

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLIAM AUSTIN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109560

Headteacher: Mr Ian Ward

Lead inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild

Dates of inspection: 12th - 14th July 2004

Inspection number: 258428

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: 480

School address: Austin Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
Postcode: LU3 1UA

Telephone number: (01582) 572 100
Fax number: (01582) 564 275

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Stan Boelman

Date of previous inspection: September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large junior school with 480 boys and girls, aged 7 to 11. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, but a significant number of pupils come from backgrounds that are socially – if not economically - disadvantaged. The school's population is ethnically very diverse. The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage; other main ethnic groups are Bangladeshi, Kashmiri, white British and black British/Caribbean. There are currently ten refugees or asylum seekers (who have joined the school with little or no English) and one traveller. Sixty-one pupils are supported through funding associated with ethnic minority achievement, and the one traveller child is supported through the Traveller Achievement Grant. For a very high percentage of pupils, English is not their first language and about a quarter are at early stages in English language acquisition. The most common first languages spoken are Urdu and Bengali. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs: 46 are supported through school action, 15 through school action plus, and six have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils' needs relate mainly to specific, moderate, physical, speech and communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Attainment on entry to the school at the beginning of Year 3 fluctuates a little from year to year; overall, prior attainment is well below average.

The school has gained a number of Healthy Schools Awards and has Investor in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15918	Margaret Julia Goodchild	Lead inspector	Special educational needs Religious education Art and design Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9748	Cliff Hayes	Lay inspector	
2901	Gulshan Kayembe	Team inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT)
30669	Margaret Sandercock	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Physical education
10053	Janet Simms	Team inspector	English Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 10
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10 - 17
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17 - 20
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	21 - 33
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Standards are below average overall but pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards in some subjects by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are good and the school has a very positive ethos. Pupils and parents are very satisfied with the education the school provides, and it is consistently oversubscribed. The headteacher and deputy head work very well together to ensure that the school is effectively led. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are that:

- Pupils achieve well in response to good teaching; standards are high in music but not as high as they could be in writing and speaking.
- Very good provision for care and personal development contributes to pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour: which, in turn, support their achievement.
- The school is led and managed well, with some very good management systems, and the governing body is closely involved in the work of the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; however, there are weaknesses in provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- Although there is some good assessment practice, not all teachers use assessment information well enough in matching work to pupils' prior attainment and tracking their progress.
- Homework does not make the contribution it should do to pupils' learning.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected, in September 1998. Most issues identified in the last inspection report have been resolved, but the school is continuing its work to raise standards in English, especially in writing.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. Most enter the school with well below average prior attainment and reach standards that are currently below average overall in Years 3 to 5. In National Curriculum tests in 2003, results were below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Test results showed that these pupils made good progress in mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, but poor progress in writing – which pulled down their overall achievement in English. Early indications from the 2004 tests show that standards have risen in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics and science, they are now close to the national average by Year 6. Very good teaching in Year 6 and careful targeting of individual pupils has enabled pupils to reach below average standards in writing and broadly average standards in reading.

Pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. They reach high standards in music, and do well in design and technology and physical education. Many also achieve well in reading, with very good progress by lower attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because their needs are identified precisely and they

receive very good support. Pupils of ethnic minority heritage make good progress overall and those who are at early stages in acquiring English as an additional language make rapid progress in speaking and listening and in writing. Provision does not, however, enable these same pupils subsequently to build on and refine their English language skills as well as they could. This is partly the result of weaknesses in assessing their ongoing needs and in the overall teaching of writing and speaking in Years 3 to 5.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and towards learning; their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory; most pupils attend regularly but a significant minority of parents take their children on extended holidays during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall and satisfactory in English. Assessment is satisfactory; there is some good practice but assessment is not used consistently in planning and tracking pupils' progress. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, with very good enrichment opportunities – especially in music and sport - and cares very well for its pupils. Partnership with parents is satisfactory; links with the community and with other educational establishments are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy head ensure that the school has a very positive ethos for learning and that all staff in posts of responsibility contribute significantly to self-evaluation and school development. As a result, teamwork is strong and the school has relatively stable staffing in an area where many schools suffer from major staff recruitment difficulties. Governors make a very good contribution through the way they support and challenge the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and fulsome in their praise for its work. Pupils are enthusiastic participants in activities and proud ambassadors for their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing, and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and speaking skills in a range of subjects.
- Improve provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- Ensure that all teachers match work closely to pupils' differing learning needs and have sufficiently high expectations, including in the amount and regularity of homework that is set.
- Further develop systems for assessing and tracking pupils' achievement;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that training takes place, as planned, on racial equality issues.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Most pupils enter the school with well below average prior attainment and reach standards that are currently below average overall in Years 3 to 5, but broadly average in most subjects – including mathematics, science, ICT and religious education - by the end of Year 6. In writing, standards are well below average until Year 6, where most pupils are currently performing below the national average. Pupils achieve well in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading but do not make as much progress as they could in writing and speaking in Years 3 to 5.
- Many pupils in Year 6 have made very good progress in English this year in response to a range of strategies for raising standards.
- Progress is good in mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, design and technology and physical education; it is very good in music.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because their needs are identified precisely and they receive very good support.
- The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good overall, but those who have moved beyond the early stages of acquiring English do not progress as well as they could in writing and speaking.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.9 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.7 (25.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.6 (28.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 118 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In 2003, National Curriculum tests in English at the end of Year 6 results fell significantly from the above average results in 2002 to well below average; they were also lower than the below average results gained in the two preceding years. Low results in writing pulled down the school's overall standards, and pupils did significantly better in reading than in writing. The newly available 2004 results show that the school's efforts to raise standards in English have led to an overall improvement by the time pupils leave, although writing results at Level 5 remain low for boys and girls. Girls outperformed boys significantly at Level 5 in reading; boys and girls reached average results at Level 4. In 2003, the school did not meet its targets in English, falling far short of predicted standards at Level 5. The improvement in results in 2004 mean that although the school has not met its overall target this year at Level 4 it has slightly exceeded it at Level 5.
2. In mathematics, Year 6 test results in 2002 improved on those of the two previous years and the above average standard was sustained in 2003, although the school fell far short of its target at Level 5. The 2004 results in mathematics show a significant further improvement. Results this year are close to the school's target at Level 4 and exceed it significantly at Level 5. Boys outperformed girls from 2001 to 2003 but the school's efforts to raise girls' attainment has met with success, with girls doing better than boys this year at Level 4 in mathematics.

3. In science, Year 6 test results rose to above average in 2002 then dropped to below average in 2003, but these results were an improvement on the well below average standards in 2000 and 2001. The school met its science targets in 2003 at Level 4 and Level 5. This year's results in science are well above those of 2003, especially at Level 4, and the school has exceeded its targets at Level 4 and Level 5. Reorganisation of the curriculum in science, with work matched closely to pupils' prior attainment, ensures that they make good progress and build systematically on their existing skills as they move through the school.
4. National Curriculum test results show a rising trend in standards in mathematics and science from 2000 to 2003 but an overall decline in pupils' attainment in English over the same years. The trend over time in Year 6 test results was broadly in line with the national trend overall from 1999 to 2003. In 2003, the progress pupils made from the beginning of Year 3 to the end of Year 6 was in line with that of similar schools nationally, based on pupils' prior attainment. They made more progress than pupils in similar schools in mathematics and science, but much less progress in writing.
5. The 2004 test results show that standards have now risen, although it is not yet possible to compare the school's performance with that of schools nationally. Inspection findings indicate that standards are broadly average by Year 6 in mathematics and science and below average in English, pulled down by a continued weakness in writing. The 2004 results indicate satisfactory progress overall in English in these pupils' time in the school - but with good progress in reading - and at least good progress in mathematics and science. Lower attaining pupils who took their National Curriculum tests in 2004 did very well in reading and relatively well in writing and mathematics. The highest attaining pupils gained their best results in mathematics and did well in reading and science.
6. Pupils' work and lessons observed show that pupils make good progress throughout the school in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education in response to good teaching, aided to a great extent by pupils' own very positive attitudes to learning. They reach high standards in music and do well in physical education: both subjects with a strong programme of enrichment activities. It was only possible to sample pupils' work in design and technology and personal, social and health education, but it is clear that their achievement is also good in these areas.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The combination of in-class support and intensive help from a team of skilled teaching assistants also ensures that their overall achievement is very good. This is particularly the case in reading, where some pupils have made dramatic improvements, for instance, improving their reading age by the equivalent of almost three years in as many months. This is because they receive very regular support with reading from the time they join the school. Pupils with special educational needs generally benefit when classes are grouped by ability, so that work is matched closely to their needs. Even where this is not the case, teaching assistants are adept at ensuring these pupils understand what is required of them and make sure that they work in a way that enables them to succeed. Many pupils with special educational needs perform much better in Year 6 tests than could have been predicted from their attainment on entry to the school.
8. From inspection observations there is no significant difference between the attainment and achievement of different ethnic groups. Setting arrangements show that all groups are represented in different sets, though the small number of black African / Caribbean pupils tend to be in the higher sets. These pupils generally have good speaking skills and this is reflected in their capacity to provide extended and fluent explanations about their work. Analysis of test results for 2003 shows some differences in attainment. For example, Bangladeshi pupils performed better in English at Level 4 than white, Pakistani or Kashmiri pupils. In particular, the school identified underperformance in mathematics by Asian girls; the increased focus on this group in the current year has helped to improve their attainment and achievement.

