

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITMORE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114819

Headteacher: Mrs Maureen Sealeaf

Lead inspector: Mrs Chrissie Pittman

Dates of inspection: 28th - 30th June 2004

Inspection number: 258416

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	255
School address:	Whitmore Way Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS14 2TP
Telephone number:	(01268) 520 435
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carole Davies

Date of previous inspection: 1st - 5th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whitmore Junior School is a larger than average community school situated near the town centre of Basildon, Essex and draws most of its pupils from the immediate area. The socio-economic background of pupils is well below average. There are 255 boys and girls, aged seven to 11 years. Most pupils are white British, although there are also a few ethnic minorities from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia represented. The percentage of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is a bit higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils thought to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including statements of special educational need, is also above average and over 20 per cent of these pupils receive intensive support. Pupils' attainment on entry has been below average in recent years although the profile has now begun to improve. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is high. Nearly all the teaching staff are new to the school and there has been a high level of temporary and overseas staff. The school has achieved the 'Investors in People' kitemark. It has also recently achieved Sport England's "Activemark" award, which recognizes the school's commitment to promoting physical activities. There is a breakfast club and pupils enjoy numerous extra-curricular activities.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18275	Chrissie Pittman	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Religious education
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	
20063	Ged Slamon	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Special educational needs (SEN) English as an additional language (EAL)
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory standard of education in very challenging circumstances. Overall, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory and most make sound progress. Pupils want to learn and they relate satisfactorily with each other. Most of the teaching is either satisfactory or better. The headteacher's leadership is good. She has successfully established a united staff team and provided a clear focus on raising standards. Other key staff manage the school appropriately. Pupils' personal qualities are developed satisfactorily and they are cared for and supported well. The partnership with parents is sound. The school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' attitudes and interest in school life are good. Many pupils of all ages attend the good range of after-school activities.
- Pupils are cared for well.
- The headteacher's leadership is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good.
- The school has made good improvement in recent years.
- Although standards have risen significantly in the last year they are still not high enough in mathematics for pupils aged 11.
- Assessment is not used well to influence what is taught next in most subjects.
- There is a small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in some Year 4 and Year 6 lessons.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well enough throughout the school.
- Higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in some lessons.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

How the effectiveness of the school has changed since the previous inspection.

Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The school's response to the previous key issues has been positive. Leadership is more effective in identifying priorities for development and the governing body is more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and challenges senior managers more effectively. The new headteacher is committed to raising standards and the school is increasingly becoming more successful at meeting its aims. The National Curriculum is taught and teachers' planning is more effective. Teaching quality is now sound and systems are tighter with more of a focus on raising standards by targeting and monitoring learning. However, literacy skills are not consistently taught well and there is still some unsatisfactory teaching, particularly in the non-core subjects. Standards have risen significantly in English, mathematics and science in this year's national tests (SATs) for pupils of all abilities.

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.*

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. When they first enter the school most pupils achieve below average standards for their age; many are well below average although standards on entry have recently begun to rise. At age 11 the standards attained in comparison with all schools nationally have been in the bottom 5 per cent nationally, and well below average compared with schools of a similar context. However, there are indications that pupils' results have significantly improved in the 2004 tests. Overall, this improvement represents satisfactory achievement given the school's challenging circumstances, such as the well below average socio-economic conditions, the high proportion of pupils who have moved to and from the school, the number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) that require intensive support and the high percentage of temporary teachers. The school's very challenging targets were not met by a considerable margin last year but this year's results have significantly reduced the margin; particularly in English for pupils with average ability and in mathematics for the higher attaining pupils, where targets were only just missed. The trend in the last four years has been in line with the national trend. Overall, there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. In lessons the current Year 6 pupils work at below average standards in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal qualities are developed appropriately. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' behaviour in and out of the classroom is satisfactory and their attitudes to school and each other are good. Children of all abilities usually interact satisfactorily together. There is a good caring and supportive ethos in the school. Attendance now broadly meets the school's target for the year but is still well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is high because parents take their children away from school for holidays and other occasions which the school rightly does not authorise. Lessons usually start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall. **Teaching is predominantly satisfactory** with many examples of both good and very good teaching. There is a positive ethos for learning in most classrooms. There are examples of very good teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in all year groups. Good planning produces some inspiring lessons where pupils' learning is very good. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in some lessons in science, geography and art in Years 4 and 6 because some teachers have insecure subject knowledge, discipline is not what it should be and the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. Assessment is not used effectively to guide teaching and learning in many subjects and pupils do not have a clear picture of what they have to do to improve. The school provides a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum with a good range of learning opportunities to meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are weak although the school has put increasing emphasis on these areas and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. They feel valued and are involved well in their learning. The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. Its links with other schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are sound overall. The headteacher's leadership is **good**. She knows what the school does well, where its weaknesses are and how to improve them. Senior managers are appropriately focused on improving standards and supporting all pupils but subject co-ordinators are not as effective as they should be in monitoring teaching, learning and assessment. The governance of the school is sound. Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses, monitor the school's performance effectively and ensure that statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with most aspects of the school but a large minority feel that some pupils behave unacceptably and a few felt that their child was bullied at school. During the inspection, the behaviour of a small but significant number of potentially disruptive pupils was very good because they were managed very effectively by the learning support assistants and members of the local education authority's behaviour support team. Some parents felt that they were not kept well informed about how well their children were doing. The school has responded well to this issue, by changing the format of the annual reports and introducing a range of initiatives to make the school more accessible to parents. Inspectors found that parents' concerns and complaints are dealt with satisfactorily. Most pupils enjoy school and are very happy. However, a minority feel that some other pupils do not always behave well and are sometimes unkind. Inspectors found that the school deals effectively with any incidences of oppressive behaviour.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 11.
- Improve the unsatisfactory teaching and particularly how literacy and numeracy skills are taught throughout the school.
- Ensure that the higher attaining pupils are adequately challenged.
- Ensure that assessment influences curriculum planning more effectively.
- Continue to monitor and improve attendance levels.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly below average. Standards range from below average to average in different year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science were well below average when compared to those of similar schools.
- Though as yet unconfirmed, standards achieved in the national tests in English and mathematics in 2004 have risen significantly.
- Most pupils achieve satisfactorily although more able pupils could achieve more.

