

INSPECTION REPORT

WALLISDEAN JUNIOR SCHOOL

Fareham

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115889

Headteacher: Mr P Johnson

Lead inspector: Mr B Bowen

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 November 2003

Inspection number: 260926

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 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	218
School address:	Wallisdean Avenue Fareham
Postcode:	PO14 1HU
Telephone number:	01329 232 571
Fax number:	01329 231 822
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Preston
Date of previous inspection:	9 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Wallisdean Junior School is an average sized junior school situated near to the centre of Fareham. It provides full-time education for 218 pupils, including ten pupils who receive specialist support through the Resourced Provision for Deaf Children. This is known in the school as 'The Ark'. The number of boys and girls are about equal although the proportions vary from year to year. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual time of transfer is above the national average, with more pupils entering than leaving. Fifteen per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, and this is broadly in line with the national picture, although census information indicates that there is some social deprivation in the local area. Pupil's attainments when they enter the school are average. Around one quarter of them are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is above average. The small number of pupils who belong to minority ethnic groups is very low compared to most schools. Only one pupil, who is new to the school, has English as an additional language.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21066	B. G. Bowen	Lead inspector	English Music Physical education Religious education English as an additional language Personal, social and health education
9163	G. Humphries	Lay inspector	
21893	V. Brittain	Team inspector	Science History Geography Design and technology The provision for pupils in the Resourced Provision for Deaf Children
24528	G. Muton	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
THE RESOURCED PROVISION FOR DEAF CHILDREN	20
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	21
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Its standard of care for the pupils is very high, and it promotes their good all-round development. It has a very special ethos which is welcoming and supportive of all members of its community. The pupils are very happy to come to school and they look forward to each lesson eagerly. Most attain standards that are around the expectations for their ages and capabilities. This represents satisfactory achievement, but there remains room for further improvement, especially in English and mathematics. The school is working hard to achieve progress in this area. The teachers share a common approach, very successfully developing the pupils' thinking and learning skills. They are dedicated and capable, and supported by a dynamic leadership. Consequently, the school is highly regarded by the parents and the local community. It gives good value for money as its strengths far outweigh the weaknesses.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school shows excellent practice in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunity to take part in the very wide variety of school activities, from musical drama to residential visits.
- The pupils are very well behaved, both in class and on the playground.
- The headteacher is very effective; his inspiration, working alongside the senior leaders to create a sense of common purpose and forward thinking, is of the highest order.
- In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, pupils are not producing enough work and presentation is weak.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- The provision for deaf children is very good; they integrate well into the mainstream classes.
- The accommodation has been imaginatively improved, creating a very good climate for learning.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in developing the pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools ¹
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	E	D
mathematics	D	C	E	D
science	C	C	D	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

During their time in school, pupils at all levels, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress towards achieving standards that are in line with their capabilities and earlier attainments. In 2003, pupils leaving school performed well below the national averages, but this was a 'one-off' year where over forty per cent of pupils had been assessed as having special educational needs. The work seen during the course of the inspection was higher. For the Year 6 pupils, this was in line with the previous trend of gradually improving standards and matched the national expectations. Standards of work are slightly higher in science than in English and mathematics, and this is due to the subject being taught in units that are easier to recall. Pupils generally speak confidently and clearly, and most older pupils read with understanding and expression. However, their writing shows that many do not produce enough

¹ *Similar schools are those that have around the same percentage of pupils receiving free school meals. It is not possible to relate the standards achieved to the pupils' performance in the End of Key Stage 1 tests because many have changed schools in the meantime. The figures in this part of the table have been adjusted to take account of the pupils in the Resourced Provision for Deaf Children who all have statements of special educational need.*

finished work. In mathematics, pupils do not regularly practise previously learned skills. These factors impede their progress to higher levels. Deaf pupils achieve well as a result of the close evaluation of their learning in each lesson. **Throughout the school, pupils have very good attitudes to learning.** They are interested and very enthusiastic. They co-operate well in discussions and investigations. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of their learning are very well developed.** Standards of behaviour are very good throughout and attendance at school is high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. The high quality curriculum covers all subjects in an imaginative way. Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by the provision of a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, ranging from music instrumental tuition and sports to advanced cookery and booster mathematics clubs. **The quality of teaching and learning is good.** Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding; they plan well and co-operatively, using a good range of resources. A high level of support is also provided by the learning support assistants. Teachers constantly demonstrate their desire to praise pupils and build up their self-esteem. However, on occasions this leads them to accept written work that is not good enough, and their responses do not show the pupils what they need to do to improve. Teaching and support for deaf children is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is of a high calibre. The headteacher has a perceptive vision of the school as a purposeful, mutually supportive community. His inspiration has led to a supportive and involved governing body, working alongside the team of capable teaching and support staff. Refinement is needed in planning for further developments where the criteria for improvements are not sufficiently challenging. In some areas, the subject leader does not use assessment information sufficiently to plan future developments, and there are inconsistencies in their monitoring roles. The governing body works satisfactorily to help shape the school's forward development. All statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have an extremely high regard for the school. They value the fact that their children are taught well. They consider that the school is well led and managed and appreciate the provision of the very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils find lessons very interesting and especially like the games they play on the playground. They do not feel threatened in school, and would feel happy in talking to their teacher if they have any worries.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- increase the content and quality of pupils' finished work, and regularly reinforce writing and number skills;
- revise marking practices to show pupils how to improve more;
- make planning for improvement more effective by setting more challenging and measurable targets for higher standards;
- develop the role of the subject manager in using assessment information to identify and monitor more closely the priorities for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment during their time at this school. The work completed by pupils in the early months of Year 3 show standards that are around the average for their age. Pupils in the present Year 6 are attaining standards that are at least appropriate to their age, and these represent satisfactory progress during their time in the school. During the years up to 2003, the school's rate of improvement had kept pace with that seen nationally. Pupils who left in July 2003 had attainments that were well below the national average, and below those seen in similar schools. However, a very high percentage of these pupils had been assessed as having special educational needs, and the teachers' prior assessments of their attainments were very close to their actual performance in the national tests. This indicates that this was not a typical year. The evidence of work seen across the school during the inspection strongly indicates that overall standards, although still having room for improvement, are higher and generally in line with expectations.

Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to improve standards generally by encouraging pupils' thinking and learning skills; this has been successful in raising standards of speaking and listening, and the attainments of boys which are now closer to those of the girls. Good classroom support has helped pupils with special educational needs to develop satisfactorily in line with their capabilities. Within the generally low achievements of the pupils leaving school in the summer of 2003, the school met its targets for the percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in the national tests. It has also been successful in improving standards in information and communication technology (ICT), which were previously judged to be unsatisfactory. However, the pupils' skills in ICT are not yet sufficiently used to support work in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- During their time in school, pupils develop increasing confidence in using their speaking and listening skills.
- Written work is often poorly presented and lacking in content.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to reinforce, through independent working, their previously learned skills.
- High standards are found in music, physical education and drama, and there are some examples of very good work in history, art and design, design and technology and ICT.
- Pupils' knowledge of the library, authors and storytelling is good.
- Pupils' skills in ICT are insufficiently used to develop higher standards in other curriculum areas.

