

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109576

Headteacher: Mrs W J Herbert

Lead inspector: Mrs E Pickford

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th May 2004

Inspection number: 258405

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:	251
School address:	Stockholm Way Luton Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU3 3SS
Telephone number:	(01582) 596 108
Fax number:	(01582) 494 883
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whitefield Junior is an average-sized community school located on the Marsh Farm estate on the edge of Luton. Unemployment in the Marsh Farm area is four times the national average. Over 37 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Average earnings of the working families are far below the national average. Housing ownership is split between Luton Borough Council, housing association and owner-occupiers. Families moving onto the estate rarely settle, resulting in a high turnover of pupils.

The 251 pupils, aged seven to 11, are organised in 11 single-age classes. Pupil numbers in the area are falling and the school has a surplus of places in some year groups. The school community is ethnically diverse with 59 per cent of pupils being white British. There are 13 ethnic minority groups within the school but no group is dominant. Most of these pupils use English as their main language. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is high, although currently only four of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.

When pupils join the school at the age of seven there is a wide range of ability. Attainment overall is well below average for pupils of this age. Pupils who have the most significant learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and behavioural problems are placed on the special needs register. The percentage of pupils on the register is below the national average and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Other pupils who have difficulties are supported in class.

The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2002 and an Investors in People Award in 2003. The community receives government money for development and this funds a family worker and a learning mentor for the school community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23128	Mrs E Pickford	Lead inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education
9563	Mrs J Reid	Lay inspector	
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology History Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language
22113	Mrs A King	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Whitefield Junior school is a much improved school which provides **satisfactorily** for its pupils. The school works very hard to raise pupils' attainment and provides a good standard of education. Pupils enjoy school and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They behave very well, have good attitudes to learning and their personal qualities are developed well. Good leadership has enabled the school to move forward and respond to the challenges it has faced in recruiting and developing a stable staff. Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities as a result of the good teaching they now receive. Parents are satisfied with the school and it provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good, purposeful and decisive leadership of the headteacher.
- The senior leadership team provide good support for the headteacher and have a strong influence on the development of their subjects across the school.
- Most of the teaching is at least good and often better, enabling all pupils to achieve well.
- A very good range of additional activities enrich the curriculum and increase motivation.
- The very good relationships which exist within the school community and the good care and support given to pupils helps them to deal with problems and overcome difficulties.
- The school has, until recently, had difficulty in recruiting governors, which has limited their influence on school development.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average.
- Assessment is good, but target setting for individual pupils is not fully established.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are not high enough.
- Classroom computer equipment is not used as effectively as it could be.
- Parents are not sufficiently aware of what their children are learning and how they can help them at home.

All the weaknesses identified in the last inspection in 1998 have been tackled. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving attendance and punctuality, behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning. The good evaluation and monitoring systems have led to the improved quality of teaching. Good assessment systems and very good data analysis are used to move the school forward. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising and resources have improved. Standards of attainment in English and mathematics have fluctuated but have not risen significantly since the last inspection. The good quality teaching and planning are not yet reflected in standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E*	E
science	E	E	E*	E

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

Achievement is **good** for pupils of all abilities, including pupils with special educational needs, those whose main language is not English and higher-attaining pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average, especially in literacy and numeracy, and this lowers their attainment in most other subjects. There is a full range of ability but over half of the pupils are of below average

ability and a very small percentage above. Although standards in the 2003 national tests remain well below average in English and in the lowest five percent in mathematics and science, over half of the pupils reach the standard expected nationally by the end of Year 6 in these three subjects and the higher-attaining pupils exceed this. The inspection found standards overall to be below average and improving in English, mathematics and science. Standards in music are above those expected nationally because of the teacher's expertise and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and their behaviour is very good both in class and around school. Pupils' attendance is now close to the national average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The good levels of care and **good** teaching mean that pupils of all abilities are able to achieve well. Pupils' learning over a period of time is satisfactory because many find it difficult to retain knowledge for any length of time. Teachers ensure pupils behave well and plan enjoyable work to meet their needs. The school is very successful in enriching the curriculum through a very good range of additional activities and good links with the local community. The accommodation is good and most specialist facilities are used well. Resources are good but classroom computers are not used efficiently. Links with the infant and other schools are satisfactory and are developing for the benefit of pupils. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents and they are becoming increasingly involved in school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The very good leadership of the headteacher has effectively established a positive ethos in the school and in doing so she has gained the respect and support of the whole school community. The development of key staff's leadership skills is very well supported and is contributing significantly to improving standards. Although many staff are relatively new to the school they work well as an enthusiastic team. Good monitoring of the school's work by senior managers ensures that weaknesses are addressed. Good use is made of evaluation and analysis of data to plan for school improvement. Governors are very supportive and ensure they fulfil their statutory duties. They are developing their role now numbers have increased. Good financial management enables good levels of staffing and support to be maintained.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally satisfied with the school and its work. However, they would like regular information about what is being taught, ideas as to how they can help at home and more time with the teachers at parents' evenings. Pupils are happy at school and feel that they are valued, listened to and are comfortable to approach staff when they have problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Use assessments to set individual short-term targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science and communicate these to parents.
- Make better use of ICT equipment to raise standards further.
- Improve standards of presentation and handwriting.
- Provide parents with regular information about what is being taught and how they can help.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in Years 3 to 6, with pupils of all abilities achieving well in relation to their capabilities. Standards of attainment are below average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards are well below the nationally-expected levels when pupils join the school in Year 3. There is a high level of pupil turnover which causes fluctuations in the range of ability during the year and makes it difficult for improvements to show in national test results. The attainment of girls in reading and writing is consistently higher than the boys. Boys' attainment in mathematics is higher than the girls'. Although numbers in ethnic minority groups are small, Bangladeshi pupils achieve better than their peers and there is underachievement amongst black Caribbean and mixed white and black Caribbean pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well in relation to their low levels of attainment when they join the school.
- Standards in reading and spelling are improving.
- Standards in music are above average.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are learning English.
- There is good provision for higher-attaining pupils and those with particular gifts and talents.
- The school is working hard to close the gender gap.
- Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are not yet reflecting the many improvements that have been made.
- Assessment is good but not used well enough to set individual targets.
- Standards are rising in ICT in most year groups but insufficient use is made of classroom computers to develop skills.
- Standards in handwriting and presentation are below average.

Commentary

1. Since 2000, standards have remained well below average in the national tests. Much has been done to raise attainment through improving attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning. Until recently the school has had problems recruiting and retaining staff. The school now has some talented and able teachers and their influence, along with staff training, has raised the overall quality of teaching. In the majority of lessons, pupils now experience good or very good teaching. This shows a marked improvement since the last inspection. Assessment is used well to establish pupils' starting points when they join the school. Data collected over the last four years shows that over two thirds of the intake attain below-average scores in standardised English and mathematics tests and only ten per cent are above average. Over 15 per cent of pupils are at the lower end of the ability scale. Progress is regularly monitored, particularly in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics. Trends are identified and the school works hard to fill gaps in learning and to support pupils who are experiencing difficulties or who are underachieving. Standards in English, mathematics and science were found to be below average but rising, especially in Years 3 to 5, where the improvements are having a greater impact. School data supports the inspection findings that the majority of pupils are achieving well as they move through the school.
2. Assessment is good and used well to set school targets for improvement based on secure data. The high turnover of pupils often means that these targets need to be reviewed during Year 6. Assessment is used well by teachers to identify and plan for the needs of the different ability groups within lessons. Group targets are set within each class for English and mathematics, which are slowly raising attainment. However, the majority pupils in each year group are still attaining below nationally-expected standards for their age. The setting of

individual targets to move pupils' learning forward step by step to the next level is just emerging and not consistent across the school. The school recognises that this is the next area for development. The links with the infant school, as regards assessment, are being strengthened and the two systems are being brought closely into line so that pupils will benefit on transfer and that staff will have better knowledge of each other's standards and trends.

