

INSPECTION REPORT

SANDWICH JUNIOR SCHOOL

Sandwich

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118548

Headteacher: Mr G Rees

Lead inspector: Mr P B McAlpine

Dates of inspection: 13-16 October 2003

Inspection number: 261551

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	199
School address:	St Bartholomew's Road Sandwich
Postcode:	CT13 0AS
Telephone number:	(01304) 612227
Fax number:	(01304) 614755
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Baldry
Date of previous inspection:	9 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is of average size with 199 full-time pupils organised into eight classes. The number on roll has fallen over the past three years by about 15 per cent, reflecting a decline in the local birth rate. The social and economic indicators for the immediate locality are mixed and there are significant pockets of economic disadvantage. The area is on the edge of the old Kent coalfield and subject to regeneration funding. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is broadly average but higher than the previous inspection. About six per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly white European with a small number of black Caribbean families; this is below average. The school rarely has pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 27 per cent, is above average; the number with statements is well above average and has increased in recent years. The significant needs are mostly linked to general learning difficulties, with some difficulties linked to dyslexia, behaviour, speech, physical handicap and autism. The amount of pupil mobility is broadly average, with slightly more inward than outward mobility. A very small number of pupils are in local authority care. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is in the lowest 25 per cent of schools in the country. The school is part of a virtual education action zone, one of only two in the country. The purpose is to raise standards and pioneer uses of information and communication technology. The local authority operates a selective education system with an eleven plus examination that takes place in January of each year, and which is taken by pupils at the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Lead inspector	English Science Arts subjects, including physical education
9406	Mr R Cottington	Lay inspector	
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Humanities, including religious education

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Brookbridge & Bedford
13A Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffordshire
ST14 8HY

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

In most respects, this is a **good** school. It is effective and offers satisfactory value for money. Most pupils achieve well in reading compared to their attainment on entry, reflecting teaching that motivates and engages the interests of the pupils, and standards in this subject are above average. Standards in writing and mathematics are below average. Pupils like school and behaviour is very good. Teaching is satisfactory, consistent with the national picture and much improved compared to the previous inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is good and the school is an orderly establishment. The school has the confidence of parents, pupils and others and promotes equality issues well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good achievement and above average standards in reading, reflecting effective teaching.
- Almost all pupils achieve well in science, information and communication technology, music and physical education. There is underachievement amongst a minority of pupils in writing and mathematics and standards here are below average.
- Strategies to meet the needs of all pupils are generally effective, particularly at a social and pastoral level but the provision for gifted and talented pupils is uncoordinated and inconsistent between subjects.
- The quality of education is good overall, with excellent opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activity. Assessment arrangements are good in English and mathematics but underdeveloped in other subjects.
- The ethos of the school is very good. Teachers provide good role models. Pupils are interested in lessons and work hard. Almost all of them behave well at all times. Relationships are very good.
- The headteacher is an effective leader. Morale among members of staff is high and the school is united and orderly. The headteacher is appropriately supported by the assistant headteachers but the roles of subject managers are underdeveloped.

Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Overall, standards have improved in line with the national trend, with good improvement in reading. The behaviour of the pupils is much improved. The teaching has improved significantly. Response to the key issues arising from the previous inspection has been positive and successful.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	C	A
Mathematics	D	E	D	B
Science	C	D	D	B

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

Achievement varies between subjects and ability groups but is **satisfactory** overall. The 2002 results for pupils in Year 6 were average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In English and science, more pupils attained the nationally expected level than did so nationally but fewer exceeded expectations and this reduced the average number of points scored. In English, standards in reading were high but standards in writing were low and this dragged down the overall result. The early indications of the 2003 test results are that they were lower in all subjects tested, reflecting a much greater incidence of pupils with significant special educational needs. Nevertheless, the 2003 results represent good educational value added compared to the pupils'

attainment on entry, which is very low compared to most other schools, and current standards indicate the potential for improved results in 2004. Current standards in Year 6 are above average in reading, average in science, but below average in writing and mathematics, though not by very much in mathematics. Pupils achieve very well in reading. Nearly all pupils achieve well in science and a substantial majority do so in writing and mathematics. However, about a quarter of pupils do not make enough progress in writing, mostly boys with low attainment on entry. A smaller minority in mathematics, mainly girls, including some with high attainment, do not achieve as well as they could. The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. The general level of interest and enthusiasm for school is better than typically found and the standard of behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is consistent with the national picture; all of it is satisfactory or better in quality and a substantial number of lessons are good or very good in quality. Good emphasis is placed on learning through practical activity. This interests and motivates pupils, making them work hard and concentrate for long periods. Pupils are learning at a relatively quick pace in most subjects, enabling many to catch up with expectations by the age of eleven from a low starting point when aged seven. Reading is particularly well taught. The arrangements for assessment are good in English and mathematics but underdeveloped in other subjects. The curriculum provides a wide range of useful learning opportunities and excellent enrichment through extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Provision for support, advice and guidance is good. Arrangements for involving pupils and seeking their views are effective.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Both leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and has united the school. The assistant headteachers provide effective support but the roles of subject managers are underdeveloped, reflecting too little time for them to carry out management tasks during the working day. This is limiting the extent to which good practice in teaching can be identified and shared, particularly in writing and mathematics. The work of the governing body has satisfactory effectiveness in the main but statutory requirements in respect of the annual pupil reports to parents are not fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The substantial majority of parents are pleased with the school. They think that their children are doing well in all subjects and particularly in sporting activities. Parents whose children have special educational needs are very pleased with the help and guidance provided. Pupils' views of the school are positive in the main.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- increase achievement and raise standards in writing and mathematics;
- develop the roles of subject managers, particularly the identifying and sharing of good practice in teaching their subjects;
- effectively coordinate the provision for gifted and talented pupils;
- improve the assessment arrangements in non-core subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that the annual reports to parents on pupils' progress include separate commentary on progress in each subject.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement varies between subjects and ability groups but is **satisfactory overall**. Standards on entry are very low but improve as pupils get older because of the effectiveness of the teaching. By Year 6, standards have risen to above the national average in reading and in information and communication technology, to average in science and in religious education, though remaining below average in writing and mathematics. There are no significant variations in achievement between classes and year groups or between pupils from different backgrounds. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls in reading and most other subjects except writing, where boys underachieve compared to girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in the core subjects is satisfactory. It is very good in reading, good in science and satisfactory in mathematics, and broadly satisfactory in writing. This leads to standards that are above the national average in reading, average in science, but below average in writing and mathematics.
- Achievement is good in information and communication technology, physical education, and music. Standards in these subjects are generally above average.
- Achievement is satisfactory in religious education and in the other subjects inspected. Standards here are broadly average.
- Since the last inspection, overall standards have improved in line with the national trend. They have improved best in English and science but not quickly enough in mathematics. Tests results in English in 2002 compared very well with similar schools. Comparisons in mathematics and science were good.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (26.7)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	26.1 (24.8)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.2 (27.7)	28.3 (28.3)