Commentary

- 1 The results of national tests in English, mathematics and science have generally shown that pupils' standards are in line with both the national expectations and those of similar schools. Last year, the results were lower and the school did not reach its targets for pupils achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics. However, in these subjects the targets for the percentages of pupils achieving the higher than average levels were met and this indicates that the school is doing well in raising the achievements of higher attaining pupils. Targets for the current year, although challenging, are realistic and the school is monitoring well their progress. These assessments, together with the outcomes of inspection evidence, show that current Year 6 pupils are well placed to re-establish the previous trend of improvement.
- 2 In the table below, the figures are for all pupils leaving school in 2003, and they include deaf pupils who all had statements of special educational need. This rightly follows the general school policy. However, if these pupils are not included in the overall figures, the school's

results in comparison with national results and similar schools from year to year may be significantly higher. This effect is shown in the table given in the first page of the summary, where the 2003 results for English, mathematics and science when compared to similar schools have been adjusted from 'E', 'E', and 'D' to 'D', 'D', and 'C' respectively.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	25.5 (27.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.9 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 3 Throughout their time in the school, pupils' overall achievements are satisfactory. Attainment in science is slightly higher than in English and mathematics, and this is mainly due to the subject being taught in curriculum 'blocks' where one topic is taught intensively over a short period of time. Pupils have more constant and consistent practice in recording the results of their investigations and this prepares them better for working independently under test conditions. In English, pupils have many structured opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They achieve well in this area due to the high quality interaction they have with teachers and learning support staff. This represents very good improvement in this area since the last inspection when many pupils were found to be reluctant speakers. They have daily practice in reading, and learn to use the library well to find out about authors and the organisation of the non-fiction books. Their interest is sustained by visits from well-known children's authors and storytellers who inspire pupils by exploring the world of the imagination. School assessments show that pupils' progress in reading is satisfactory. Many pupils reach a high level of competence in drama, and this further develops their self-confidence and esteem.

- 4 The school has assessed the standards of pupils' writing well over the past four years. It has been successful in raising their basic level of competence in understanding about the use of words and different styles of writing. Their work in exercise books, however, does not reflect the same progress as it is often lacking in content and poorly presented. This is often the result of the lack of time in lessons for pupils to complete extended pieces of work. In mathematics, teachers promote opportunities to help pupils discover ways of solving problems and learn the skills of computation, but they have too few chances to practise these in regular independent working. In this subject also, the pupils' productivity as seen in exercise books is low and poor presentation hampers the pupils' ability to review their work and correct mistakes. These weaknesses are overcome to some extent in Years 5 and 6 where there is a sharper focus on preparing pupils for the national tests.

- 5 In other subjects of the curriculum, attainment in music is a strength of the school, with many pupils taking advantage of the wide variety of instrumental tuition. It is the policy of the school not to charge for this and it is further evidence of the school's determination to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity. Pupils achieve well, too, in physical education where talented pupils have progressed to representing the local area in a number of sports. Inspectors also saw some examples of very good work in design and technology, where pupils created working models of fairground roundabouts, using control technology. High attainment was also seen in one ICT lesson where pupils learned to present information in a variety of forms, using the Power Point program and clip art facility. In these two subjects, as in other areas seen during the inspection, attainment is in line with national expectations and progress is satisfactory overall. In religious education, pupils progress satisfactorily towards achieving the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.

- 6 The school has worked hard to ensure that boys become fully involved in the learning process. Teachers have introduced a number of good strategies to develop their interest and active participation in lessons. A 'reading army' has been established in order to give this area an image that appeals to boys. Question and answer sessions have been adapted to make sure that everyone participates fully in thinking about and contributing to class responses. These have been successful and the gap in attainment between the boys and girls has narrowed accordingly. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. They receive good support, especially from the class learning support assistants. These staff members, including those from the Ark, are well briefed about their roles and they show, in interaction with the pupils, that they know the right way to phrase questions in order to draw out the teaching points of the session. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully involved in all lessons and activities, and some are able to make a valuable contribution to studies about different cultural traditions and religious beliefs. They do not require any special provision. The one pupil with English as an additional language is a new arrival at the school. As a result, it is not appropriate to arrive at a judgement on the standards and progress made in this aspect of the school's provision.
- 7 Pupils use their speaking skills well across the curriculum generally. They are keen to respond to questions and give increasingly mature responses to questions. They know how to act out a role, for instance as children of a Greek household. Their writing skills are promoted to satisfactory effect in subjects where written accounts are necessary. There are fewer planned opportunities for pupils to use their number skills in other subjects, and pupils struggle in ICT when the Logo program requires them to work out angles of turn or scale. The programme for ICT has improved pupils' overall awareness of how computers can be used in other areas, for instance in art or publishing documents, but this has yet to be seen being used consistently to support work across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Provision in this area is **very good**

Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning and their interest and engagement in their work are **very good**. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils say they are happy and enjoy school.
- Attendance is above the national average and punctuality is good.
- Behaviour is very good and relationships are very well developed throughout the school.
- The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and deaf pupils ensures that they take part in all activities.
- The school is a welcoming place for new pupils, especially for those with learning difficulties.
- Pupils' appreciation of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values leads to very good personal development.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and contribute to the work of the school, and do so.

Commentary

- 8 Pupils show very good levels of interest in their lessons and all other school activities. There are opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs and in larger groups. Because the tasks they are given and the style of teaching used is well matched to their learning needs, they sustain high levels of interest and concentration. Pupils have a clear understanding of their own learning styles and thinking skills. They are well equipped to show initiative and take appropriate responsibility for their own learning, although this is an area that needs to be more structured in teachers' planning.

- 9 Behaviour is very good and the implementation of the school behaviour policy is consistent and successful. No pupils have been excluded in the past twelve months. The quality of relationships throughout the school is very good. Pupils show care and consideration towards each other and are courteous and polite towards adults and welcoming towards visitors. A small number of responses to the parents' questionnaire showed concerns about bullying in school. However, when talking with pupils, they say that their teachers are good at dealing with any poor behaviour. Pupils say they are happy and enjoy school because it is friendly and welcoming and they like their teachers and trust them.
- 10 The spiritual ethos in the school is well established. Pupils are given opportunities to explore their own values, feelings and emotions, through discussion and role-play, particularly in literacy, religious education and history. Personal values are also promoted through religious education and the personal, social and health education programme (PSHE). The school provides a clear moral code and there is a very strong commitment to the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity. There is a sense of community within the school demonstrated by the way pupils support each other, and this is typified by the way in which deaf pupils are helped and supported by those around them.
- 11 There are good opportunities for pupils to explore and experience their own and other cultures. This was demonstrated during the inspection when pupils in Year 6 re-enacted scenes from Macbeth. There was also an opportunity for pupils to experience how life was lived in ancient Greece by taking part in activities led by visiting actors dressed in period costumes. Through these and many other experiences, pupils are learning to act according to their own principles and to challenge things that limit freedom such as aggression, injustice and discrimination.
- 12 Attendance is good and above the national average and morning punctuality is good. Overall the learning attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils have been very well maintained since the last inspection with some improvements and opportunities added to the established good practice.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2002/3)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black African
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
209	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
7	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good; pupils enjoy their lessons and a positive working atmosphere is established. The strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained, and teachers have worked very successfully to implement the approaches of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They have established positive caring relationships with their pupils and parents appreciate their extra commitment, particularly in the organisation of the many extra-curricular activities. In lessons, pupils learn well, but often their written work does not reflect this.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and planning is good.
- The provision of equal opportunities is a guiding principle of all lessons and school activities.
- Teachers have good skills in questioning pupils; they manage behaviour very well.
- Some lessons lack pace, often because the introduction goes on too long, and pupils do not have enough time to complete their work.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve.
- Classroom support assistants are well prepared for their roles in the learning situation.