Commentary

Starting school

1. The standards of the children entering the school for the last few years have been below average for their age and many have been well below. Recently the trend has been changing and the profile has improved. Because pupils' attainment on entry is rising, this is impacting positively on the standards now seen in lessons.

School results in national tests

2. The table below shows that in recent years, standards in Year 6 national tests were very low in English, mathematics and science. This was largely due to a combination of factors such as high pupil and staff mobility and a low ability profile which included a high number of pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, the school's very challenging targets were not met by a considerable margin last year. However this year's results are significantly better and the margin has been greatly reduced; particularly in English for pupils with average ability and in mathematics for higher attaining pupils, where the targets were only just missed. What the table also does not indicate is the sound progress made by these pupils, since their tests in Year 2. This year in 2004, there is every indication that pupils have improved and standards are significantly higher than in previous years. The trend in the school's results has been broadly in line with the national trend. Overall, there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.3 (21.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.6 (23.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.0 (23.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 67 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The table does not indicate the difference in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics, with boys doing slightly better, overall. However, it is evident in many classes that higher attaining boys and girls could do better.

Standards and achievement in lessons

4. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in most year groups. Currently standards in listening and reading are average for 11-year-olds but standards in speaking and writing are below what are expected for this age. Standards in mathematics and science are below average. Pupils' attainment at the higher Level 5 is well below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are broadly average in the few lessons seen in other subjects. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in English and science but there remains some underachievement in mathematics. Achievement is good in art and satisfactory in all other subjects except for geography, where pupils underachieve.
5. Teachers give good emphasis to the teaching of vocabulary needed in other subjects and, many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The emphasis the school places on reading is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm for books. Pupils have few opportunities to record events and information in subjects such as religious education, history and geography and opportunities for improving writing skills when planning other subjects are often missed and are not used well enough to promote higher standards in writing.
6. The use of pupils' mathematics skills in other subjects is underdeveloped. There have been few opportunities, either planned or incidental, for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge across other subjects taught at the school. As a result, pupils miss opportunities to reinforce their mathematical understanding or to practise the use of basic skills.
7. There are still too few planned opportunities to practise and develop information and communication technology skills in other areas of the curriculum. Although there has been an improvement in the use of ICT across the curriculum this is still insufficiently developed.
8. The achievement of pupils with SEN is satisfactory and parallels the achievement of all pupils. Pupils with SEN are supported effectively in their learning by both teachers and teaching assistants. The school's shared commitment to inclusion is realised in the good provision for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds where English is not the main language. As a result, they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. They make sound progress overall as they move through the school, because the curriculum for these pupils is matched appropriately to their needs. There are no significant differences between the attainment of the different ethnic groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good. Their behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. Moral development is promoted well; spiritual, social and cultural development are promoted satisfactorily. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in learning and want to do well.
- The school's systems for managing pupils' behaviour have been successful in reducing the number of exclusions.
- Despite the school's very good efforts, too many pupils are absent from school on too many occasions.

Commentary

9. Pupils' willingness to learn and enthusiasm for their work have improved since the last inspection when attitudes were satisfactory with some weaknesses. In most lessons and activities, pupils are attentive to their teachers, concentrate well on their tasks and take pride in what they are doing. They enjoy reading, to the extent that they are sometimes reluctant to put their books away to move on to the next lesson. They respond particularly well when the teachers use materials that they can relate to from their own experiences, such as a radio interview about the difficulties of getting a ticket for a sports event, or artefacts from a church in a religious education lesson about Christian symbols. Pupils of all abilities were eager to show inspectors what they were capable of achieving, such as being able to think of the word. The school can now use these good attitudes to raise achievement further.
10. As at the last inspection, the majority of pupils behave well in and around the school. Behaviour was mainly good in the lessons, assemblies and playtimes observed during the inspection. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds were polite and friendly to the inspectors. The school has on roll a small but significant number of pupils with very challenging behaviour who can, from time to time, disrupt the learning of others. This is naturally of concern to parents. During the inspection, the behaviour of these pupils was very good because they were being managed very effectively, particularly by the learning support assistants and members of the local education authority's behaviour support team. The school has worked effectively with the team to establish a positive behaviour policy and procedures which are applied consistently across the school. This has created a usually calm learning environment in which pupils clearly know the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Pupils of all ages, especially those with special educational needs, are motivated well by the reward systems. Very occasionally, the school's capacity to handle the few pupils with the most severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties breaks down. The headteacher recognises the need to train key workers further within the school to strengthen its provision for behaviour support and a new experienced behaviour support worker was due to take up post in the week after the inspection.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
243	19	2
3	0	0
1	0	0

Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

11. The table above refers to exclusions in the school year 2002/3. The permanent exclusions took place nearly two years ago following a dangerous incident. In the current school year so far, there have been only five short fixed-period exclusions involving four boys all of whom have particularly challenging needs. Incidents are properly recorded and exclusion procedures are correctly followed.
12. Aspects of pupils' personal development have improved since the last inspection, although personal development is still satisfactory overall. Pupils now show a greater respect for other people's beliefs, as seen in a Year 4 religious education lesson when pupils handled 'Kosher' food with interest and curiosity. They appreciate each other's achievements in lessons and take good care of the school environment both during and outside the school day. Pupils have more opportunities to take responsibility, with a particularly notable feature being the 'best buddy' system whereby selected Year 6 pupils are trained to support the midday assistants in improving relationships between children at lunchtime. Nevertheless, Year 3 pupils report a significant amount of bullying by older pupils and there are a small number of incidents involving racist remarks and harassment. The school deals with these issues well, through assemblies and the personal, social and health education programme, for example.
13. The assemblies seen during the inspection contributed well to the school's provision for pupils' personal development. They promoted the school or class as a community, celebrated pupils' achievements and involved them effectively in role-play activities which demonstrated that week's theme of 'trust'. Pupils responded well to the opportunity to reflect on the theme. The school has taken appropriate action following the recent review by the local education authority which stated that planned activities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development are under-represented in the curriculum. Staff have now identified subjects and events where such opportunities take place and are planning for a multi-cultural week to raise pupils' understanding further of the diversity of cultures within Britain and around the world.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.4	School data	1.9
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance declined significantly after the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory and reached an extremely low level in 2001/2. The figures in the table above refer to the school year 2002/3 and show some improvement. Attendance in 2003/4 improved still further to 92.2 per cent which broadly meets the school's target for the year but is still

likely to be well below the national average. Only two-fifths of pupils attend for at least 95 per cent of the sessions which is the national expectation. Unauthorised absence is high because parents keep their children away from school for too many holidays and other occasions which the school rightly does not authorise. Some of the authorised absence is due to genuine long-term sickness. Pupils' frequent absences have a major impact on their achievement as they are unable to maintain continuity in their learning, such as the systematic development of their literacy skills. The school has undertaken a rigorous campaign over the past two years to raise attendance levels. This has included telephoning parents on the first day of absence, if a reason is not supplied working closely with external agencies, who undertake home visits and take families to court, if necessary and introducing incentives for pupils and classes. It is aware that it needs to continue this with considerable determination if it is to reach next year's challenging target of 95 per cent. Most pupils are generally punctual at the beginning of the day and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is **sound**. The teaching quality is more consistent in some year groups than others. The curriculum is satisfactory; opportunities to enrich the curriculum outside of the classroom are good. Pupils are well cared for and the school's links with parents are sound. Its links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. However, higher attaining pupils are not challenged enough in many classes and assessment is not used well enough to respond to pupils' individual needs. Comprehensive procedures exist for tracking and assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, assessment is insufficiently developed in other subjects because whole school procedures have not yet been fully established.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching are good.
- Most teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and positively reinforce good learning.
- Teachers plan well to develop pupils' learning.
- In many lessons there is a good use of questioning to challenge pupils.
- Pupils with SEN and EAL are well taught; teaching assistants support them effectively.
- Work is not well matched to pupils' capability in some lessons, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Assessment is not used effectively to guide teaching and learning in most subjects and pupils do not have a clear picture of what they have to do to improve.
- Teacher's use of time and their teaching methods are sometimes ineffective.

Commentary

15. The table below indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and has been maintained since the previous inspection. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 5. However there is considerable variation in some of the teaching in Years 4 and 6 where

teaching ranges from poor to very good depending on the ability of the teacher taking the lesson. During the inspection, it was evident that one or two teachers found the process stressful and did not teach as well as they could. All the unsatisfactory or poor teaching was attributed to a few teachers, including those who are inexperienced. The best teaching is in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT where many of the lessons are set for different abilities and teachers are particularly effective in meeting the needs of all pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	5 (13.9%)	17 (47.2%)	10 (27.8%)	2 (5.6%)	2 (5.6%)	0 (0%)

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

16. There is sound teaching and a positive ethos for learning in most classrooms. There are certain features that are common to many of the very good lessons and they provide clues to ways in which the unsatisfactory lessons could be improved. The start of the most successful lessons is particularly significant. The beginning of the lesson is usually brisk, lively and challenging; it immediately makes pupils think. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which mean that pupils concentrate well on the task. Good relationships exist between pupils and teachers and this helps pupils to tackle the work with confidence. In English and mathematics, where many of these lessons are found, the teacher's infectious interest and good subject knowledge are used to set the scene and engage pupils in thinking about the objectives of the lesson. The teacher is indicating from the outset that he or she expects pupils to work hard, but also that there is enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from such learning. Teaching is less effective in some lessons throughout the school where the pace of the lesson is too slow, work is sometimes not matched well with pupils' abilities and the higher achieving pupils, particularly, are not sufficiently challenged.
17. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue and good questioning enables pupils to think carefully and develop their understanding. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils were obviously confident when challenged to think by the high quality questioning of the teacher. A sense of fun was inspired by the teacher and the lesson encapsulated a love of learning among the pupils. All achieved the objective.
18. Once teachers have gained pupils' full attention they keep up the momentum, often with a series of short, focused tasks, so that there is no opportunity for concentration to flag. This was demonstrated in a very good science lesson in Year 4 where the teacher encouraged pupils to take their learning one step further by challenging them to investigate different ways of conducting a fair test on 'How to keep liquids warm'. The pupils' contributions were valued and good opportunities provided for all pupils to take responsibility for their work. Usually there is little need for obvious management of pupils; behaviour is good and there are good relationships based on mutual respect between pupils and teachers. When necessary, however, teachers are quick to notice and deal with any straying of attention or lack of effort. Parents say that the teachers do well to help their children become mature and responsible.
19. Lessons usually provide a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both the teacher and fellow pupils will be supportive. Most

teachers use resources well in their lessons. In a Year 6 English lesson for higher attainers, resources were used inventively to make pupils' learning more meaningful, particularly in the group activities. However, this is not always the case. For example, in a poor science lesson in Year 3 valuable time was lost giving out equipment to one child at a time while the class waited noisily. The more able pupils were not sufficiently challenged, soon lost interest in the task and very little learning took place.

