

INSPECTION REPORT

Abbotswood Junior School

Totton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116482

Headteacher: Mr Gary Heath

Lead inspector: Mrs P D Holwill

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th December 2003

Inspection number: 260747

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	672
School address:	Ringwood Road Totton Southampton
Postcode:	SO40 8EB
Telephone number:	023 8086 3159
Fax number:	023 8066 0134
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Dickinson
Date of previous inspection:	12 th – 16 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Abbotswood Junior School is situated in a suburban area close to the Hampshire border. It is much bigger than the average junior school, with six classes in Year 3, with pupils coming from two feeder infant schools. The school caters for 672 pupils aged from seven to 11 years. Pupils from the immediate locality live in a mixed housing area with some privately owned, rented and local authority homes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with national figures. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority homes and the percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is very low. There is only one pupil who is at an early stage of learning to speak and understand English. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs including statements is in line with the national average. The attainment of pupils when they arrive at the school is in line with that expected of children of similar ages. In recent years the school has been awarded the Investors in People Award (in 2001) and is involved with the Children's Fund initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2705	Pat Holwill	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, history, geography,
9977	Sue Howley	Lay inspector	
1395	Garry Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, religious education
33104	Tracy Goodway	Team Inspector	Science, design and technology, art
17078	Martin North	Team inspector	English, physical education, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Abbotswood is a **good** school in which pupils are highly valued and fully included in all aspects of school life. Its very strong caring and sharing ethos results in the very effective personal development of pupils. They achieve well in all subjects and make good progress in their learning. Pupils' standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. The school is led and managed by an excellent headteacher, who is well supported by two very able and effective deputies. Staff work hard to raise standards for all pupils. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Throughout the school pupils achieve well in all subjects because teaching is consistently good.
- There have been excellent improvements in the provision for information and communication technology. Pupils' attainments in the subject are now above national expectations.
- Standards in religious education and music are above national expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the very good provision made for them.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. There is a very clear educational direction to the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. There are very good relationships amongst pupils and adults.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good. The school sets high expectations for pupils' conduct and they respond very well.
- Standards in English could be higher if children used a wider vocabulary and more complex sentences in their oral and written work.
- The management of assessment data for target setting needs to be streamlined.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has addressed all the issues raised satisfactorily. Moves to continue to improve standards of attainment and enrich the quality of education for pupils are priorities in the school improvement plan. The headteacher's leadership, supported by staff and governors, has been central to this process.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	D	C	C
Mathematics	C	C	C	C
Science	B	B	C	C

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.

In the 2003 national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, standards were average and an average proportion of pupils gained the higher Level 5. The test results were also typical of those found in similar schools. As a result of the school's development work, pupils are achieving **well** and standards are likely to be average in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Careful analysis of data and test results, and the use of target setting to track pupils' progress across the school, are having a positive effect on raising standards and many Year 4 and 5 pupils are already reaching higher standards than expected for their age. Teaching is consistently good across all subjects; it captures the pupils' interest and makes them want to do well. Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development are **very good**. They show a very high respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen carefully and try hard to complete their tasks well. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is **good**, with many examples of very good and occasionally excellent teaching observed in lessons across the school. This contributes substantially to promoting pupils' enthusiasm for learning and good standards of achievement. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They plan work at suitable levels for all pupils and give clear explanations at the start of lessons to ensure that all pupils understand what is to be learned. They create happy and purposeful working environments in which their pupils flourish.

Consistently good teaching is helped by the very effective help offered in class by the learning support and teaching assistants who work with individual pupils and small groups. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and make it clear to them how to improve their work further. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They use and practise the skills they have learned well, but their breadth of vocabulary and their written skills are not sufficiently well developed in order to reach Level 5 in the national tests. The curriculum has very good breadth and balance and there are very good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities. All these strengths make learning a pleasure for pupils. They respond by being interested in their work and determined to do well in all aspects of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **very good**. The headteacher's leadership is excellent. As it has inspired very high levels of commitment and loyalty from all members of staff, and respect from parents and the local community. All staff share a clear sense of purpose. Standards are improving in all subjects because of their success in ensuring good teaching and learning in the school. As a result, all pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs. The school is very effectively managed. Staff willingly take on responsibilities to support school development. They are deployed very effectively to ensure pupils' standards of attainment across the school. The monitoring of standards, teaching and learning is good, but the management of assessment data for target setting needs to be streamlined because it is too time consuming. The school's learning environment is attractive and stimulating. All resources are used efficiently to meet the needs of the pupils. The governors' effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities is very good. They both support and challenge the school and ensure that priorities in the school improvement plan are fully costed and monitored effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and carers have very positive views of the school. They feel that the school works very well with them and provides them with very good information about their children's achievements. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel that they are valued and well supported by all the members of staff. They refer to themselves and their school as 'magic'.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards of pupils' oral and written work by broadening pupils' vocabulary and enabling them to use more complex sentences in their written work.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the target - setting process by streamlining the use of assessment data.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good overall. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is good and it is often very good, especially in Years 4 and 5. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in the school. Standards of attainment for pupils currently in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in all subjects and make good progress because teaching is good and often very good.
- Standards are average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attainments in information and communication technology are high.
- Standards in religious education and music are above national expectations.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good overall. They work hard and achieve well.
- Pupils' vocabulary and use of complex sentences is not good enough to enable them to reach higher standards in English.
- The management of assessment data needs to be streamlined.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2	26.8 (26.8)
Science	28.8	28.6 (28.5)

There were 173 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. In the 2003 national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, standards were average and an average proportion of pupils gained the higher Level 5. Results in English, mathematics and science were also typical of those found in similar schools. There have been variations in test results from year to year in all three subjects with the highest overall results being well above average in 2000. Although, this year's results represent a downward trend since then, there are a number of valid reasons to explain this, such as the varying abilities of children in the groups taking the tests and an increased number of pupils with special educational needs.
2. The school's targets for improvement for the present Year 6 pupils are challenging and are likely to be achieved for mathematics, but not for English because pupils' skills in writing are not well developed. The school has already identified reasons for this and has set in place more rigorous strategies for improving pupils' writing skills across the school. However, evidence from work analysis and lesson observations during the inspection also suggest that the majority of pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 are achieving above average standards in their work. In addition, careful analysis of data and test results, and the use of target setting to track pupils' progress across the school, are having a positive effect on raising standards of attainment. These measures suggest that standards are likely to improve as younger pupils move through the school
3. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and capabilities in all subjects. This is because of the actions taken by the headteacher and deputies to strengthen the senior management team and place emphasis on raising standards, through careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses, assessment, and monitoring the work of the school. For

example, the arrangements to group pupils by ability in English and mathematics are effective, enabling all pupils to be given appropriate work which is well matched to meet their needs. In addition, target setting is effective, especially in the Years 4 and 5 classes and is helping to raise standards.

4. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as they move through the school. Their needs are identified early, work in classes is set at a suitable level for them, and they receive good quality support from the very effective special needs team led by the school's knowledgeable special needs co-ordinator.

5. Pupils currently in Year 6 are reaching standards in English in line with those expected nationally. Their skills in listening are satisfactory and most pupils speak confidently and with suitable expression. The school's initiative on developing role-play to help pupils explain their ideas and bring meaning to texts is helping to develop their range of vocabulary. This still remains an aspect for further development so pupils can achieve higher levels in the national tests. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are often above average and pupils achieve well. This is because of well managed teaching of literacy using a good range of resources including newspaper articles, books and information available on the Internet. Standards in writing are satisfactory but they are not as high as those for reading. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to use drafting techniques, write accounts of events, instructions, stories and poems. In their writing, pupils use a relatively simple sentence structure with a limited vocabulary. This constrains more able pupils from attaining higher levels in their written work.

6. In mathematics, pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to meet their target of 84 per cent of pupils to attain the nationally expected levels. All areas of the mathematical curriculum are covered and this accounts for the satisfactory standards in Year 6. Throughout the school pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of place value and the more able pupils work confidently with very high numbers. Many pupils accurately add, subtract, multiply and divide two and three digit numbers. They are able to find ways of changing fractions into percentages and to explain clearly the methods they use to the rest of the class. They discuss the most effective way to solve mathematical problems and give good reasons for their results. Links with information and communication technology are particularly strong and used well to enhance learning.

7. Pupils currently in Year 6 are reaching standards in science in line with those expected nationally. Pupils currently in the Year 4 and 5 classes are also achieving well and some are already working at levels beyond those expected for their age. Again, this is because of the good teaching. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 follow a carefully prepared scheme with regular assessment of strengths and weaknesses and this ensures a firm foundation of scientific processes as they move through the school. However, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given insufficient opportunities to plan their own investigations and this limits the challenge for higher attaining pupils. In all classes, pupils make accurate use of terms, know how to construct a fair test, predict outcomes and test their theories fairly and accurately.

8. Standards in information and communication technology are above national expectations by the end of Year 6 and pupils are achieving very well. This is an excellent improvement since the last inspection. There are a number of reasons for this: Pupils have very high quality resources and using these helps them learn at a good rate. All aspects of the subject are taught well and pupils use information and communication technology competently to help them in their work in many other subjects. For example, they used the Internet to research their studies in science, art and history. Multimedia presentations are particularly strong and Year 6 pupils are able to produce high quality short animated films using web cams.

9. In religious education, pupils are achieving standards above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Year 6 pupils have acquired a good understanding and knowledge of the important religious traditions and have covered all aspects of the syllabus. They are able to contrast their own beliefs, practices and places of worship with others they have learned about. When

comparing similarities and differences, they listen carefully to what is being taught and listen respectfully about the beliefs of others. In music standards are above those expected nationally for pupils by the end of Year 6. All pupils achieve well in the school. During the inspection period, however, it was not possible to make any judgements about standards of attainment in physical education, design and technology, art and design, geography and history.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. The strong praise culture provides considerable encouragement to pupils and their personal development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are really proud of the school and their achievements are highly regarded.
- Attitudes to learning are very positive.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life. They are very willing to take on extra responsibilities.
- Adults are very good role models and provide considerable support and praise, which successfully build pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Very effective behaviour management and high expectations lead to very good behaviour and an orderly community.
- The strong praise and achievement culture is consistently applied to great effect.
- There were three fixed term exclusions last year.

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy coming to school and clearly feel valued and they refer to themselves and their school as "magic". The very positive ethos promotes confidence and high self-esteem and everyone lives the motto "it really does matter in everything we say and do". The excellent praise and reward culture has a huge impact on attitudes and achievement.

11. Assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons all play a crucial role in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development and self awareness are excellent and are enhanced through religious education lessons and in assemblies where they are given the opportunities for quiet reflection. Pupils are provided with opportunities and experiences throughout every school day to be responsible for their own actions to appreciate that the views of others matter and to understand what lies behind rules. Moral, social and cultural developments are very good, and relate directly to the commitment and care that emanates from all staff.

An Example of outstanding practice

This example of pupils' spiritual development was written after observations of religious education lessons and a choral rehearsal for Christmas in a very large junior school with over 670 pupils.

The school's fundamental philosophy is built very successfully on spiritual values. In daily life, the school fosters principles which pupils subscribe to as members of a sharing community. In lessons on religious education, pupils have opportunities to discuss the meaning of very personal experiences. Pupils consider these issues very sensitively and, for example, are able profitably to discuss the similarities and differences between their own birth and that of Jesus. In assemblies and concerts the whole school manifests its beliefs, with each and everyone in the school community contributing, and able to appreciate its joyous moments. In a rehearsal for Christmas, the sensitively combined contributions promoted an atmosphere comparable with a Cathedral Midnight Mass. The pupils' voices, angelic but powerful, uplifted the listeners who observed the pupils' pride in performance and shared in the resulting sense of belonging. The pupils of this school live with music in their souls and spirituality in their hearts.

12. The school's philosophy for caring for one another manifests itself throughout the school day. For example, children with physical disabilities are included in all activities. They have very good provision through the quality of specially trained assistants, and the high quality of the accommodation and specialist equipment. Pupils see all adults in the school as very good role models and follow their example. Each pupil contributes to the harmonious community life. Visits, including residential visits, complement and greatly enhance moral and social development. The school community is an excellent example of understanding tolerance, care and humanity. No opportunities are missed to promote and extend pupils' understanding of other cultures.

13. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting and in their questionnaire responses, parents confirmed that their children felt valued, they are eager to come to school and to participate in every aspect of school life. They feel that the school welcomes them and works well with them. Parents were happy that there was very little harassment in the school and that all pupils knew what to do should it occur. Pupils spoken to by the inspectors confirmed that they trusted all the adults in the school to help them. They agree that the headteacher and staff are effective in the way they involve them in the life of the school and appreciate the notice they take of their ideas. There is a very good range of after-school clubs and many children take the opportunity to attend them. Pupils also think of others less fortunate than themselves by supporting a number of charities throughout the year.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils arrive in good time. Good attendance is well promoted and attendance is effectively monitored. Exclusions are low but there were three fixed term exclusions last year. The exclusion of pupils is unusual and is only used as a last resort.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
550	3	0
5	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
5	0	0
86	0	0

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

15. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good. Pupils settle quickly and work hard. They are well motivated and enthusiastic and they work well together. They are very keen to participate in the wide range of opportunities made available and to take on additional responsibilities. The pupils frequently initiate charity fundraising activities. The school council is very effective in promoting pupils' involvement in the life of the school. Pupils are able to raise concerns and initiate ways of dealing with them, knowing that their views are valued and action will be taken. Year 6 pupils make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school by taking on a wide range of responsibilities as well as supporting younger pupils, all of which has a very positive impact on their personal development.

16. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Very good behaviour management and clear high expectations result in an orderly school with very little unsatisfactory behaviour or bullying. The few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed well, sometimes in small groups. Senior staff members take particular care to ensure there is suitable support for those pupils and that teachers plan for the pupils needs especially in the mathematics and English setting situation when the pupils may be taught by teachers other than their normal class teachers. Throughout the school there is considerable mutual respect between adults and pupils. Relationships are very good and are very well promoted through "circle times" and strong pastoral support.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in English, mathematics and science and they achieve well because of the consistently good and often very good teaching. The school's very effective, sharing and caring ethos results in pupils having high self-esteem and helps to ensure that they all do as well as they can.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is consistently good with one in three lessons being very good or excellent. There are strengths in teaching in all year groups. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Pupils' learning is also good and directly reflects the good teaching they receive throughout the school. They assess pupils' work carefully so that it is closely linked to the planning of suitable future work to help pupils learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach.
- Planning of lessons is effective and meets the varying needs of pupils.
- Teachers manage their pupils very well and create happy and purposeful working environments in which pupils flourish.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class.
- Teachers have very high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and standards of work.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. It is made clear to pupils how to improve further.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (5%)	18 (34%)	35 (55%)	5 (8%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

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

Commentary

17. The consistently good teaching is helping pupils of all ages and abilities to achieve well. They are able to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge at a good rate in all the subjects. There have been good improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection as a result of teachers planning together in order to make the best use of the available expertise and resources.

18. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and many have specialist skills that they willingly share with colleagues. This means that they are able to explain new ideas and concepts to pupils clearly and help them learn the correct facts and vocabulary. Teachers are often passionate about the subjects they teach and this is transmitted to pupils in lessons so that they want to learn more and become enthusiastic learners. This was clearly seen in a Year 4 mathematics lesson when the teacher used humour and a sense of fun to capture the pupils' interest in number problems. The pupils became completely absorbed in their work and were keen to continue even after the lesson ended.

19. Lessons are well planned by teachers who often interest, excite and help pupils learn at a good rate. Planning is done in year groups, which again gives teachers the opportunity to support each other and share ideas. Work is consistently well planned at an appropriate level to enable pupils to make good progress. By careful questioning and constant assessment of exactly what their pupils know, teachers are able to plan work closely matched to their individual needs. The development of target setting in English and mathematics is effective and helps teachers focus on areas most requiring improvement. It also helps pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve their work further. Teachers use very good quality resources imaginatively in lessons to stimulate pupils and give a good focus to learning. It is the good planning of imaginative and often entertaining lessons that makes the teaching so strong in the very good lessons.

20. In the very good teaching observed, lessons begin with whole-class sessions in which new ideas are introduced and basic skills practised orally. This part of the lesson is often brisk and actively involves all the pupils in their learning. It is particularly good when teachers use the pupils' own interests and experiences as starting points for the lesson. In these lessons the teachers often assess the levels of understanding by individuals and groups of pupils by having them record their answers on individual whiteboards. They then move on to the next stage confident that all the pupils understand the work. Next, pupils are involved in activities suited to their varying abilities so that skills are enhanced and consolidated. In the last part of the lesson, teachers usually review what has been done and learned. Pupils enjoy this part of the lesson as it gives them an opportunity to share their ideas and findings.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils learn well in lessons because teaching is clear and well structured. The setting arrangements for English and mathematics in Years 4, 5 and 6 also enable pupils with special educational needs to be taught in small groups where there is very good support for them to achieve the realistic targets on their individual education plans. Support staff are knowledgeable and skilled in helping pupils with special educational needs in each lesson. They ensure that pupils are able to understand their tasks and stay focused on what they are learning. Teaching methods are well adapted to their special needs so that pupils' learning is good. The Year 4 pupils, for example, enjoy very good quality support in very small groups led by the special educational needs co-ordinator.

22. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour. They manage pupils very well and they create a working environment that is conducive to good learning. All teachers aim to give pupils interesting practical work. This makes learning more effective and fun, as pupils are actively involved. As a result, pupils willingly participate and are eager to learn. In the very good lessons observed, teachers often have other activities planned so that the more able pupils are taken on to a higher level in their work. For example, in a very good Year 6 information and communication technology lesson, pupils worked in small groups to produce short animated films using web cams. Some pupils were keen to extend their work and improve their animations further. This challenging

task enabled these pupils to bring together all their skills and imagination to produce some carefully observed and fascinating results which were exceptionally good.

23. By careful questioning and constant assessment of exactly what their pupils know, teachers are able to plan work closely matched to their individual needs. All work is marked regularly and as well as encouraging pupils to do their best it often gives them a good understanding of how well they are doing and useful ideas to help improve their work further. Pupils often evaluate their own work. The targets set in English and mathematics are effective in helping them focus on areas most requiring improvement. All these strengths in teaching make learning a pleasure for pupils and they respond by being interested in their work and determined to do well in all aspects of their education.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good. Staffing and resources are very good and there is excellent accommodation to support pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good breadth, variety and enrichment of the curriculum to enable good achievement.
- Very good provision for those pupils with special educational needs.
- Very good preparation for the next phase of education.
- High quality use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Some of the fiction books need to be replaced.

Commentary

24. The curriculum meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and is supported by very good resources. Through careful analysis, planning and timetabling, a broad, rich and varied curriculum is provided for pupils. Access to the curriculum is carefully considered for all pupils and there is very good provision for those with special educational needs through specialist resources and well-matched programmes of study which are well written with specific attainable targets. Children with physical disabilities have very good provision through the quality of specially trained assistants, and the high quality of the accommodation and specialist equipment.

25. Teachers' experience and training are well matched to the needs of the curriculum with a good spread of different talents, skills and knowledge contained within the staff. Members of the support staff are well trained and in good numbers to enable the school to achieve its curriculum aims. There is very good preparation for the next stage of education through the skills taught and work attitudes that are inculcated through the curriculum. Transfer arrangements for pupils at the end of Year 6 are carefully planned and implemented. Good quality opportunities are provided for Year 6 pupils to learn French and German as preparation for learning modern languages at the next phase of education.

26. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and they are effectively adapted to meet pupils' needs. In English and mathematics, pupils work together in sets grouped according to pupils' ability, and this has allowed more closely targeted support for all pupils. Good monitoring and assessment indicate that this innovation is having positive effects on pupils' performance. The very high quality of information and communication technology provision supports the good developments the school is making to link various elements of the curriculum together, as for example, in science work where mathematics is closely linked through data handling programs.

27. Well-matched and relevant homework supports pupils' learning outside of school. The inspection team looked into the use of homework, examining pupils' homework books, reading diaries and talking to pupils. Generally the homework set in most classes is relevant and helps

pupils to practise what they have learned in class, with mathematics, spellings to learn, reading and sometimes a task to find out about a particular topic in history or geography.

28. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the large number and range of relevant visits planned for pupils and the rich variety of visitors who talk to and work with the pupils in school. The number and range of out of school clubs for pupils to attend is very good. There is a wide range of activities throughout the year, which cater for boys and girls in all classes. Both pupils and parents are consulted about the opportunities on offer. Within these extra-curricular activities pupils have opportunities to make suggestions about new initiatives which they organise themselves. Pupils have good participation in sports with local schools and within school. They are encouraged to join in artistic activities and many are learning to play musical instruments and many join in the choral activities.

29. The accommodation is excellent and managed imaginatively so that high quality specialist areas such as the cookery area and the library enable the school to respond to a wide variety of curriculum demands. The school building is very clean, well maintained and effectively managed. The outside environment is developing an imaginative range of exciting and interesting features. For example a sensory garden is planned to enrich the quality of learning for pupils. The school's learning resources are of good quality, and sufficient to meet the needs of the curriculum. However, worn fiction book stock needs to be replaced and some of the reference books are dated in content. There are good resources for pupils with special educational needs and they are used effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very high standard of care, guidance and support for its pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including child protection, are very good.
- Pupils' needs are well known and staff place considerable emphasis on giving positive support to all.
- Induction arrangements are very thorough and the personal, health, social education programme and assemblies provide very good guidance to pupils as they move through the school.
- Guidance for personal development is very good.
- Pupils views are regularly sought and they have very good opportunities to have a voice in the running of the school.

Commentary

30. Child protection procedures are very good. Staff are thoroughly briefed about their responsibilities and vulnerable children are very well supported. Health and safety policies and procedures are very thorough and the school is safe. Considerable fundraising efforts by staff, parents and pupils to purchase a fence around the perimeter have greatly improved the security and safety of the site.

31. Pupils' needs are well known and well supported by all members of staff, especially where there are particular needs or concerns. A high level of care is maintained. The school has good links with the feeder infant schools so that there is early identification of pupils' special educational needs as soon as they transfer into the Year 3 classes. Their progress is carefully monitored and there is effective liaison with other agencies and parents to ensure the pupils' needs are met and those with statements receive their full entitlement. Children with physical disabilities have very good provision through the quality of specially trained assistants, and the high quality of the accommodation and specialist equipment.

32. Induction arrangements are very thorough and the close liaison with feeder schools means that new pupils are familiar with routines and know their teachers. Very good support and guidance is provided as a result of careful assessment of academic achievement. Careful grouping arrangements and close monitoring and guidance by class teachers and year group leaders promote very good personal development.

33. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon. The school council arrangements are very democratic. Pupils' representatives take their role seriously and the whole class contributes by making suggestions. For example, the school council took a very active role in helping to raise funds for the new security fence. Governors meet regularly with pupils and this provides another valuable opportunity for them to contribute to school development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents, other schools and the wider local community, including business, are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in very high regard and are very supportive.
- Many parents regularly help in school and the Friends Association is very successful in its fund-raising activities.
- Parents receive very good information about the school and good annual reports about the progress their children are making.
- The very good liaison with local schools supports very good transfer arrangements.
- The school has very good links with the local community, including businesses. They enrich the provision and contribute well to pupils' learning.

Commentary

34. Parents are very supportive. The school and the headteacher are held in very high regard. The school works in close partnership with parents, successfully involving them in supporting their children's learning. Many parents offer regular help in classrooms and on trips. Some also provide valuable expertise and support for projects to improve the environment.

35. Attendance at special events is very good. Parents are very keen to attend awards assemblies and the Easter and Christmas "Tree" celebrations. The Friends Association contributes significantly to the life of the school and raises considerable funds which provide valued additional resources for learning. The collaboration, commitment and strong community spirit of everyone involved with the school, is evidenced by the recent project to build a security fence, which has ensured that the school provides a safe outdoor area for pupils.

36. Parents are very well informed about activities through regular newsletters and information sessions. Parents have good access to staff and their views are surveyed and valued. Annual reports and consultation evenings provide good information about the progress of their children and helpful targets for improvement.

37. Links with local schools are very good and this close liaison has a very positive impact on supporting pupils on transfer from the infant schools and into the secondary phase. The school is used as a venue by many community groups and has good links with local business which enrich the provision have a very positive impact on pupils' achievements and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Together with the deputy headteachers, staff and governors, there is a clear educational direction to the school. Management is very efficient, competent and well informed.

Analysis of pupils' performance is effective, with a strong focus on raising pupil achievement and the quality of education for all. The governors' role in helping to shape the direction of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides outstanding and purposeful leadership.
- The school has two very effective deputies and a very strong senior management team.
- The shared commitment and concern for individual pupils by all staff in the school are excellent.
- Management of the curriculum, special educational needs and resources are very good. There are very effective procedures for self-evaluation.
- The management of assessment data for target setting needs to be streamlined.
- The school makes good use of its information systems.
- The school applies the principles of best value to all its decisions. Educational priorities are supported well through very good financial planning.

Commentary

38. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection through the commitment, hard work and vision of the headteacher and the very able and effective deputy headteachers. Together they have inspired and generated high levels of commitment and loyalty from all members of staff, and respect from parents and the local community. Every possible care is taken to ensure that this is an inclusive school so that all pupils receive their full entitlement to a good quality education and are treated with respect and consideration at all times. All who work in the school are fully committed to this aim. This is much appreciated by the pupils and all who know the school.

39. The very strong senior management team, which includes the year group leaders and the special educational needs co-ordinator, has ensured a firm foundation for the continued growth and improvement of the school. Leadership of the curriculum and teaching by the headteacher and senior staff is good. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have clear expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of work. Everyone focuses on improvements and follows the school guidelines consistently, encouraging very positive attitudes and behaviour and helping pupils to develop self-discipline.

40. Planning aimed at reaching the school's identified goals is good. The organisation of responsibilities, based on a careful analysis of the priorities for development has led to subject managers having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Together with the year group leaders they promote a carefully considered strategy to ensure enrichment in all curriculum areas so that they are addressed in greater depth. Subject managers already have suitable monitoring tasks, such as checking teachers' lesson planning and work sampling to help ensure that appropriate work in their subject is provided for pupils across the classes and year groups. They have already been very successful in this work. As a further development they need to play a more significant part in the analysis and setting of targets in their subject for each year group.

41. The school is very effectively managed. The headteacher and deputy headteachers also manage to address the day to day difficulties faced by the school very successfully with the help of the very efficient office staff.

42. The match and deployment of teaching and support staff is very effective and helps to create an improving school. The staff have clearly understood roles, routines and procedures that ensure their involvement in improving provision and raising standards of attainment for all pupils. For example, the implementation of the handwriting scheme is monitored well and has a very positive effect on standards. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection.

43. The school has developed and implemented some very good systems for evaluating its performance. There is thoughtful analysis of a wealth of data to help identify areas for development

and the information gained from this process is used well to identify areas for improvement. However, this can be time consuming as the computer program that supports this analysis is cumbersome and delays the target setting actions which need to be taken.