Commentary

- 13 In all areas of the curriculum, the teachers have shown themselves willing to embrace the most recent guidelines on teaching methods and the content of the curriculum. As a result, pupils receive a good foundation for improved achievement. The concentration on developing pupils' thinking and learning styles is a very valuable approach as it assists them to use their skills in other situations, such as when working at home. On the few occasions when individual teachers are not entirely secure in their knowledge of the subject, such as in music or physical education, they can easily find sufficient assistance to enable them to teach, at least satisfactorily, the series of lessons. There is good co-operation between the teachers in each year group in planning the week's work to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the same studies. However, some lessons do not give pupils the opportunity to engage in extended independent work when it would be appropriate to do so, for instance in Year 6, by practising the use of words that join sentences in an interesting manner, or by reinforcing their long multiplication skills.
- 14 Teachers' planning over a series of lessons, such as in 'plant life' in science or the use of 'connecting' words in English, shows that they all contain new learning opportunities or the reinforcement of previous knowledge and skills. As a result of good teaching strategies, the pupils' understanding develops consistently, especially within the times identified for discussions and group work. The teachers collect and use resources very well, especially in lessons where there is a practical content such as in an art and design lesson where Year 6 pupils made very expressive representations of figures using papier-mache. All classrooms are attractive, well organised and stimulating with many aids to learning prominently featured. Where pupils' work is displayed, however, its particularly good features are not pointed out as examples of how high standards can be achieved.
- 15 The teachers are enthusiastic for all elements of the curriculum and this readily conveys itself to the pupils, who settle very well to their work. The pupils know what is expected of them. As a result they confidently approach the many occasions where they are expected to engage in pair or group discussions. The behaviour policy is consistently applied and provides the pupils with a secure understanding of the expected codes of conduct. As a result lessons are taught in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. This makes a very important contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, particularly with the emphasis placed by the school on co-operative learning. Classroom support assistants are particularly

effective in assisting deaf pupils and those with special educational needs. They sensitively ensure that the contributions of the children to class discussions are valued. Arrangements for support outside classrooms ensure that the pupils have equal opportunities to benefit from the learning opportunities provided. Local authority support services have been suitably arranged for the one pupil with English as an additional language. In Year 6, pupils are divided into three groups for mathematics and literacy lessons; in this way, pupils with special educational needs are able to obtain valuable extra support.

- 16 The majority of parents express themselves very satisfied with the amount of work that children are given to carry out at home. On occasions, the reading diary is used well as a medium for communication between the home and the school, but this could be extended to ensure that all parents are happy that their child is completing the homework that is set for the class. Some of the marking by the pupils themselves of spellings that they have learned at home is inaccurate.
- 17 The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Teachers review their knowledge and skills every half term. All the work completed in the exercise books or in worksheets is marked according to the school's policy. Too often, however, marking is restricted to praise for the child's efforts, without pointing out common errors in spelling and punctuation. On occasions, work that is not good enough is accepted and the exercise books show insufficient and poor presentation. As a result, although in lessons pupils make good progress in acquiring new knowledge and skills, their consistent progress to higher standards is impeded. There are examples of better responses in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are focusing on the need for pupils to achieve higher levels. A good assessment process, which involves the pupils in monitoring their own learning, is in the early stages of implementation, and some pupils have only a hazy awareness of their learning targets.
- 18 At the meeting for parents, some concern was expressed that there might be a concentration on raising the achievement of the lower and higher attaining pupils at the expense of those in the middle. Parents should be reassured, however, as most teachers organise lessons in a series so that each group in the class is given close attention on a rotating basis. On a few occasions in lessons observed during the inspection, groups who were expected to work independently were not given sufficiently clear guidance. For example, pupils in a Year 5 group who were given a comprehension exercise using 'contextual clues' were not sure of their task. However, this was quickly noticed by the teacher, and the appropriate assistance was given within a short time.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (29%)	13 (37%)	12 (34%)	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.

The curriculum

The quality of curriculum opportunities provided by the school is **good** with **very good** opportunities for enrichment. However, a lack of focus on ensuring that pupils produce finished work has inhibited the progress to higher levels of attainment. The quality and quantity of resources including staffing and accommodation are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The curriculum is continually modified to include new and creative ideas.
- The arrangements for ensuring equal opportunities for pupils are very good.
- The otherwise very good review and evaluation of the curriculum does not focus sufficiently upon gaps in individual pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Curriculum planning does not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning.
- The arrangements for timetabling series of lessons around topics at different points in the year is imaginative and ensures that the full curriculum is taught in a logical and comprehensive way.

Commentary

- 19 The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. As a result of monitoring the learning habits of pupils, the school has put much effort into developing a thinking and learning policy. The curriculum is heavily influenced by the aim to provide activities to match the differing learning styles of pupils. Opportunities are promoted for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to understand the visual, aural and physical clues to learning.
- 20 This innovative approach to the curriculum is very beneficial for pupils' personal development as they become aware of the most effective method of learning for themselves. Pupils' PSHE is also catered for through 'class councils' when they have opportunities to discuss, honestly and openly, matters which have a direct bearing on their school lives. There is also a planned programme of work which includes education for drugs awareness, and sex and relationships.
- 21 The aims of making all learning opportunities accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, results in the provision of exciting activities. For example 'Crimewatch Chromatology' involves pupils becoming 'detectives' when finding out about light and colour in science. In order to find out about all the countries in the European Union, pupils are involved in a Eurovision Song Contest when they all have to research the country they represent. Drama is used extensively to promote learning.
- 22 The curriculum is further enriched by a large number of extra activities when pupils visit other locations, or have the benefit of talented or expert visitors coming into the school. Visits are planned to link directly with topics being covered in the classrooms. Authors, artists, and musicians visit the school to give pupils a wide experience of artistic and cultural activities. There is a very good provision of after school activities including opportunities for pupils to have extra teaching in mathematics and literacy. Extra-curriculum activities are provided free of charge to pupils to ensure equality of opportunity. This policy even extends to visiting music teachers. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. The attention to the individual learning styles of all pupils further reinforces the school's very good arrangements for equal opportunities.
- 23 The curriculum is continually reviewed and developed. Teachers and support staff are involved in this process at all levels. Teachers work together in year groups; subject leaders carry out reviews of their subjects and senior staff coordinate the whole process, facilitate agreement on new arrangements and take into account the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This has also taken account of the needs of the pupil with English as an additional language who has the support of a learning assistant at appropriate points in the timetable.
- 24 The structure for the review and evaluation of the curriculum by both staff and governors is very good. This results in an exciting range of studies that is accessible to all pupils. However, the process does not focus sufficiently upon the knowledge, understanding and skills demonstrated by pupils in their finished work. The exciting and stimulating teacher-led experiences are not always balanced by opportunities for pupils to practise individual

research. They are factors which have inhibited the raising of attainment of pupils beyond the average.

- 25 Very good use is made of the accommodation, which provides a bright and stimulating learning environment. The computer suite is too small but the school has set aside resources to improve this provision significantly. Otherwise the school is well resourced with spacious classrooms and a library which is well stocked, very well managed and provides a very pleasant environment. The match of teaching and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good with all staff being very well informed about the school's priorities for learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare provided for pupils is **very good**. The support and guidance is **good overall** with **some very good features**. Pupils' views are valued and there are very good opportunities for them to contribute to the life and work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very well for the pastoral care of pupils.
- The school has embarked upon a healthy eating project.
- The school seeks out and acts on pupils' opinions about what can be improved.
- There is good support provided for pupils with special educational needs and they are included in all school activities.
- The school's environment is very conducive to learning.
- The good use of assessment data to advise pupils in some of the older classes about how they can improve has yet to spread throughout the school.