9. On the whole, pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and achieve well. Good teaching in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education and good support from teaching assistants, including bilingual assistants, helps to meet their needs effectively. Pupils' own very good attitudes to learning contribute in no small measure to their good achievement. Hence, pupils learning English as an additional language reach broadly similar standards to other pupils in these subjects by the end of Year 6. However, in English, progress is not as good. Whilst the few beginners in English, usually new arrivals to Britain, often make rapid progress in acquiring English, most others make slow progress in speaking and writing. The technical skills of reading develop effectively and this is helped by the school's overall good focus on reading. Most pupils with English as an additional language make reasonable progress in developing their skills of comprehension but often do not have sufficient oral confidence to explain character and plot in detail. Able and more fluent speakers of English as an additional language are not developing a sufficiently wide vocabulary and their written work, though largely grammatically correct, lacks vibrancy and flair. Spelling is a common weakness in written work because not enough attention is paid to displaying vocabulary and to ensuring that pupils enunciate and practise saying words they do not know properly. Hence, pupils spell what they think they have heard; for example, *rockwilder* instead of *rottweiler* and *libery* instead of *library* were noted in the work of Year 6 pupils.
10. In response to the 2003 results, the school introduced a range of strategies that have begun to take effect, as revealed by an improvement in 2004 results and very good progress evident in Year 6 English lessons seen during the inspection. It reorganised its setting system and promoted collaborative planning between teachers and teaching assistants. A new literacy co-ordinator was appointed to focus on correctly identifying pupils' attainment levels and raising standards. The school reviewed its teaching of writing with support from the local education authority, and targeted pupils attended extra classes on Saturday mornings. Most importantly, senior managers placed some of their best teachers in Year 6, which has had a positive effect on standards in mathematics and science this year, as well as in English. Nevertheless, raising standards further in writing – and to a lesser extent in speaking – is the central challenge that faces the school; at present, progress in writing is out of alignment with the school's good overall performance.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is very good; cultural development is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and towards learning, and their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' positive attitudes contribute strongly to achievement.
- Pupils behave very well in and out of lessons, and exclusions are very rare.
- Relationships are constructive and racial harmony exists.
- Spiritual development and self-awareness are very well promoted.
- Pupils respect others and distinguish easily right from wrong.
- Pupils are very responsible; they are model citizens of their school community.
- Pupils hold very positive views of the school.
- Not all parents make sufficient effort to ensure good attendance.

Commentary

11. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils make a powerful contribution to their learning. Pupils come to school with a very positive attitude and, in lessons, they are extremely interested and responsive. They participate well in all aspects of school life, and are polite and extremely courteous to staff and visitors. Relationships are very good and pupils do not suffer harassment. In class and at play, they mix happily in groups of various ethnic heritage. There were three permanent exclusions (all three pupils were involved in the same incident) and one

fixed-term exclusion in the most recent complete year, but there have been none in the current school year. Pupils readily accept responsibility and are keen to demonstrate their capabilities.

12. The school is very effective in promoting high standards of behaviour and positive relationships. Most teaching stimulates pupils' desire to learn, and pupils show an unusual readiness to co-operate: inappropriate behaviour rarely occurs. This means that pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment.
13. Pupils with English as an additional language have very good attitudes to learning and this supports their learning well. They pay very good attention to their teachers or support staff and co-operate fully with them. However, some pupils lack the confidence to speak and prefer to keep quiet or say little when asked questions. This becomes less marked as they move through the school. Behaviour amongst these pupils is very good and they demonstrate the same mature and thoughtful conduct as other pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are happy at the school and appreciate the support their teachers give them. Pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds get on well with one another.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last unit year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils currently on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	52	1	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	178	0	1
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	79	0	2

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

14. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. Religious education, literacy, personal, social and health education and other lessons all help pupils to acquire an awareness of, and curiosity about, the world and its people. They are also encouraged to reflect on their own feelings and values and to learn more about themselves. Meaningful assemblies make a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness and personal development. A strong feature of assemblies is the way pupils read out prayers that they have written.
15. The school promotes pupils' moral development very effectively. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and invariably choose the 'right way'. They respect teachers, support staff and one another, and understand that other people may hold differing views or beliefs.
16. Social development of pupils is very strong. They collaborate well in class, manage their school council well and willingly take on responsibilities for duties that will benefit the school community. They are active in providing help for the local community and are well aware of the responsibilities of citizenship. The school community is a very cohesive one with a superb ethos of care and an environment that supports learning. The pupils play a very important role in maintaining this community.
17. Pupils' cultural development is good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to participate in music and art, both in lessons and in out-of-class clubs. In subjects such as history and geography, pupils learn about other cultures and Britain's heritage. A range of religious festivals is celebrated and places of worship are visited.
18. Pupils hold strongly positive views about the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, the only area apparently causing significant concern was behaviour. When spoken to, all pupils confirmed that only a few were badly behaved and all expressed great satisfaction with the school. Indeed, pupils admitted to the school with emotional and behavioural difficulties are rapidly absorbed into the school's positive ethos by the pupils as well as the staff.

19. Attendance in the current school year is in line with the national average. The attendance in Year 6 is below average and this is where the highest level of extended holidays in school time occurs. The school is working hard to discourage parents from taking their children – mostly Asian – on holidays during term time, as absence for this reason equates to almost one per cent of total attendance. It has met with limited success to date. Punctuality to school is satisfactory; to lessons, it is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	0.7
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.

20. Since the previous inspection, behaviour, attitudes, ethos, relationships and personal development have remained very good. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, with very good enrichment activities. It cares very well for its pupils. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Links with the community and with other educational establishments are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in most subjects, including mathematics, science, ICT and religious education; they are satisfactory overall in English, although some of the best teaching is found in English in Year 6. Assessment is satisfactory; there is some good practice but also a need for further improvement in the way some teachers use assessment information.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many teachers ensure that pupils are given work that is interesting and engages them as enthusiastic learners.
- Teaching is good in most subjects; the best teaching, as well as that which is only just satisfactory, is found in English.
- Homework does not make the contribution it should do to pupils' learning.
- The school makes increasing use of assessment data in raising standards; not all teachers use assessment information well enough in matching work to pupils' prior attainment.
- Pupils' special educational needs are identified precisely because the assessment of these pupils is very good.
- The performance of ethnic minority pupils is analysed appropriately; there are some weaknesses in assessing the language development of pupils learning English as an additional language.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	13 (26%)	21 (41%)	16 (29%)	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.

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. This enables pupils to enter the school with well below average attainment and reach broadly

average standards in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education by the time they leave. In music, it enables them to reach above average standards and in physical education it ensures that they meet with a good level of success in competitive sport. Teachers in almost all areas of the curriculum have good subject knowledge and those who co-ordinate subjects invariably provide at least good support to their colleagues. Work is usually motivating and varied and introductions are clear. Learning objectives are shared with pupils to ensure that they understand what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson, and where this practice is at its best, teachers share success criteria with pupils. Demonstrations involve pupils and this helps them to focus on the lesson. Small whiteboards are often used to check pupils' understanding and to provide pupils with opportunities to practise skills.

22. High expectations regarding behaviour are apparent throughout the school. Partly as a result, the attitudes of pupils are very good and their commitment to learning is often exemplary. The vast majority of pupils work hard, listen with great attention and co-operate very well with staff. They work together very effectively, often helping and supporting one another. They apply themselves to their tasks enthusiastically so that there is a very good ethos for learning and no time is wasted.
23. Where lessons are good or very good, high expectations are evident in the work that pupils are given, so that tasks challenge them and are well linked to work done before. In lessons that are only satisfactory, assessment information is not used as much as it should be to match work to pupils' individual needs. Pupils are grouped by ability in English and mathematics, and different work is given to each class, but there is a tendency for all pupils within a class to receive the same work. More able pupils can mark time as a result. When pupils are in mixed ability classes, teachers increasingly identify what higher, average and lower attaining pupils should be able to do by the end of the lesson. Only in the best lessons are higher attaining pupils given the extension task instead of that completed by the rest of the class; they usually only have the opportunity to undertake work directly matched to their prior attainment when they have completed easier work first.
24. There has been a considerable amount of staff training to raise standards in speaking and listening, and some focused training in writing and marking. This has led to an improvement in English National Curriculum test results this year. Teaching is less good in English than in most other subjects, however, and this goes a good way to explaining why – despite a range of initiatives - the school has not yet been able to bring English standards in line with those in mathematics and science. Much of the teaching in English is just satisfactory in Years 3 to 5, with very good teaching in Year 6. Few teachers promote literacy as well as they should throughout the curriculum, and monitoring needs to be more rigorous in picking up weaknesses in Years 3 to 5. There is clearly scope for the school to use the very good practice in Year 6 as a model for English teaching throughout the school, and it now intends to place greater emphasis on these earlier years. The best lessons show excellent practice in teachers' use of the literacy hour, enabling all pupils to develop a good balance of skills whilst enjoying their learning, and there are some very good opportunities for writing in other subjects when teaching is very effective. The literacy manager is an excellent teacher, capable of raising standards in writing throughout the school and serving as a role model of best practice for other staff.