44. The management of special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator works very closely with teachers, learning support staff, parents, governors, outside agencies and pupils to ensure that the provision is of a very high quality. Through careful organisation and timetabling, the special educational needs co-ordinator is very effective in targeting resources to support the pupils with special educational needs. As a result of her very well structured training programme for support staff and the guidance given in the construction of individual educational plans, the liaison with staff, parents and outside agencies she ensures the provision is of a very high order.

45. The organisation, management and support for teachers new to the school are very good. For example, the school ensures that every teacher new to the school has a colleague mentor, in order to provide relevant information. This works very well to give support and guidance to newly appointed or temporary staff who work in the school. The continuing professional development for staff is very good and very effective use is made of information from performance management reviews to identify training needs. Rigour is maintained in the performance reviews as the school arranges external moderation of the process. The best value principles have a very positive influence on the total provision from care for the site to the very good deployment of all categories of staff.

46. The governors are clear about their roles and their importance to the school. They act as 'critical friends' and their effectiveness in fulfilling their statutory and other responsibilities is very good. The headteacher, staff and governors are all involved in school development planning. Priorities for development are carefully analysed; the appropriateness of them and the actions taken to meet these objectives are very good. Senior staff report to governors to keep them informed of developments and to enable them to assess the impact of spending on standards. Governors visit the school regularly to observe the provision first hand to assess its effectiveness. They have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and ensure that they take a prominent role in promoting the aims of the school. As a result of all these measures the school gives good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,657,941	Balance from previous year	93,530
Total expenditure	1,667,372	Balance carried forward to the next	84,099
Expenditure per pupil	2,481		

47. The governors apply the principles of 'best value', to all their decisions and then monitor carefully its impact on financial planning. They ensure the school spends its resources wisely and seek to obtain best value when improving teaching and learning resources. Educational priorities are supported very well through good financial planning. The school uses its funds to support developments in the school and these funds are used very effectively for their designated purposes. The school gives good value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, especially in handwriting.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well.
- Good use is made of role-play to develop pupils' understanding and use of language.
- There is very good use of teachers' marking and short-term target setting to raise standards.
- Good curriculum leadership has recognised the areas for development and put suitable actions in place to bring about improved standards.
- Tracking of pupils' progress to set expectations for each year group needs further development.
- The fiction books have been well used and now need updating and replacing.
- There is insufficient breadth of vocabulary and complexity of sentence structure in pupils' written and oral work to raise standards to higher levels.

Commentary

48. Standards in English by the end of Year 6 have fluctuated since the last inspection and have dipped down over the last two years. Although they still fall below the those seen at the last inspection, standards and rates of progress are improving and are now broadly in line with those for similar types of school and those found nationally as a result of the school's development work. The focus the school has on improving pupils' handwriting results in a sound, consistent style being taught throughout the school and the majority of pupils show fluency in handwriting.

49. Pupils from all backgrounds including those with special needs and minority ethnic groups achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported particularly well through carefully planned programmes of work; good and very good teaching, very good use of support staff and the effective use of well-chosen resources matched to their needs. In the past, girls have done better than boys in writing, although the gap between the two is closing.

50. Standards in speaking and listening are average in all year groups. Most pupils speak confidently and with suitable expression. The school's initiative on developing role play to bring meaning to texts is helping to develop pupils' range of vocabulary, but this still remains an aspect for further development so pupils can achieve high attainment levels.

51. Most pupils read confidently in Year 6 and achieve well as they develop their knowledge of different types of books. This is because of well managed teaching of literacy using a good range of resources including newspaper articles, books and information available on the Internet. There is a clear strategy for teaching reading and this supported by a well planned focus on developing pupils' understanding and enjoyment of books in the "Love of Books" sessions. Pupils in all age groups are able to talk about preferred authors. There is a useful fiction section of new good quality texts in a well-resourced library area that has over 7000 titles of mostly reference books. Each class has a well organised fiction book stock that is passed from class to class within a year group to ensure variety. The books have been very well used, but many are now in need of replacement.

52. Standards in writing are average. Evidence from previous work shows that pupils cover writing for different purposes and audiences, for example, letter writing, book reviews, newspaper articles and some poetry. Standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation in this work are in line with those expected of pupils of similar age. Pupils know the main features of the different types of writing needed for different purposes and so by the age of 11 most pupils are able to use drafting

techniques, write accounts, instructions, stories and poems. Most use punctuation correctly. Their spelling, although variable, shows a satisfactory understanding of spelling rules. In their writing pupils use a relatively simple sentence structure with limited vocabulary. This limits pupils from attaining higher levels.

53. The quality of teaching in English is a significant strength throughout the school and is good overall with much that is very good and some examples of excellence. There is sustained purpose to engage the pupils' interest and they are given good quality opportunities to learn collaboratively. Teachers provide pupils with high quality guidance on how they are doing and on how they can improve their work. High expectation for pupils' behaviour and performance is a consistent feature of all teaching and this contributes to the good attainment seen in lessons. In one notable lesson, the teacher made excellent use of a computer and projector to illustrate the development of newspaper articles. Within the same session, pupils learnt through a variety of strategies when working with a partner, in a group and individually. The teacher maintained constant high expectations for their work and did this with humour, often using "play on words" part of the lesson's focus, to make a point. The pupils' response was excellent, sharing the humour but also understanding the purpose of the session and they were able to evaluate their own progress.

54. Particular strengths of the teaching are:

- specific guidance for teachers on the development of writing.
- the arrangements for setting by ability in Years 4, 5 and 6;
- targeted support for pupils in Year 3 using well trained support staff;
- good quality teachers' planning for pupils of differing abilities;
- selection of tasks that is relevant to the pupils;
- very good marking and feedback to pupils so that they know what to do to improve;

55. The subject managers identify what needs to be improved and plan and work with their colleagues to develop and implement strategies to bring improvement. For example, the school has developed an impressive amount of assessment information in English and uses it well, but the management of this needs further refinement to make it easy to interpret for long-term target setting, which can then be used efficiently by the class teachers. Through the subject managers, the school continues to focus on raising pupils' standards of writing. They have already identified the following elements to help this development, namely:

- lesson planning which indicates specific vocabulary to be taught in lessons and provides pupils with good opportunities to use these new words;
- concentration on developing the pupils' expressive vocabulary especially in Year 3;
- challenge and support for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to write sentences with complex structures using a wider vocabulary.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subject areas. Some very moving writing is seen in personal social and health education and well-crafted poems are seen in work arising from a study of rivers in geography. Very good use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in literacy across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good and often very good because they are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills to real life problems.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good with examples of very good teaching.
- Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their work.
- The leadership and management of the subject by the two subject managers are very effective.