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

1. The pupils are making good progress in reading; all of them achieve well in relation to their capabilities and current standards in Year 6 are above the national average. The substantial majority make good progress in mathematics and science and satisfactory progress in writing. In these subjects, the bulk of the pupils achieve appropriately in relation to their capabilities, particularly in science, though both lower and higher attaining pupils could do better in writing and in mathematics and there is some underachievement here. Current standards in Year 6 are in line with the national average in science, being better than tests in 2002 and 2003, but below the national average in writing and mathematics. Progress in information and communication technology, physical education, and music is generally good and the vast majority of pupils achieve well; standards in these subjects are above average in Year 6. Achievement and progress in the other subjects inspected is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Parents are satisfied with standards and believe their children are making good progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are particularly pleased with the impact of the provision.

2. Boys are doing particularly well in reading compared to boys nationally and there is no significant gap in attainment between boys and girls. This is not the case in writing or mathematics, where boys lag behind girls and do not fare as well as boys nationally. In science, boys are more successful than girls and the slightly better performance of girls than boys found nationally is reversed at the school. The teaching in reading and science is particularly successful in helping and motivating boys. In reading, low attaining boys are helped to attain national expectations because of the very effective individual and small group support they receive. In science, there is a strong emphasis on learning through practical work involving investigation and experimentation which is particularly helpful for boys.
3. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds generally perform as well as white British pupils and there are no significant variations in attainment. Pupils in local authority care are very well supported and make very good progress in relation to the difficulties they face, reflecting the strong pastoral care provided. Pupils with special educational needs mostly achieve well given their difficulties though their progress varies. Those whose learning difficulties are relatively minor generally make the nationally expected progress and, in reading, often do better so that they catch up with national expectations. Pupils with significant learning difficulties make good progress in literacy but not in writing, where support is often insufficiently focused on individual needs. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties benefit from effective pastoral care and make good progress. The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented lags behind other special provision and the school has not yet identified these pupils clearly. The very good enrichment provision in the arts and humanities is allowing these pupils to excel in some subjects but this is an aspect that needs greater coordination, particularly in core subjects.
4. Pupil mobility is resulting in lower test results than would otherwise be the case. The typical pupil joining the school attains standards in tests in Year 6 that are about a year behind those who complete all four years at the school, in all subjects tested. The impact of mobility varies annually. In 2003, about a quarter of the Year 6 cohort had joined after the age of seven, most of them with significant special educational needs. The induction procedures for pupils joining the school are effective and these pupils generally achieve as well as other pupils once they are settled. The pupils are attracted to the school because of its reputation for supporting pupils with learning difficulties.
5. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is low in the core subjects, being amongst the lowest 25 per cent in the country. The generally good progress and satisfactory achievement pupils make throughout the school means that standards rise and get closer to national averages by Year 6. The Year 6 test results for 2002, the most recent confirmed, were average in English but below average in mathematics and science. Because the attainment of these pupils in 1999, on entry to Year 3, was well below average in all subjects, their results by Year 6 represent good educational value added. Compared to schools with similar low attainment on entry, the 2002 results in English were very good, and were good in mathematics and science. The school is part of a selective education system. In recent years, about a quarter of the pupils in Year 6 have transferred to grammar school education; this is higher than the local average.
6. The early indications for the 2003 tests, taken before the summer and before the inspection, are that the results were lower than in 2002. There is no change in proportions attaining the higher levels but the proportion attaining the nationally expected level was smaller in 2003 because there were substantially more pupils with significant special educational needs. Although standards were lower in 2003, the educational value added remains above average overall and particularly good in reading. Results in reading in 2003 are above average; they are better than both the local and national averages. Results in writing in 2003, however, are not as good as the national or local pictures and weak attainment in writing is dragging down the school's overall performance in English. In mathematics, a third of the pupils tested in 2003 did not attain the nationally expected level. In science, almost all of the pupils attained the nationally expected level in 2003 including a third who exceeded them. These variations in performance

between subjects, particularly the contrast between the good standards in reading and the much lower standards in writing and mathematics, reflect variations in curricular and teaching effectiveness which the school is aware of and acting to improve.

- The statutory targets for 2003 were not met by a wide margin. This mainly reflects the impact of pupil mobility but also targets that were very ambitious given the low starting point for many pupils. The targets for 2004 are high and challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to school are **good**. Attendance is **above average**. Behaviour is **very good**. The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good overall**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have very good attitudes to school and to lessons. They are generally enthusiastic about learning, are pleased to be in school, and become fully involved in school life.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at break times. They invariably work in an atmosphere that is free from bullying, racism and other forms of anti-social behaviour.
- The provision for developing social and moral awareness, including respect for others, distinguishing right from wrong, and living in a community is good. Provision for spiritual development and cultural development is satisfactory.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year – 2002 - 2003 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- Attendance shown in the table is above average. Over the past two years the school has worked very hard to improve attendance. This effort is now showing good results and attendance during the current year, not shown in the table above, has improved. Punctuality is good and very few pupils are late at the start of the day.
- Pupils are strongly interested in school life and the activities provided. In lessons, they are attentive and work hard. There is a very strong feeling of community and pupils are readily willing to help each other and work to common goals. Behaviour in lessons and at all times throughout the school is consistently good and this enables learning to continue uninterrupted. Neither parents nor pupils raised concerns about bullying or racist behaviour and none was observed. The school deals effectively with bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour. A pupil was excluded for a fixed period during the last year. Correct procedures were followed. The pupil returned and integrated back into school life. The offence was not repeated and the pupil's behaviour is now good.
- An effective programme of personal, social and health education is being implemented, supplemented by studies in religious education, science, physical education, and humanities subjects. The systems for involving pupils through positions of responsibility such as house and games captains, together with membership of the school council work very well and help give pupils a sense of ownership and belonging. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. Relationships between pupils are harmonious and those between pupils and members of staff are firmly based on mutual respect. Pupils from different backgrounds are well integrated.