Commentary

- 26 The welfare and pastoral support provided by the school is very good. Staff are sensitive to the individual needs of pupils and the pastoral care and support is carefully matched to their needs. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and very effective and there is good provision for first aid. Pupils are very well supervised and are taught to use school equipment safely and to observe high standards of personal hygiene. The school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. The headteacher is the child protection officer. He ensures that all staff are well trained and able to exercise their child protection responsibilities with vigilance and care. There are well-established links with social services and other relevant outside agencies.
- 27 The induction arrangements for pupils transferring from the infant school and for when they move onto secondary education are very good. A high degree of trust between pupils and their teachers is clearly evident. Pupils say they are confident that if they have to seek help about their work or a personal problem it will be forthcoming. The school has been very successful in taking in new pupils who have had behavioural or learning difficulties in previous schools. At the meeting for parents, support was expressed for the sensitive manner in which the school had managed this. Teachers, support staff and senior managers work very closely together to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed regularly and appropriate targets set. Those who require additional help with their learning, particularly the deaf pupils in the Ark, are well cared for in a way that ensures that they are fully included in all aspects of school life and have equal access to all opportunities. The support provided for the one pupil with English as an additional language is appropriate and he has settled into school well and happily.
- 28 The advice and guidance afforded to pupils regarding their personal development and learning skills is very good. However, pupils are not given sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve their standards of attainment, particularly in their written work.

29 Pupils consider that their opinions and the contribution they make to the life of the school are valued. They were consulted when the learning styles and thinking skills programme was initiated. They have a voice in selecting playtime games and activities. Older pupils can formally apply for a wide range of 'jobs' for example 'Playtime Buddies', 'Assembly Support Assistants' and 'Register Support Assistants', all of which involve agreeing to a formal job specification and signing a contract. Through this recognition and engagement pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and learn to take pride in their school and its environment. The school has recognised that some pupils need to become more aware of the effect of their lifestyles on their health and is embarking on a 'healthy eating' project, following a recent dental inspection. Pupils are very well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents, based on very effective two-way communication, is **very good**. Parents have very positive views about the school and the quality of education that it provides. The links with the community and other schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective two-way communication ensures a very good partnership between school and parents.
- Parents are given many opportunities to find out about the school's aims and practices, such as in the recent open day on spelling.
- The school provides parents with comprehensive information about its activities, in attractive and innovative ways.
- The majority of parents actively support their children's learning and many become involved in the life of the school.
- Annual progress reports provide good information on attainment and progress but could provide parents with more specific guidance for future learning targets.

Commentary

- 30 The partnership between the school and parents is very good. The very effective two-way communication between the school and parents ensures that the views of parents' are noted and acted upon. The school endeavours to provide them with information on the curriculum, topic work and the school's approaches to teaching and learning in imaginative and innovative ways. Newsletters are written in the style and lay-out of newspaper broadsheets. A recent evening workshop on the development of pupils' spelling attracted 75 parents.
- 31 The annual progress reports provide a good overview of pupils' personal development, as well as attainment, progress and effort, for all areas of the curriculum. Summary targets are provided for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but more specific guidance on future learning targets would be a great help to parents who want to contribute to their children's future success. There are regular consultation evenings that are well attended. The reports demonstrate that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of individual pupils. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted regularly about the progress their child is making. The contribution that parents are making to their child's progress is recorded on pupils' individual education plans and the school has plans to develop parental involvement further.
- 32 A significant number of parents are involved in the work of the school and help to organise social and fund raising events to provide additional teaching and learning resources. Some parents have been provided with training to support pupils' learning and currently there is a recruitment drive to establish an 'army' of parents trained to hear pupils read.

- 33 There are good links with the wider community. There is an extensive programme of visits to local places of historic, cultural and religious interest and community leaders, including the local vicar, contribute to assemblies and other school activities. For example, a local team of professional sound and lighting engineers support the school's annual musical production. This has become one of the highlights of the school year and provides pupils with extensive opportunities to develop performing and musical skills and enhances their personal confidence and self-esteem.
- 34 Links with other schools are good. The relationship with the feeder infant school ensures that pupils are well prepared for the transfer to junior school. There are strong links with the receiving secondary schools and pupils are afforded the opportunity of visiting the school of their choice and gaining first hand experience of the amenities and specialist facilities on offer. The school has been a focus of attention by many schools in the local authority and beyond because of the successful teaching and learning strategies based on an understanding of pupils' learning styles.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **good**. There is a very clear, shared view of the improvements needed to raise standards further and of how this is going to be achieved. The school has an excellent record in ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. **Good** systems of school management are in place. The school governors contribute **satisfactorily** by ensuring that the school fulfils its duties and moves forward.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vision and drive of the headteacher inspires staff and governors most effectively.
- The school improvement plan is well focused on identified needs in order to raise standards.
- Monitoring by the school leadership team is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Performance management procedures are very effective in setting out and monitoring targets for individual members of staff.
- Success criteria for the school improvement plan are not sufficiently specific in identifying how high standards of attainment should be.
- There are inconsistencies in the monitoring role of subject leaders.

Commentary

- 35 The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has created an effective management structure to take the school forward. There is a school leadership team for day-to-day management, and the monitoring of lessons, as well as longer term issues. Other members of staff are involved when appropriate and this ensures a sense of shared purpose and commitment. There are co-ordinators for all subjects and, as a result of developing well thought out actions plans, they have been effective in monitoring and improving the quality of the curriculum. However, in some subjects, they are not yet involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning, and as a result are not able focus on how to improve overall standards. Most of the recent monitoring of lessons, carried out by the leadership team, has been primarily focused on the development of thinking and learning skills in general.
- 36 The deputy headteacher is designated as the 'Challenge and Support' leader. This newly created post combines the functions of co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs and for those who are regarded as being gifted and talented. A very good start has been made to improving the provision for both of these groups of pupils. There is effective deployment of support staff and resources and there are good systems to review provision continually.

- 37 The school fulfils its statutory requirements well. Information given to parents about the school is informative and comprehensive. Appropriate systems are in place for monitoring the health and safety of pupils, staff members and visitors to the school. There is a newly established policy for ensuring positive race relations in school, and a date has been set for the assessment of its implementation.
- 38 The school improvement plan focuses intensely on thinking and learning. This arises out of the issues identified during the last inspection, together with the analysis of national test results and the outcomes of the monitoring of lessons. Teachers recently appointed have been very well chosen to support the aims of the school. Staff have been well trained in the use of visual, auditory and other methods of engaging all pupils in their learning. Performance management is used very successfully to develop a common approach to learning. The results of rigorous monitoring over the past year show a good improvement in the quality of teaching and a greater involvement of pupils in their own learning. However, within the plan the success criteria that are related to raising standards are not specific enough. There is no identification of a timetable by which the initiatives can be monitored as they progress, or by whom.
- 39 The results of national tests are thoroughly analysed by staff and governors so that general areas of weakness can be addressed. Pupils' performance in English and mathematics is well tracked across the school using data collected from teacher assessments and from non-statutory tests, but it is not yet being used well enough across the school to identify gaps in the knowledge and understanding of groups or individuals.
- 40 The governance of the school is satisfactory. There are very positive relationships between the school leadership team and the governing body. This helps the governors to develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have attended training with staff which has given them good knowledge of the strategies that are being used to raise standards. This experience is helping them to shape the direction of the school through involvement in planning for improvement. One governor has been able to use his expertise in music to develop its use as a tool for learning. More direct links with the curriculum have been developed by the pairing of governors with subject leaders in order to monitor provision, although they do not evaluate the curriculum in lessons. Governors are involved in establishing financial priorities and evaluating cost effectiveness. They understand the guiding principles that ensure the best value for spending. Examples of successful spending are:
- the sound systems installed in all classrooms to the benefit of all pupils, as well as those with hearing impairment;
 - the increase in numbers of learning support assistants and,
 - the creation of the well-used drama studio.
- 41 The school's arrangements for financial management and control are good. Day to day spending is controlled effectively and administrative staff work well with the leadership team to ensure that the budget is tightly controlled and the requirements of the governing body are met. At the present time, the school's budget shows a large balance. Most of this has been rightly earmarked for improving the accommodation for ICT, and plans are in an advanced state for this. The school has maintained and developed well the good strengths in leadership and management identified at the time of the last inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	768,263
Total expenditure	734,446
Expenditure per pupil	3,207