Example of outstanding practice

By the end of an English lesson in Year 6, pupils were on fire with pride and enthusiasm when they read out the kennings that they had written based on characters in *Wind in the Willows*.

The teacher's excellent, probing questioning pushed pupils to deepen their thinking as they contributed their perception of the different characters: this gave rise to the use of varied vocabulary and brought pupils to a much more rounded perspective on each animal. Pupils' prior attainment was taken into careful account in the characters they were asked to write about and success criteria were shared with pupils: to take details from the text, make inferences and seek to write in rhyming couplets. Teaching was both practical, in the strategies for achieving rhyme, and inspirational - in referring to pupils as the 'key' to unlock the 'treasure chest' of words in the thesaurus. They were urged to use all their senses as they searched for precise descriptions. Pupils worked extremely productively, higher attaining pupils discovering words such as 'caress', 'instigate' and 'languish'. The teacher was very precise in her communication as she stressed the importance of producing a 'high quality' poem, and her probing advice and questioning pushed pupils to make maximum use of 'the most interesting words' they could possibly find. As pupils discussed their ideas animatedly in pairs, putting words together and building their kennings, line by line, there was a tangible buzz of excitement. The full impact of the teacher's energy and skill - and the excellent progress the pupils had made - was more than apparent when pupils read out their highly imaginative kennings, many capturing the exact traits of the characters.

25. Where teaching is good or better, pupils with English as an additional language benefit as well as other pupils and make good progress: this is the case in most subjects. Teaching assistants, including bilingual assistants, provide good support to those still learning English, and target particularly those who are beginners or who have special educational needs as well. The home language is used well by bilingual assistants to help pupils understand the topics they are studying as well as to help them to develop skills in English. Teachers have been ensuring that they focus on, and hence more actively include, Asian girls in mathematics lessons this year to help improve their achievement.
26. The quality of teaching by support teachers promotes some progress amongst pupils with English as an additional language, but there are some important weaknesses. These include limited opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills or to work independently. Support teachers spend too much time talking in lessons and not enough time enabling pupils to explain their ideas or give extended answers to questions. There is insufficient use of special resources or different work matched to these pupils' English language learning needs, and this hinders progress in lessons that are only satisfactory. In good or better lessons, teachers ensure that they give sufficient attention or support to pupils learning English, or direct teaching assistants to do so. Few teachers pay sufficient attention to displaying relevant vocabulary or correcting misspellings when marking work.
27. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in class, because teachers are generally sensitive to their needs. For example, in an English lesson in Year 3, they were given a similar worksheet to the rest of the class, but their worksheet included symbols as well as words to ensure that they understood. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning, for example, through patient explanations of 'learning intentions' to lower attaining pupils and others, so that they know what to do. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual targets through regular individual or small group sessions when teaching assistants provide intensive help with tasks that relate directly to their individual education plans. Much of the focus of special educational needs support is to develop basic literacy and numeracy skills, and there are language groups in each year to develop communication skills. Teachers work closely with external specialists to ensure that learning is made accessible to pupils with special educational needs such as autism and speech and language difficulties. The many learning resources for use with pupils with special educational needs are easily accessible to teachers and teaching assistants.
28. Some opportunities for independent learning were observed during the inspection and many pupils, especially higher attainers, grasp this challenge readily. Older pupils are given insufficient homework, however, to develop these skills further or to consolidate their learning.

This is a missed opportunity to raise standards, especially in writing. Parents express concern about lack of homework, particularly in preparation for the move to secondary school, and the inspection team found that homework falls short of national recommendations in Years 5 and 6. These pupils are given typically two pieces of homework a week, whereas national guidance suggests that they should have 30 minutes homework every day in Years 5 and 6.

29. The school makes increasing use of assessment data in its efforts to raise standards and there is some good practice, including close liaison with the adjoining infant school. The deputy head - who is the assessment co-ordinator - undertakes thorough analysis of the results of National Curriculum tests and of the ongoing tests that the school uses to monitor pupils' progress. She passes detailed assessment information to class teachers. Assessment information is used to identify the needs of groups of pupils, for instance, to pinpoint those pupils who are likely to need additional support in order to reach Level 4 in Year 6 tests. This has helped the school to raise standards this year in its National Curriculum tests. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics, but the school has rightly identified the need to strengthen its target setting and tracking of individual pupils. Teachers' use of targets is inconsistent at present. The school is taking part in a local education authority programme for raising standards, which has led to the targeting of individual pupils for additional support, giving rise to particularly good progress for those concerned. A start has been made in involving pupils in their own self-assessment as a further part of the programme. Where teaching is at its best, this system is already partly in use.
30. As a result of the school identifying the need for staff training, teachers are becoming more aware of how to assess pupils' attainment precisely in writing. They were already confident in judging standards in reading and numeracy. The beginning of an assessment system is in place in ICT but this needs further development. In religious education, teachers have begun to assess pupils' work using levels of attainment, aligned with the new Locally Agreed Syllabus. There is limited assessment in non-core subjects and the school has identified this as an area for development. Though pupils receive a good deal of verbal feedback in lessons and marking is regular, there is relatively little written guidance to pupils on how they could improve their work. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers are beginning to make pupils aware of whether they have met the learning intention by which their work will be marked.
31. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very effective. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises closely with the infants' school when pupils move up at the beginning of Year 3. Information about pupils' special educational needs that is passed on from their previous school is supplemented by a series of tests, which are also used to check any other pupils who might have some degree of learning difficulty. These tests include the standardised cognitive ability tests that all pupils take when they join the school, together with specialised tests for spelling, visual and auditory discrimination, visual and auditory memory, a full language assessment and a baseline numeracy assessment. This comprehensive approach to identifying pupils' needs means that support can be targeted very precisely, and that individual education plan targets are consistently specific and measurable. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is regularly tracked in terms of the National Curriculum levels at which they are working, through frequent reading tests, termly reviews of their individual education plans and ongoing observations. Where necessary, the school makes appropriate use of external specialists in assessing pupils' needs. Furthermore, a significant number of other pupils are monitored and supported who do not have an identified special need but who might be in danger otherwise of underachieving; this is a particular strength in provision.
32. The school helpfully analyses data by ethnicity and compares the performances of different ethnic groups against performance of these groups across the local education authority. Appropriate action is taken where significant underperformance by any group is identified. For example, the increased focus on Asian girls in mathematics this academic year is helping to improve their overall attainment across the school. The level of linguistic competence is assessed annually for pupils learning English as an additional language and their Year 2

National Curriculum test results are analysed when pupils join the school in Year 3 to identify potential need. However, there is no system for setting targets or identifying the areas where improvement is needed. Class teachers do not, therefore, have any specific information to help them plan suitable work for pupils with English as an additional language.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, with very good enrichment, especially in music and sport. The accommodation is very good and learning resources support the curriculum well. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad and balanced curriculum is complemented by a range of enrichment activities and a strong personal, social and health education programme.
- Insufficient attention is paid to promoting pupils' literacy skills in a range of subjects.
- The school makes some provision for gifted and talented pupils; their needs are not yet fully considered in curriculum planning.
- Aspects of curriculum provision for pupils with English as an additional language are good; more needs to be done to ensure that their needs are fully met.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school is well staffed and well resourced; accommodation is very good.

Commentary

33. As at the time of the last inspection, the school provides a broad, balanced curriculum that meets National Curriculum requirements, together with a wide range of enrichment activities. Opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside lesson time are particularly good in music and sport, and also include a number of clubs (from geology to Latin). Learning is brought alive by educational visits, including residential experiences for pupils in Years 5 and 6, and the stimulation that comes from welcoming visitors into the school. An excellent personal, social and health education and citizenship programme has been developed, and the curriculum in religious education reflects the Locally Agreed Syllabus closely. There is no whole-school policy for the promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, however, and whilst the development of pupils' numeracy skills in a range of subjects is satisfactory, the school does not foster pupils' literacy skills sufficiently across the curriculum as a whole.
34. The school has appointed a co-ordinator for gifted and talented pupils and has identified a number of pupils who would benefit from additional challenge. There is a club especially for them and they have been given opportunities to take part in special projects and visits. In science, a club for the most able pupils provides a wide range of challenging activities perfectly suited to their needs and they are given the opportunity to achieve Young Investigator Awards, of which they are very proud. At present, provision for gifted and talented pupils is made mainly through enrichment opportunities, however, and most teachers have not had training in how to identify pupils who might be gifted and talented. The establishment of a top set in English and mathematics has gone some way to meeting the needs of the most able pupils. More work needs to be done now to ensure that the needs of these pupils are written into all schemes of work, so that they are consistently given tasks in lessons that are matched to their capabilities and needs.
35. Pupils with English as an additional language are given satisfactory access to the curriculum through the support they receive from teaching assistants and class teachers, especially where the quality of teaching is good or better. Whilst the setting arrangements work reasonably well in mathematics and science to support pupils learning English, the school is not yet systematically placing abler pupils who are at earlier stages of learning English in higher ability sets. Furthermore, being in low sets in English means that they tend to miss out on hearing spoken English modelled well. However, booster classes, bilingual assistants and

one-to-one support are being used well to help improve English language competency. Withdrawal of pupils for specialist or additional support is very judiciously used and, wherever possible, pupils learning English are supported in lessons. The Saturday morning booster classes for borderline pupils were well attended by pupils from minority ethnic groups. These have supported their improved attainment in tests in Year 6 this year. Additionally, pupils learning English as an additional language have opportunities to take part in story sessions based on texts in their home languages.