11. The extent to which pupils understand and respect other people's feeling, values and beliefs is good. All classes provide time each week for pupils to share personal experiences and thoughts relating to values and beliefs. This is helping them to understand themselves and the needs of others. Religious education lessons are providing appropriate knowledge of Christian beliefs and values as well as the beliefs and values of other major world religions. However, more needs to be done to broaden pupils' knowledge of different cultures, of which religion forms only a part, to equip them properly for life in a multicultural society. Moral values are well developed through the very good ethos of the school and the good example set by members of staff. The arrangements for managing pupil behaviour make a strong contribution to this aspect. These arrangements promote understanding of underlying moral values and help pupils to learn what constitutes good behaviour as well as wrong actions. The general ethos, the opportunities for pupils to work in teams, particularly the sports and club activities, and to make contributions through the school council to the running of the school, are helping pupils to develop a good understanding of what it means to live and work in a community. Taken together, the provision is a strength of the school and better than found typically.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	192	1	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	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

The quality of education provided is **good** overall. The teaching is broadly consistent with the national picture. The curriculum is broad and interesting. Enrichment, including extra-curricular provision, is excellent.

Teaching

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** with examples of **good** and **very good** teaching; this is an improvement compared to the previous inspection. No teaching is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is effective in the main and leading to nearly all pupils learning quickly, being well motivated, trying hard and working to capacity in most lessons.
- Teachers manage pupils well and have high expectations of their behaviour.
- Very good relationships develop between staff and pupils.
- Teamwork is well developed.

- Some lessons lack pace and challenge.
- Lessons objectives are shared with pupils and revisited at the end of lessons.
- Assessment procedures have improved in the core subjects but are insufficiently developed and used in the non-core subjects and are unsatisfactory overall.

Commentary

12. The teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons, with about two-thirds being good or better including one in seven that are very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	12	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

13. The bulk of the teaching is effective, leading to nearly all pupils making worthwhile gains in knowledge, skills and understanding in most lessons. Teachers have a good command of the subjects they teach, plan effectively, with clear objectives, and using suitable methods. Literacy and numeracy lessons appropriately follow national guidance. Teachers work well in teams and this promotes equality of opportunity for pupils and enables best use to be made of individual teacher expertise. In the majority of lessons, individual needs are considered and tasks adapted to meet the specific needs of different pupils, particularly in reading and science. However, this is not consistent and in about a third of lessons there is insufficient challenge to extend the more able pupils.
14. In very good lessons, the pace is brisk so pupils are instantly engaged in the lesson. The teachers' enthusiasm motivates the pupils to succeed. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and appropriate challenges are provided. There is an excitement and urgency to the lesson and pupils remain well focused.
15. Behaviour is managed well. Pupils know what is expected of them. Many try hard and give of their best. Lessons have a very positive atmosphere, with good use of praise to reinforce good behaviour, and this helps pupils stay on task and concentrate for long periods. The school is very clear that its ethos, the environment and atmosphere for learning are very important and works hard to develop it. All members of staff are committed to the quality of relationships and the way in which pupils are valued and cared for. This is a considerable factor in the quality of learning. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and all benefit from this additional help.
16. Because of good relationships, pupils are keen and confident to respond to teachers' questions and willingly explain their method for arriving at an answer. In many lessons, pupils work closely together, sharing ideas and resources and cooperating in positive ways. Teachers provide good role models and respect the pupils' ideas, encouraging them to do the same. This has a positive effect on pupils' self esteem and boosts confidence.
17. Teachers are developing useful strategies for assessing pupils' work but these are not consistently applied across the curriculum and so the arrangements overall are not as effective as they need to be. Assessment information is used to group pupils for mathematics and English and this is appropriate. Teachers have a good idea of what each pupil should achieve in the national tests but do not always use the information to plan work closely to the needs of every pupil. Question and answer sessions provide one form of on-the-spot assessment but where questions do not extend the more able the results are less reliable. The assessment arrangements in non-core subjects are underdeveloped and this has the potential