ASSESSMENT

20. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged not good enough. The statutory test results are now very thoroughly analysed and targets set so staff have a clear picture of different groups of pupils' attainment. However, although there is a clear understanding of the purpose and use of assessment and teachers' plans show that they will assess learning in the light of the objectives they have set, this data is still not used rigorously enough to plan subsequent work. The procedures in place for English and mathematics are good. Assessment procedures in all other subjects are insufficiently developed. In the best lessons, staff give pupils good verbal feedback on their work and they are told how they can improve, but the marking of work by some teachers is not always as helpful. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and to a good standard. However, a few do so infrequently and their marking is cursory. However many teaching assistants now make useful notes on what pupils can do.
21. Pupils with SEN and EAL are fully involved in lessons and make progress equally as well as their peers. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and provide effective guidance on dealing with pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers throughout the school know these pupils well and use this knowledge to effectively provide for their needs. There is also effective support within the class from well-trained teaching assistants. They work well with small groups or individuals and focus on developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, in a small minority of whole class lessons teachers do not match work accurately enough to pupils' individual learning needs when there is no targeted support. This slows pupils' access to the task. The teaching in the set groups is well planned, sensitively delivered and effective. The teacher with responsibility for minority ethnic achievement makes a good contribution to enable pupils whose first language is not English to learn well. These pupils' learning is well focused and sensitively delivered to ensure they achieve their full potential. The progress of all these pupils is closely monitored and support deployed appropriately.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with learning opportunities that meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of all pupils. Opportunities for further learning in activities outside lessons are **good**. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with SEN and EAL is good.

- There are good opportunities to enrich learning outside the school day and to extend pupils' interests.
- Participation in sport is good.
- Support staff are particularly effective.
- The school provides satisfactorily for pupils' personal development.
- Accommodation and resources support the curriculum adequately.

Commentary

22. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a sound basis for pupils' learning. Plans for literacy and numeracy are based on the national strategies and those for other subjects follow the National Curriculum guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This ensures skills are taught progressively and all teachers in the year group plan their work to cover the curriculum.
23. There is a good range of activities before and after school and during lunchtimes. Sporting activities are extensive and pupils have the chance to represent the school in many of these. There is good participation in sport. The curriculum is enriched with a number of visits to different cultural venues and by visitors to the school.
24. The new headteacher is committed to running a school where every individual matters and has an equal opportunity to succeed. This is achieved by active intervention through catch-up programmes, setting in English and mathematics and the good support provided by teaching assistants in lessons.
25. Pupils with SEN and EAL have full access to the curriculum and teaching assistants support their progress well. The provision for SEN complies with the requirements of the new SEN Code of Practice. All pupils on the special needs register have well written individual education plans highlighting their individual needs. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is also good. Teachers are aware of the cultural background of these pupils and plan carefully to meet their needs. Overall the school provides appropriately for its range of pupils. There is a good caring ethos where pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils' personal development is well provided for.
26. There are enough well-trained and experienced teachers although at the time of the inspection there were some temporary and inexperienced teachers. The work of teaching assistants is a strength of the school. They are adequate in number, well trained and appropriately deployed for the pupils to gain maximum benefit from their contribution. Accommodation is satisfactory. It is well cared for and enhanced by bright and cheerful displays of pupils' work. Classrooms are fairly spacious and corridors are well used for additional teaching areas and computers. There are no specialist rooms such as for food technology or music, which limits provision in those subjects. The headteacher and governors have instigated a programme of redecoration and remodelling of the accommodation. Parents appreciate the improvements being made. The grounds have been affected by building work and currently do not provide a stimulating and structured environment for pupils to play and develop better social skills. The school has appropriate plans to improve the play areas as its Golden Jubilee project for next year. There is ample space outside for games and outdoor play. Resources for the curriculum are satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. Pupils' involvement in the work and development of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a caring ethos which is backed up by secure procedures to ensure pupils' well-being.
- Support for pupils with SEN and EAL is good but that for the more able and gifted and talented pupils is underdeveloped.
- Pupils now have a voice in the school and feel their ideas are listened to.

Commentary

27. The school has successfully maintained a positive environment in which pupils are happy and friendly, which was a strength of the school at the last inspection. Office staff are very efficient and caring in finding out about pupils' health needs and in ensuring that all records associated with pupils' welfare, health and safety are properly kept. Nearly all staff, including learning support assistants and midday assistants, have been trained in first aid and child protection procedures and so know what to do in the event of any accidents or concerns. The caretaker fulfils his responsibilities effectively. The school uses a grant from the Children's Fund well to provide a popular breakfast club with the aim of encouraging better attendance and tackling the welfare needs of some of the children. It also makes good use of drama groups and speakers from the police force to help it equip pupils with the knowledge of how to protect themselves from harm.
28. Support and guidance have improved since the last inspection because teachers now keep consistent records of the children in their class. These show that they know the individual backgrounds of their pupils well, in addition to their broad academic ability in literacy and numeracy. Targets have now been introduced in reading and in number which enables more focused support and guidance to be offered to pupils. Most pupils speak positively about the staff and the ways in which they help them. A significant minority, mainly in Year 3 where there have been some staff changes earlier in the year, are not so confident that they can go to an adult in the school if they are worried. The stable and well trained team of learning support assistants often provide very effective guidance to pupils with difficulties in learning. These include pupils with special educational needs, those with challenging behaviour and new arrivals to the school such as a pupil in the early stages of learning English. Pupils with SEN and EAL receive good support. Their learning, social and emotional needs are clearly identified. Pupils with special needs have full access to all outside support agencies. Parents and carers are consulted at all stages to ensure that all aspects of the care are used to help these pupils gain maximum benefit from all they do at school. A learning mentor, appointed in January through the Excellence in Cities programme, is starting to provide valuable support in helping individual pupils overcome barriers to learning. More able pupils in Year 6 have recently been guided to achieve better through the arrangements to teach English and mathematics in ability groups. Overall across the school, however, there has not been sufficient progress since the last inspection in helping these pupils fulfil their potential. For example, they are not helped enough to develop confidence in working independently. The school is aware that it is still in the early stages of identifying pupils who are gifted or talented and of providing a programme to individually challenge them.