Commentary

57. The standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the 2003 national tests taken were similar to the national average. The pupils currently in Year 6 are reaching standards in line with those expected for their age and the school is on track to meet the very challenging target of having 84 per cent of pupils attain the nationally expected level. Achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs is good and often very good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, identify learning objectives in their books. Mathematical concepts are reinforced with real life situations. Throughout the school, pupils have a good understanding of numbers, shape and space, data handling and establishing relationship of patterns.

58. The good use of practical investigation and problem solving offers a positive transference from theoretical learning to practical application. This systematic approach has a positive impact on helping to raise the levels of pupils' mathematical understanding. They show confidence when using mathematical vocabulary and this together with their confidence to apply mathematical learning to different 'everyday' situations, is a strength of the school's practical approach in mathematics.

59. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often better and is a significant factor in helping pupils reach expected standards. Teaching is delivered at a brisk pace with high expectations. Teachers use 'quick fire' probing questioning to gauge pupils' understanding, and management of pupil behaviour is always good. They use different methods to explain new work and use the interactive white board and computers very effectively to support mathematical learning, making the best use of a visual approach. Day-to-day assessment is used well and provides an effective strategy to inform future planning and teaching. The good quality additional support given to those pupils who are identified as being at risk of not achieving the expected level assists many of them in reaching it successfully. Pupils are always aware of what they are expected to learn through identification of learning objectives. This encourages and promotes good pupil – teacher interaction. Many lessons are lively and capture pupils' interest so they are able to explain in their mental sessions, what strategies they use to perform complete calculations and arrive at a solution. There are many examples of very effective teaching and pupils clearly enjoy their mathematics. In these lessons, achievement is very good.

60. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are good and mostly very good. Pupils are attentive, keen to learn and as they work their way through the school they are becoming self-assured. They work independently and collaboratively, showing respect, consideration and support for their peers, as well as the support staff who offer all pupils help, guidance and care.

61. The leadership and management of the subject are shared responsibilities between two members of staff. They work well together, analyse data to provide them with pupils' general performance in relation to strengths and weaknesses. This information is used effectively. They set targets and recognise that they need to monitor progress on a regular basis. This will provide them with more accurate information in order to help pupils whose attainment is borderline to achieve the higher results. Planning is carefully monitored to ensure that coverage is according to statutory requirements. Year group planning ensures parity of opportunity and continuity and progression for all pupils. The subject managers are very effective and self-analytical and these very positive strengths have now prompted them to consider how they can improve their target setting further to continue the current upward trend in standards now being experienced.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. The pupils' skills in mathematics are used in other subjects of the curriculum and this helps reinforce their understanding of mathematical concepts by using them in practical and relevant ways. Links with information and communication technology are particularly strong. Pupils use programs on the classroom computers designed to improve their mathematics skills and sometimes have their numeracy lessons in the computer suite. There they use programs such as Logo to learn about position and direction and use data handling programs to create graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Planned progression and good provision in investigative science.
- Very good marking and informative feedback to pupils, linked to National Curriculum levels and individual targets in investigative science.
- The good use of real life contexts to engage and motivate pupils and provide relevance.
- There is good emphasis on the use of specific technical language.
- Opportunities for pupils to plan their own investigative work are too teacher-directed. This limits the challenge for the higher attainers.
- Although assessment is good overall, its diagnostic use in the content strands of the science curriculum is not fully developed.

Commentary

63. Standards achieved in Year 6 assessments in 2003 are average and are in line with national expectations, results achieved by similar schools and the progress that would be expected based on attainment on entry to the school. This however represents an overall downward trend given that results in 2000 were well above average and above average in 2001 and 2002. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations, but evidence from work analysis and lesson observations during the inspection suggests that standards for the majority of those pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 are above the national average. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well as a result.

64. In the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching varied between satisfactory and very good, with the majority of teaching being good, leading to good progress from pupils. Planning is detailed and secure subject knowledge on the part of teachers is reflected in clear explanations and good questioning. Pupils showed enthusiasm for their work and high levels of engagement. This is due to the emphasis placed on planning work in contexts which are relevant and motivating. For examples, work in Year 3 on absorbency is linked to the headteacher's need to find the best cloth to mop up water from a leaking pipe. Giving pupils opportunities to develop the skills of investigative science is a strength of the teaching, but too often this is closely directed by the teacher and pupils are given insufficient opportunities to plan investigative work independently or collaboratively. This is also reflected in the range of work seen in pupil books.

65. At present, planning for lessons does not consistently provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Where these opportunities are provided, such as in a Year 4 lesson where pupils work in 'table groups' with mini white boards to plan an investigation into evaporation, pupils respond enthusiastically and make very good progress. In all lessons seen there is good emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary in relation to knowledge and investigative processes. Good emphasis is also placed on pupils developing the skills to record their work systematically and from Year 3 onwards pupils are regularly encouraged to use the language of method, prediction, results and conclusion. Overall, teachers set high expectations for the quality of presentation of written and graphical work. There is evidence of the good use of information and communication technology to support the science curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 use spreadsheets to record the results of investigative work and pupils in Year 4 produce bar and line graphs using data handling programs. Year 3 pupils also use digital microscopes to examine the structure of materials to support their predictions in relation to their absorbency.

66. Assessment in investigative science is rigorous and closely linked to effective marking and target setting for individual pupils. Its diagnostic use is less well developed in the other areas of the science curriculum, but the subject leader has identified the need to introduce diagnostic

assessments linked to each unit of work the children undertake. Marking is very good, clearly reinforcing the positive aspects of pupils' work as well as systematically identifying areas for development and linking to individual targets relating to national curriculum attainment levels. Pupils are generally very clear about what they need to do to achieve specific National Curriculum levels in investigative science and how to improve their own work by making reference to the next target on the list in their books.

67. The subject leader has only recently taken up the post but has a clear vision for development and has inherited practices which mean that subject leadership is good overall. However, the use of assessment data to track pupils' performance to identify targets for improving the percentages of pupils achieving the higher National Curriculum levels, is under developed. Teachers' planning is detailed and evaluated regularly via half termly curriculum review meetings in year group teams. Additional guidance within planning to support the provision for the higher attaining pupils is currently being developed. Staff have recently taken part in in-service training to enhance the quality of teaching investigative science and this is judged by the subject leader to have had a positive impact. Resources are good .

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Pupils learn at a very good rate.
- Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6
- Pupils are well motivated, confident and apply themselves well to their work.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in all subjects across the curriculum.
- The subject manager gives excellent support to colleagues and takes charge of ordering, installing and maintaining appropriate hard and software.

Commentary

68. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 6 and that pupils made satisfactory progress across the ability range. There have been excellent improvements in standards since that time. Evidence from lesson observations, the pupils' work stored on the computer system and from displays and scrutiny of the teachers' planning, demonstrates that pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are attaining above average standards by the end of Year 6. All pupils make very good progress across the school.

69. Many significant strengths have been developed in the breadth of content, subject planning and in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Other reasons for pupils' high standards of attainment are the timetabled access to the computer suite, the effective use of the interactive white board and also because teachers now have excellent support from the subject co-ordinator and his technician.