for variations in pupil progress going unnoticed and for work being mismatched with learning needs. The quality and consistency of marking vary across the school. Where it is constructive and helps the pupil improve, it is good but often there is just a tick and, occasionally, nothing. This is an area for improvement.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. Extra-curricular provision and enrichment are excellent. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad range of worthwhile learning opportunities are provided together with a very extensive programme for enrichment through extra-curricular activities.
- All relevant statutory requirements are met.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is broadly satisfactory, with very good pastoral support and effective support with reading but with management arrangements that lack rigour.
- Planned links to develop writing skills in other subjects have only limited impact and the curricular provision for design and technology is narrow in range.
- Membership of the virtual education action zone is providing good value for money.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is allowing pupils to achieve well and has improved in quality since the previous inspection. Learning experiences are interesting for pupils and there is a strong emphasis in most subjects on learning through practical activity. This motivates pupils and makes them willing and eager to learn. All relevant statutory requirements are met, including the provision of religious education and collective worship. Swimming, which was a weakness at the previous inspection, is now provided. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented successfully. Teachers provide a broad and effective programme for personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to alcohol and drug misuse. The school is inclusive in its approach, offering all pupils access to activities and equality of opportunity, and generally prepares pupils well for the next stage of education.
19. Pupils with special educational needs receive the same broad curriculum as other pupils. Members of the support staff are particularly effective in dealing with pupils' needs and their skill and expertise when working with pupils with special educational needs is generally high. This is helping pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and those finding it hard to learn to read, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their difficulties. However, the systems for checking on progress in the long-term are undeveloped, particularly where these relate to individual education plans. The quality of records is often poor, with individual education plans too generalised and imprecise to act as useful guides. The impact of this in the short-term is not extensive as communication between teachers and support staff and with parents is mostly verbal and all members of staff know the pupils reasonably well. In the long-term, however, there is considerable potential for a break down in communication and for ineffective monitoring of progress. The role of the special educational needs coordinator is underdeveloped. The present incumbent is very recently appointed and has inherited the current arrangements.
20. In all subjects, planning for the year and the term is promoting the systematic accumulation of knowledge and skills. However, opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects are not rigorously planned, limiting the provision, and not enough use is made of assessment information in all of the non-core subjects to ensure that learning opportunities are consistently well matched to aptitudes and particular needs. The pupils are organised into large ability groups called sets for the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This has satisfactory

effectiveness. However, only two sets are organised in each year group and this still leaves a wide ability range within each set, which is not always reflected in the teaching, which is often planned around work at one level. The provision for design and technology is narrow and does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to work with a suitably broad range of materials or tools or for them to learn specific techniques or acquire in-depth knowledge of mechanisms.

21. The teachers provide a rich and varied programme of learning opportunities for all pupils, including extra-curricular activity. This is a particular strength of the school and it has received a national award, Activemark Gold, for the quality of provision. The range of extra-curricular opportunities provided is very wide, including sports such as cricket, football and athletics, plus a choir and instrumental music activities, arts based activities, and information and communication technology. These activities are open to both boys and girls, and some girls have been selected for county teams. During school time, enrichment opportunities include learning French, residential visits for Year 6, visiting theatre and orchestral groups, plus regular visits from the fire service, school nurse, railway safety officer, local police and the local clergy.
22. Membership of the virtual education action zone is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in information and communication technology. Additional funding from membership of the action zone is being spent wisely and has, for example, helped with the acquisition of sufficient lap-top computers to equip class-trolleys and develop efficient methods of teaching relevant skills. Because of this, pupils' general standard of knowledge and their competence and confidence using this technology are ahead of expectations. Very good links have been made with other institutions and organisations as a result of membership of the action zone and this is leading to innovative curricular developments in the use of computer technology.
23. The quality and quantity of the accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory. There are sufficient members of staff to teach the curriculum. Good use is made of a teacher without a class commitment to support a range of activities, including working with pupils with special educational needs and with more able pupils. The recruitment and retention of teachers are managed effectively. The accommodation has sufficient teaching and specialist space for current needs and has been adapted sensibly to make better use of corridors and otherwise redundant space for small group teaching. Books and other resources are only just sufficient. The library has improved considerably since the previous inspection, when there was none. The improvement reflects significant investment but because the starting point was so very low, the current library is still sparsely stocked compared to the typical school and continued investment is necessary. Furniture, including tables, chairs and cupboards, are mixed in quality with some being worn and in need of replacement or refurbishment. Several tables and chairs were seen with damaged and splintery edges that represent minor risks to health and safety.

Example of outstanding practice

Extra-curricular provision and enrichment are excellent and this is having a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and their enthusiasm for school.

Every member of staff, including the headteacher, leads at least one extra-curricular activity each week. These include all of the traditional sports plus gardening, art, board games, including chess, an internet café, choir and sewing. Nearly two-thirds of the children attend regardless of age or ability and there is provision for all should they wish to participate. The most able pupils, including gifted and talented, are given opportunities to represent the school through competitive sports and other activities, and to extend their interest by joining a number of local clubs that the school has developed links with specifically for this purpose. This excellent provision is helping pupils to acquire very positive attitudes to learning and to recognise the importance of, and responsibilities arising from, team work and community membership. Enrichment activities include participation in local carnivals and festivals; singing and performing at a variety of venues; numerous visits to museums, zoos, castles, and theatres; and visits several times each term from theatre companies, artists, musicians, and members of the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and well being are **satisfactory**. The advice and support for pupils in lessons are **good** and their progress is monitored **well**. The school involves pupils **well** in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are satisfactory.
- The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is good.
- Good levels of support to help pupils improve.

Commentary

24. The well being of all pupils is seen by the school as an important aspect of its work. All members of staff know the pupils well and they are sensitive to changes in mood, standards of work, and behaviour. The school works particularly well with pupils who join having encountered difficulties elsewhere. These pupils settle in quickly and respond well to the help and support they receive. The level of help and guidance given to pupils is good. Teachers keep track of progress in English and mathematics and, when necessary, agree with the pupil targets for improvement. These are communicated to and discussed with parents and this is good practice. Pupils know their targets and can say to what extent they are achieving them.
25. Representatives of the governing body regularly carry out health and safety checks. Experienced and qualified members of staff promptly provide first aid when it is needed. The locally agreed guidelines and procedures for dealing with child protection issues are followed, and all members of staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns. Working relationships with local agencies are good and effective.
26. Pupils take an active part in helping to shape the life of the school. The elected representatives of the school council are proud of their role and are able to discuss issues responsibly and maturely. They say that their views are taken seriously and acted upon by adults. Likewise house and other captains act as good role models. The views of pupils expressed through the pupil questionnaire were positive, and at times very positive, about all aspects of school life. However, a minority of pupils said that they would find difficulty with sharing problems with an adult in the school. This was followed up at the time of the inspection during discussions with pupils and staff. It emerged that some pupils were worried about what may happen if they raised concerns, others were too proud to take problems to staff and others misunderstood the question. It was established that nearly all pupils have confidence in and trust staff. The school should, through discussions with pupils, find ways of altering these perceptions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the parents are **good**. Parental views about the school are positive. Parents' consultation evenings are well supported and help parents find out how well their children are doing. However, annual progress reports are unsatisfactory and do not meet statutory requirements. Procedures for pupils' induction and transfer to local secondary schools are good. There are good links with other schools in the area and very good links with the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships and day-to-day communication between home and school via personal and other contact.
- The school's procedures for cementing links with parents are effective, though a substantial minority of parents are not actively involved with their children's education.