3. Over 60 per cent of the group of Year 6 pupils tested in 2003 were boys, which lowered the school's results in English and science because of their lower literacy skills. Closer scrutiny of the English results show that standards of attainment in reading and spelling have improved as a result of the additional emphasis they have been given. Reading materials have been purchased and new strategies introduced to motivate boys' interest in writing. The school is also involved in initiatives to raise the achievement of ethnic minority groups, for example, Black Boys Can. During the inspection a combination of these strategies and the influence of the learning mentor were found to be successfully closing the gender gap.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.5 (23.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	23.1 (24.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.1 (26.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 76 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Many pupils have well below average speaking and listening skills when they join the school and staff work very hard to develop vocabulary and encourage discussion to help pupils clarify their thoughts before they write things down. The measure of the success of this was evident in the high quality of the discussions that took place in lessons in Year 6. Reading is given a high profile on the school timetable and pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Most pupils show an interest in books, use the library and enjoy the books staff read to them. They are heard to read regularly by adults in school but this is not always followed up at home. Standards of handwriting and presentation are below expectations for age. When pupils join the school many have poor pencil control and, although handwriting is taught regularly, very few pupils develop the level of control and fluency in writing expected by the end of Year 6. The low level of literacy skills reduces pupils' attainment in other areas of the curriculum but in discussion they show better levels of understanding than their written work suggests. Poor hand control skills also lower levels of attainment in art and design and design and technology, which are below the nationally-expected levels for their age.
5. Standards in mathematics are below average. In 2003, less than half of the pupils reached the expected level in the national tests. Higher targets have been set for the current year group and these are likely to be met. Pupils are taught in ability sets, which provides good challenge for higher-attaining pupils and additional support for the least able, who work in smaller groups with good adult support. Pupils learn well in lessons but many have difficulty in using their knowledge to solve problems and retain information over a period of time. The school has introduced revision classes for pupils in Year 6 in an attempt to move more pupils up to the expected level. Standards are below average in science, which is taught in class groups. Over 60 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level in the 2003 national tests and of these pupils 10 per cent attained the higher Level 5. Many pupils have difficulty in retaining knowledge and scientific vocabulary but it is likely that measures to address this will be positively reflected in the 2004 results. An improved percentage of pupils are now working at the higher level and pupils' investigative skills are developing well.
6. Standards in ICT are below average in Year 6 but close to those expected nationally in Years 3 to 5. Many pupils do not have computers at home to practise the skills they are taught in school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach computer skills well, however, they

do not make enough use of classroom computers to develop pupils' confidence and skills. Computers are not used sufficiently for research in other subjects. In the other subjects which were sampled standards vary. Standards in history, geography and physical education are close to those expected nationally. In most aspects of physical education pupils show good levels of co-ordination and well-developed skills. Standards in music are high due to very good teaching and the sharing of expertise, also many pupils have musical talent which is developed well. In art and design and design and technology standards are below those expected nationally and reflect the difficulties many have with hand control. Standards in religious education are as expected by the locally-agreed syllabus by the age of 11.

7. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support through their individual education plans and the support they receive. Teaching assistants are used well to support these pupils in lessons and to teach small groups of pupils who, for example, have difficulties learning letter sounds and spelling. Teachers brief them well to ensure that these pupils are helped to achieve as well as others in the class. Some of the pupils with very low ability achieve very well by the end of Year 6.
8. The small number of higher-attaining pupils in each year group are identified and their progress is carefully tracked and they achieve well. Teachers provide regular challenge for these pupils in their planning. Mathematics sets enable some of these pupils to achieve very well in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 3. The science club is providing additional challenge and motivation for the most-able scientists. Pupils with particular gifts and talents, for example in sport, have the opportunity to work with other talented youngsters in the area and several pupils take advantage of this. Funding has just been received to develop academic talent and a joint project is planned with the infant school.
9. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress. Teachers are aware of their needs and plan appropriate work stressing subject vocabulary and involving them in discussion. Pupils at the early stages of fluency receive some additional support and every opportunity is taken to develop their vocabulary and they achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are **good**. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are **very good** and a strength of the school. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils arrive punctually to school.
- The school's initiatives have greatly improved attendance.
- Pupils behave very well and attitudes to learning are good.
- Relationships between adults and pupils and pupils themselves are very good.
- Pupils' personal qualities are carefully developed.

Commentary

10. Attendance was judged to be poor at the time of the last inspection. Through the efforts of the school it has improved each year, and this year it is at the national average. Unauthorised absence has fallen since the last inspection but is still above the national median. Pupils and classes are rewarded for good attendance, and the 'attendance shield' is coveted. The family worker and educational welfare officer work with families where attendance is a problem. This has had a significant impact. The punctuality of pupils to school is very good. They appreciate the drink and biscuit which is provided when they arrive on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. Behaviour is very good. The school is calm and well ordered. Pupils quickly develop a very good understanding of appropriate behaviour for the occasion due to teachers' high expectations and their very good management of pupils, especially those with behavioural problems. The school's behavioural policy is consistently applied. Good behaviour is praised and rewarded and sanctions are applied when behaviour is unacceptable. Pupils are quite clear where the boundaries lie and learn from their mistakes. Behaviour at lunchtime has improved since a range of playground activities have been provided, at the request of the pupils. Lunchtime staff are vigilant and quickly intervene if they see a problem. The vast majority co-operate well with each other, move around the school site sensibly and are aware of safety issues. Any incidents of aggression or racism are recorded and followed up by the headteacher. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically to five in the current school year, showing the success of the systems now established. Behaviour in assemblies is excellent. Pupils are very attentive, interested and participate well. Parents who join out-of-school visits comment on pupils' very good behaviour on these occasions, as do members of the public.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	155	10	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	14	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or British – Caribbean	19	1	0
Black or British – African	10	0	0
Black or British – any other black background	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In lessons, teachers skilfully engage pupils to ensure that pupils are on task and pay good attention. Work is carefully planned to meet the wide range of needs within each class and support is directed so that all pupils experience some success by the end of the lesson. Staff are enthusiastic and some passionate about their subject and provide a very good range of additional activities and groups to extend particular gifts and talents. These motivate pupils, raise their self-esteem and encourage them to develop interests. This is particularly evident amongst the African drummers group.
13. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and adults, based on high levels of trust and honesty. Staff are enthusiastic, and have pleasant and calm manners with the pupils which engender very good levels of respect and tolerance. Pupils are happy and secure and enjoy an atmosphere where all are valued. Pupils show a good awareness of right and wrong and a good knowledge of school and class rules, which are followed. They respond very well to the praise that is given and are keen to earn team points and gain certificates or be a 'star of the week'.
14. Pupils are given good opportunities for taking on responsibility, such as the school council, house captains, playground buddies, class monitors and the technicians who operate equipment in assembly. They respond well to these duties and contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school. The school council has a considerable influence on the school's affairs, for example, through making decisions about playground equipment and the introduction of a buddy scheme.
15. Many pupils have low self-esteem and lack the confidence to try things for themselves. The school is successful in developing pupils' confidence and self-worth. This is done through praise and awards for a variety of qualities, which make each pupil special. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect and express their feelings in circle time and through art, poetry and music and they do this well by the end of Year 6. Prayer and worship are a regular feature of the school day and all participate. Values are promoted well through the school's programme of personal, social and health education. A number of posters are placed around the school which encourage pupils to reflect on issues. For example, 'What is popular is not always right, what is right is not always popular'. Pupils have a good understanding of the responsibilities of living in a community and caring for their environment. They have a good understanding of their own culture thorough the visits they make and visitors who come into school and benefit from living in a culturally diverse community. Pupils show very good levels of respect for others' feelings and beliefs. The school is a racially harmonious community.
16. Pupils' social development is good; they are given good opportunities to be part of different groups through sport, music and drama. Lunchtimes are social occasions and pupils behave well in the dining room. In the playground they are inclusive in their play and playground monitors ensure that nobody feels lonely. Residential visits provide good opportunities for pupils to work as a team and develop maturity.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** overall. The quality of teaching is good and long-term learning is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are enhanced by a broad and balanced curriculum and a very good range of additional activities which enrich it. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for gifted and talented pupils is good. Good care and counsel is provided for pupils through a number of initiatives and strengthen the ethos and climate for learning within the school. Links with the community are good. The partnership with parents is satisfactory and improving.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall, and there is some excellent and very good teaching. Learning is **satisfactory** because issues of weak retention over time, and lack of independence, reduce the impact of good teaching. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Most teaching is good and often very good.
- Teachers give clear explanations and question pupils well.
- Effective planning which takes pupils' needs into account enables all to achieve well.
- Assessment is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and achieve well.
- Individual targets are not being used well enough to move pupils' learning forward to the next stage.
- Parents are not aware of their children's targets.