36. As already stated, pupils with special educational needs receive very good support, which ensures that they are able to access the curriculum and meet with a very good level of success. The combination of in-class support with intensive help individually or in small groups ensures that pupils build continuously on their prior attainment. Social skills groups, run by the learning mentor, and various other specialist groups provide additional support to those pupils with learning difficulties who need it.
37. The school is well staffed by a committed team of teachers and teaching assistants. Learning resources meet most curriculum needs effectively, and the library supports pupils' learning well through a good collection of fiction and non-fiction books. The school has a number of bilingual books and books written in other languages. Although existing computers are supporting learning well, senior managers have rightly recognised the need to update ICT resources and are planning for ways in which the new, more up-to-date equipment will be used when it arrives in September. The imminent arrival of nine interactive whiteboards should provide many more opportunities for teachers to use ICT as part of everyday teaching and learning. Accommodation is very good: classrooms are spacious and made attractive by displays of pupils' work. This supports the school's very good ethos and means that pupils work in a positive learning environment that promotes good achievement. The school grounds provide ample opportunity for sport and play.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very well for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Pupils receive good support, advice and guidance. The school has good processes for seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very strong caring ethos provides a very good learning environment.
- Medical and health and safety arrangements are comprehensive.
- Personal support for pupils is very strong.
- The school council is an effective medium for airing pupils' views.

Commentary

38. The school has a strong caring ethos and this is reflected in the very good arrangements made to ensure pupils' wellbeing. The school pays good attention to ensuring pupils' safety and has received four Healthy Schools Awards. Midday supervisors are trained and knowledgeable, and staff are well aware of child protection procedures. There are ample qualified first-aiders and there is a well-equipped medical room.
39. Pupils are supported effectively and receive good advice and guidance, especially with regard to their personal development. Beginning with the very good induction to the school, pupils are well known to staff, who are always available to discuss concerns. A feature much appreciated by pupils is the 'worry box', a means of raising their concerns, anonymously if they wish. There is also a learning mentor, who provides valuable support for underachieving pupils.
40. Academic support is satisfactory overall; parents and pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their pupils' progress. Pupils appreciate the help they get from teachers, though this

would be enhanced if class work were consistently based on assessment information in order to match it to individual needs.

41. Pupils with English as an additional language are well looked after and their personal development needs are well monitored and supported. However, monitoring of academic progress is not as rigorous as it might be and advice and guidance is very general. For example, pupils learning English have the same half-termly targets as other pupils and no separate targets based on their English language learning needs. In contrast, the academic and personal progress of pupils with special educational needs is closely monitored, and links with a good range of external agencies underpins the support provided by the school.
42. The school values the opinions of pupils. Surveys are conducted and the school council is used as a vehicle for pupils to communicate their views. The school takes this seriously and the governing body is made aware of the issues raised. Action has been taken on a number of these issues and pupils appreciate the opportunity to contribute to school development. School councillors take their role seriously and pupils conducted a school council meeting very effectively during the inspection.
43. Since the previous inspection, the way the school cares for pupils has remained very good. The academic and personal support is now rated good rather than very good, with some potential areas for development in academic support.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. There are good links with the local community. Liaison with other schools and colleges is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents receive many opportunities for consultation but not all parents feel able to work closely with the school.
- General information to parents is good; progress reports could be further improved.
- Although most parents are less active than they might be in supporting their children's learning, they send their children to school with very helpful attitudes and a willingness to behave appropriately.
- Parents hold very positive opinions about the school.
- Community visits and visiting speakers contribute well to the curriculum.
- The school works effectively in partnership with other educational establishments.

Commentary

44. Improving the partnership with parents of ethnic minority pupils has been identified as a priority for development. For many parents, whose first language is not English, full involvement in the school is difficult. The school takes a number of steps to overcome this, with simplified communication, English lessons for parents, many consultation evenings, translation services and the headteacher's 'open door' policy. The learning mentor is instrumental in working to strengthen links with parents, but the school could do more targeted work – through its staff who support pupils with English as an additional language - to inform and involve the parents of pupils who are learning English.
45. General information to parents, for example, in the school brochure, governors' report to parents and newsletters, is good. Pupils' progress reports have been simplified in order to make them more easily readable and they are clear and well laid out. Whilst there is considerable information about what pupils can do, reports do not make clear to parents whether pupils are reaching the expected standard and targets are sometimes imprecise.
46. Parents are well informed about day-to-day aspects of their children's education. They receive timely data on, for example, attendance, accidents, special educational needs reviews and

targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator has provided parents with valuable information and materials to enable them to help their children at home. The school ensures that a copy of each pupil's individual education plan targets is sent home to their parents, who have the opportunity to discuss the targets at the consultation evening that is held each term. Parents are not necessarily involved, however, in reviewing and setting new targets, because this process is not always aligned with the timing of consultation evenings. Pupils are consulted when individual education plan targets are reviewed and new ones set, but the school does not entirely fulfil the recommendations of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs in the extent to which parents are involved currently in this process.

47. Most parents ensure that their children arrive at school eager to learn and ready to be co-operative with teachers: both factors contribute significantly to the school's very positive ethos. Parental attendance at consultation and other evenings is good, and parents support the school well through activities organised by the Friends of William Austin.
48. Parents hold very positive views about the school. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting were fulsome in their praise for the school, except for concern expressed by some parents about the amount of homework that is set. The pre-inspection questionnaire - which was returned in good numbers - was overwhelmingly positive, showing mild concern only about bullying. Some further parents expressed in writing their concern about the amount of homework that is set. Inspectors agreed with most of the positive views expressed, though they felt that improvements were needed in progress reports and homework arrangements. Inspection findings support the view of the large majority of parents who do not feel that their children are bullied or harassed.
49. The school enjoys good and constructive links with the local and wider communities. Several trips during the school year enhance the curriculum, while visitors contribute to, for example, assemblies, citizenship and drugs education. Pupils give concerts and harvest parcels to local senior citizens, and a wide range of local groups, including a youth group, makes use of the school's facilities. The school makes community provision for adult education, with a weekly language class for Asian parents.
50. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary education are satisfactory overall, and good for pupils with special educational needs. One local school provides Year 7 'taster' lessons at William Austin and both main receiving schools offer full-day induction programmes. Links with the adjacent infant school ensure very effective induction to the junior school, though curricular links are not as strong as might be expected. The school has good links with its neighbouring secondary school and with colleges of higher education, particularly teacher training establishments. In support of initial teacher training, the school works in partnership with De Montfort University and the Shire Foundation, and it works with the Education Business Partnership by providing work experience placements.
51. Whereas partnership with parents was good at the last inspection, it is now satisfactory because the school has itself identified the need to work in closer partnership with the parents of ethnic minority pupils. It is seeking ways to do so and there are further strategies that could be tried. Community links are good now rather than very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, which ensures that pupils achieve well overall. The complementary skills of the headteacher and deputy head ensure that the school has a very positive ethos for learning and that all staff in posts of responsibility contribute significantly to self-evaluation and school development. Governors make a very good contribution through the way they support and challenge the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Coherent systems have been put in place to empower staff in posts of responsibility and to ensure that the school is led and managed well.
- Monitoring and evaluation are thorough, but they could be more rigorous.
- The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There are weaknesses in the arrangements for the co-ordination of English as an additional language.
- Governors are closely involved in the work of the school.

Commentary

52. The headteacher is committed and caring. He has strong interpersonal skills and is very effective in delegating, empowering and developing his staff. This has resulted in particular in the development of a very strong middle management structure. Having heads and assistant heads of year does much to strengthen the leadership and management of the school, drawing teachers and teaching assistants together in coherent teams. The impact of this is particularly evident in very good provision for pupils' care and in the very positive ethos. The deputy head undertakes a considerable amount of analysis of data and works very well with other key staff in an effort to raise standards. The direct effect of this is evident in the improved standards in the 2004 National Curriculum tests, but more needs to be done to raise standards further in English – which the school has already identified as a priority. The establishment of a senior leadership team – an extended version of the senior management group – means that a number of teachers with responsibilities have the opportunity to work together on school improvement. The role of subject co-ordinators is very well developed – those with leadership and management responsibilities for subjects have undertaken a significant amount of training, so that they are able to lead their subjects well and regularly monitor provision. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good opportunities for professional development, and performance management makes a good contribution to school development. New teachers and assistants go through a thorough induction process. As a result of these features, teamwork is strong and the school has relatively stable staffing in a town where many schools suffer from major staff recruitment difficulties.
53. The day-to-day organisation of the school is very efficient and it is managed well. There have been some very strategic appointments, most notably the literacy manager in order to raise standards in English, and deployment of the strongest staff where their skills are most needed to improve National Curriculum test results. Systems for monitoring the school's work and evaluating its effectiveness are good overall. As a result, senior staff are well informed about what is going on in the school. A substantial amount of monitoring takes place, including lesson observation by senior and middle managers, checking of pupils' work and teachers' planning. This has led the school to identifying many areas for development and taking necessary action, especially through involvement in various initiatives for raising standards and providing staff development. Through the detailed feedback that they receive, for instance, when their teaching has been observed, teachers are given a great deal of support in improving the quality of their work. The school does not analyse the findings from monitoring as much as it could, however, and there is a need to sharpen the impact of evaluation on teachers' practice in some areas. This is particularly the case at present in relation to English in Years 3 to 5 and provision for English as an additional language. School improvement planning is comprehensive, including that for the development of subjects. There is an appropriate emphasis on raising standards, and senior managers are creative in considering possible innovations - such as single sex groups in mathematics – as a means of improving school effectiveness.
54. Special educational needs provision is led and managed very well by an experienced and well qualified co-ordinator, who has high expectations of her pupils and the team of teaching assistants. As a member of the senior leadership team, she is in a good position to ensure that special educational needs has a high profile in the school and that other staff understand the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and how to cater for them. Teaching assistants

have very good opportunities to gain additional qualifications and undertake regular training; a number are in the process of working towards qualified teacher status. The special educational needs co-ordinator also ensures that class teachers are suitably trained to meet needs such as those associated with dyslexia and autism. She monitors the work of teachers and teaching assistants through some in-class observation and regular detailed tracking of pupils' progress, thus identifying any potential areas for development and checking that special educational needs funding is used as effectively as possible.