70. In an innovative move, the co-ordinator works closely with staff in the two feeder infant schools. This has had a very significant impact on standards and has resulted in pupils coming into the school with many well-established skills. For example, Year 3 pupils know the functions of the keyboard and use the mouse with confidence and skill. They have well-developed click and drag techniques and word processing skills. In their science work, they are able to understand how to represent and then interrogate data they have collected to ask questions and form conclusions about absorbent materials using a branch database. In Year 4, pupils design Christmas Cards, using 'clip art' to group and layer different shapes into attractive designs. Year 5 pupils worked with LOGO to model 'nesting' procedures and repeat procedures to create some stunning patterns. Pupils in Year 6 worked in small groups to produce short animated films using web cams. The

quality of the groups' discussions in order to solve problems and improve the animations was very good. This challenging task enabled pupils to bring together all their skills and imagination to produce some carefully observed and fascinating results which were exceptionally good. All these examples are evidence of the confidence and understanding the pupils have of the use of information and communication technology and result in examples of high standards of work throughout the school.

71. There is equal access for boys and girls including those pupils with special educational needs. All pupils are given good access to the facilities with sensitive adult help. Higher attaining pupils show suitable independence in using information technology, and many average and lower attaining pupils are gaining the confidence to proceed without guidance. Pupils use the Internet to research topics linked with their topic work and their skills in refining the research are developing well. They have a good understanding of the use of scanners, digital cameras, and have a good knowledge of information and communication technology in every day life.

72. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work in their lessons. They are well motivated, confident, apply themselves well and do not waste their time when using computers. They are very co-operative when it is necessary to share computer facilities and freely help each other without prompting. During the periods they were observed, pupils enjoyed the activities and worked well together. They eagerly pass on their knowledge to others when explaining their work. They handle equipment carefully. Pupils are proud of their work and like to see it on display. Pupils use word processing to present examples of work in other curriculum areas, and many turn to it with a sense of familiarity as a means of improving the quality and presentation of their writing.

73. Throughout the school, pupils receive consistently good teaching. There are high expectations of work and behaviour and pupils are expected to show a high degree of independence and follow teachers' instructions carefully. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject, when working with large groups. The support they sometimes receive in the computer suite from the very skilled co-ordinator has undoubtedly helped the staff to become even more confident in this regard. Introductions to tasks, and to new ways of using information and communication technology are clear and direct, and as a result, pupils make rapid progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to co-operate well and work at a good pace, often independently or with other children. This has a positive effect on all the pupils' learning. Staff are aware also of the need to allow the higher attainers to work at a more rapid pace and the need to present them with challenges and extension work. This was seen in all classes when some pupils having completed their work, selected another task and found new ways to suit their levels of working.

74. All teachers place appropriate emphasis on sharing learning objectives with the pupils and then reviewing how much they have learned at the end of a session. The quality of teachers' planning is good. Major aspects of the subject such as data handling, using spreadsheets, desktop publishing and the use of power point for presentations have also been developed. Pupils are confident in their use of e-mail, the Internet and scanners.

75. The policy and scheme of work ensure that pupils are able to make progress in a continuous and progressive way at a pace suited to their needs. The subject co-ordinator gives excellent support to colleagues and takes charge of ordering and maintaining appropriate software. In-service training is organised for all members of staff, which is an on-going priority for the school improvement plan. This is having a major, positive impact on pupils' standards of work. The computer suite provides an excellent and much needed resource for the school. The school has a very good range of software for teaching the National Curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The pupils' knowledge and skills in information and communication technology are used well in other subjects. This not only helps extend and reinforce skills in information and communication technology but also makes learning more relevant and fun. For example, designing patterns using mathematical shapes adds a new dimension to working with LOGO. Pupils use the

Internet to find out more about topics they are studying in subjects such as history and science. In English they use word processing skills for writing and in mathematics they use suitable programs in their data handling work. When appropriate, some numeracy and literacy lessons are held in the computer suite. Pupils' animation presentations are of a high quality and involve them in learning many new skills in a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

77. In humanities, the work was sampled in history and geography but, during the inspection week, only one geography lesson and no history lessons were observed. No judgements can be made on standards achieved, although the standards in the one geography lesson observed were good with pupils having a clear understanding of their locality as a result of very good teaching.

78. Planning shows that **geography** and **history** are taught on a half termly basis over the year. A major strength of the provision is that in both subjects emphasis is placed firmly on providing pupils with as much direct experience as possible. This is achieved by a wide range of well-planned visits, visitors, role-play and drama. The management of both subjects is good. Managers are well informed and enthusiastic. They support their colleagues well and make every effort to ensure that class teachers are provided with all the help they need to make the subjects come alive for their pupils. There is evidence of information and communication technology being used very well to support both subjects for research and presentation of work, as for example, in the work on local rivers and bridges being prepared by Year 6 pupils for pupils in Year 3. Assessment provides effective information about pupil progress against key objectives for each unit of work, and is assessed against national curriculum criteria. Resources are generally good, although many are shared with other classes, and sometimes this limits opportunities for pupils to have reference materials readily available, for example, maps or atlases of the world or the United Kingdom.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the knowledge and expertise of staff through very good support from the subject leader.
- The teaching of religious education makes a very strong and high quality contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The quality of leadership is good.

Commentary

79. Standards in religious education are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievements, including those with special educational needs are good and often very good. Discussions during lessons indicate that pupils are very well aware of the significant characteristics of their own religion as well as those of Sikhism and Hinduism. They are able to contrast their own beliefs, practices and places of worship with others they have learned about. They understand the very strong connection there is between what people believe and how they behave. When comparing similarities and differences, they share their views, listen carefully to what is being taught and listen respectfully about the beliefs of others.

80. Teaching is good or better and teachers provide high quality opportunities for pupils to discuss what they have learned. Teaching and learning of religious education in the school is about understanding, respect and care of each other. It is a practical, 'hands on' approach with a focus of finding out and expressing feelings about what they have learned. This provides the pupils of this school with a very solid foundation for being able to live in and be good citizens in a multi-cultural society. Teachers plan their lessons imaginatively and encourage pupils to share their own experiences, which they did when comparing their own birth with that of Jesus, considering such

aspects as parental pride, gifts and visitors. These young pupils did this with confidence and evident enjoyment.

81. The teaching of religious education has a positive impact on pupils' personal development by helping them to become aware of the beliefs of others and those of others. It also makes a very strong contribution to the underlying aims and ethos of the school.

82. The subject co-ordinator provides a very clear direction for the subject. This is shared by the headteacher and all members of staff. This together with collective acts of worship, for example, and the very firm belief of the school as a family by all members of staff, contributes to the excellent spirituality, vibrantly underpinned by music and art, which is evident in the school on a day-to-day basis. Assessments are carried out on an end of topic basis, which advises the school about standards and progress pupils make on a regular basis.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Only two lessons were seen in **art and design** and one in **design and technology**. In addition to observing lessons, pupils' work was also scrutinised and the managers were interviewed. Examination of work on display was also carried out. It was only possible to see a very small number of lessons in **physical education** and therefore it is not possible to make firm judgements about provision and standards.