Commentary

17. Teaching is good overall and has improved considerably since the last inspection when one-in-six lessons were judged as unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good and better teaching was seen in all year groups and excellent teaching was seen in Years 3 and 6. The overall quality of teaching is now a strength of the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (8%)	14 (38%)	15 (41%)	5 (13%)	0 (0%)	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.

18. In the excellent and very good lessons, pupils are very well managed, so that a successful atmosphere for learning develops. Many teachers have a good voice quality and present pupils with a very good model of speech. They give instructions clearly and their explanations include the careful introduction of key words and ideas which are important to pupils' learning. Very good questioning of pupils results in discussion in which pupils feel confident to make effective contributions that are valued. This acts as very good preparation for the practical activities in lessons. Teachers also set clear expectations of their pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and consistently teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Furthermore, teachers' very good relationships result in good motivation of pupils, which helps learning.
19. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed, and the preparation of resources is good, which serves to give pupils a clear sense of direction in lessons. In the best planning, the different stages of lessons are very well sequenced, and group work activities are very closely matched to pupils' prior attainment; this ensures that the work is within pupils' compass. In the final stage of lessons, teachers help pupils to consider what they have gained, through good opportunities to summarise the main aspects of their learning. A weakness in the planning is that opportunities to regularly use ICT are not identified. The impact of teaching is sometimes reduced by pupils' limited independence or by their weak recall of past learning and considerable time has to be taken at the start of a new unit of work revising.
20. Assessment is good. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils. The school has collected a wealth of data and uses it well to identify trends and plan improvements. The recording of

pupils' progress is at varying stages of development in different subjects but is good in English, mathematics and science. Records are carefully studied to identify underachievement and provide support. Assessment information is well used to plan for the next stages of learning in English and mathematics and to ensure that pupils of all abilities are included when planning lessons. Target setting is being developed and is mainly at a group level within the classes. Individual targets have recently been introduced in English and mathematics but are not yet helping pupils to understand how well they are doing and what the next stages in their learning are. Targets are not shared with parents. The marking of pupils' work is regular and good in English and science. Elsewhere, marking does not often indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve and rarely comments on poor presentation. Pupils are not yet being encouraged to give their own verdict on their learning. However, they are involved in evaluation by commenting on the work of others in physical education and art and design and show fairness in their judgements and offer suggestions for improvement.

21. Those pupils who have special educational needs are well supported by class teachers in that they match tasks effectively to pupils' prior levels of attainment. Teaching assistants understand the needs of these pupils, know their individual education plans and accordingly provide good support for them. Teachers are good at taking opportunities for intensive work with such pupils. For instance, a Year 6 teacher conducted a session of guided reading with her special educational needs pupils while others were producing written work. When pupils with special educational needs undertake their spelling and reading activities, they do so with a teaching assistant who has been specially trained for this work and who provides particularly good support for them. Most pupils for whom English is an additional language are not at an early stage of learning the language, but wherever necessary these pupils also are provided with further support.
22. Since the last inspection, the leadership of the school has worked successfully to raise the quality of teaching and learning through careful monitoring and training. Best classroom practice is shared well and has resulted in the good improvement in teaching and learning. The overall improvement has not yet had a full impact on standards.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**, and is enhanced **very well**, especially through music and sport, and there are **very good** levels of inclusion of all groups of pupils in the school. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good enrichment of the curriculum through a range of activities.
- Very good access and opportunity for all pupils to the good range of learning experiences offered.
- Good, balanced curriculum, with good coverage of subjects.
- Satisfactory innovation of the curriculum, but this is an area for development.

Commentary

23. The curriculum the school provides is broad and balanced. It meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum subjects and the locally-agreed syllabus for religious education. Good account is taken of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. There are very good opportunities to enhance the curriculum through a wide range of activities, visits and other opportunities, especially in sport and music, such as the African drummer group. There are good activities to promote health and physical fitness, although the pupils do not always take advantage of these, and it is through the support of the caretaker that a male adult is available to accompany the pupils when they go for swimming sessions at the local pool. The school also organises visits, there are good opportunities for poetry throughout the school, and

a book week is held: these all combine to enliven the curriculum and benefit the pupils' learning.