55. The school leadership shows good awareness of the backgrounds of pupils and the differences in performance or attainment of different ethnic groups. It has used this information well to target Asian girls in order to improve their mathematical capability. The school is aware also of the need to improve provision for pupils learning English as an additional language but is currently hampered by the lack of a co-ordinator for managing this area. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection; the school has made various attempts to appoint a co-ordinator and the deputy head is currently overseeing provision. English as an additional language support teachers have undertaken training on developing their role and the school is trying to use them to model good practice for all. However, these teachers themselves do not have sufficient understanding of what is currently considered best practice nationally. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the work of teaching assistants, including bilingual assistants, and they are well deployed to support pupils learning English. They enable pupils to make good progress in a number of subjects, including mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. The school is aware that provision for pupils with English as an additional language is an area that requires development. The lack of day-to-day co-ordination required to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met and to put in place systems and procedures to guide the work of all staff means, however, that leadership and management in this area is not satisfactory at present. Teachers need training in supporting pupils with English as an additional language, and further training is planned for next term. The finance received through the ethnic minority achievement grant is used mainly to fund staff posts. It is used appropriately for its intended purpose, but the vital link between improving provision in English as an additional language and raising standards in writing and speaking has not informed decisions sufficiently.
56. Governance is very good. The chair of governors has a very close relationship with the school and, as a Baptist minister, contributes to assemblies as well as being present frequently around the school. This has a positive impact on the school's very good ethos and on pupils' personal development. He attends parents' consultation meetings and makes himself readily available to parents at other times. There is a full complement of parent governors and other governors are experienced and, in many cases, long-serving. Individual governors readily take up the training provided by the local education authority, so that they have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors are closely involved in discussions about the school's performance and have an understanding of how to compare the school's effectiveness with other schools. They challenge senior managers and ask pertinent questions about key points - such as those surrounding the National Curriculum test results - as well as being active participants in school development. As a result, governors are able to identify the school's main strengths and weaknesses, talking about them in detail. They are linked to particular curricular areas and make regular visits: so much so, that 'governor visits' is an agenda item at governing body meetings. Subject co-ordinators have begun to make presentations to the governing body and feel that they have a 'direct line' to governors. Good attention is paid to aspects of best value, and systems for financial management are good. Almost all statutory requirements are fully met. The only exception is that training to support the school's racial equality policy has not yet taken place; it is planned for next term and the policy itself has been agreed by governors.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,337,211
Total expenditure	1,349,076
Expenditure per pupil	2,768

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	92,110
Balance carried forward to the next year	80,245

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the 2003 National Curriculum tests were well below average.
- Because of very good teaching during the current Year 6, the standard of work for pupils who are about to leave has improved considerably.
- Pupils' listening is good, but many teachers do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to speak using formal, structured language.
- Achievement in reading is good, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards in all aspects of writing remain low for many pupils in Years 3 to 5.
- The leadership of the subject is good; the co-ordinator provides an excellent role model for the teaching of literacy and has the capacity to raise standards in English throughout the school.

Commentary

57. Results in 2003 national tests in Year 6 fell sharply from the above average standards in the previous year and were well below average. This was partly because the pupils who took tests in 2003 had lower prior attainment on entry to the school than those who took the tests in 2002. Standards in English were markedly below those in mathematics and science in 2003, and pupils underachieved based on their attainment on entry to the school. Their performance was well below that of similar schools based on prior attainment in Year 2 tests, particularly at Level 5. Standards were better in reading, but very low standards in writing depressed pupils' overall results. In the current Year 6, standards are higher than in 2003 as a result of these pupils making very good progress in the past year in response to very good teaching. The 2004 test results show that standards in Year 6 are now average in reading and below average in writing. This shows that the many initiatives the school has introduced to raise standards have begun to take effect. Despite the high priority now placed on writing, this continues to be pupils' weakest area and standards are still well below average in Years 3 to 5, where achievement in writing is only satisfactory. Weaknesses in provision for pupils with English as an additional language, mentioned elsewhere in the report, impact adversely on overall standards in literacy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons where they are supported by teaching assistants and very good progress when they are withdrawn for intensive support on their individual education plan targets.
58. Pupils are generally good at listening and respond well on occasions when teachers present them with structured opportunities to listen actively. Standards of speaking are generally much lower than those in listening. This is partly because significant numbers of pupils are learning English as an additional language and because opportunities to speak at length are not promoted often enough. Teachers have undergone training on this in the past year and pupils are frequently given opportunities to work in pairs. Whilst this represents good practice, it necessarily means that pupils often work with others who have limited speaking skills. In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for paired work but ensure that considerable emphasis is placed on pupils discussing their ideas in the class as a whole, where the teacher is able to deepen pupils' thinking and extend their vocabulary by asking pertinent questions and clarifying any misunderstandings. This was evident in the best English lessons, especially in Year 6.
59. Reading is stronger than other aspects of English. Pupils achieve well in reading and standards broadly match the expectations for pupils' ages. This constitutes good progress for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and many pupils with special

educational needs, who have additional literacy help, have made exceptional progress in reading. Pupils' skills in reading support their learning in other subjects and by the time they leave, pupils invariably read with fluency and expression.

60. The standard of pupils' writing on entry to the school is usually well below average and writing is the weakest of pupils' English skills. The absence of clear whole-school procedures to promote writing leads to inconsistent provision and means that pupils do not learn key aspects well enough, or early enough. Handwriting, for example, is a key weakness, with many teachers ignoring poor practices in technique and not promoting good ones. At another level, spelling is weak because there is no effective policy applied throughout the school for the teaching of spelling. Marking is not good enough to provide pupils with understanding about how to improve any of these elements of their writing. Teachers' current use of targets is also variable. The content of lower and some average attaining pupils' writing is often very short, partly because they sometimes copy lengthy 'learning intentions' before they begin a writing task. These sentences often include vocabulary that some pupils do not understand. Nevertheless, there is some imaginative and competent writing in Year 6 and by higher attaining pupils in other years. Teaching assistants work very effectively with pupils with special educational needs and also provide support to those learning English as an additional language.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is very good and excellent practice in teaching, particularly in Year 6, but it is not found in all years. Recent very good exemplification of best practice has not improved the overall quality of teaching enough yet. The best lessons show excellent practice in teachers' use of the literacy hour, enabling all pupils to develop a good balance of skills whilst enjoying their learning. Weaknesses common elsewhere include teachers planning insufficiently for the wide range of abilities in their English sets. The parallel 'middle' sets include pupils with very differing needs: use of unadapted, commercially produced materials does not meet the needs of many of these pupils effectively.
62. The leadership of English is good – its impact seen at present mainly through raised standards in Year 6 - and the co-ordinator has the potential to become outstanding. In an effort to raise standards following the 2003 National Curriculum tests, the school introduced a range of valuable initiatives and took the very good strategic decision to appoint a literacy manager, who has become a member of the senior team. A number of the strongest teachers were placed in Year 6 in an effort to raise standards in pupils' final year. These initiatives have resulted in very good teaching and learning in Year 6 and improved test results this year. Very good leadership is evident in the way weaknesses have been overcome in Year 6 and these teachers work together very effectively. The literacy manager provides an excellent role model for the teaching of the subject and has the capacity to transform the teaching of English throughout the school. Most of the issues detailed in this report have been identified and prioritised, but there is much to do to raise standards in Years 3 to 5. Management of English at school level is satisfactory but has not yet resulted in sufficient consistency of approach in all years to resolve issues of underachievement in writing. Raising standards in writing in all years is partly a question of time – and the school is tackling this systematically - but also requires all staff to make this their priority, backed up by specific whole-school procedures.
63. Standards on entry have fallen since the time of the previous report. Attainment in English across the school has fallen, especially in writing. In Year 6, because of recent improvement, standards this year match those described in the last report. Given this recent, stronger achievement in Year 6, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. The promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory, except in Year 6 and where teaching is at its best. The school has taken part in special events, such as 'book week', but does not have a literacy policy to inform teachers about what is expected in order to promote literacy in all subjects. Although reading skills are sufficiently well developed for most pupils to understand the texts they are required to read in subjects, writing is weak in many

pupils' work. Handwriting, spelling and other technicalities of writing need consistent reinforcement and development across the curriculum if pupils are to improve their overall standards. The school library is much improved and provides a pleasant, quiet environment, with a good book-stock to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. This has a good effect on pupils' achievement in a number of subjects and is to be developed further through timetabled library sessions next year.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of their very good attitudes, the good opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in lessons and clear introductions to topics.
- Whilst setting arrangements support pupils' learning and achievement well, match of work to pupils' individual needs within sets requires further development.
- Good co-ordination of the subject has helped to address key weaknesses so that performance in National Curriculum tests improved significantly in 2004.
- Though teachers refer to key mathematical vocabulary, opportunities are missed to have it displayed for pupils or to encourage them to talk about their work in lessons.
- Written feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is rare and use of qualitative targets is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants contribute most effectively to pupils' learning.