- Pupil progress is not reported on in all subjects in annual progress reports and this is contrary to statutory requirements.
- Good links with other schools and very good links with the local community.

Commentary

27. The school has developed good relationships with parents. Parents are pleased with the work of teachers and other staff. They are encouraged to contact the school if they have concerns and senior staff make themselves available in the playground should parents want to speak to them. Teachers know parents well and establish effective working relationships.
28. Despite the school's best efforts there are a significant minority of parents who show little active involvement in school life. The number of completed questionnaires returned was low. Although there may not be active support, there are nevertheless, other indications that parents support the work of the school. For example, attendance levels continue to improve, there are very few incidents of lateness, homework is completed and parents' consultation evenings and school productions are very well supported. The school's parent-teacher association, known as 'The Friends', has recently been re-formed and held fund raising activities.
29. A few parents felt that progress reports were not very helpful in establishing how well their children were doing. Inspection evidence supports these views. Although details about progress in the main subjects are communicated well, the reports do not show progress in all curriculum areas in line with statutory requirements.
30. Good links and liaison with several local secondary schools have been established and a range of activities is in place to help pupils during transfer time. The school is one of ten primary schools who work together as a consortium. Representatives meet every term to share good practice and to develop curriculum areas. Links with colleges are good and benefit pupils in a number of areas, for example, staff from a local grammar school and technology college visit the school to support the teaching of mathematics, languages, art and design and physical education. Resources and expertise are also shared; for example, pupils at the school are members of a joint steel band whilst the swimming facilities at the grammar school are used by the school.
31. Relationships and links with the local community are extensive and very good. A good example from a wide range of links includes involvement with a local pharmaceutical company. This company not only lends the school equipment but also one of its scientists visits the school to help pupils with practical aspects in science lessons. The company also provides financial grants for equipment and holds an annual science fair for Year 6 pupils. The school is heavily involved in community activities. These include local carnivals, festivals as well as the choir performing for senior citizens. Involvement in one of the community events resulted in a pupil's work being displayed at Tate Britain.
32. The school makes very good use of the local community to support pupils' learning especially in history and geography. Good examples include visits to the Guildhall and the river Stour. Representatives from other community organisations visit the school. There is also extensive use of the school buildings by community groups.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good** and has a number of strengths. The governing body has **satisfactory** involvement in the life and work of the school. The headteacher's good leadership has motivated staff and added enrichment to the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has united the school and provides a clear sense of purpose and direction.
- Team work is well developed.
- Subject coordinators' roles are underdeveloped; they have too little time for management tasks during the working day.
- Standards in reading and information and communication technology have improved because they were specific areas of focus and have been well financed;
- The school knows its strengths and areas for development very well. It uses performance management, self evaluation and the analysis of data to help raise standards.

Commentary

33. The school is led effectively. The headteacher has a clear understanding of what the school should and could be like. This is well expressed in his vision for the future. The headteacher has motivated the staff to provide the pupils with a broad curriculum and a wide range of enrichment experiences.
34. The headteacher is well supported by all members of staff. Throughout the school, teamwork is effective. The induction of new staff is good. Students from the local college benefit from regular work placements. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and keen but have insufficient opportunity to fulfil their role. They are involved in checking pupils' work and planning but their opportunity to identify and share good practice with colleagues is limited. This is slowing the pace of change in aspects and subjects such as writing and mathematics. It is an area for further development and one the school has recognised. The governing body gives satisfactory support. It has been innovative insofar as it has its own section in the school improvement plan and it has organised joint training sessions annually with the staff.
35. Planning for school development is effective. Management tools such as the improvement plan are satisfactory and identify what needs to be done next to get the development required. All staff and governors contribute to the plan and this is good practice. Priorities are carefully identified and current priorities are appropriate to the school's needs. Wise staffing appointments have ensured that the school has the capacity for further improvement. Some improvements, such as above average standards in reading and information and communication technology, have already been achieved. Good financial planning has provided adequate access to computers for all its pupils and is closely linked to development planning. Specific targeting and training for staff now results in above average standards in reading.
36. Income and expenditure per pupil are above average, reflecting extra money for pupils with special educational needs, for training, and from the membership of the virtual education action zone. Expenditure appropriately reflects school priorities. Money allocated for specific purposes, such as that for special educational needs, is spent in line with requirements. The relatively large carry forward is earmarked for refurbishment of parts of the accommodation. Governors and senior management have appropriate regard for best value when purchasing resources though more could be done to evaluate cost effectiveness of developments after the money is spent.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	516,210
Total expenditure	509,006
Expenditure per pupil	2,447

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	73,586
Balance carried forward to the next	80,781

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory overall**; it is good in reading and broadly satisfactory in writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in reading is very good and standards are above average, reflecting strengths in the teaching.
- Achievement in writing is broadly satisfactory but standards are below average. Not enough progress is made over the four years to fully remedy the low standards on entry.
- High priority is given to teaching reading. Until relatively recently, not enough emphasis was placed on the teaching of writing. This is being satisfactorily remedied but more could be done.
- The organisation of pupils into large teaching groups based on their attainment has satisfactory effectiveness but the benefit of this strategy is not consistently exploited by all teachers.
- The subject coordinator leads very effectively by example. However, too little management time is set aside for her to share good practice and guide the development of her colleagues and this is slowing the pace of change.