29. There has been a significant improvement in the way the school now invites pupils to express their views and share in the decision-making, for example through the system of class councils and the school council. Following a survey a year ago, which enabled them to voice their concerns about playground arrangements, pupils were involved in designs for more stimulating play and activity areas around the school grounds. Unfortunately, these have had to be postponed while work on replacing the demountable classrooms is carried out. Pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties are increasingly being given a voice through the one-to-one sessions they have with non-teaching staff. Pupils are not as involved in the setting and reviewing of their targets as they could be, nor in the assessment of their work, although there are some examples of good practice.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory. Links with the community and with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is improving its channels of communication with parents but a significant minority of parents do not feel either well informed, involved or consulted.
- The school makes good use of its links with other schools and resources in the community to enhance the provision for pupils and strengthen the expertise of staff.

Commentary

30. A significant number of parents do not feel comfortable in approaching the school. In many cases this is because of their own negative experiences of education in the past. The headteacher has introduced a range of initiatives to make the school more accessible to parents. For example, parents are now invited to class assemblies on Fridays when they can see their children present some of their work. Parents appreciate this and attend in good numbers. They are also invited to meetings and workshops about developments in the school and aspects of the curriculum, but these are not always so well supported. Information provided for parents is satisfactory, with regular newsletters, an outline of the curriculum each term and an up-to-date website which parents can use to contact the school. A very promising feature is the introduction of home-school contact books in which parents and staff can record comments. These are very well used in some classes, especially in Year 3, but are not yet consistently used across the school. Nearly half the parents responding to the questionnaire said they do not feel well informed about how their child is getting on. The school has responded well to this issue, which it had already identified, by changing the format of the annual reports for July 2004 to include better information about what pupils can do in each subject and what they should be aiming for next. Parents' concerns and complaints are dealt with satisfactorily without compromising the need to maintain confidentiality when they involve other pupils. Parents supported the school well at a fund-raising event last Christmas and there is a full complement of parent governors who have useful ideas about how the partnership with parents can be improved further. The governing body has not consulted parents sufficiently to find out their views.
31. The school has the goodwill of the local community with the result that there is no vandalism outside school hours and local people offer practical help to improve the

school's grounds. Visitors from a range of organisations and agencies help the school to boost many aspects of its curriculum and the support provided for pupils. For example, a regular speaker from a church group made a very good contribution to an assembly seen during the inspection. Older pupils have been involved in visiting elderly residents and also a hospice so that they are becoming increasingly aware of the issues of disability and support for the aged. The school also works well with other schools to provide greater opportunities for pupils in sport and music and to ease the transfer to secondary school. Its links with a Beacon school and with a local cluster of schools are making a positive contribution to leadership and management at all levels, including subject co-ordinators and school improvement, for example by funding a joint attendance officer and a co-ordinator to develop provision for gifted and talented pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management of the school is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The leadership of the senior management team is satisfactory but developing. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher has been good in bringing about significant improvements since the last inspection.
- The headteacher is well supported by her hardworking deputy.
- Staff performance management is effective in bringing about improvement.
- Approaches to financial management are very good.
- The school development plan does not set out a broad, strategic overview beyond the current year.

Commentary

32. The headteacher leads the school well and has overseen much needed changes in order to improve the quality of education provided by the school and introduced a range of strategies designed to help pupils achieve as well as they should. Some of these changes have been affected by a high turnover of teaching staff but nevertheless are beginning to have a positive impact.
33. The headteacher has built a more stable staff, which is already operating as a team that shares her vision of the school and is determined to do the best for the pupils in its care. Overall, pupils now achieve satisfactorily and often well in lessons as a result of improved teaching. This is due to better monitoring of teaching and learning and good staff performance management procedures, closely linked with the school development plan. Although the development plan correctly identifies immediate priorities for development, the school has not yet considered a broad, strategic overview beyond the current year.
34. The senior management team is developing its role well and, as a result, the headteacher is able to delegate responsibilities to senior staff, who share her determination to raise standards. They have already overseen a range of helpful strategies which have already seen improvements, for example, in English. Many co-ordinators are new to their role but they are developing an understanding of what needs to be done to raise standards.

35. Despite the high level of staff turnover, the headteacher and her deputy have maintained a coherent programme for performance management. There are sound arrangements in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers and experienced teachers new to the school.
36. Many governors are new to their role but are taking all opportunities for training by the school and the local education authority. Key governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are kept well informed by the headteacher about what needs to be done to sustain improvement. Governors are beginning to shape the direction of the school and are involved in development planning. There is a strong commitment to inclusion. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met.
37. The school manages its finances very well. The headteacher and the governing body's finance committee ensure that all resources available to the school are used to meet educational priorities and the principles of best value are applied in all aspects of its work. The school's administrative assistant manages finances very well and keeps the headteacher and governors well informed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	801,740
Total expenditure	731,516
Expenditure per pupil	3,055

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	80,119
Balance carried forward to the next year	70,223

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of good leadership.
- Pupils are not given enough time or opportunities to write for a range of purposes within English lessons or across the curriculum and standards in writing are below average.
- Pupils are interested in reading and most show very good attitudes in lessons.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent.