Commentary

65. Standards of work are average by the Year 6. These pupils have achieved well, given that their attainment on entry was well below average. The results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were a marked improvement on those of 2003. Girls' results were better than in the three preceding years, especially those of Asian girls, who had not attained well in 2003.
66. Examination of pupils' work indicates that achievement is good throughout the school. The current Year 5 pupils are on target to attain standards that are close to average by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Standards, though lower in Years 3 and 4, are improving from the well below average standards on entry so that the gap between national expectations and attainment in the school narrows at a good rate as pupils move up through the years. There is no significant difference between the attainment of different ethnic groups. The small number of black pupils attain well and are well represented in top sets.
67. Basic numeracy skills are taught well and, therefore, pupils' grasp of aspects such as the four rules of number, multiplication tables, place value and arithmetic is reasonably secure. Pupils develop skills of data handling and interpretation of graphical information well. This is assisted by their regular use of ICT. Most pupils are able to use relevant scales to measure a variety of quantities and both to measure and draw angles with reasonable accuracy. However, all but the ablest pupils find it difficult to solve problems that contain several steps and where they have to determine what these steps are. For example, whilst an able group of Year 6 pupils coped well with identifying the steps needed to develop an algorithm for adding a series of consecutive numbers, pupils of average ability in Year 6 needed to be taken several times through calculations involving ratios.
68. The setting arrangements help to support pupils' progression well and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported in the lower sets. The special educational needs co-ordinator teaches some of the lowest groups and provides very good tuition to them to help support their learning. Those with English as an additional language who also have special educational needs benefit equally well from all these arrangements. Both their English language learning needs and their special educational needs

are well catered for. The experiences of other pupils with English as an additional language are more varied. They do make good progress and achieve well overall, but opportunities are missed to help them articulate ideas or to promote speaking skills through paired work or by pressing pupils to give extended answers. Many English language learners, including able mathematicians, find it difficult to give extended answers to questions or to express their mathematical thinking. On occasion, teachers do not understand what pupils have said and hence cannot answer them appropriately. Whilst regular use of technical vocabulary means most pupils, including those still learning English, have good knowledge of it and use it, they very often cannot spell correctly because the specialist vocabulary is rarely displayed for them to see and refer to.

69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Introductions are clear and learning objectives are shared with pupils to ensure that they understand what they need to achieve by the end of the lesson. Demonstrations often involve pupils and this helps them to focus on the lesson. There are times where involvement could be improved through greater use of the small whiteboards or discussing a problem in pairs. Nonetheless, the attitudes of pupils are very good and their commitment to their work is often exemplary. The vast majority of pupils work hard, they listen with great attention and co-operate very well with staff. Teaching assistants, including bilingual assistants, support pupils most effectively in lessons. Where lessons are good or very good, expectations of teachers are high and pupils are provided with work that challenges them and is well linked to work done before. A key weakness of lessons that were only satisfactory was the lack of use of assessment to plan sufficiently for the individual needs of pupils. Though pupils are grouped by ability, and different work is given to each group, there is a tendency for all pupils within a group to receive the same work. Where teaching is good, this weakness is overcome by good quality individual support and good use of teaching assistants. Where teaching is satisfactory, able pupils can mark time as a result. Though marking is regular, there is relatively little written feedback to pupils on how they could improve their work and teachers' use of targets is inconsistent across the school.
70. A new co-ordinator was appointed at the start of this academic year and has made a good impact on improving provision. The good focus on planning and on improving girls' attainment in mathematics has resulted in less of a difference between the performance of boys and girls, though this focus needs to be continued. Regular monitoring and evaluation have ensured the generally good quality of provision in mathematics across the school. In addition, these have effectively informed the co-ordinator's action plan for the subject, which already includes the issues identified in this inspection.
71. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Given the changes in the intake, standards have most certainly improved. Planning has also improved but further work needs to be done in relation to the use of assessment to match work to individual needs within sets.

Use of numeracy across the curriculum

72. The use of numeracy in subjects is satisfactory. The most frequent use of numeracy is in drawing and interpreting graphs and charts and in measurement work. Effective work in data handling occurs on a regular basis in subjects such as ICT, science and geography. Accurate measurements are taken in science, design and technology and art and design. Adventure games, simulations and control programs in ICT also provide useful contexts for pupils to practise their numeracy skills. However, there is no policy for the use of numeracy across subjects and, hence, no coherent strategy to help pupils to develop further and refine their overall competence in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good: standards are well below average when pupils enter the school and average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching observed in Year 4.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the provision of a very good science club.
- Very good co-ordination in the subject is leading the drive to raise standards.
- In some lessons, tasks for higher attaining pupils require more careful planning.

Commentary

73. Standards in science at the end of Year 6 are average. The 2003 National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 6 show that the number of pupils attaining and exceeding the expected Level 4 was below average in comparison with all schools. These results dipped in contrast to the average standards in 2002. The school's results in 2003 were above those of similar schools, based on pupils' prior attainment in their Year 2 National Curriculum tests. The number of pupils attaining the usual Level 4 was average and it was above average for pupils attaining the higher level, Level 5. These results were as expected and the school met its targets for 2003. The five years up to 2003 reveal a rising trend in results, broadly in line with the national trend. This year's results show that standards are continuing to improve. In 2004, 94 per cent of pupils reached or exceeded Level 4 and 40 per cent attained the higher Level 5, exceeding the school's targets at both Levels 4 and 5.
74. When pupils enter Year 3, their attainment is well below average. Good clear plans for learning ensure that knowledge and skills are carefully built upon and achievement in Year 3 is good. Some very good teaching in Year 4 ensures that pupils continue to achieve well, although standards are still below average. The very good teaching is characterised by a very high level of teacher knowledge and very detailed plans, so that pupils are quickly engaged in their work and remain fully involved. Very well timed interaction - which challenges pupils to think - results in high levels of concentration so that pupils develop their knowledge and understanding at a good rate. Teaching in Year 5 does not take sufficient account of what pupils already know in order to challenge and enthuse them. The pace of working slows somewhat; tasks sometimes involve pupils recording what they already know, rather than challenging them to investigate and find out more. However, pupils remain enthusiastic about the subject and reasonably engaged. Good teaching in Year 6 ensures that the slippage is addressed and pupils again achieve well, attaining average standards by the end of their time in school. The work of Year 6 pupils shows that they use appropriate scientific vocabulary. Their knowledge and understanding of subjects like micro-organisms and disease; life cycles; the classification of mini-beasts; electricity and soil sampling is appropriate for their age. When planning and conducting experiments, they can order the process and record results logically.
75. Throughout the school, good teaching characterised by good planning gives careful attention to the needs of lower attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language, ensuring that these pupils make good progress. Additionally, teaching assistants support these pupils well. They help pupils to tease out their tasks so that they apply themselves diligently and achieve well. However, in many lessons the average and higher attaining pupils have similar tasks, with only slightly extended challenges for more able pupils. Greater depth of thought is seldom required and deeper scientific knowledge seldom given, which means that the achievement of the highest attaining pupils is often satisfactory as opposed to the good achievement of the vast majority of pupils. However, the school goes some way towards addressing this imbalance in the science club. Here, the most able pupils from Years 5 and 6 have a wide range of challenging activities perfectly suited to their needs. The club generates a high level of enthusiasm and pupils are able, in a very supportive situation, to discuss their

tasks using scientific terms. They achieve Young Investigator Awards and are very proud of these. Here, as throughout the school, there is no evidence of any difference in the achievement of girls and boys. High expectations regarding behaviour are evident throughout the school and pupils respond very well. They work together very effectively and apply themselves to their tasks enthusiastically so that there is a very good ethos for learning.

76. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and well. However, as yet, planning does not fully take into account assessment information. The school has identified the need to provide different tasks for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, and planning meets their needs well. It also ensures that work is matched to the needs of average attaining pupils, but it does not currently take into consideration how much higher attaining pupils know already and plan for building on this knowledge. These pupils are not always set challenging targets or stimulating tasks in their investigative work. Although teachers invariably provide an extra task to hold their attention if they finish early, these seldom provide opportunities to extend their knowledge, skills or understanding.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The whole-school scheme of work, which has been reviewed since the last inspection, is beginning to have a positive impact. Planning is checked, lessons are observed and results analysed to ensure that the curriculum is fully covered and consistently taught in the drive to raise standards. A good range of well-organised resources supports pupils' learning. These improvements contribute well to the good level of achievement and rising standards since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because they have regular access to computers and are very keen to learn.
- Teaching is consistently good and teachers provide well-structured activities for pupils, which motivate and engage them and hence enable them to develop their skills and knowledge well.
- Though the current resources are becoming outdated, the school management has been astute enough to secure up-to-date replacement equipment for September 2004.
- Assessment systems and procedures are underdeveloped and curricular planning requires review.
- Teaching assistants and technical support are well used to support learning in lessons.

Commentary

78. Standards are just in line with expectations by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6. Achievement is good throughout the school and there is no significant difference between pupils of different ethnic groups. The small number of black pupils achieve particularly well and attain relatively good standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as also do those for whom English is an additional language.
79. Pupils have good basic skills with computers such as logging on, saving and printing work and locating files. Most show good familiarity with a range of programs, including word-processors, databases, spreadsheets and the Internet, and use them with confidence in a variety of contexts. Pupils have sound skills in relation to sharing and exchanging information in a variety of forms, including e-mail, and in organising information and presenting it for a range of audiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 made effective use of a desktop publishing program to create the front and back pages of books for young children. They demonstrated secure understanding of their audience through their choice of topic for the book, the pictures they created and the content of the text or 'blurb' to go on the back page. Most pupils are developing their skills well in finding information from a range of sources and in controlling events through the use of control programs or simulations. Pupils make good use of wider

technology. For example, Year 6 pupils have made interesting and creative videos about the school as part of a project they have been doing with a local e-learning organisation.

80. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good knowledge of the programs they are using and they are well supported by the technician and teaching assistants. Work is well structured so that pupils find it easy to engage with and it enables them to work effectively on their own. For example, Year 4 pupils working on habitats were asked to pretend to be an animal estate agent and to identify the habitat needs of a particular animal client. They were provided with a useful template to collate this information, which they found from books. The use of the template enabled them to extract relevant information effectively without resorting to copying vast tracts of texts from the books they were using. The activity made the work interesting and hence the levels of pupil engagement and motivation were high. On the whole, pupils are very keen to learn, enjoy their work with computers and work hard as a result, often helping and supporting one another.
81. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed so it is difficult to make a clear judgement on overall leadership and management. However, the co-ordinator is keen and enthusiastic and settling well into his role. He is well supported by the headteacher, and senior managers have been astute enough to realise in good time the need to upgrade resources that were up-to-date at the time of the last inspection but are now becoming old. They are currently still supporting learning well but class computers have had to be removed. Hence, follow up work from the weekly timetabled lessons in the computer suite is not currently easy to do.
82. Monitoring and evaluation and user-friendly assessment systems are not yet in place. Whilst planning ensures coverage of the National Curriculum, opportunities to revisit and extend skills in specific areas are not as well embedded as they could be or as consistently used by all teachers within the same year group. Overall, the area at first glance does not appear as good now as reported at the time of the last inspection but there has been significant change in staffing, including the departure of a very strong manager. Given this and the change in the intake since the last inspection, improvement is satisfactory. Achievement continues to be good and pupils reach expected standards by the end of Year 6.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. Planning ensures that work in the ICT suite during the weekly timetabled lessons is linked to relevant curricular contexts. Hence, computers are used on a regular basis to support learning in other subjects. However, because the suite is used solidly for timetabled lessons for each class, there is little opportunity to book it for additional work in subjects or to follow up work begun in the suite. For example, the Year 6 pupils making books for younger pupils have hand-written the text because they had insufficient access to the suite to complete all the text using ICT. The current lack of stand-alone computers in classrooms further limits the extent to which subjects can make full use of ICT to support and enhance learning, though teachers make full use of their laptops in lessons, including allowing pupils and learning assistants to use them. The provision of a new suite, as well as electronic whiteboards and projectors, planned for the start of next term should help to ameliorate this situation.

HUMANITIES

History and **geography** were sampled: a small number of geography lessons were seen and pupils' work was scrutinised in history. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision, achievement or teaching in either subject.

84. Learning in history and geography gives pupils appropriate experience of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. They cover two main topics each year in each subject. Teachers mainly teach a block of history and then one of geography, allowing enough depth and continuity for pupils to understand major areas.

85. Although curriculum coverage for pupils of all abilities is similar, pupils' books show that lower attaining pupils are supported well, for example, in geography, with different types of worksheets. Less challenge is provided for higher attaining pupils though, which would help these pupils to achieve higher standards. In Year 6, clear objectives are set by teachers - for instance, in geography - about 'What I am looking for?' and 'What are we learning today?'. This gives pupils clear targets to work towards in the lesson. These aims are not so clear in other years. In Year 5, mapping of the locality and of the UK covers these aspects of geography satisfactorily. Social geography comparisons, for example, in Year 4, between the lives of people in Kenya, enable pupils to understand that people have different ways of living in other parts of the world. Surveys, such as those in Year 4 about noise levels, provide appropriate geographical data for pupils to work on, sometimes using ICT. The use of the local environment, from pupils' own desks, through to their classroom, then outwards to the school site and beyond in Year 3, shows teachers extending pupils' frame of reference properly for their learning of concepts of place in geography. Throughout pupils' geography books, their low standards in literacy, particularly in writing, which is an important element of language-based humanities studies, adversely affect their presentation of written work.
86. Pupils seem to enjoy their learning in history. In Year 6, for example, their written work shows good understanding of, and empathy with, the lot of people in London before and after World War II, with the role of women during the war and with the feelings and plight of evacuees. The work of pupils in Year 5 in history shows a good volume of work about Ancient Greece, with some good links to English, for instance, through myths and legends. Their work about Victorian times has resulted in some good 'Dear Diary' entries from higher and middle attaining pupils, for example, about what it feels like to be the dunce in a very strict Victorian schoolroom. Again, weak literacy impedes lower attaining pupils significantly, although these pupils also benefit from different worksheets and often the support of teaching assistants for written work. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 show above average standards in understanding, and writing about, the Tudor and Aztec periods in history. Here, support for lower attaining pupils' was very effective, enabling them to achieve well. History work in Year 3, about Romans and Anglo Saxons, exemplifies the lack of a whole-school policy to reinforce and improve standards in literacy. Inaccurate spelling of key words, even those which recur frequently in the topic - such as the word 'Romans' itself - remains uncorrected, so some pupils keep on even spelling words incorrectly that they copy for history from the board.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well to reach the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; their understanding of religious thinking is above average.
- Teaching is good overall; marking and assessment are variable.
- The curriculum and the way the subject is taught ensure that learning about religion is linked very well to learning from religion.
- Religious education is led very well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge.

Commentary

87. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards are in line with national expectations and those of the Locally Agreed Syllabus; pupils' understanding about the significance of religion in people's lives is better than that found in most schools. This is partly a result of many pupils coming from families where religion is an important part of daily life, but it is also due to the successful integration by the school of the two elements of the subject: learning about and learning from religion.

88. By Year 6, pupils are able to make comparisons between different religions, for instance, considering the symbolism of objects used in various faiths, and comparing different stories of creation. They have a good grasp of the key beliefs of a number of religions and are able to talk about these in detail. Although there are weaknesses in the literacy skills of lower and some average attaining pupils, they have opportunities to record information using a range of genres; higher and some average attaining pupils have produced a good amount of written work. Pupils in Year 6 have produced little booklets on 'The Creation', potentially for use by younger children. Pupils of all ages write prayers on a range of themes - many of which are read out in assembly – and poems, such as those about candles as part of their study of the place of 'light' in religion. Some pupils have written a play script about the life of a street child and all pupils are gaining an understanding of ethical issues that underpin life in various parts of the world. Pupils in Year 5 have produced their own accounts of selected Bible stories, imbuing them with feeling and imagination.
89. Teaching and learning are good overall; teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and apply themselves very well; they discuss religious issues seriously and thoughtfully. Where teaching is good and very good, appropriate attention is paid to deepening pupils' spiritual understanding – so that they move beyond the facts to a more abstract and spiritual level of thinking. Pupils' work and lessons seen show that religious education makes a good contribution to the development of their literacy skills. Sometimes, this means that subject vocabulary is emphasised and often pupils have good opportunities to write or to present their ideas to the rest of the class. Good use was made of ability groupings in a lesson in Year 6, when pupils prepared presentations on symbolism, and this gave pupils opportunities for speaking and listening in groups and as a whole class. There is variation, even in Year 6, however, between the quality of written work that pupils produce – clearly based on teachers' expectations. Where teaching is at its best, the fact that pupils are encouraged to think deeply gives way to writing in much greater detail than where teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers identify what upper, average and lower attaining pupils should be able to do by the end of the lesson. Where this is managed well, higher attaining pupils (based on prior attainment in religious education and literacy skills) are given a distinctly different task that challenges them, as in a Year 3 lesson on the theme of 'water', when they wrote a letter to their Member of Parliament while other pupils wrote a simple prayer. In lessons that are otherwise good or even very good, higher attaining pupils sometimes have to 'wait' to access the extension activity until they have completed the same work as the rest of the class, and teachers do not always leave enough time for pupils to record their ideas in writing. In many lessons, especially in Years 3 and 4, lower attaining pupils generally have the same tasks as their peers; when these involve writing, this sometimes means that they write less or are unable to finish the task.
90. Teachers are beginning to assess work using the levels found in national guidance and some work has been marked that way, aligned to the new Locally Agreed Syllabus. A minority of teachers correct spelling errors and some teachers have begun to comment on whether pupils have met the learning intention. There is considerable variation in the usefulness of marking, however, and some consists almost exclusively of ticks with a very brief comment.
91. The curriculum is better than that found in most schools. Pupils cover a good range of work and their learning is enriched by visits to various places of worship. Teachers frame topics in such a way as to combine opportunities to learn from religion with learning about it. For instance, in one lesson, the learning objective was 'to be able to understand the place of the Ka'bah in Muslim thoughts and feelings'. Pupils' work shows that they have considered a wide range of religious questions, around themes such as:
- the beauty and feelings associated with special objects;
 - the purpose and significance of sacred writings;
 - the importance of valuing the earth;
 - the fact that there are mysteries and ultimate questions;
 - the existence of good and evil; and
 - the importance of empathising with others and respecting differences.