24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, is good. Pupils with special educational needs experience the full curriculum and are taught by the class teacher alongside other pupils. There is also some withdrawal by teaching assistants for specialised work. In classrooms, teaching assistants also support these pupils effectively. The pupils have individual education plans which are well written by the intervention leader, who keeps them up to date. The content of individual education plans is well organised so that the plans fulfil their function well, except that the condition or problem which the plan addresses is not detailed sufficiently. Copies of plans are provided for the teaching assistants designated to support such pupils as well as for the class teachers. The small number of pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language are provided with effective individual language plans to support their development. The intervention leader liaises effectively with class teachers, teaching assistants, and also with external support agencies over the teaching of these pupils.
25. Resources are satisfactory overall, the school has completed an audit and is improving the quality and variety of resources. Despite the constraints of the building the accommodation is good overall, with a good-sized hall, good outdoor space with an open aspect, and there is a wildlife area in the grounds. However, there are too few small areas for individual work with pupils, and the lack of cloakrooms means space is used in corridors, but this is also an effective use of areas which might otherwise be wasted. There are two mobile classrooms on the site, which are put to good use by the family worker and for other community projects. There is a specialist room for music which is put to good use, and rooms for IT and cookery, although these tend to be underused.
26. There is good provision for personal, social and health education through work on sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. The local police officers help in this type of work and the welfare assistant in the school is also a trained nurse and can answer the pupils' questions accurately. The provision is also used effectively to address behavioural issues and the pupils are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and how to be responsible citizens. There are residential visits organised for the pupils, the school has a Healthy Eating Award and citizenship is promoted effectively.
27. There is satisfactory innovation of the curriculum so far, there are plans to develop the links to other subjects in the curriculum and also to improve the opportunities for oracy, role-play and drama in lessons. The school day is appropriately balanced, time allocations tend to be greater than average and the school day is longer than expected, but lessons are well thought through to offer the pupils maximum opportunities to concentrate and persevere, especially in the morning when they are most alert. There is a good match of staff and teaching assistants to the demands of the curriculum and the school, and this ensures all groups of pupils have very good access to the whole curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, and health and safety of pupils are **good**. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on monitoring, is **good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good care, counsel and support to pupils with problems, through the unified approach by the intervention leader.
- Teachers and support staff have very good relationships with pupils.
- The views of pupils are sought and valued.
- The induction arrangements for new pupils are good.

- There is no annual up dating of staff on child protection.

Commentary

28. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. The welfare assistant is a qualified nurse, and there are an appropriate number of trained first-aiders. The governing body is fully involved in health and safety matters, and together with the site manager, it carries out its duties diligently. Equipment is regularly checked and tested and a range of risk assessments is carried out. Pupils learn how to live in a healthy and safe way through a well-planned programme in the personal, social and health education lessons. The school has effective child protection procedures, although child protection training is not up to date for all staff.
29. The school provides a caring, supportive and happy environment. Teachers and staff have very good relationships with pupils. They give willingly of their time and understand the variety of needs. Most pupils who responded to the questionnaire said they had an adult to turn to if they had problems. Learning support assistants and mid-day assistants make an important contribution to the caring ethos of the school. Through the monitoring of pupils' academic development, teachers provide satisfactory advice and guidance. The school is starting to use the assessment data to provide more focused targets in each subject to meet the needs of individual pupils. Pupils with problems receive very good care, counsel and support. The pupil mentor/counsellor works with individual pupils and groups to remove barriers to learning and develop social and communication skills. The family worker works with both parents and pupils to break down the barriers between home and school. The intervention leader draws together these strands of support for pupils with difficulties and involves the school nurse and outside agencies where appropriate. This arrangement is enabling the school to have maximum impact in helping pupils to resolve their problems.
30. The programme for settling new pupils into school is good. Pupils from the infant school visit for a day. They share an assembly and various activities with Year 3 pupils and meet their new teacher. On the first day, older pupils act as buddies in the playground. Good support is given to the significant number of pupils who join the school during term time by being partnered with a buddy in their class.
31. The school is very effective in seeking, valuing and acting on the views of pupils. The large majority of questionnaires completed by pupils said that the school is interested in their views. There are 'praise' and 'worry' boxes in the school reception area, which pupils use to tell of their concerns and pleasures. The school council is very effective in collecting the views of pupils and the school has responded to their ideas. The members are encouraged to use their initiative, for example, to raise funds to buy the playground equipment pupils felt was needed. The family worker and pupil mentor both have open door policies and pupils use this facility well. This provides the school with helpful feedback on school issues.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between school and home, and with other schools is **satisfactory**. The links with the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents find the school approachable.
- The family worker is succeeding in improving the home-school relationship.
- The school seeks to involve parents through regular questionnaires and newsletters.
- Links with the community enrich learning experiences for pupils.
- Parents receive little guidance as to how to support their child's learning.

Commentary

32. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting think that the school has many strengths but some weaknesses. They have positive views about the management of the school and have confidence in the headteacher. They think their child makes good progress, is expected to work hard, that the teaching is good, and that the school provides a good range of activities. However, they would like regular information about what is being taught, ideas as to how they can help at home, information on their child's progress and targets and more time with the teacher at parents evenings. The inspection team agrees that all of these are areas for improvement. The inspectors are unable to support the parents concerns about bullying and unsatisfactory behaviour. They found that when bullying is identified, it is quickly and effectively addressed and that staff are effective in identifying and resolving relationship breakdowns. They found the behaviour of pupils was very good overall.
33. The quality of general documentation that the school provides is good. Reports inform parents about work that pupils have completed and their attitudes. However, they are generated by computer, and frequently give bland targets or no targets at all for the core subjects, so parents do not know what their child has to do to progress to the next stage of learning. Parents at the meeting did not feel that reports gave a clear enough idea of the levels at which their children were working.
34. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to encourage parents into the school and be involved in their child's learning. The family worker is succeeding in improving the home-school relationship, and there is increased co-operation between home and school for many families. Parents are generally supportive of events in which their child is involved. Attendance at parents' evenings is satisfactory. Attendance at the Friday assemblies, when parents can see the children talking about their work, is improving. The Parents and Friends Association has recently been reformed and support is growing. However, the Reading Partnership received insufficient support and had to be scrapped, and no male helpers volunteered to accompany classes swimming.
35. The school has good arrangements to survey parents and gain their views through annual questionnaires and the newsletters. The school has responded to parents' requests for more after-school activities for younger pupils. Most parents are comfortable about approaching the school and complaints are resolved informally.
36. The good links with the community enrich pupils' learning experience and support their personal and social development. For example, a poet, a theatre group and a storyteller have entertained the pupils. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 make a visit to Dell Farm, Whipsnade, and pupils in Year 6 make a residential visit to Mill on the Brue, Somerset. Visits are made to the Barbican Centre and the Museum of Childhood and many other places. The school's African drummers have performed in the Arndale Centre and at other events.
37. Links with other schools are satisfactory. The school is working hard to establish better links with the infant school. The new headteacher of the infant school is a governor, and is equally committed to forming a more effective partnership. There are satisfactory links with the secondary school as regards transfer and the use of the leisure centre. Some pupils come to the school on work experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **well led and managed**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership for the school and is supported by a good leadership team who are committed and hard working. Governance of the school is **satisfactory** overall. Most of the governors have only recently been appointed and are not yet fully involved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has established a very clear vision for the work of the school, and offers strong and supportive leadership to her staff.
- Senior staff are provided with good opportunities to develop their leadership and management skills.
- All staff work well together as a team and all are valued.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work very hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in the life and work of the school community.
- The school makes good use of data to improve its performance by identifying trends and taking action.
- Staff training is good and is bringing about improvement in many areas.
- Financial management is good.
- The difficulty in recruiting governors has limited their influence on the development of the school.