Commentary

37. All of the pupils achieve well in reading, often highly, and progress at a good rate in relation to their attainment on entry, which is generally low. This leads to above average standards in reading by Year 6. All of the Year 6 pupils tested in 2003 made the nationally expected progress and more than half progressed at a quicker rate. This was significantly better than the majority of schools. Many of those with low attainment when aged seven, including a number with special educational needs, caught up with expectations by the age of 11. About half of those with average attainment when aged seven exceeded national expectations by the age of 11; this is excellent. Pupils currently in Year 6 are fully stretched by the teaching in reading and all of them are working to capacity. Boys and girls do equally well in reading and there are no significant differences in attainment. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds generally do well in reading.
38. More than 80 per cent of the pupils currently in Year 6 are independent in their reading and on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level for 11-year-olds by the end of the school year. More than a third of these pupils have high attainment for their age and are set to exceed national expectations by the end of the year. The typical reader enjoys books and has well developed tastes for author and types of story. They read most texts fluently and with good understanding, tackling unfamiliar words competently and quickly. The higher attaining pupils are already reading books of an adult level of difficulty, have excellent skills for tackling unfamiliar words and very good comprehension skills, being able to sustain discussion about the authors' meaning and intentions through rigorous reference to the text.
39. Achievement in writing is satisfactory in the main, given the very low standards on entry. The teaching is not as effective as in reading, particularly for pupils in the middle to below average attainment range, reflecting inconsistencies between teachers in the methods used and insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching writing through the school. Pupils with high attainment on entry and those with very low attainment on entry generally make the nationally expected progress. Those with very low attainment are well supported by class assistants and this is helping their progress in writing. Those with above average and high attainment on entry are generally challenged by the tasks set and also make reasonable progress, though the most able could achieve more. The relatively large group with attainment that is not

significantly low but is nevertheless below average on entry, most of them boys, make very mixed progress. About half struggle to attain national expectations by the age of 11 even though they are generally capable of doing so. The teaching is not always sensitive to their learning needs and places insufficient emphasis on independent writing.

40. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with two-thirds of lessons being good or better in quality and this is close to the national picture. The teaching of reading is particularly effective. There is a strong emphasis on comprehension skills, taught mainly through shared work involving all pupils and guided work in small groups. Pupils with low attainment on entry are very well supported in the small groups by the class assistants. The assistants ask a good range of questions that encourage pupils to search the texts they are reading for answers and clues. The work in small groups leads to pupils improving quickly their word and letter recognition and letter blending skills. The methods recommended by the National Literacy Strategy are being effectively implemented in lessons, particularly where these relate to reading skills, and this is helping pupils to acquire an appropriate knowledge of the language. The use made of shared and guided writing methods, however, is not as extensive or as effective as it needs to be and this is an aspect for improvement. The teaching of drama is good and this is a strong element of the provision.
41. Throughout the school, the pupils are organised by their attainment for the teaching of literacy into large teaching groups called sets, with two sets in each year group. This organisational strategy effectively narrows the attainment range in each set, satisfactorily facilitating the provision of work at different levels. It has contributed to raising standards over the past few years. However, the extent to which the teachers exploit this facility varies between year groups, particularly when teaching writing skills. In one very good lesson with lower attaining pupils, the teacher provided challenging work at different levels to meet the varying learning needs, including different work for pupils with significant learning difficulties. In a satisfactory lesson with higher attaining pupils, however, all were given the same task, which met the needs of the majority but did not extend the most able sufficiently.
42. The subject manager leads well through the example of her own teaching. She has brought about good improvement since her appointment. However, she has too little time during the working day to share her good practice by teaching alongside colleagues, helping them implement change; this is slowing development in writing. The subject manager, together with senior management, is aware of the need to raise standards in writing and is trying several initiatives. In all year groups, management has set aside one literacy lesson a week for sustained independent writing and the headteacher works with the youngest pupils to provide an extra pair of hands and lead the way. These initiatives are effective as far as they go. The curriculum as experienced by pupils is satisfactory overall because of the provision for reading but insufficient provision is made for pupils to write independently. Resources for teaching are satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. Opportunities for writing arise in other subjects but are not exploited sufficiently to develop literacy skills. Planned links with other subjects are not as rigorously developed as they could be. In literacy lessons and in most other subjects, too much time is taken copying and working through exercises that require one or two word answers and too little time is given to tasks that require pupils to compose sentences, paragraphs, and extended passages independently. Information and communication technology is generally well used to promote skills of reading for information and research purposes and for developing writing through use of word processing.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is satisfactory for the majority of pupils but about a quarter could do better. Standards on entry to Year 3 are low. The majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress but this is not enough for standards to rise to average by Year 6.
- The teaching is effective in the main, reflecting good skills of questioning and explanation, but work is not always appropriately matched to the needs of pupils and some pupils are not confident with mental mathematics.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good.
- Subject management is good.

Commentary

44. Test results in 2002 in Year 6 were below average. Three-quarters of the Year 6 pupils tested in 2002 made the nationally expected progress between the ages of seven and 11. The more able pupils and some with low attainment could have done better. Results in 2003, as yet unconfirmed, are very similar to those of 2002. In 2002, girls attained better standards than the boys although both were below the national average. Standards in the national tests have fluctuated since the previous inspection and not improved enough in comparison with English and science. The small numbers of pupils who join the school after the age of seven do not make as much progress as those present for all four of the junior years, reflecting the significant special educational needs that many of them have.
45. Current standards in Year 6 are below average, though not by very much. The raising of standards is a priority already identified by the school and arrangements have been made to provide additional help and support for all pupils. The majority of pupils currently in Year 6 are making satisfactory progress and achieve well. A significant proportion entered Year 3 with below average attainment and these pupils are now close to expected levels. However, a minority are underachieving mostly, but not exclusively, pupils with above average and high attainment on entry. Those pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress though their attainment is significantly below national expectations.
46. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some examples of better teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All teachers have a good relationship with their classes and this gives pupils the confidence to respond to questions. Pupils are encouraged to explain how they arrived at their answers, which helps develop understanding and confidence. Pupils are encouraged to work together and to share answers. This they do very well. Lesson objectives are shared with the pupils and often revisited at the end of the session to see if they have been achieved. Teachers begin the lesson with mental tasks but often the questions lack challenge for the more able pupils. In a few lessons the pace is pedestrian and pupils, although on task, do not put the extra effort into their work. Where lessons begin briskly, pupils are immediately focused and motivated and learning is quick. They enjoy the initial input and participate with enthusiasm when using white boards to answer questions, thus giving teachers an instant assessment of skills. Teachers use learning support assistants effectively to the benefit of those with special needs. They provide valuable support for these pupils and help to make the tasks more accessible and improve the opportunities for learning.
47. Assessment procedures have improved considerably since the previous inspection and targets are now set for each pupil. The results are used to group the pupils more carefully, according to their mathematical abilities. However, insufficient use is made of the information to ensure that all tasks effectively provide sufficient and appropriate challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able and the least able. Marking is variable and inconsistent. Where it is good, positive constructive comments enable pupils to move on.