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	40,504
Balance carried forward to the next	33,816

- 42 The expenditure per pupil is a higher figure than for most junior schools. This reflects the high number of pupils in the Ark who all have statements of special educational need.

THE RESOURCED PROVISION FOR DEAF CHILDREN

The provision for deaf pupils in the specialist unit ('the Ark') is **very good**. It enables the pupils to play a full part in lessons in the main school and to participate in the very wide range of extra-curricular and other enrichment activities which the school has to offer.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' social development is very well provided for through their integration into mainstream classes.
- Teaching is good, supported by well-trained learning support assistants and specialist staff.
- The pupils' work follows very closely their individual learning plans.
- Provision for deaf children benefits all pupils in school.
- There is a good range of specialist equipment to support pupils' learning.
- The pupils' learning in each lesson is closely monitored.

- 43 At present there are seven pupils from the Ark taught in school with three attending the adjoining Infant school. Teaching is very good. Staff are highly skilled in the teaching of language skills and they use a wide range of strategies to interest and involve pupils. For example, a Year 3 pupil and the teacher worked together on creating an autumn poem after collecting 'signs of autumn' from the school grounds. Very good learning was enhanced by a joint performance of the poem using a cabasa instrument to create the sound of the crunching of leaves, and a tambourine to achieve a dramatic effect. Each lesson is evaluated so that teachers build on pupils' progress. As a result pupils achieve well. There is very good liaison between class-teachers, support assistants and the staff of the Ark. This enables them to prepare pupils for work in class and to provide consolidation where needed.
- 44 Excellent relationships enhance learning. Teachers know their pupils well and how each learns best. As a result, pupils show very good attitudes and work with concentration and interest. They relate very well to the other children in school. At playtimes, pupils voluntarily and easily integrate with each other. This mutually supportive relationship makes a good contribution to all pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, through becoming aware of how they can and do value everyone, irrespective of physical differences. It is a significant factor in the establishment of the supportive whole school ethos.
- 45 The Ark is very well led and managed by the teacher-in-charge, who is also a member of the school leadership team. This ensures that the provision is seen as an integral part of the school. Children from all classes visit the specialist classrooms to learn about sound and how humans hear and this helps to promote and strengthen the very inclusive nature of the school. Detailed guidelines, and the use of well-trained support staff, enable other teachers in the school to provide very good support. Close links with the parents and also with secondary schools ensure that pupils are well supported throughout their school life.
- 46 Pupils' progress is continuously assessed, tracked and monitored so that they achieve to the maximum of their ability. There is regular monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff to evaluate the effectiveness of provision. The substantial budget for the Ark is very well spent because of the high quality of the provision for the children, and of the benefit it brings to the school as a whole.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening; this shows very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Boys' attainment has improved well as a result of initiatives in developing their learning skills and self esteem.
- The school's assessment of writing skills shows that current Year 6 pupils are progressing well.
- Written work in exercise books often shows little productivity and poor presentation.
- Teachers' marking does not always show pupils how they can improve.
- The use of drama to enhance learning across the curriculum is very good.

Commentary

- 47 Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English, with better standards being achieved in speaking and listening than in reading and writing. Since the last inspection, standards in the end of key stage tests have been gradually rising, matching the national trend. In 2003, the test results fell and the school did not reach its target for improvement which was too optimistic. However, the teachers' assessment of the pupils' attainments was very close to their actual performance. Over four out of ten pupils had been entered on the school's register for special educational needs. This was higher than average and suggests that it was a 'one-off' year. Even so, some encouraging outcomes were still seen. Boys' attainment was much closer to that of the girls. This was due to an increased sophistication in teachers' questioning skills, which ensured that boys had to make active responses and to the creation of a 'reading army' which was designed to give reading a more dynamic image. Also the school met its target in raising the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in the end of key stage tests. This was due in large measure to the setting arrangements in Year 6, where three groups have been established to enable lessons to be given a sharper focus on raising standards for pupils of all capabilities.
- 48 The current Year 6 pupils are well placed to attain standards in line with the national expectations. This confirms the school's assessment of their progress from Year 3 to Year 5 which shows that skills in writing have been steadily rising. However, the attainments of pupils generally are impeded by poor presentation of work in their exercise books. On occasions, lessons are not structured well enough to give the pupils the opportunity of completing extended writing and they do not produce finished pieces of written work. This is more noticeable in Years 3 and 4. In the older classes, pupils engage in exercises designed to produce extended pieces of writing, and presentation is better for higher attaining pupils. In all years, however, there are many pupils whose work is untidy and contains too many mistakes in spelling and comprehension.
- 49 Throughout the school, pupils have good speaking and listening skills. This represents very good achievement as they were found to be below expectations at the time of the last inspection. The vast majority are eager to answer the teacher's probing questions, and are confident and articulate in their responses. This is the result of the recent concentration on developing their thinking and learning skills. The teachers have developed a range of strategies for the pupils to become aware of how they learn and organise skills and knowledge. They engage in discussions with their peers in pairs or small groups, and do not lose the thread of the argument. They are adept in developing mind maps to help them collect ideas together, and willingly engage in 'brain gyms' to help them stay alert and focused.