Commentary

38. The headteacher was new to post at the time of the last inspection. She has gained the respect of staff, pupils, governors and colleagues. The school is deservedly gaining a better reputation in the area and parental support is improving. The school provides very successfully for the high percentage of pupils who have difficulty in learning or problems which make it difficult for them to respond to school. The headteacher knows all the pupils well and ensures that their gifts and talents, wherever they lie, are carefully nurtured. The school is ethnically diverse and racial equality is carefully promoted and, as a result, all sections of the school community integrate harmoniously.
39. Many improvements have been facilitated by the headteacher over the last six years, as she has skilfully guided the school through some difficult and challenging times. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff and considerable problems filling vacancies. Through various initiatives, staffing has stabilised and recruitment has become easier as students who have trained in the school have been keen to stay. Through the appointment of able staff, the roles of the deputy and senior leadership team have been strengthened and they now have considerable influence on staff and pupils. The leadership team are committed to securing high standards of teaching, learning and behaviour. The deputy provides very good support for the headteacher and they complement each other in the skills and perceptions that they bring to the management of the school. The headteacher gives the senior members of staff good opportunities and encouragement to develop their leadership and management skills by confidently devolving the responsibility for key developments in the life and work of the school. At the same time she keeps a clear and measured overview of the progress of these projects. Staff are encouraged to use their initiative and take risks. This approach has been particularly successful in the development of the assessment leader, who collates and analyses data, and also the intervention leader, who co-ordinates support for pupils experiencing a range of difficulties that affect their learning. Both of these areas are now having a strong influence on school improvement. The leadership has established good systems to support the high percentage of pupils moving in and out of the school to cope with change and instability.
40. As a result of the headteacher's collegiate approach to management, all staff feel valued for the contribution they make and are well motivated to move the school forward. For example, lunchtime staff monitor behaviour and organise weekly rewards for those pupils who behave particularly well. Teaching assistants who support pupils with special educational needs are fully consulted on the progress of the pupils they work with. Subject managers have appropriate responsibilities for developments in their subject. Due to promotion within the school several co-ordinators are new to post but they are being supported well by the previous post holders during the handover period in order to maintain the momentum. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science are given release time to monitor planning, sample work and observe lessons. The information gathered is reported back and helps to influence the co-

ordinator's action plan and identify staff training needs. For example, the science co-ordinator has successfully led training to improve the quality of marking as a result of her monitoring. The co-ordination of the majority of subjects is good and many staff share their expertise and enthusiasm for subjects with pupils through the additional activities they offer.

41. Further evidence of the fact that the school truly recognises the value and contribution of all its staff was the receipt of the 'Investors in People' award in 2003. The effect of this has a direct bearing on the quality of relationships between staff and pupils. There is a strong sense of purpose among staff, there is a good level of consistency in their approach to developing positive attitudes to work and good patterns of behaviour among pupils. As a result most pupils now enjoy school, behave very well and attend regularly.
42. Governance of the school is satisfactory. For several years the governing body has been below strength, due to recruitment difficulties. The committee structure had to be suspended and consolidated. Currently there are no vacancies on the governing body and the new governors are being trained and are keen to be involved. The small core of governors who are well established give loyal support to the school and ensure that their statutory duties have been fulfilled. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their visits and the regular information provided for them by the headteacher and deputy. They are proud of pupils' improved standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning and attendance. Governors have responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs and understand current developments and the progress made in these areas. Most of the governors are parents and are keen to improve parental interest and involvement in the school because they see this as the key to raising academic standards. To this end they have been very involved in the successful launch of a new Parents and Friends Association, which has brought more parents into the school. There are plans to work closely with the infant school, sharing the same site, to set up common systems and policies which will make the transfer between the schools easier for pupils and parents.
43. The senior leadership team focuses its attention on the implementation of the school improvement plan, which is drawn up through consultation with staff. Previously the governing body was involved at the draft stage when it considered the implications for the budget and set priorities. Now the governing body is at full strength it is to be more fully involved. The improvement plan is of high quality because it is based on good self-evaluation and reflection. The school has collected and analysed a wealth of data which is used well to plan for improvement. For example, data showed that the level of under-achievement by boys in English and science was very high. Several projects were put into place to tackle these differences and test results were carefully analysed to measure the success and to identify areas for further effort. This very good analysis and use of data has helped to close the gender gap, motivate boys and improve overall standards over the last three years. The school is not yet making sufficient use of data to set short-term individual targets.
44. The performance management of staff is well managed by the headteacher and deputy. Targets for improvement are linked to whole-school issues as well as improving specific aspects of individual's classroom management and teaching. The local education authority has provided good support and training for staff, which has resulted in the very much improved quality of teaching seen during the inspection. There are good opportunities for the continuing professional development of staff, several senior staff are working for additional qualifications and there are opportunities for all staff to visit other schools to widen their experience. Staff in some year groups teach as a team and others exchange classes to share expertise. Teachers are happy to be observed and to observe others, in order to find out what works well for their pupils. Such openness has helped to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Good systems are in place to help teachers who take over a class at short notice and also to support training teachers. Both were observed to be effective during the inspection week.
45. The office staff provide effective administrative and financial support for the school. They are welcoming and helpful to visitors, parents, pupils and staff, and make a significant contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The management of the school's finances by

the headteacher and office staff is good and the relatively high underspend is designated for premises improvements and to keep class sizes as small as possible in order to raise attainment. The office staff keep the headteacher and governors well informed so that action can be taken when necessary. Best value for money is sought on major purchases and building projects. The senior managers and governors are committed to keeping class sizes small and providing good levels of classroom support which they find contributes to the improved achievement. The drop in pupil numbers will mean that classes will be larger in some year groups next year but the good levels of classroom support will be maintained.

46. The school has recently brought together the management of special educational needs and of English as an additional language in the post of intervention leader. The leadership and management of the intervention leader are good. She has a good overview of the role, and is aware of how to bring about improvements. Effective day-to-day management is combined with a reflective approach to the role. Funding for pupils with special educational needs and ethnic minority groups is well managed and directed to have the best possible impact on learning. The attainment of these pupils is carefully monitored and best value principles are applied. Better use could be made of classroom computers and the computer suite. The design and technology facility is not used efficiently. Overall, considering the costs and pupils' achievement, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	787,703
Total expenditure	786,690
Expenditure per pupil	2,770

Balances (£)	
Budget adjustment from previous year	132,196
Balance carried forward to the next year	133,209

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

LEARNING AND SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards in English are improving but below the national average.
- Pupils are achieving well.
- English is much improved since the last inspection.
- English is very well led and managed.
- Most of the teaching is good and often very good.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are below average.
- Not enough use is being made of ICT.
- Many parents are not sure how to help their children with reading.

Commentary

47. Improving standards in English has been a sharp focus since the last inspection and as a result standards of reading and spelling are rising. The staff has become more stable and the quality of teaching has improved considerably recently, but this is not yet fully reflected in standards achieved in national tests. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in Year 6 in reading and spelling are below the national average but standards in writing remain well below average. Overall standards in Year 5 are higher and likely to improve further because teaching has improved and these pupils have experienced less disruption to their learning resulting from staff changes. Staff are working very hard to improve pupils' oracy skills in order to extend vocabulary and raise standards in writing, but progress is slow. There has been a tendency for girls to perform considerably better than boys in the national tests at the end of Year 6 and measures to improve boys' motivation are showing success. This indicates that the hard work put in by staff is paying dividends and will continue to do so in the future. However, the school recognises that it will always have to place considerable emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those learning English, achieve well in relation to the well- below-average standards attained in all aspects of the subject when pupils join the school.
48. The achievement of Year 6 pupils in English lessons is good despite the below-average standards of attainment seen. In speaking and listening activities, Year 6 pupils achieve well because of the good quality of the teaching. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well in their reading and read with fluency and confidence in the case of those who are higher-attainers or average attainers, indicating understanding and enjoyment. Achievement in written work in Year 6 is also good. For instance, when pupils write from the point of view of two characters in a book which they have read, they successfully illustrate the 'voice' of their characters. Most of the pupils in Year 3 are not forming their letters correctly nor can they join them because they have poor hand control. Although handwriting is taught regularly, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation remains below average for age at the end of Year 6.
49. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in reading is good and the majority enjoy books and stories. They are encouraged to borrow books from the well-stocked library. They progress well due to the structured approach to the teaching of reading and the high profile that reading is given on the daily timetable. Pupils regularly read to adults on an individual basis as well as in groups during literacy lessons. Not all parents are aware of this nor are they sure about helping and encouraging their children to read at home. Not all reading diaries are kept

up to date, nor is this checked regularly in all classes. Pupils who are making insufficient progress with their reading are given extra help in small groups where they learn letter sounds and methods to help them read and spell unfamiliar words.

50. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good or excellent. Teachers have good knowledge of teaching literacy. They plan their lessons very well, and match work very well to pupils' individual needs. They offer a good model of speech and use of language when they give explanations or instructions and carefully introduce important ideas in literacy such as 'genre', 'homonym' or 'alliteration'. In very good lessons, this helps to promote high expectations and a good climate for learning in which teachers effectively develop pupils' thinking and reasoning. In such cases, the pupils listen well and feel confident to make contributions to discussion in pairs and with the whole class. One teacher, for example, developed pupils' thinking about similes and metaphors very effectively, as they discussed and wrote haiku poems with great interest. However, only limited use is being made of ICT in lessons to enhance and extend pupils' learning. Pupils learn well in lessons but the majority have great difficulty retaining and applying their learning, which reduces the impact of the good quality teaching they now receive.
51. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour is generally very good. Teachers show a good level of awareness of their pupils' responses. Where pupils are occasionally inattentive, teachers are very skilled at helping them to re-focus on the work in hand. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs in discussion and in written work. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough. Pupils' achievements are recognised and advice is given about how work could be improved. Although targets are set for individual pupils, these are not being revised as progress is made in order to move learning forward to the next stage at the best possible rate.
52. The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator has very good powers of analysis and is building very effectively on the good work of her predecessor. All aspects of the role are very well developed, including checking the quality of planning and teaching and of pupils' work, and consequent planning for improvement. Information from testing provides a good basis for assessing improvement over time and identifying trends. In her teaching and management, the co-ordinator provides a very good role model. The curriculum is enriched through visits from poets, visits to the theatre, book fairs and clubs.
53. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards are below the national average, but achievement is good. The quality and consistency of teaching has improved considerably and is now good overall. Whereas the leadership and management of the subject were previously unsatisfactory, they are now very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Teachers use the opportunities provided by other subjects, such as history and ICT, to promote language and vocabulary development. In addition, teachers use written work in history, for example, to extend pupils' knowledge of factual writing. However, many opportunities to use ICT to support learning are missed.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics, from low attainment on entry to the school.
- Teaching and learning are good, with a good match of tasks to the range of abilities in each year group.
- Leadership and management of mathematics in the school are good.

- Standards are below average, but there are a substantial number of pupils with learning difficulties.
- Individual target setting is at an early stage of development.
- Parents would like guidance so that they can help their children with homework.

Commentary

55. The standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school are below average for their age. This is despite the good progress they make in lessons and the good support for the pupils identified as having special educational needs, who achieve well in relation to their capabilities. The pupils' achievement is good, as they start in the school with skills in mathematics that are well below average, which is confirmed by testing. There are a high proportion of pupils with specific needs, mainly in behaviour and skills, oracy and literacy, and these have an impact on their attainment in mathematics. The very small percentage of pupils who are above average ability achieve well and some very well by the end of Year 6.
56. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good overall, with very good teaching in several lessons observed, for example in Year 6 and upper and lower sets in Year 5. The staff are adept at engaging the pupils, building on the very good relationships which feature in lessons and using these to ensure the pupils are on task and pay good attention. Staff are enthusiastic, have pleasant and calm manners with the pupils, which engender very good levels of respect and tolerance. Techniques to manage behaviour are very good and are productive in ensuring that high standards of behaviour, very positive attitudes and responses are maintained. From work seen, the pupils have the benefit of a good, broad and balanced curriculum for mathematics, which covers the expected elements and takes due account of the National Strategy for Numeracy. Mathematics lessons are taught in set groups, depending on the pupils' abilities and skills, and within these sets the work is further developed and refined to match the pupils' specific needs, including the higher attainers. The pupils receive good support in their learning from staff, including teaching assistants, and those staff with specific responsibility to support special educational needs. The work covered meets National Curriculum requirements and there is a good balance between work on shapes, space and measure, numeracy and data handling. The pupils' skills in applying their previously learned knowledge and understanding are well supported, but this is an area for further development, especially to promote their literacy skills and using mathematical language correctly, which many pupils find difficult. Parents find it difficult to help pupils with their homework.
57. Resources are generally used appropriately in lessons, several are used well, but the use of ICT to support learning tends to be underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are good, with a good range of procedures to identify what the pupils know, can do and understand to inform what they are to learn next, and individual targets in mathematics are now being set but this is fairly new. The pupils' work is checked for coverage and it is the intention to develop this scrutiny of standards further to ensure there is consistency in the expectations for the presentation of work and accuracy in mathematical work. Presentation of mathematical calculations is a weakness in the pupils' work, as they do not always take good care and attention and there is inconsistency in ensuring work is neat and tidy.
58. Leadership and management of mathematics are good, with good insight of what needs to be done to improve the subject further and enable pupils to achieve their full potential, especially as their attainment is relatively low when they first start in the school. Standards have remained at the same level since the previous inspection, teaching has improved, however, and progress is satisfactory overall.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Satisfactory use is made of mathematics across the curriculum. In science, pupils create graphs of their pulse rate and the growth of plants. Pupils weigh ingredients for cooking and measure liquids. They record temperatures in science and geography. Accurate measurements are sometimes used in design and technology and science. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in other areas. Computers are not used to improve the rate of pupils' mental recall or to extend the higher-attaining pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their attainment at the start of Year 3.
- Teaching is good and investigative skills are carefully developed.
- Leadership and management are good.
- The science club provides good challenge for more able pupils.
- Work is not presented well enough in some classes.
- Pupils do not have individual targets in science.
- Very little science work or vocabulary is displayed in classes.
- Links with ICT for research and recording are underdeveloped.