Commentary

38. Standards in English were well below average at the time of the last inspection and remained so until 2003. In the tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 standards were very low when compared to all schools and well below average when compared to those for similar schools. Standards are higher now. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining the expected standards in listening and reading. Standards in speaking and writing are below what is expected for pupils aged 11. Improved leadership of the school and of the subject have been the main reason for these improved standards. The pupils now achieve satisfactorily in lessons, but their achievement over time has been unsatisfactory because of weaknesses and instability in teaching. The situation is now more stable and the teaching is sound overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and a significant number were either good or better. The school is working hard to achieve consistency in the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator, with help from the local education authority's adviser, has monitored teaching and has held staff meetings, to give teachers a greater understanding of National Curriculum levels, for example. Setting arrangements for pupils in Year 6 are effective in allowing teachers to plan appropriate work for each group and this is having a positive effect on raising standards.
39. Discussions with pupils and evidence from lessons show that many pupils are articulate and capable of speaking with confidence. The school has recognised that a significant number of pupils have below average speaking skills and has put effective strategies in place to improve this aspect of English. In most lessons, teachers ensure that boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are fully involved during whole class sessions through carefully targeted questioning. Although most pupils listen carefully enough to instructions in class lessons, they respond better when lessons are particularly interesting, questioning is brisk and they are given varied tasks, such as paired discussions. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher inspired all pupils to plan and deliver discussions using interviewing techniques. All pupils were engrossed in their work, spoke with confidence and listened to each other with respect, evaluating each discussion sensibly. These good attitudes are a common feature of all lessons. Pupils enjoy their lessons and many say English is their favourite subject.

40. The school has worked successfully to develop its reading resources. Classroom and library books are well chosen to ensure they address a range of interests, including those of boys. Books are carefully graded so that pupils can choose appropriate books for themselves and can progress in small steps. As a result, they grow in confidence and show high interest in reading. Planning for the teaching of letter-sound patterns has recently been introduced in Year 3 as a result of monitoring performance data and is already having an impact on pupils' reading. Pupils across the age and ability range are acquiring good skills in sounding out unfamiliar words and are not afraid to try, or to extend themselves. Pupils with special educational needs and those at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are given extra help and make good progress in small group reading sessions. Staff involved in additional literacy strategies are well trained to give good support to pupils' learning and many pupils benefit from this additional support and guidance. Reading homework is well established and is carefully monitored by teachers and most parents. Because of this recent focus on reading and the good quality extra help provided, pupils achieve well.
41. The school has recognised the need for a greater focus on developing pupils' writing and has begun to put effective procedures in place. There has been an inconsistent approach to the teaching of writing and even now teachers do not always expect enough from pupils in the quality or quantity of their written work. In lessons which are otherwise satisfactory, teachers focus for too long on a particular group and do not continue to rigorously teach and challenge all pupils as they work on group or individual tasks. As a result, some pupils, particularly higher achieving pupils, do not achieve as well as they could. The school has correctly identified weaknesses in handwriting, spelling and punctuation and there is an increased emphasis on these in English lessons. Standards in spelling are weak, but pupils are set homework tasks and are regularly tested, which is a positive step forward. Work seen in pupils' books across a range of subjects shows inconsistencies in practice and expectations over time.
42. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now supported by a well developed curriculum, which is helping to extend pupils' interest and raise standards. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is regularly tested and targets are set for individual pupils. Teachers take account of this information when planning tasks for groups of pupils with differing ability. Lessons are well planned with clear learning intentions. Teamwork is strong, with teachers and learning support assistants in each year group planning together, sharing ideas and evaluating the previous week's lessons.
43. The leadership and management of the school and the subject have been effective in raising standards. This is because the plans for improvement are based on thorough monitoring of teaching, pupil progress and a clear identification of the precise weaknesses in provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Recent improvements in information and communication technology are allowing pupils more time to improve their writing using computers. In its drive to raise standards the school now needs to look closely at how other subjects can contribute to pupils' writing and lessons in history, geography and religious education, for example, are structured to allow more time for pupils to write. Improving pupils' writing in English and across the curriculum is a key area for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching seen during the inspection was good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well.
- Standards of work seen are below average.
- Standards attained in National Curriculum tests in 2003 are very low although they have improved significantly this year.
- The more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Pupils are often unaware of exactly what they have to do to improve.
- The use of assessment information does not sufficiently inform teachers' planning.

Commentary

45. The standards attained in the 2003 tests taken by Year 6 pupils were very low and in the bottom five per cent nationally. There are strong indications that the 2004 test results are higher. The present Year 6 group work at higher standards than in recent years because of the success of newly introduced setting arrangements for mathematics. The pupils' standards in lessons are now below the national average. However, the pupils are capable of better still and their overall achievement remains unsatisfactory. There is no discernible difference in the achievement of boys and girls.
46. Teaching seen during the inspection was good and pupils achieve well in numeracy overall. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and the time given to mathematics each day means that pupils' learning is systematically built upon. Teachers are following the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy well and are successfully using the oral/mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons to improve pupils' confidence and help them to develop strategies for calculating. For example in a Year 3 class pupils moved easily from counting and multiplying in fives to multiplying by 50. In the most successful lessons, teachers make mathematics fun and pupils enjoy collaborating, as well as working independently, on tasks that match with their capabilities. In a good Year 5 lesson on calculating time, all pupils achieved well in tasks that ranged from calculating their age in hours to recognizing the time on an analogue clock.
47. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets, due to the good support they receive from learning support assistants. However some activities were pitched too low for more able pupils resulting in their achieving less well than they could have done. When looking at pupils' prior work, there were very few examples of using mathematics to solve problems and there is a heavy reliance on worksheets for younger pupils. This leads to insufficient opportunities for them to try out different approaches and to practise their own strategies. Pupils are not, therefore, given sufficient responsibility for their own learning in mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously but there are too few comments to pupils on how they can improve work.
48. Comprehensive procedures exist for tracking and assessing pupils' progress. These lead to targets which are shared with pupils but do not necessarily guide future planning and teaching. Most teachers have simple but effective systems in place for pupils to

reflect on how well they have understood a lesson. However, pupils' computational skills still require further development although the regular use of a systematic computer program by all years is having a significant effect and providing an effective way of assessing individual progress.

49. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has identified pupils' strengths and weaknesses from standardised tests and has shared these with teachers and support staff. She monitors planning and observes lessons. Her action plan is effective because it addresses the key areas needed to raise standards. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. There have been few opportunities, either planned or incidental, for pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge across other subjects taught at the school. As a result of this, pupils miss opportunities to reinforce their mathematical understanding or to practise the use of basic skills. This leads to some pupils having a less secure range of mathematical skills, limits their potential progress and leads to underachievement. The school should plan for the development of these opportunities.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

During the inspection there was no opportunity to see lessons in Year 6 although the school's timetable confirms that sufficient time is given to this year group. Provision was discussed with the subject leader, pupils' work was looked at and pupils were spoken to about their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen significantly this year although they are still below average.
- Good opportunities are now provided for pupils to develop investigative methods and skills.
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific technical language.
- Pupils' presentation of their work is poor overall.
- Assessment is not used well to change what is taught next.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

51. Pupils' standards on entry to the school have been well below average over recent years. These standards have been improving recently and pupils are now entering the school with average standards of attainment. Standards in the national tests last year were very low because there was a large number of pupils with special educational needs in the group taking the tests. However pupils have made the expected progress in relation to their prior attainment this year and the results are significantly better and have risen from well below average to below average. Achievement is now satisfactory overall but the quality of the presentation in pupils' books is poor. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
52. Good opportunities are beginning to be provided for pupils to develop investigative methods and skills. In scientific enquiry Year 5 pupils correctly describe the principles that make scientific testing fair and can clearly explain the need for repeating measurements to ensure the accuracy of their results. This builds well on work in Year 4, where pupils who were studying heat insulation could explain how to carry out a fair scientific test. Pupils have a basic understanding of materials and physical forces. They have less understanding of life processes. Year 6 pupils' written work shows they are given good opportunities to plan, carry out and make sense of their own investigations. No lessons were seen in Year 6 but teachers' planning and pupils' work since the start of the year show that standards are below average overall. Generally, the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the work they do. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection; although in the lessons seen, pupils are still attaining below average standards overall because teaching and learning are not monitored enough to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged.
53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They range from very good to poor in Year 4 and are satisfactory in Years 3 and 5. Teachers usually have a secure knowledge of the subject and they give precise explanations. As a result, pupils understand exactly what is required of them. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and good support is provided

for those pupils with SEN and EAL. Lessons usually proceed at a steady pace and, consequently, pupils concentrate appropriately making good use of the experiences offered. Pupils use equipment safely and co-operate well when working in a group. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the teacher provided pupils of all abilities with good opportunities to take responsibility for their own work. Some higher attaining pupils were able to explain how to plan a fair test and how to decide what to change and what to keep the same. The teacher shared the objectives of the lesson with all the pupils at the start so that they understood what they were meant to learn.

54. Teachers give good emphasis to scientific vocabulary and terminology although pupils' responses are sometimes too readily accepted and they are insufficiently challenged to remember the 'right' vocabulary. Whilst pupils' written work is marked regularly and supportive comments sometimes added, feedback sometimes does not indicate where pupils have been successful or where further improvements can be made.
55. Pupils with SEN and EAL receive good support from skilled and committed support staff who know them well. The support staff are briefed before lessons and this enables them to help these pupils to play a full part in the lesson and make good progress.
56. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The subject leader is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic and provides appropriate support for other teachers. However, she has too few planned opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in the subject and, consequently, her capacity to secure further improvement in science is limited. Assessment is not consistently used to change what is taught next.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The school's ICT technician makes a significant contribution to the subject.

Commentary

57. Pupils across the school reach the expected standards in ICT and all pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 6 pupils have experienced all aspects of ICT and can talk confidently about their work. Through a well planned curriculum they improve their knowledge and skills and build on these each year as they move up the school. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress and work confidently with ICT equipment and on the Internet. Some aspects of pupils' learning such as word-processing, graphics, research work and PowerPoint presentations are particularly strong. Pupils have, for example, produced business cards, found information about historical topics and science, drawn plans and produced a variety of graphs. Pupils have a good understanding of ICT applications although control technology and monitoring are not as well developed.
58. The quality of teaching is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to teach ICT confidently and demonstrate to pupils the correct procedures. There is a programme of continuous staff development so that all staff develop confidence in the use of new

equipment as it is purchased, such as the whiteboard, the digital cameras and devices for teaching control technology. Pupils are well managed and respond very positively to the opportunities offered to them. The subject is well led and managed by the deputy headteacher who has a very clear vision for the future and a detailed action plan to improve the provision even further. The school is already well equipped with good quality hardware and useful software that is used effectively by both staff and pupils. The use of data projectors has helped raise standards in ICT and make teaching more interesting. The school's standard assessment procedures provide a good ongoing record of pupils' learning.

59. There have been many good improvements since the last inspection. Expectations have risen considerably since then and the school has worked hard to keep pace with all the new demands and initiatives. Resources have been much improved and pupils now have much more time to develop and improve their knowledge and skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Although there has been an improvement in the use of ICT across the curriculum there is still plenty of scope for further development. Links to other subjects happen but are not always planned carefully enough. Research work using ICT in subjects such as history is proving to be useful and is reinforcing the pupils' skills in searching the Internet. The school is promoting the use of ICT in physical education. ICT programs to support learning for pupils with specific needs are also developing well and the school is constantly improving the available software to be used in numeracy and literacy lessons.

HUMANITIES

61. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with a small number of lessons seen in each. While no overall judgement about provision can be made, there is every indication that standards are below average in geography. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 during geography lessons show that many have little knowledge of significant places and environments such as continents and countries of the world. The school needs a greater range of maps and other resources to develop this area of pupils' learning. Indications are that standards in history are broadly average which is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning, based on national guidance, shows that the humanities curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched by visits within the local environment and visiting speakers. Pupils in Year 6, for example, interviewed parents about their memories of childhood during their '1960's Day'. Year 3 pupils tell how much they enjoyed and learned from the Roman Day with visiting performers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- The school has a multicultural week when visitors from 'other' religions come to the school although there are insufficient opportunities to learn about comparative religions during the year.