- 50 All year groups have good opportunities to develop the knowledge and use of books. Their library sessions are well organised by an enthusiastic librarian who ensures that all pupils have experience of reading books from a range of authors and styles. As a result, reading enjoys a high profile in the school, and older pupils have a wide knowledge of authors and how the library is organised. This is shown in their confidence in reading a variety of texts with understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 know that the narrators in storybooks can be represented in either the first or third person.
- 51 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good overall progress. This is due to the help they receive in small groups working either with the class teacher or with well briefed learning assistants, who have skills in using the right language and in questioning pupils. The wide variety of books and resource material with a multicultural aspect assists pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds to feel valued and accepted in the school. The one pupil with English as a second language receives effective assistance in class and from the local authority support services.
- 52 The quality of teaching is good overall with six out of ten lessons seen during the inspection being judged to be good or better, with no unsatisfactory teaching. The teachers have concentrated much of their efforts into developing pupils' skills in language over the last two years. Their enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. This is evident in the engagement of older pupils in their topic on Macbeth, using it as an inspiration for developing their knowledge of different forms of language. This builds on work in Year 5 where pupils learn how play scripts are written. In all classes teachers show their grasp of the subject, discussing with pupils the technical aspects of language, such as the use of homophones in Year 4. In the lessons seen, pupils' learning reflected this good teaching with gains in understanding. Their writing shows a developing grasp of punctuation such as speech marks and commas. Pupils build up their awareness of the different styles of writing, such as instructions, factual reports and recipes, as well as storytelling.
- 53 Teachers mark all the pupils' completed work in exercise books, but too often this is limited to praising effort, and points are not made which could lead to improvements. For instance, a Year 4 pupil drafted a first account in the style of a newspaper report. This had a number of spelling and punctuation mistakes. The final version was written out again using columns as in a newspaper, but the same mistakes were repeated. Although most classrooms have attractive displays, including some children's work, there is no explanation as to why the work is valued or pointers showing how the pupil has shown particular skills in writing. There are examples of good assessment processes in Year 5, where pupils are engaged in monitoring their own work against criteria which have been developed to mirror the national curriculum levels, but which are written in 'child-friendly' language.
- 54 The school has recently changed the member of staff responsible for leading the subject further. The new co-ordinator has been well prepared for this by 'shadowing' the role for the last year. The quality of teaching has been monitored and samples of pupils' work have been analysed to ensure a consistency in arriving at judgements on standards. Priorities for future development are appropriate, and based on the wide array of assessments of progress that are made every half-term. However, the school has not analysed the outcomes of the Year 5 optional tests to identify particular areas where pupils are making the least progress as they approach their final year.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 55 Pupils use their language skills well across the curriculum, as the same approach to discussion and co-operative research is used consistently in all subjects. There is very good use of drama in role-playing situations in history, and there is video evidence of high quality musical drama in the end of year concerts in which pupils take part. There are satisfactory planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects such as science, history and geography where report and account writing is needed. In practice, however, these are

not always followed through. The use of ICT in developing pupils' skills in desk top publishing is limited.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good proportion of pupils are already working at the levels expected at the end of the school year.
- Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Pupils like mathematics and they concentrate well.
- There is insufficient emphasis upon independent work and the consolidation of previous learning.
- Subject leadership is not sufficiently focused upon standards.
- Insufficient use is made of information from pupil assessments.

Commentary

- 56 Results in last year's national tests showed below average standards for eleven year-old pupils. However, these results included a large proportion (over forty per cent) of pupils who had special educational needs. The knowledge and understanding of the current Year 6 pupils meets national expectations.
- 57 Pupils are very attentive in lessons. They are very engaged with their learning because teachers use a variety of effective teaching methods. Pupils behave very well and are very happy and confident in sharing their ideas because they know that their contributions will be treated positively. Teachers often use the pupils' own ideas to consolidate learning for everyone. They have very good subject knowledge although they do not always use this to keep pupils on their toes with rapid-fire questions. There is very good interaction between teachers and pupils so that even when teacher-led sessions are quite long all pupils remain actively involved. There is extensive use of small whiteboards in these whole class sessions when pupils have opportunities to carry out written calculations.
- 58 Teachers have made good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to put in place a comprehensive curriculum, allied to its practical teaching strategies. The introductory sessions are usually good and often very good so that pupils make good or better progress. However, sometimes these are too long and therefore leave less time for pupils to work independently. Over time this imbalance inhibits pupils' achievements and their ability to work on their own to solve problems and tackle mathematics that is presented in different ways. The work in pupils' books does not therefore reflect the good learning that is often taking place in the main part of the lesson, and pupils are clearly not being given enough opportunities to improve their presentational skills. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, but do not always ensure that pupils who make mistakes are given enough practice in rectifying them. However, a good proportion of pupils (almost a third) are already working at levels above those expected for eleven year olds and achievement overall is satisfactory.
- 59 Subject leadership is satisfactory. In keeping with school priorities during recent times, the subject leader has focused upon making mathematics accessible by varying teaching methods to suit pupils' learning styles and making mathematics more exciting. These are significant developments and pupils are reaping the benefit. The quality of pupils' responses in lessons has clearly improved from the time of the last inspection. However, there has been insufficient focus upon keeping track of standards across all year groups and taking steps to improve them. Little action has been taken for example to improve the quality of work in pupils' books. The subject leader has not been involved in the monitoring of teaching, and planning for improvement across the school is impeded as a consequence.

60 There are potentially good systems in place for assessing pupils' work but not enough use is being made of the information this provides. At the end of each year, for example, pupils take optional tests but there is no analysis of these to identify the next steps that pupils need to make in order to progress to the next level. A system of target setting is being tried out but a considerable amount of work remains to be done in order to tie together the three elements of assessment, target setting and marking. Without this cohesion, pupils are not sure themselves what they need to do to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61 In some subjects, such as science and design and technology, pupils satisfactorily use their skills in measuring, drawing and tabulating. These opportunities have not been identified within medium term planning to show how they will be explored.

SCIENCE

Overall provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn principally through investigation and are fully involved in their learning.
- Role play is used well to develop understanding.
- Good questioning challenges pupils' thinking.
- On occasions, pupils' records of experimental work are incomplete.
- The monitoring of standards, and of teaching and learning, could be more focused.

Commentary

62 Over the past few years pupils have attained average standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6. While the numbers reaching the expected level have sometimes been higher than average, those reaching the higher level have been slightly lower. Achievement for all pupils is satisfactory. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the current Year 6 will again be broadly in line with the national expectation by the end of the school year. Their achievement over time is satisfactory. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils have a satisfactory, and often good, understanding of the aspects of science they have covered. There are no specific areas which are stronger or weaker than others.

63 Teaching was good or better in three quarters of the lessons seen and is good overall. Most pupils are working at expected levels and making good gains in their learning. Lessons are well planned to build on earlier experiences and provide appropriate activities. Interesting activities are planned to develop pupils' understanding and provide a strong motivation to learn. For example, role play was used particularly well in Year 6 when pupils acted as water molecules and particles of un-dissolved sugar to demonstrate how solids dissolve in liquids. Investigative learning is strong and pupils work with enthusiasm. As a result pupils' science skills are developing well alongside their knowledge and understanding.

64 In Year 4 pupils know that there is a need to plan a fair test in investigations. They observe closely and record appropriately, on charts, what they see. Where learning support assistants are present they are used effectively to ensure that lower attaining pupils achieve as well as other pupils. Teachers are developing the use of correct scientific vocabulary well, encouraging pupils to use it when they explain their ideas. Good questioning skills to challenge pupils' thinking and the use of 'talk partners' to enable pupils to share and clarify their ideas are other effective features of the teaching. In a very good lesson in Year 6 the teacher constantly challenged pupils to think for themselves, asking for example how extra sugar in a saturated solution might be encouraged to dissolve. A further question 'Can we change the point at which it will become saturated?' was used to involve groups in planning

their own investigations. Ideas such as 'stirring more quickly' and 'changing the water temperature' showed their developing understanding. However, despite the good pace of the lesson, there was insufficient time to complete the planning process and an opportunity was missed to consolidate science skills. Sampling of pupils' workbooks suggest that pupils across the school are not always given time to record their experimental work and this is a factor in curtailing higher attainment in science. The curriculum for science is imaginatively arranged within the timetable to be taught in discrete series of lessons around a particular theme, such as 'electric circuits' or the 'growth of plants'. This assists better recall, which allied to a consistent form of recording the results of investigations, prepares pupils satisfactorily for making individual responses in tests.

- 65 Leadership in science is satisfactory. Although there have been good developments in analysing national test results to target areas of weakness, assessment data is not yet used to track pupils' progress across the school and set individual targets. There has been no recent monitoring of teaching and learning in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvement since the last inspection is good.
- Professional development is good.
- Subject leadership is good.
- Although there are examples of very good achievement in some lessons, it is inconsistent across all aspects of the subject.

