.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship are an integral part of the school's work.
- Standards are above average, and represent good achievement.
- The school takes advantage of a range of initiatives that encourage the development of the subject.
- Teaching is good, and planning is very good.
- The leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

86. The school places a high priority on pupils' personal, social and health education. This is taught through discrete lessons, and also through other subjects, particularly science, physical education and religious education. The school's programme ensures that pupils are developing confidence and responsibility, and are preparing to play an active role as citizens. They understand the importance of a healthy, safe lifestyle, develop good relationships, and respect the differences between people. The programme meets statutory requirements in relation to sex and relationship education and drugs education.
87. Planning for the subject is exemplary, and is based on a four-year programme devised from a wide range of curriculum guidance. Particularly impressive work has been done in citizenship to raise self-esteem, which has helped the school to gain the Healthy Schools Award. Good use is made of outside agencies, such as those involved in the Primary Drug Planning Project and the Wellbeing Project. In addition, local police and the dental nurse are involved purposefully. All this provides the pupils with opportunities to acquire accurate information that improves their knowledge of drugs, particularly about alcohol and tobacco, and their effects. It promotes positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles and challenges those attitudes that might lead to behaviour which is harmful to health. The scheme also provides opportunities to develop associated skills, such as making informed choices. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and could discuss whether or not they had made the right choice in the given scenario. In Year 6, pupils discussed freedom during a lesson seen, and had a good understanding of the freedoms they have, and how others, particularly from certain countries, do not enjoy such freedom. Good contributions were made to pupils' cultural development and to their oracy skills.
88. Overall, the very good programme provided, together with good teaching, leads to above average attainment by most pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, challenge pupils well, and pursue issues that are raised very well through thoughtful and sensitive questioning. Very good relationships enable pupils to express their opinions confidently.

89. Leadership of the subject is good and has a beneficial impact on provision. The subject manager ensures that planning is of a very high standard, and that all key topics are covered well. Their enthusiasm is recognised beyond the school, and they are invited to take part in various local initiatives, such as the Primary Drug Planning Project, the Young Enterprise Project, Peer Mentoring work, and with the Fleet community and the Hart Council. The school council even had its first meeting in the Town Council Chamber!

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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