Commentary

60. Standards the pupils attain by the time they leave Year 6 are below average for their age. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, as they join the school with skills that are well below the national average. Over two thirds of the intake are of below-average ability and many have limited knowledge and understanding of their world. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities. However, at the end of Year 6, the above-average pupils achieve above the expected levels in the national tests and average-attaining pupils achieve the expected levels. Girls achieve better than boys due to their higher levels of oracy and literacy skills. Standards are slightly lower than those found at the time of the last inspection, although the quality of subject teaching has improved considerably.
61. The teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall. Learning in lessons generally matched the quality of teaching, which was sometimes very good or excellent. At the end each topic pupils are tested and show good gains in their knowledge. Pupils have great difficulty in retaining knowledge and subject vocabulary when they move onto a new unit of work. This was evident in Year 5 lessons where classes were starting a new topic on 'sound'. Although all teachers started their lessons by questioning their pupils well to recap and collect relevant facts and important vocabulary, pupils could remember very little from their lessons in the previous year. Even the wide range of small investigations that followed did not jog the memory of the majority. In contrast, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils could recall key vocabulary and facts about skeletons and muscles from the previous week. The school is aware of these difficulties and is trying to improve the pupils' recall of knowledge through a number of strategies, including booster classes in Year 6.
62. From the work seen, pupils have the benefit of a good, broad and balanced curriculum for science, which covers the areas of the National Curriculum through an investigative approach. The curriculum is enriched through studies of the environmental area and pond in the school grounds. Visits are made to woodland, a farm and the zoo, to develop pupils' knowledge of living things. Lessons are well planned, often in year groups, although all teachers organise their own lessons in the way they know will be most suitable for their class. Teachers engage their pupils well, for example, in Year 6, when the teacher produced a balloon of ice and cake

mixture to illustrate that heating and cooling can cause different kinds of changes. They enable all pupils to be included in the learning, often through the ways in which pupils are grouped, or by adapting the ways that work is recorded by different groups of pupils. Teachers use classroom assistants well to split the class into smaller groups. Classroom assistants question the pupils in their group very well to focus their observations and encourage them to think things through and explain their ideas orally. Although many pupils have limited literacy skills they are expected to record their investigations for themselves and worksheets are used sensibly. Work samples from Year 6 show that average and above-average pupils are able to hypothesise, predict outcomes and draw conclusions from their results. They are able to communicate their ideas in writing as a result of the structures that are in place as they move through the school. In discussion with older pupils of below-average ability it was evident that their level of understanding was better than their written work suggests. Pupils in Year 3 benefit from the expertise of the co-ordinator and develop a real understanding of the way that scientists work, by sharing ideas and repeating experiments to check results. The teacher has an excellent way of relating their work to environmental issues and helping pupils to see that their experiments are important to their everyday life.

63. Pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject. They find the work interesting and especially enjoy the practical aspects. They show good levels of responsibility and work co-operatively in pairs and small groups. They are keen to answer in class and generally behave very well, unless the teacher's explanations are lengthy and practical activity is delayed. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well during practical sessions, expecting them to remain focused on the tasks, note down their observations as they go along, treat equipment with respect and consider safety issues. Most pupils respond very well and complete the tasks in the time set. Pupils have difficulty retaining the essential subject vocabulary which is identified for each topic, however, the key words are not prominently displayed in classrooms to fix these firmly in pupils' minds and support those who are learning English.
64. There is considerable variation in the way pupils present their work. In some classes good attention is paid to drawing and labelling diagrams correctly and setting out investigations clearly, elsewhere expectations are not as high.
65. Although the co-ordinator is fairly new to post, leadership and management are good. She has high aspirations, considerable enthusiasm and provides a very good role model. She monitors teaching, planning and pupils' books. From her feedback to staff about marking and the examples of good practice she shared, marking has improved. Good marking and dialogue with pupils was evident in the work samples seen during the inspection. The co-ordinator has a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses from her monitoring and the analysis of data. She has highlighted the gaps in pupils' learning that have resulted from the lack of staff continuity in the past and is addressing these. She is aware that pupils lack the confidence to find things out and try things out for themselves. The profile of science is being raised through science fun days and the science club. Competitions are held two or three times a year and children are chosen to join a club which provides additional motivation and challenge for more-able pupils. Some of these 'junior scientists' were seen to make a very useful contribution to lessons in their classes and were raising the overall standard. The club is now largely run by the pupils themselves, who organise the competition for new members.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 3 to Year 5 are now attaining satisfactory standards in ICT.
- The school now has staff who have expertise in the subject.
- Teachers' subject knowledge has improved through training.
- Opportunities are missed to use teaching assistants in the ICT suite efficiently.

- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT in classrooms to develop confidence and independence.

Commentary

66. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is below average, but that of pupils in Year 3 to Year 5 is average when compared to national standards. Year 6 pupils still have some gaps in their knowledge. Pupils in Year 6 have basic skills in various aspects of word-processing, for instance they know how to change font and colour, or how to underline or enbolden their writing. However, they have not experienced as broad an ICT curriculum as pupils in Year 3 to Year 5, who demonstrate more advanced skills. Year 4 pupils, for instance, know how to construct a branching database and how to add new branches, and Year 3 pupils gain experience of procedures for using e-mail through a self-taught program.
67. The teaching of ICT seen during the inspection is good. Teachers plan well, give clear explanations and instructions and use good questioning skills in ICT lessons. In the computer suite, the interactive whiteboard is effectively used to check pupils' stages of learning within lessons. Where necessary, basic knowledge and skills are rehearsed at the beginning of lessons, for instance when Year 3 pupils learned how to write e-mail addresses which required the use of upper case letters and the '@' key. Teachers manage pupils well in that they intervene to focus pupils back on their tasks if they become distracted. When some terminals in the ICT suite malfunctioned, one teacher did well to re-assign pupils appropriately to other groups of children working on the same task. Some teaching assistants are able to support pupils' learning in the computer suite, but others do not have the knowledge and skill to demonstrate or advise effectively.
68. However, other sources of evidence suggest that teaching and learning over time is only satisfactory. This is because there has been some turnover of teachers in recent years which has had a negative impact on pupils' learning in ICT. Improvements in the quality of teaching resulting from staff training and the appointment of staff who are confident with ICT has not yet had a full impact on standards higher up the school. Furthermore, arrangements for the assessment of ICT have not yet been developed.
69. Few pupils have computers at home and so are not able to practise the skills taught in lessons. In addition, pupils in all year groups are not being given sufficient opportunities to use ICT in classrooms to enhance their learning in a range of subjects. When Year 3 pupils learn from an ICT program designed to teach them how to use the e-mail application, too many of them lack the necessary confidence to follow the sequence for themselves without continual reassurance by the teacher. In a lesson which followed up the use of a program to design the interior of a house, Year 5 pupils showed more independence and used their speaking and listening skills well to present their designs to the class.
70. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory, in that the co-ordinator is aware of strengths and weaknesses in ICT provision. However, the role is not yet fully developed because the monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching is not yet taking place, and assessment procedures are yet to be implemented. The lack of technical back-up for the school's computer facilities has limited his impact on curriculum development because much of his time is taken up maintaining equipment.
71. Since the last inspection, facilities have improved through the development of the computer suite and acquisition of further software resources. However, some computers in the suite are becoming unreliable. Pupils' standards remain below national expectations, but the confidence and expertise of teachers has improved so that teaching is now satisfactory overall. Leadership and management were not judged on the previous inspection, and are now satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. Only one instance of the use of ICT in the other subjects of the curriculum was noted during the inspection. This was in a Year 6 English lesson where a small number of pupils had opportunities to word-process rather than compose haiku on paper. The use of ICT in the learning of, for example, mathematics or science, is lacking. Opportunities to use ICT skills are not identified in planning in other subjects. There was little evidence to show that pupils were confidently using ICT for research.