Commentary

- 66 At the time of the last inspection provision in ICT was judged to be unsatisfactory. Since then the school has completely changed its range of computers and other hardware. The employment of a part time technician has been a considerable help in setting up systems that are easily accessible to both pupils and teachers.
- 67 Subject leadership has been shared in recent times. A full curriculum is in place covering all aspects of ICT. Teachers have a detailed programme of work to follow and an assessment system is being used. By sampling pupils' work and working alongside teachers the subject leaders have built up a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Significant progress has been made in pupils' abilities to present information in different ways using presentational software and in their ability to use computers to control simple devices. Pupils were observed working at levels above expectations in these areas. Standards in other aspects of ICT meet national expectations and overall achievement is satisfactory.
- 68 The school programme for professional development organised by one of the subject leaders has been very successful. Teachers' confidence and competence has improved. Across the school, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some very good teaching was seen during the inspection when developing the pupils' ability to use software to power working models. On occasions, however, the teacher's expectations of work can be too low, as in a mathematics session when work on multiplication tables did not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils behave very well in the restricted space in the ICT suite and their attitudes to their work are very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69 There are few examples of links between ICT and literacy and mathematics and this aspect of the use of information technology is underdeveloped. Examples of good practice seen during the inspection include:

- a very good link between ICT and design and technology resulted in the making of externally controlled motorised fairground models;
- pupils searching for information on the Internet and using computer programs to prepare presentations on their work in history and their visit to Stubbington;
- a school website is about to be uploaded onto the web, using contributions from the children themselves.

During the inspection, there was little evidence of pupils using information programs for developing their independent research skills in a systematic form across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

70 As a result of curriculum arrangements, no work had been carried out in geography so far this term. Therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. Talking to Year 6 pupils reveals that standards are broadly average. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge, understanding and recall both of places they have studied and they are developing geographical skills appropriately, such as the use of atlases and maps.

71 The curriculum has been enriched since the previous inspection, and there are planned opportunities for all year groups to use the local area and further afield to carry out fieldwork. Year 6 pupils carried out a beach study and investigated the estuary and flood plain during a recent visit to Stubbington.

72 The co-ordination of geography is satisfactory. Detailed planning gives good guidance and support for staff and the new system for assessment fits well with this. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator has not been sufficiently developed yet to identify areas for improvement and to have an impact on the standards achieved by the pupils.

History

Two lessons in history were observed during the inspection. However, one of these was led by a visiting drama group, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. Other evidence has been gathered by a scrutiny of planning and completed work as well as discussions with pupils and staff. The curriculum offers exciting and innovative experiences and pupils clearly enjoy finding out about the past.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enrichment of the curriculum through role-play and drama.
- The use of visits and visitors makes history come alive.
- Pupils use a wide range of sources to find out about the past.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning through writing.

Commentary

73 Standards are broadly average for pupils in Year 6. They can talk about aspects of the periods they have studied and have a good sense of time. They understand the differences between primary and secondary sources and realise that we know about the distant past mainly because of the work of archaeologists. Pupils' understanding of the ways in which history can be interpreted is less secure.

- 74 A visit from an actor in Year 6 brought history to life very well and enabled pupils to become fully involved in their learning. Surrounded by a backdrop of Ancient Greece and a range of artefacts from that time, pupils listened to an 'Athenian' talk about his life. He involved them in discussing similarities and differences to their own life today. They examined the pottery and other artefacts to find other clues to the way people lived then. Pupils were totally absorbed by these activities. As a result, a group of pupils talked animatedly the next day about what they had found out. Written work does not always reflect this good learning. There are too few opportunities for extended writing and, in some classes, too many worksheets are used. These limit the achievement of pupils. An exception was in Year 3 where pupils consolidated their learning by writing diary entries about life as an evacuee. These were written after an intense week with a World War Two focus which involved drama, examining artefacts and an old folks' tea party, when they heard first hand experiences of life at that time. The subsequent writing from all attainment groups gave a clear picture of what it was like to be evacuated. Teaching was satisfactory in the one other lesson seen. Pupils achieved the objective which was to make deductions from pictorial evidence, but learning would have been enhanced by the use of better quality resources and by extra challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- 75 Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the co-ordinator has overseen useful developments in improving planning and assessment systems and in further enrichment of the curriculum. Monitoring of teaching and learning has not been developed sufficiently to have an impact on standards.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in finding out about religious beliefs and the stories of religious traditions.
- The subject has a multi-faith curriculum.
- Pupils' work in topic books is often incomplete.

Commentary

- 76 The work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and overall achievement is satisfactory. Religious education was taught only in Year 6 during the days of the week that inspectors were in school. As much of work in the subject is based on oral discussions, there was little written work to examine. As a result it is not possible to arrive at overall judgements on the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Some writing completed in Year 6 as 'letters to God' showed original touches such as 'Why did you give me a brother who is so annoying?' and 'How did you create yourself?' However, drawings of Hindu Gods and Jewish symbols in other years were either incomplete or unaccompanied by descriptions of their meanings.
- 77 In the one lesson observed, good exciting teaching led to pupils considering the reasons for stained glass windows in Christian churches. They were then well organised into groups considering the main elements to be put into their own design, from the story of the Creation onwards. This 'brainstorming' exercise was structured so that the pupils had to identify areas for further research.
- 78 Scrutiny of the school's curriculum plans show that the subject is taught in topics for an appropriate length of time, covering aspects of the world's major faith communities. Within this, Christianity enjoys an appropriate focus, with Year 3 pupils, for example, studying the theme of 'Angels' around the Christmas period. There are good links with the local church, which pupils visit as part of the programme of studies on religious buildings and symbolism. Pupils learn some of the stories of the Christian tradition in the lively whole school

assemblies. Religious education has been the focus of in-service training for all the staff. This has led to an integrated, non-doctrinaire approach to the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

- 79 It was only possible to observe one lesson in art and design so that no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching or standards. Discussions were held with teachers and school planning documents examined. It is clear from the high quality of artwork displayed along the corridors that the subject enjoys a high profile in the school, with wide-ranging techniques and materials being used. This is well used to create the impression of an attractive and purposeful atmosphere.
- 80 A full programme of work is in place. Using a national scheme of work as a basis the school is continually evaluating the success of its lessons and modifying its plans when appropriate. Art is often connected with work in other subjects, for example a study of the paintings of Van Gogh is linked to work on colour in science. During the inspection Year 6 pupils were making impressive papier-mache sculptures in connection with their study of the Greeks in history.
- 81 The use of sketchbooks is being developed more widely, and class work is enriched by work in the local environment and visiting artists.

Design and technology

There was no design and technology taking place during the inspection and it was not possible, therefore, to make a firm judgement on provision. However, from the limited evidence available, it was possible to identify particular strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of work seen from Year 6 pupils was high.
- The subject leader is having a positive impact on standards.