48. Since the previous inspection when there was criticism of a lack of a whole school scheme, the National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented. This has helped to ensure progression, continuity and a teaching of similar topics within each year group. This has given the teachers greater confidence and security of knowledge.
49. Subject management is satisfactory though some aspects of the role are underdeveloped. There is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator, who leads by example but has little opportunity to monitor the teaching of others and share good practice. This is part of the priority highlighted for 2004. The coordinator has analysed the optional national tests to find weaknesses in pupils' understanding. These areas are now part of the main mathematical focus to help raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Satisfactory use of mathematics is made in science, design and technology, geography and history, particularly of measures, tables and graphs. For example, pupils in Year 3 use metres and centimetres to measure their bodies as part of their science project. Data is then transferred to a computer and graphs produced to analyse findings. In Year 6, pupils used measuring in design and technology to design and build shelters as part of history work on World War II. Spreadsheets and graphs are a feature of both science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of the pupils is satisfactory overall. The average and low attaining pupils mostly do well but the most able pupils could do better.
- Standards in Year 6 are average and this represents good progress for these pupils since their entry to school in 2000.
- The teaching is good overall and places a strong emphasis on learning through investigation and experimentation. However, the most able pupils are not always challenged as much as they might be.
- Subject leadership is satisfactory though the use of assessment is underdeveloped.

Commentary

51. Almost all pupils are achieving well and making good progress. Standards on entry are low yet by Year 6 average proportions of pupils attain or exceed expectations. Low attaining pupils do particularly well, catching up with national expectations by Year 6. The more able pupils are generally challenged by the teaching, work to capacity, and make the expected progress. However, the most able could achieve higher standards. The substantial majority of the pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year; this is consistent with the majority of schools.
52. The test results for 2002 were below average overall but not by very much. Ninety per cent of the pupils attained the expected national level, more than was the case nationally, and about a third exceeded it. The amount of high attainment was smaller than in the typical school and this is why results overall were below average. The early indications from the 2003 tests are that more than 80 per cent of the pupils attained or exceeded expectations with about a third exceeding them. The overall result is lower than 2002 and below the national average. Nevertheless, the educational value added for the Year 6 pupils tested in 2003 was good and similar to 2002.

53. Throughout the school, pupils are acquiring a satisfactory, balanced knowledge of life processes and living things; materials and their properties; and physical processes. This knowledge is effectively acquired through a strong and appropriate emphasis on practical investigations and experimentation. The practical work is enjoyable and very motivating, engaging the interests and imaginations of all the pupils. Those in Year 6 have a good understanding that scientific ideas are firmly based on evidence. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the pupils investigated whether air has weight by devising their own experiment and their own equipment for measuring the weight of air. This was very challenging. The pupils worked hard to ensure fairness in their tests, identifying variables and controlling some to make the tests equal. They understood the need to repeat tests to check the accuracy of their results. Their conclusions were firmly based on their findings, which they debated to check that all of the variables had been taken into account.
54. Teaching is good in the main. The vast majority of pupils learn quickly in lessons, apply themselves productively and concentrate until tasks are finished. All pupils tend to be given the same task, however, and this means that the most able pupils are not always set challenging enough work. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and planning appropriate though not enough use is made of assessment information to identify pupils with different abilities and set work that is well matched to their learning needs. The impact of this is tempered by the extensive use of practical investigations, which allows pupils to learn at a pace matched to ability but does not always provide the intellectual challenge for the most able. The methods are good and lead to all pupils learning effectively. In most other respects the curriculum is broad and relevant to the pupils' learning needs. Resources are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **very good**. The pupils are well taught, make good progress, and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is above national expectations. The school has invested a great deal into promoting information and communication technology and, through the purchase of laptops; all pupils have easy access to computers. This has led to a rise in standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in information and communication technology are above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have a very good attitude to their work and are enthusiastic.
- The teachers make effective use of laptop computers.
- Pupils have growing confidence in the use of information and communication technology.
- Information and communication technology is regularly used to support work in other subjects and this is good practice.

Commentary

55. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are above those typically found. All aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum are taught to help pupils build successfully on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and work confidently with information and communication technology equipment and on the Internet. Those pupils with special educational needs are totally involved in lessons often working with a partner and achieving very well. Keyboard skills are good and pupils navigate a PowerPoint program with ease and confidence.
56. The quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and skilled, inspiring pupils and presenting the work clearly and in logical steps. All teachers manage their pupils well and create a good working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and produce good

quality work. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the subject and are very pleased with efforts, particularly their PowerPoint presentations in Year 6, to which they add pictures, facts, text and even sound, carefully evaluating the effectiveness of each addition. All pupils collaborate very well, as they share the computers. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to explore a range of programs.

57. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has invested heavily in providing laptops for classroom use and this enables all pupils to have frequent access to the technology, a criticism from the previous inspection. Progress is now good. Standards have risen as a consequence of very much improved provision.
58. The subject is well lead by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable coordinator. There are plans to improve the resources even further, and to form a link with the local technology school. Extra-curricular activities are held weekly and attendance is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. Although information and communication technology is used to support work in other subjects there is still scope for improvement. It is used fairly effectively in mathematics and science to draw graphs or prepare spread sheets; word- processing skills are used in literacy and the internet helps historical research, for example on World War II.