- There are too few opportunities in some classes for pupils to record their thinking and understanding.
- Teaching and learning are monitored insufficiently.

Commentary

62. Only two lessons were observed and a lot of the work covered centres around discussion, so there was limited work to examine in many classes. However, from the lessons seen in Year 3 and Year 4, a scrutiny of the available work and discussions with staff and pupils, there is every indication that standards of attainment remain in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as was the case at the time of the last inspection.
63. In Year 6 pupils demonstrate a basic understanding of Judaism and Christianity. Discussions show that they know that the Torah is the Jewish Holy Scripture and why the scrolls are sacred. However, most pupils are not yet linking religious teaching with everyday life, such as knowing that the Ten Commandments give us rules for living. Higher attaining pupils are able to articulate some reasons why people hold religious beliefs. They can also understand that people who do and do not hold religious beliefs may behave differently. By the end of Year 6, pupils have insufficient understanding of some of the other major faiths in the world, such as Hinduism and Islam.
64. In the lessons seen teaching was either satisfactory or good and pupils are gaining a sound understanding of Christianity and Judaism. In a satisfactory Year 4 lesson the teacher's appropriate range of activities helped to maintain pupils' interest and concentration on the tasks set and helped pupils to a deeper understanding and knowledge of their own and other's beliefs. In a good Year 3 lesson younger pupils learned about the different objects used in Christian worship. Artefacts and music were used inventively to create atmosphere and bring the lesson to life and draw out the pupils' own religious experiences.
65. Management of the subject is satisfactory. However, the co-ordinator does not have time to check the quality of teaching and learning across the school and there is no assessment policy so assessment cannot be used effectively to change what is taught next. Consequently, the opportunity to raise standards is restricted.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. Only one lesson was seen in the following subjects: art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about provision. In addition, inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils about what had been learned and looked at pupils' work from the past year.
67. It is evident from a review of teachers' planning, discussions with the subject co-ordinator, the parents' evening and the displays around the school that work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. The sound standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
68. From the time pupils start school, they are encouraged to experiment with paint and colour, to explore pattern, to work from observation and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them. Colourful displays of pupils' work are hung throughout the school. This

lively approach to art was evident in the work in Year 3 of a collage of spring flowers through to the detailed pastels of Wat Tyler Country Park by pupils in Year 6. There was good development of practical skills in a Year 4 class who had sculptured Maori fish hooks out of salt dough and colourful independence in their self-portraits in the style of Andy Warhol. This creative independence was taken further by Year 5 with their three-dimensional Egyptian pots, computer enhanced abstracts and aboriginal art which cleverly linked blow painting with symmetry. Pupils achieved well because of the teacher's expectations of what each of them could do. The subject co-ordinator plans the art curriculum well. However, there is no whole-school overview to monitor pupils' progress and assessment is informal and not used effectively to inform teachers what to teach next.

69. In **design and technology**, pupils' work is in line with expectations. Teachers' planning includes designing, making products and evaluating work. It shows that all pupils of a similar age have access to the same range of experiences. Examples of pupils' prior work shows that the design process is well established. They plan and select materials and evaluate their finished product suggesting possible improvements. By the time they reach Year 6, they have experienced food technology as well as making both hats and shelters. Pupils are encouraged to consider a range of existing products before making decisions about their own design. Sound links are made with other subjects, particularly art and science. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They listen carefully and responded to the teacher's questions in class discussions. They generally work co-operatively in pairs or small groups. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has correctly identified the progression of skills and the improvement of pupil and peer evaluation as areas for development.
70. **Music** does not currently have a high status across the school. All class teachers take their own classes for music but the subject is not taught in sufficient depth. There are no specialist music teachers on the staff and the headteacher understands that teachers need training and a new scheme of work to support their teaching. The school takes part in music festivals with other schools, pupils sing carols at a local residential home for the elderly and have opportunities to join the school choirs and to learn to play the recorder. These opportunities, together with school performances and visits to pantomimes, enrich pupils' experiences and support their social and cultural development.
71. Pupils appreciate all of the physical aspects of the **physical education** curriculum, especially the many clubs and are eager and willing participants. From the subject files and other documentation analysed, physical education is a strength of the school. All aspects of physical education are taught to pupils including games, gymnastics, dance, athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities. The use of ICT to improve teaching and learning has recently been effectively introduced. There are good links with other schools and agencies. The school has recently achieved Sport England's "Activemark" award, which recognizes the school's commitment to promoting physical activities. By Year 6 nearly all pupils can reach the national standard for swimming.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. Provision is good. The school has adopted a local scheme of work for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and adapted it well to meet the needs of the pupils. Appropriate attention is paid to sex and relationships education and to drugs education. PSHE lessons are timetabled in all classes. One lesson was seen in Year 3 and this was good. It was very well planned and encouraged speaking, listening and writing about exercise and why we take it. Although pupils' literacy skills were poor, they understood

the objectives of the lesson and made moral decisions about the dilemma posed. Pupils with SEN, including those with severe behaviour problems, were supported well and made good progress. Teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of each unit which helps the co-ordinator to monitor the provision across the school.

73. The PSHE programme is enhanced well by special events, such as the annual Friendship Week when the whole school undertakes activities in mixed age groups to encourage better relationships. There is also good use of visits and visitors, for example theatre groups give presentations about bullying and professional coaches from West Ham United Football Club talk to pupils about healthy living while coaching them in football skills. The co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, leads and manages the subject well. For example, she has mapped and developed the wider provision carefully to ensure that pupils have good opportunities for citizenship education. These include each class having a class council which meets regularly to discuss issues that are important to the pupils and which elects two representatives to take ideas forward to the school council. There are appropriate plans to develop PSHE provision further, such as holding a multicultural week and working towards the Healthy Schools award. Provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

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

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