84. Standards in **art and design** are in line with national expectations, though some work in Year 3 is not well developed and lacks maturity. Pupils in Year 3 have worked with paper to make collage pictures, Year 4 have produced abstract designs which have then been represented in a range of media including screen prints and repeated patterns produced on the computer. Pupils in Year 5 have linked their work on St Lucia in geography to designing and making batik prints and large scale collaborative drawings of exotic fruit using pastels and chalk. In Year 6, pupils investigate the work of established artists to inform their own work in a similar style. Their work in sketchbooks and finished products show good use of detailed pencil sketches to explore ideas and good use of paints. In the lessons observed, teaching was good and pupils made good progress, largely due to the high expectations of the teachers and detailed planning. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. Although pupils are encouraged to evaluate the work of their peers and the artists whom they study, the use of technical vocabulary to describe techniques and composition is under developed.

85. In **design and technology** standards are in line with national expectations and achievement overall is satisfactory. In the one lesson observed, teaching was good and pupils made good progress. Pupils' work shows evidence of them being engaged in effective planning represented by sketches, descriptions and annotated diagrams and pupils have been involved in focused practical tasks to develop specific skills necessary for making subsequent products. These include sawing and joining wood to make rigid frames and sewing a range of stitches. This is an improvement since the last inspection in which this was identified as an area for development. There is an appropriate emphasis on pupils evaluating their own and each other's finished work. Pupils in Year 6 test bridges they have made in order to identify improvements and pupils in Year 3 discuss in pairs the pneumatic models they are making part way through a lesson in order to identify potential areas for development. However, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with precise criteria to inform this evaluation. Marking and the provision of productive feedback to pupils, highlighting the strengths of their work as well as areas for future development, are strengths.

86. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 talk animatedly about their experiences of design and technology and provide evidence that they have gained experience of a range of materials and techniques in designing and making a variety of product including bridges, cam mechanisms and biscuits. Resources are very good and there is excellent accommodation comprising a designated practical working room and a food technology room. Both of these areas have been suitably adapted to allow full access to those pupils who are in wheelchairs. Subject leadership is very good and the current co-ordinator has developed highly

effective guidance on planning and teaching. All staff have been involved in effective in-service training. There is evidence of the use of information and communication technology, including control technology, being used to support the subject. Assessment provides effective information about pupil progress against key objectives for each unit of work, but the school recognises the need to link this to the identification of examples of pupil's work assessed against National Curriculum criteria.

87. From discussions with members of the subject management team and pupils, scrutiny of planning and records of events it is clear there are many good opportunities for pupils to develop well in **physical education**. Teachers' planning meets the full expectations of the National Curriculum requirements. There is very high quality provision of resources including, very unusually for a junior school, an excellent sports hall. Adventurous and outdoor education is provided for through the use of its grounds and visits to activity centres such as the recent visit to a specialist centre on the Isle of Wight. Swimming takes place at a nearby college for pupils in Year 4 and a catch - up programme is planned for Year 6 pupils who can't swim in the summer term. There is very good provision for pupils with special physical needs through the specialist physiotherapy suite.

88. Good use is made of specialist teaching staff from beyond the school to offer additional sports including tennis and judo. Pupils participate in sports competitions against other schools that include swimming, football for boys and girls, athletics and cross-country running. Basketball is one of several extra-curricular activities linked to physical education that enrich the opportunities available to the pupils.

89. Teachers make links with other areas of study and so pupils develop an understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies in science and can monitor the effects. Pupils develop ideas of fair play and inclusiveness in sport in their Personal Social and Health Education. Members of the subject management team have a programme for the future development of the subject that involves furthering relations with other sports organisations in the community.

Music

Provision for music in the school is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and very good teaching allows pupils to develop their knowledge of music, their high quality singing and their performing, with tuned and untuned instruments.
- Teachers focus effectively on skills development.
- The subject is very effectively organised, managed and led.

Commentary

90. Standards in music are good overall. In singing they are very good. In performing and composing they are good and in appraising music they are sound. Teaching and learning is good. Lessons are carefully prepared to give pupils many opportunities to experiment with instruments and explore sound, particularly when following graphic scores as was in evidence in Year 6. Pupils classify sounds to respond to the graphic scores and in small groups use both tuned and untuned instruments to correspond to different symbols on the musical score. This promotes musical vocabulary particularly well and encourages pupils to distinguish between harmonious and discordant notes. Pupils in Year 6 build on the composition skills learned in previous years and can write a score for the group to perform. Pupils work very well collaboratively, taking turns in sharing instruments and offering suggestions. They learn respect, how to listen attentively and do not interrupt as their peers speak. All pupils in the school participate in and enjoy music. This provides them opportunities to explore its richness. This enables them to make good progress and contribute knowledgeably to group discussion.

91. In all lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities to handle instruments and experiment with sound. As they progress through the school they learn to distinguish between rhythm and pitch, and develop the skills of interpreting music. They discuss how it makes them feel and explore their own ideas and imagination. This allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to develop their skills of interpreting, composing and performing. They display confidence in their approach to music and feel comfortable and enthusiastic when asked to perform individually or in a group.

92. The subject is effectively organised and managed and maintains the high status previously judged in the last inspection. The subject manager has provided teachers with quality in-service training in compositional skills and is currently focusing on raising the profile of pupils' appraisal skills. The subject manager is passionate in the belief that music is an important contributory element in supporting spirituality within the school as a community. Music in the school has become a way of life with high numbers in the school choir and pupils learning to play instruments through the peripatetic service. Teachers ensure that planned lessons are of high quality. Pupils participate in musical events and concerts and the quality of singing can only be favourably compared to the high rate of enjoyment they experience when they perform as a choir of almost seven hundred. Pupils sing with emotion to match the mood of the music. They accompany many songs with actions and sing joyfully, sweetly and melodiously with the quality of a cathedral choir.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. The school has a manager taking responsibility for developing this aspect of the curriculum who liaises closely with the religious education manager, the deputy headteacher and staff in order to plan a clear scheme of work for every year group to cover all aspects. The plan covers relationships, respect and self-esteem, health and safety and citizenship for all classes and provides different areas to be taught each term. Many of the aspects are covered in other curriculum areas, such as religious education, and the assemblies and special times set aside by teachers to support the children's understanding and appreciation of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of their lives. All classes set aside some time for these discussions in their circle times.

94. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection period. In this lesson the pupils showed sensitivity to the views of others and learned how to make informed decisions about relevant matters. Their learning and achievements were good as a result of the teacher's careful planning of suitable activities and class organisation. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, contributed well to the discussions and felt that their ideas and views were valued.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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