HUMANITIES

Provision in the humanities was not a focus of the inspection. Work in history was sampled but none seen in geography.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The provision in history is **satisfactory**. There is too little evidence to make a judgement in geography.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for first hand experiences particularly within the local area are good.

Commentary

60. Standards in history in Year 6 are similar to those typically found. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in geography because of the school's arrangement for teaching the subject. There was also no opportunity to observe lessons and thus make judgements about teaching and learning in history. In the humanities, pupils benefit from being taken on a range of educational visits for first hand experiences in the local area as well as further afield. All this effectively enhances the pupils' understanding. There have been several improvements since the previous inspection. Geography was heavily criticised in the previous inspection but since then a policy and appropriate scheme of work has been written and implemented. Additional resources have been purchased to support learning in these subjects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Use of assembly themes to enhance pupils' understanding is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are effective.
- Pupils work collaboratively.
- Teachers' knowledge of other faiths is limited.
- Interesting and thoughtful writing on occasions but limited recording and missed opportunities for extending writing in the main.

Commentary

61. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, reflecting those required by the locally agreed syllabus and broadly average overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress developing the relevant skills and understanding of a range of faiths. For example, they have satisfactory knowledge of Islam, in particular, the mosque and its use and discuss their feelings about arranged marriages. Written evidence was limited and varied from some very thoughtful writing from last year's Year 6 pupils to a range of completed worksheets in other year groups, though these missed opportunities for exploring pupils' own views and for extended writing using different genres.
62. The small amount of teaching seen was satisfactory. Teachers have a good relationship with their classes so pupils are keen to respond to questions and to offer their opinions. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to work together, either researching a mosque in a Year 6 class or making kangans, a symbol from an Islamic wedding, in a Year 5 class. This they do very successfully, sharing their thoughts and listening to each other. Questions are used effectively to reinforce or extend pupils' understanding. However, teachers' knowledge of other faiths is limited. There is limited opportunity for pupils to write their thoughts and this is an area for further development which links with the need to increase the use of literacy skills. Where pupils had been given such opportunities, some thoughtful words were used to describe the Christmas story and explain the pupils' ideas for creating a new planet.
63. Assembly themes planned throughout the year highlight many Christian stories and events in Jesus' life as well as opportunities to think about living together and caring. This enhances pupils' understanding of what it means to share and appreciate those who may be different.
64. The local vicar regularly comes to school and leads assembly. The pupils visit the church to gain insight into a place of worship. There are presently no visits to those of other religions although a visit to a mosque is to be planned for the future. Resources are adequate and include CD-ROM for research purposes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The arts subjects were sampled but were not a main focus of the inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **broadly satisfactory** though narrow in range. No lessons were seen but work was examined and pupils from Year 6 spoken to about their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is broadly satisfactory but the pupils' knowledge and understanding in Year 6 is limited, reflecting a narrow curriculum and too few opportunities for learning.

Commentary

65. The pupils are well motivated and interested in recent work, much of which is derived from useful learning experiences. Those in Year 6 were eager to explain how they had designed and constructed model shelters in preparation for building larger shelters later in the topic. They had explored different designs and, through evaluations, had learnt about the importance of triangular shapes when building rigid constructions; this is good practice. Before designing, they had explored the construction of a tent brought in for that purpose by a pupil; again, good curricular experience. Imaginative designs were produced and the pupils had been fully challenged by the task and were working to the capacity of their current knowledge and skills. This level of knowledge and understanding, however, is somewhat below national expectations. While there is good use of marking and measuring before cutting materials, which are skills expected by this age, the Year 6 pupils' knowledge of methods for joining materials, or of different materials for different purposes, is underdeveloped, reflecting narrowness in the curriculum in this and previous years. Recorded work shows infrequent opportunities to study the subject and little evidence of direct teaching of techniques or of using a wide range of suitable materials. Recent work was restricted to investigations using paper, sticky tape, paper fasteners, and straws, materials replicated in tasks in other year groups, and pupils could not recollect using wood or plastics, for example, or using tools such as saws, drills and hammers.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in lessons is good and standards are generally above average.
- Extra-curricular and instrumental tuition arrangements are very good overall.

Commentary

66. The small amount of teaching seen was purposeful, knowledgeable, and leading to good standards overall. In lessons and assemblies, the pupils show enthusiasm and willingness to contribute and explore. They try hard and are generally working to their potential. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the pupils understood and could talk about pitch and dynamics and effectively explore how sounds can be combined and used expressively; this is more than a year ahead of expectations. Singing is tuneful and shows good regard for texture and structure. In a Year 4 class, the pupils actively and diligently explored forms of musical notation, creating and performing short passages of music based on the notation. This work was very challenging for all pupils, engaged them intellectually and stretched them to the limit. Singing during acts of collective worship and for the harvest festival was vigorous, enjoyable and tuneful. Pupils learning the recorder and other instruments showed good ability and application.
67. The small amount of teaching seen was of good quality. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise are good, with several teachers able to lead by example. The curriculum is appropriately planned, with high quality enrichment opportunities. There are no rigorous arrangements for assessment but this is not having a discernable impact at teaching level though it does mean that senior management is unable to track pupils' progress and evaluate how good the curriculum and teaching are.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**. The extra-curricular provision for sports is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are good.
- A wide range of opportunities are provided after school for pupils to participate in sporting activities.

Commentary

68. Lessons are well planned and taught. This is leading to pupils acquiring knowledge and skills quickly. Pupils are well motivated and generally give of their best. In a lesson in Year 4, all of the pupils were totally involved, reflecting the very good relationships between pupils and teachers. Throughout the lesson, the pupils used appropriate skills, showing good coordination and dexterity. They understood and used tactics in games situations, evaluated what they were doing and tried to improve. All of these skills are expected by the end of the school year and so current standards are ahead of expectations.
69. Extra-curricular provision is very good. On most evenings each week, pupils have opportunities to participate in different sporting activities. The activities include an extensive range of inter-school competitions and competitive activities.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