Commentary

- 82 Discussions with Year 6 pupils show that they have experienced an appropriate range of materials and techniques. Their models of fairground roundabouts and Ferris wheels are of a higher quality than might be expected for pupils of their age. Woodworking and measuring skills are good and many of the models show creative flair in design. A group of girls talked confidently about how they investigated the use of pulleys to make their models rotate at different speeds when powered by battery driven motors. Photograph frames in Year 3 and toys using movement generated by cams in Year 5 show good development of making skills as the pupils' progress through school. All pupils produce designs before making and then evaluating the finished product.
- 83 Co-ordination of the subject is good. An audit of pupils' skills in 2001 revealed a weakness in staff confidence and subject knowledge. Curriculum topics were adjusted to build on skills acquired in the Infant school and to prevent repetition. All topics have project plans which give very good guidance and support for staff both in technical advice and in developing skills for each part of the design and technology process. Work sampling is carried out regularly and this has led to improvement. For example, scrutiny of finished 'pop-up' books in one year group suggested a lack of challenge for pupils. This led to them being asked to identify other ways of creating movement in their designs. The curriculum is enriched by after school clubs for cookery and for 'robot design'. The popularity of the cookery club is obvious by a waiting list of 60, all of whom will be given a chance to participate during the school year. Pupils in

the advanced skills cookery club have prepared and served a three course meal for staff and governors, which was very well received by all consumers!

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a wide variety of instruments.
- There are very good links with drama, leading to school concerts of an exceptional quality.
- Year 6 teachers work together very well to create integrated year group performances.
- Class lessons are not always organised to take account of some pupils' advanced knowledge and playing ability.
- The standard of pupils' singing is good.

Commentary

- 84 Pupils attain standards that are above the national expectations. In Year 6:
- pupils' singing is tuneful, lively and shows awareness of harmony and dynamics, responding well to varying moods;
 - they can play pitched instruments such as glockenspiels using chords and following basic notation;
 - many have experience of playing specialist instruments encompassing woodwind, brass, strings and percussion;
 - these aspects are integrated into performances which link to other topics, such as their study of Macbeth in English.
- As a result of these experiences, pupils' achievement is judged to be good.
- 85 During the inspection, three lessons were observed with the quality of teaching judged to be good overall. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher had prepared the resources well with every child being able to play an instrument and there was considerable improvement in the playing of notes in unison as the lesson proceeded. However, there was some inappropriate fiddling with the percussion instruments and the lesson lacked pace while this was sorted out. This lesson was judged to be taught satisfactorily. A second lesson for Year 4 pupils showed a higher level of subject expertise from the teacher, resulting in better playing of notes. In Year 6, the pupils were inspired to improve the quality of their singing by an expressive demonstration of how the pitch and dynamic quality of singing could be used to show its changing moods. A team teaching approach was then well organised with one group forming the accompanying orchestra. This group was very well taught to play a series of chords to fit alongside the melody of the song. This task was arranged so that all pupils coped with the increasingly more difficult series of notes. The pupils responded to their tasks with enthusiasm and absorption.
- 86 In Year 6, there was good practice in ensuring that pupils who had established skills in reading and playing were given sufficiently stretching activities. The school carries out a regular assessment of the pupils' playing activities, but, in the other lessons, there was no evidence that this was used to plan activities for the range of attainments within the class. All pupils carried out the same playing task, which was to copy as closely as possible the playing and singing of the teacher. The attainment of all pupils improved as the lesson developed, but there was little scope for those with particular talents to progress to higher levels.
- 87 Strong evidence of the high profile of the subject in the school came from viewing a video of the end of year concert in which all pupils took part; 'Return to the Forbidden Planet'. There was very high quality singing both from soloists and the choral accompaniment.

88 Music is well co-ordinated throughout the school. The subject leader has specialist playing ability and a well organised curriculum has been developed using national guidelines which have been adapted to suit the school's emphasis on integrated thematic studies. As a result it makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a good range of musical instruments, some of which are from a variety of cultures. The subject leader has monitored the quality of teaching and has led in-service training on the use of music as an aid to general learning by setting the right mood for lively or quiet class activities.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of sports clubs; some teams and individual pupils have been successful in inter-school tournaments.
- The school organises a good range of playground 'crazes' many of which feature games such as skipping, whipping tops, and 'jacks'.
- The curriculum is well organised, and includes both swimming and outdoor adventurous activities.
- There are good resources for learning, and the playground areas have been imaginatively developed.
- The subject makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' PSHE.

89 Inspection evidence shows that pupils' achievement is good across the many strands of the physical education programme. In a Year 4 dance lesson, pupils improved their ability to structure sequences showing different levels of movement while working in unison with a partner. In a Year 5 lesson, the lively warm-up session was well used to point out the effects of exercise on the body. In both lessons, the pupils worked together well, with good concentration and improved their control and co-operation throughout. Boys and girls worked alongside one another, and watched demonstrations showing the ability to appreciate one another, praising and making appropriate suggestions for improvement.

90 When the pupils were observed on the playground at lunchtimes, their response to the provision of 'craze' activities was very impressive. They played well together sharing equipment and encouraging one another. Boys and girls played football sensibly, keeping to the area set aside for the purpose, and following the terms of the football 'contract' which is clearly displayed around the school. Others who wish simply to socialise or follow less active pursuits such as outdoor chess, draughts or 'Connect Four' can do so in the attractively set out quiet areas. As a result of these opportunities, both in lessons and in less structured periods of free play, the pupils' PSHE is very well developed.

91 The teachers have good knowledge of the strands of the physical education curriculum, including dance, gymnastics, games, and athletics. Swimming tuition is arranged in Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to take part in outdoor problem solving challenges during their residential visit to Stubbington. Both deaf children and pupils with special educational are well supported and take part in all lessons.

92 The leadership of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator has monitored the quality of teaching across the school. Some in-service training has been given and progression through the programmes of study is monitored for every pupil every half term. The subject has contributed well to the current emphasis being placed on establishing a positive environment for learning by setting up a number of 'brain gym' exercises which liven up lessons at appropriate points. Good management is ensured by teachers' joint planning and the use of subject expertise in team teaching when appropriate. The school has responded to a recent dental survey of the condition on pupils' teeth by planning shortly to embark upon the 'Healthy Schools' Award' scheme.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

Provision in PSHE is **very good**.

Main strengths

- All pupils are included in the very wide ranges of school courses and activities.
- The school has worked very hard to provide opportunities for pupils to play and socialise with one another within a caring and secure environment.
- Class councils and class lessons in PSHE enable all pupils to express their opinions, knowing what they say will be valued.
- The provision of frequently changing playground 'crazes' motivates pupils to explore different individual and team games.
- Much classroom work is built around co-operative learning.
- There is a structured programme for PSHE, including drugs awareness and sex education.

Commentary

- 93 There is strong evidence from class timetables and curriculum plans that this area of the school's activities enjoys a high profile within the curriculum. However, no specific lessons were organised during the days that inspectors were in the school as they tend to be organised towards the end of the week. A visit to a meeting of a class council showed that pupils have genuine chances to express their views and influence many aspects of school life. They prepare well for their role as future citizens.
94. The programme of studies for PSHE includes consideration of drugs awareness. Sex education is contained with wider consideration of personal relationships and responsibilities. The school organises many opportunities for pupils to see for themselves how taking on responsibilities can be very rewarding. This is particularly evident in the system of 'playground buddies' where pupils take on specific roles and tasks, based on a contract which they have to draw up and sign. This system is very effective and playtimes are very orderly and pleasant occasions in the school. The school's very good programme for curriculum enrichment also encourages pupils to aspire to contribute of their best. Pupils meet and interact with successful writers, artists, musicians and artists. Their horizons are extended as a result with some pupils expressing their wish to become writers or musicians when they are older.
95. Concern for pupils to develop their social skills and personal confidence underpins every lesson across the curriculum. All teachers plan specifically for pupils to engage in discussions with one another and to work co-operatively. Their skill in doing so is a significant factor in the underlying ethos of the school which is to develop a whole-school community where each pupil is valued as an individual.

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	1
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	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