HUMANITIES

73. In the humanities, work was sampled in **geography, history** and **religious education**. Only one lesson was seen in history and religious education. None were seen in geography. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There are indications from pupils' work in history and geography that standards are close to those expected nationally.
74. In **geography**, Year 4 pupils were studying rivers and were concentrating on the river Lee, whose source was close to the school. They had made plasticine models of the river valley and knew key vocabulary which they had used to label their models. They were also considering river pollution and enjoyed sorting the rubbish their teacher had collected. Evidence indicates that pupils have satisfactory knowledge for their age. Teachers' planning from other year groups showed that the curriculum was organised well so that the National Curriculum was fully covered as pupils move through the school. Good use was made of the local environment to bring the subject to life. Displays of work also showed pupils were developing an understanding of world geography, the different continents and also countries such as Australia. Pupils from ethnic minority groups have good knowledge of their countries of origin.
75. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 in **history** is satisfactory. Pupils know about the Ancient Egyptians' view of the afterlife, and the kinds of objects which therefore accompanied them into the next world. They consider in groups what objects they themselves would want to take into the afterlife, and why. They show sound levels of reasoning in their justification of the examples which they choose, and make satisfactory notes about their selections. Pupils are evidently accustomed to speaking and listening work in history, and to using discussion to generate ideas. In assembly they read well-written prayers to Egyptian gods, which showed very good insight into the beliefs and importance of religion in those times.
76. From the limited sample seen, the teaching of history is satisfactory. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant know how to elicit pupils' emerging ideas and to probe their reasoning. However, there was insufficient challenge to develop pupils' thinking, especially for higher-attainers, for instance through requiring more historical reflection on the reasons for the Egyptians' choices.
77. Displays of work from Year 5 showed that pupils had studied various aspects of the Tudors. In discussion, they were very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about Henry VIII and his wives. Some had done their own research at home using the Internet and library books. One class had made puppets and performed a Shakespeare play and they had also made models of boats used by Francis Drake and Walter Raleigh.
78. One lesson of **religious education** was observed during the inspection in Year 6, although teachers' planning and pupils' work were also sampled. The limited evidence gathered and discussion with pupils and the co-ordinator indicates that standards are in line with those expected by the locally-agreed syllabus. The topics covered in each year group follow the locally-agreed syllabus but increasingly links are being made with other areas such as personal, social and health education, literacy and history. Much of the work in religious education centres on discussion and drama so there was limited written work to examine. Pupils gain a clear understanding of others' beliefs and the way in which they live their lives

from the other pupils in the school. They are very open with each other and happy to discuss their differences and similarities and this reflects the high quality of their relationships. In the very good lesson seen in Year 6 about forgiveness, which was linked to a Hindu story, pupils were willing to share significant and appropriate examples from their own lives of forgiving someone. Pupils were able to say how they would respond to a number of situations, how they would feel and why. Others put forward different points of view. All ideas were listened to and some pupils changed their opinions as a result of what others said. Very good levels of debate and discussion are developed through the subject as pupils move through the school. In discussion with pupils they show a good knowledge of a number of religions and their major festivals. They enjoy visits to the local Christian church and to the mosque. There are good opportunities for spiritual development through writing such as, 'Beauty is...', and some excellent poetry about 'A Special Friend', which showed sensitivity and depth of feeling. The school is collecting its own book of prayer, common to all religious groups, for use in assembly. The co-ordinator is having a strong influence on the subject and encouraging staff to try a variety of approaches which are stimulating pupils' interest and developing their understanding of each other.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. These aspects of the curriculum were not a main focus of the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a small number of lessons were seen, no judgement on the overall provision in these subjects can be made.
80. The standards the pupils attain in **art and design** are below the expected level for Year 6. Although pupils in each year group are taught skills and techniques in art and design, they do not re-apply these sufficiently in their art work. The pupils' hand control skills are generally weak, presentation is not good and, unless reminded, the pupils do not take enough care over their artistic work. Although teaching in lessons observed in Year 6 was good, and the pupils' efforts were also good, their artistic skills, knowledge and understanding were still below average and they worked at a basic level. The curriculum for art and design is appropriate, however, and the staff teach techniques and skills properly, but the pupils' difficulty in retaining these and applying them are limited. This affects the standards of the finished product and means they do not take enough care during the process. Also there is not enough progression from year-group to year-group, building on the skills the pupils have acquired. However, the subject is well resourced, with a good quality range of materials.
81. The standards the pupils attain in **design and technology** are below the nationally-expected level by the end of Year 6. Pupils cover one unit of work each term, which often links with their work in other subjects. In Year 3, pupils were making picture frames. In one class where the teaching was very good there was good evidence that pupils had incorporated earlier work on paper-folding into their designs. Pupils were working from their own design sketches and they had generated a wide range of ideas. Here, the process of evaluation of the product was encouraged and standards were as expected for this age group. In another class in the same year, the design, making and evaluation process was not evident and the photo-frames were all very similar. Pupils in Year 5 had made puppets to a very similar design, as was the case in their models of Tudor ships. Similarly, in other year groups, emphasis was on making, and design and evaluation were given insufficient emphasis. Pupils' difficulty with hand control skills is reflected in the immature quality of the finished product and the expectations to apply the skills taught are not often high enough. In Year 6, pupils were using tools to cut wood and applied their skills well when making the chassis of their buggies. Only two units of work are concerned with food technology and the specialist facility is under-used. Evidence suggests that teaching is satisfactory overall. Resources for the subject are good and so are materials and tools.
82. The standards in **music** in the school are good, by the time the pupils are in Year 6 they have good skills creating music, exploring sound and being inventive with these to create effects. There are very good opportunities for the pupils to gain experiences which enhance their

spiritual, moral, social, cultural development, their achievement is very good because of the consistently very good teaching they receive, and the pupils' learning is very good as a result. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their music lessons and generally participate very well, with very good attitudes. Those who find this more difficult to sustain are consistently reminded to show respect for others' efforts, to strive to produce good quality work and to show appreciation of their classmates' efforts. The musical specialist who takes several of the music lessons in the school, is highly skilled has very good musical expertise and delivers this knowledge very clearly, taking into account the musical skills some of the pupils already have and uses these very well. There is a well-attended choir, an African drummers group, and music is highly valued within the school. Standards in music have been maintained at this high level since the previous inspection and instrumental tuition is offered to the pupils, including use of a musical instrument, for a nominal fee each term, and several pupils take advantage of this.

83. The standards in **physical education** are at the expected level for the pupils in Year 6. They are learning to develop their skills in games, for example when playing variations of rounders. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall, lessons in physical education are well-taught, and in Year 4 the pupils' skills in batting and hand and eye co-ordination to aim and strike are developing well and their skills are good for this age group. The pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn to swim, these have been extended recently and a reasonable majority of pupils learn to swim before they leave school. Opportunities to attend subsidised swimming lessons are offered, as are other sporting activities, but pupils do not always take advantage of these. The school participates in sporting events and competitions locally and two parents are actively involved in supporting the pupils' development in games and have trained as football coaches.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. Only one lesson was seen which was excellent and taught by the co-ordinator. The programme for personal, social and health education is good and the family worker, learning mentor and school nurse are fully involved. The curriculum includes work on diet, health, sex and relationships education, personal safety and drugs. By Year 6, pupils gain the confidence to put forward their point of view and listen to the views of others and have a sensible discussion. Visitors from outside, such as the police, are used well to enrich learning. The school achieved a Healthy Schools Award in 2002.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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