93. The subject is led very well and managed effectively. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge of the subject – she is enthusiastic and involved in the development of religious education beyond the school through various groups. She has been involved in the development of a revised Agreed Syllabus; as a result, she is able to advise other teachers very effectively. The school's own good resources are supplemented by borrowed artefacts and materials.
94. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are good now, where they were satisfactory previously. The leadership of the subject and the curriculum have also improved, although assessment remains an area that is undergoing development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

95. It was only possible to sample art and design, by looking at pupils' work on display and considering the way the subject is co-ordinated; in design and technology, two lessons were sampled and pupils talked about their work. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement about achievement or teaching in art and design and technology. In physical education, a swimming lesson at the local pool was observed and another lesson was sampled. In music, three lessons were observed. Enough evidence was available to form overall judgements about physical education and music. Documents were analysed and the provision was discussed with pupils and teachers. Pupils enjoy all aspects of creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects. They value highly the wide range of enrichment activities that the school provides to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and improve their skills.
96. In **art and design**, higher and average attaining pupils produce some attractive work that is in line with national expectations; the work of lower attaining pupils is below expectations.
97. The role of the subject co-ordinator is well developed in art and the scheme of work covers an appropriate range of topics. Good links exist between art and some other subjects, for instance, between art and history and religious education. Younger pupils have learnt to weave like the Anglo Saxons, paint from secondary sources when studying the Vikings, and produced collaged fruit as part of their work on healthy eating.
98. Clay work and observational drawings on the theme of fruit and vegetables in Year 5 reveal careful looking and some effective recording in two and three dimensions. The standard of self-portraits, also by pupils in Year 5, ranges from average to a bit below. The best large-scale pastel drawings by pupils in Year 5 show above average compositional skills and imaginative interpretation of Aborigine art.
99. In their painting of heads in Year 6, pupils revealed a clear understanding of the fragmentation technique of Cubism; higher attaining pupils used colour and tone well to emphasise certain planes so that their face take on a three-dimensional quality. Drawings that mirror a half image of a face from a magazine have encouraged pupils to look carefully. The best clay models in the style of gargoyles make good use of the possibilities of form, but a wide range of standards are evident. In an interesting exercise that linked art and literacy, pupils produced some thoughtful written work about what Lowrie might be thinking and feeling in his self-portrait. Pupils' illustrative drawings, like those that form part of a display of work in geography, show that standards are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 – with some imaginative figure drawings and effective combining of design elements.
100. In **design and technology**, lessons sampled and work on display suggest that provision is good. Although it was not possible during the inspection to judge the achievement of younger pupils, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach the expected levels in the subject and achieve well. No teaching was seen during the last inspection, but provision appeared to be satisfactory and inspection evidence shows that this has improved. Teaching, as evidenced by the appropriate development of skills and by pupils' responses in discussions, suggest that teaching is good. Some high quality examples of work were seen, like slippers and controllable vehicles made

by pupils in Year 6. This high quality of finished products is because there is precise teaching of skills, due regard to safety, and good interaction between pupils and teachers in Year 6. Pupils think carefully about their designs; teachers intervene astutely, so that pupils are thoughtful about how best to make and modify their designs, paying careful attention to detail. Positive interaction between teachers and pupils ensure high levels of enthusiasm. An appropriate range, good supply and quality of resources supports the design and making process well and enables pupils to create high quality products; pupils know what is available and are imaginative in using materials.

101. Subject leadership and management are good. Careful attention to the planning for the development of the subject ensures that skills of designing and making are built upon as pupils move through the school. The assessment of skills is rightly recognised as an area for future development.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers have very good levels of knowledge so that learning is supported effectively.
- Very clear lesson plans ensure pupils have a full range of musical opportunities.
- Teaching is very challenging, ensuring a high level of involvement.

Commentary

102. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' knowledge was better than expected but the quality of singing was satisfactory. The school continues to foster pupils' musical knowledge very well so that Year 6 pupils quickly recognise pieces of music and the instruments that are playing. Teaching is characterised by very high levels of subject knowledge, which supports learning across the whole area of music very well. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils' work on un-tuned and tuned instruments was supported by timely and sensitive intervention and the teacher's expertise was very well used to challenge and enthuse pupils in their work, so that all became very involved and enjoyed the lesson. Regular assessments are made; aural work and compositions are tape-recorded so that teachers are aware of pupils' skills and levels of knowledge, though assessments are not always well considered when planning tasks for the most able pupils. The quality of singing is now good, with some very good examples heard. The teaching of singing is very well focused, ensuring that pupils concentrate well on developing their skills. Very high levels of teacher confidence and competence in a Year 3 lesson encouraged all to sing, to appraise and to improve their performance. This attention to teaching basic skills ensures that the singing in assemblies is invariably good. The vast majority of pupils join in and sing, not only enthusiastically and confidently, but also tunefully and melodiously.
103. It was not possible to observe the provision outside the taught curriculum, but pupils report that this is 'much better than friends receive in other schools' and value this provision highly. Many learn to play instruments and the opportunities for singing in the choir and playing in the orchestra ensure that many pupils have opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge.
104. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator and a specialist teacher take music throughout the school, which ensures consistent teaching in accordance with the precise scheme of work. No use of ICT was observed and the plan for the future accurately identifies this as an area for development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very broad curriculum is taught and is very well resourced, engendering very high levels of enthusiasm.
- Clubs, sports days and inter-school competitions support the taught curriculum very well and pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities.

Commentary

105. At the time of the last inspection, no judgement was made about standards, and provision appeared reasonable. The provision has improved. A very broad range of physical education activities is taught; training has been provided to boost teachers' confidence in the subject. Due to successful funding bids, the range and provision of resources has improved and is now very good; for example, the provision of basketball and tennis equipment and a full range of small apparatus for use when teaching athletics indoors. The availability of these well-kept resources contributes very positively to pupils' enthusiasm and skills.
106. Due to the small sample of lessons observed, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching, though good and very good teaching was observed. In Year 4 and Year 5, good teaching, with a clear focus on the teaching of skills, ensures that pupils remain fully involved in their work and behave very well. There is careful attention to safety. The high level of teacher expertise evident in the teaching of swimming ensures that pupils achieve very well during Year 4. However, by the end of their year of tuition, few can swim confidently and unless further instruction is available to them, few will reach the national expectation by the end of Year 6. In other activities observed, the levels of skills demonstrated were as expected for their age. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language ensures that they are fully included and ensures their full co-operation, so that all pupils achieve well. Further evidence of the good provision is the enthusiasm and full participation of boys and girls and pupils from minority ethnic groups in all activities. For example, the high level of enthusiasm shown by all pupils in Year 6 towards dance and the extremely low numbers of girls opting out of swimming for cultural reasons.
107. Discussion with pupils indicates a high level of enthusiasm for the rich provision of sports and games clubs and the competitive opportunities, which enhance the curriculum. This provision contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of sport and to their very good involvement in the subject. Pupils are keen to succeed; they have a 'personal best book' for self-assessment and these are used regularly.
108. The subject is led and managed well. There is a clear scheme of work and the subject is well funded. The co-ordinator ensures that opportunities to share expertise, for example, through demonstration lessons, support the high levels of confidence in teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

A circle time and two lessons were observed in personal, social and health education. Curriculum planning was also looked at in detail. Insufficient evidence was seen, however, to form an overall judgement about provision, achievement and teaching in personal, social and health education and citizenship.

109. An excellent personal, social and health education and citizenship programme has been developed, covering a wide range of carefully integrated themes, and the co-ordinator is a very experienced teacher with a thorough understanding of this area. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are actively promoted, within discrete personal, social and health education lessons, in circle time and within and across other subjects. The impact of timetabled lessons,

assemblies, enrichment activities and the school's very good ethos ensures that pupils make very good progress in their personal development, learn about how to eat healthily and why some drugs are dangerous, and know how to function as positive members of society. This is evident in the contribution pupils make to the school's racially and culturally harmonious community, where their personal and social development is enhanced further. Pupils undertake various duties, including those of head girl and head boy, prefects, lunchtime helpers, library assistants and representatives of the school council.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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

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

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).