

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH END JUNIOR SCHOOL

Rushden

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121891

Headteacher: Mrs Teresa Storr

Lead inspector: Dr John Collings

Dates of inspection: 17th - 20th May 2004

Inspection number: 264491

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:	339
School address:	Wymington Road Rushden Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN10 9JU
Telephone number:	(01933) 314 611
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Bufton
Date of previous inspection:	9 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

South End Junior School is bigger than most other junior schools and nearly 50 per cent bigger than it was at the last inspection. Attainment on entry is average. It is an expanding school and pupils' socio-economic circumstances are higher than average. The school gained Achievement Awards in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The school is part of the Rushden and Higham Network Learning Community of sevens local schools. The number of pupils with free school meals is below average at 4.8 per cent. The vast majority of pupils are white British and there are no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. The number of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average and those with statements of special educational needs above average. A significant number of pupils come from out of the school's immediate catchment area.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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31177	Martin Mangan	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

South End junior school provides a **good** standard of education for its pupils. Overall standards and achievement are **very good**. The headteacher provides **good** leadership and management. Teaching is **good** throughout the school. The school is **effective** and gives **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching throughout the school results in very high standards in English and mathematics and high standards in science.
- Pupils' ability to carry out science investigations independently is not as good as their standards in other parts of the science curriculum.
- The good leadership and management of the headteacher is a major factor in creating the very good ethos for learning in the school.
- The very good relationships between all members of the school community results in the very good behaviour of pupils.
- The application and consolidation of information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not systematically included across the curriculum.
- Although satisfactory overall, the role of the leadership and management of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped.
- The developing creative arts curriculum is having a significant influence on raising standards in art and music and in supporting other parts of the curriculum such as dance and drama.
- Assessment is used well in English to plan challenging work but is less rigorously used in the remaining subjects.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social education is very good but pupils are given limited experiences to develop an understanding of life in multicultural Britain today.

The effectiveness of the school has been improved since the last inspection. Standards by Year 6 have been well above average since 2000 until 2003 when they were above average. Value added measures for the 2003 cohort show pupils achieve very well. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English and mathematics are well above average and standards in science are above average. School statistics and inspection evidence indicate that the current cohort of Year 6 pupils are achieving very well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupil achievement is **very good**. Overall, pupils enter Year 3 broadly average. Standards and achievement by Year 6 are very good in English and mathematics, and good in science. Pupils are above national expectations in art and design, religious education and music and meet expectations in ICT but do not apply their ICT skills sufficiently across the curriculum. Pupils' ability to devise their own science investigations is not as well developed as other aspects of the science curriculum. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement in the remaining subjects.

The development of pupils' attitudes and personal qualities is **very good** and they behave **very well** and there are **very good** relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. Provision for spiritual development is **good**, social and moral development **very good** and cultural provision satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The quality of teaching is **good** across the school. Assessment is **satisfactory** overall with good assessment in English that is well used to plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. However, assessment in mathematics, science and the foundation subjects is less well developed but is currently under review. Resources and accommodation are **good**.

The school meets requirements of the National Curriculum **well** and provision for enrichment is **good**. The school is becoming increasingly innovative in the way it delivers the curriculum through greater emphasis on creative arts. The application and consolidation of information and communication technology, however, is not systematically included across all subjects. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is **good**.

The support, advice and guidance given to pupils is **good** and pupils are **well** cared for. Links with parents, the community and other schools are **good**. The school seeks the views of pupils and plans to create a school council are well in hand.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher are **good**. The headteacher and the governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governance of the school is **good** and all statutory requirements are fully met. The leadership and management of key staff are **satisfactory**. The senior management team are effective in ensuring smooth running of the school and maintaining pupils' high achievement; however, their monitoring of the school's priorities across the school is inconsistent. The leadership of English is very good because the weaknesses in pupils' learning, for example, in writing, have been systematically addressed. This rigorous analysis of teaching and learning to effect change is less effective in other subjects.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are very happy with the school and with the information they receive, particularly about the curriculum. There are regular newsletters, including a Pupils' Sports Newspaper written by pupils. Good use is made of the home school booklet to record progress and to communicate with parents. Pupils like the school and want to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Ensure the senior management team monitors the school's priorities systematically and subject co-ordinators are given sufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Ensure progress in pupils' ability to carry out science investigations independently.
- Plan for the greater inclusion of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- In subjects other than English, use assessment more effectively to plan work based on identified weaknesses.
- Create more opportunities to prepare pupils for life in our multicultural society.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall standards and achievement are **very good**. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 varies from year to year but is broadly average; by Year 6, attainment is **well above** that expected nationally in English and mathematics and **above** in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are very high.
- By Year 6, standards in science are high.
- Year 6 pupils' ability to carry out investigations independently is limited by lack of sufficient opportunities to investigate questions they have raised for themselves.
- Standards in the creative subjects of art and design and music are above expectations.

Commentary

1. Over the last five years pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 has varied but overall has been broadly average. Standards in the Year 6 national tests have been well above the national average in English, mathematics and science since 2000, except in 2003, when they were above average. When compared to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2 in 1999, the Year 6 pupils in 2003 achieved well in English, mathematics and science. Value added measures showed that these pupils achieved very well.
2. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are attaining levels in English and mathematics that are well above, and in science above, the expected level for pupils of this age. When compared to their scores at the end of Year 2 in 2000, inspection evidence and school predictions indicate that pupils are achieving very well, particularly for those pupils who have spent the full four years in the school.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (29.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.3 (28.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.7 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 87 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Pupils are achieving very well in English. Standards in speaking and listening, and reading are well above average and writing above average. Groups identified for extra support, such as pupils with special educational needs, are very well catered for because their needs are precisely identified and as a result their achievement is very good. More able pupils are also identified through the school's system of setting. These pupils have challenging targets to aim for and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve and they achieve very well. Boys' writing has been targeted and this has now improved. Pupils use their skills in reading, speaking and listening very well in other subjects, for example, the use of drama in religious education. Pupils do not, however, write in sufficient range of genres in other areas of the curriculum.
4. In mathematics, the teaching of basic numeracy skills is good. Setting arrangements in all year groups are well managed and pupils learn well because the work is well matched to their individual needs. By Year 6, pupils understand and compute square numbers and the square

root. They are able to use six figure grid references, calculate the volume of 3-D shapes, use brackets appropriately and calculate and measure angles accurately. Opportunities to apply and consolidate mathematics in other areas of the curriculum are not exploited fully.

5. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of science in 'Life processes and living things', 'Materials and their properties' and 'the Physical processes' is very good. Year 6 pupils carry out and interpret a significant amount of practical work; however, pupils are less skilled in planning, carrying out and evaluating investigations they have devised for themselves.
6. Through good provision and support, pupils with special educational needs achieve well. The school recognises that it does not identify rigorously enough those pupils who are potentially gifted and talented and has limited procedures to ensure they achieve as well as they could. The school are aware that in the national tests in 2003 girls' attainment was higher than boys'. Inspection evidence did not identify any significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment in the current cohort.
7. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations across the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. There has been significant improvement since the new computer suite was installed. Information and communication technology (ICT), however, is not being used sufficiently to apply and consolidate ICT skills in other subjects, for example, greater use of word processing and power point to present work. The school is well placed to improve further.
8. Standards in religious education are good. Standards in creative subjects of music and art and design are above national expectations, making a significant contribution to the creative arts curriculum in the school. Although insufficient evidence was seen to make a secure judgement on standards in physical education as a whole, the high standard of dance seen during the inspection also makes a significant contribution to the creative arts curriculum. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the provision in geography and history. Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, relationships with each other and with adults, their behaviour and values are all **very good**. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is **good** and cultural development **satisfactory**, because the opportunities for preparing pupils to live in a multicultural society are limited. Pupils are eager to come to school and attendance and punctuality continues to be **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and to each other are very good.
- The caring ethos of the school permeates all activities, and helps to promote pupils' very good relationships, attitudes and personal development.
- The very good role models of the staff and very good behaviour management ensure that pupils know the difference between right and wrong and behave well.
- The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good.
- Attendance and punctuality in the school continue to be good. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.
- Pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own is underdeveloped.

Commentary

9. Pupils' attitudes and values are very good. Pupils are very well behaved, polite and courteous and respond well to the caring and calming ethos of the school. Pupils enjoy school and take a real pride in their work. They are interested and involved in lessons and out of school activities. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work because teachers

and teaching assistants expect them to behave well and work hard. Parents are very supportive and happy with the values the school promotes. Staff deal quickly and effectively with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and there have been no instances of racism. One pupil has been permanently excluded from school.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
339	0	1

10. Pupils work independently or in groups and their attitudes to learning are very good. They work well together, sharing and valuing each other’s ideas. Pupils’ relationships with adults and each other are very good; this has a very positive impact on their learning. They are supportive of each other, happy and secure, and enjoy an atmosphere where all are valued. They respond well to the help provided and like being rewarded for doing their best. Pupils are supportive of each other, for example, pupils who join the school during term time have a ‘buddy’ selected to help them settle in. Pupils of all ages mix well across the school. All pupils are fully included.
11. There is a very well developed pastoral support system which includes a very effective school counsellor and ‘circle time’ in all classes. An example of how the school actively helps pupils develop caring relationships with each other was demonstrated during one ‘circle time’ where the pupils were encouraged to talk about their own good qualities and the sort of person they would like to be. Their positive attitudes, and the care with which they listened, showed just how much they empathised with each other.
12. Development of the expressive arts curriculum has had a significant impact on pupils’ moral, social and cultural development as was seen in one excellent dance lesson where boys and girls were fully involved in the experience. Their positive attitudes and the care they took of each other during the lesson was exemplary.
13. Pupils’ personal development is good. It is fostered well by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral and social development through literacy and religious education, as well as school clubs, residential visits, visits out and visitors into the school. Developing more understanding of other cultural traditions, however, would help pupils to extend their understanding of their own culture. Pupils’ have a very good understanding of right and wrong, and benefit from the very good role models set by the adults in school. The expectations of the school that pupils will be honest, trustworthy and well mannered are amply rewarded.
14. A characteristic of the school is the confidence with which pupils ask questions and are willing to express their opinions. This was amply demonstrated during an interview with some of the editors of the Children’s Sports Newspaper where they described the way they interviewed other children, wrote articles and edited the paper. Pupils are encouraged to accept many responsibilities around the school which include acting as monitors, buddies, helping in class, playing music during assemblies, fund raising for different charities and the school newspaper. Pupils will clearly benefit from the planned development of a school council, which will provide more opportunities for them to accept responsibilities across the school.
15. Attendance is good and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average. The school puts maximum effort into improving pupils’ attendance by using well-planned strategies concentrating on a target group of poor attendees. The vast majority of pupils are keen to attend school and arrive punctually for the start of school and for lessons. Arrangements for registration and record keeping are efficient and fulfil legal requirements.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school. Assessment is good in English and satisfactory in the remaining subjects and **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships and very good classroom management create a very good ethos which results in very high standards of behaviour and pupils fully engaged and wanting to learn.
- Overall, work is challenging and well planned to meet all pupils' needs.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and challenge and engage pupils through good questioning and discussion.
- Lessons have good pace and resources are used well.
- Teachers do not use information and communication technology sufficiently to support the curriculum.
- Assessment and its use in planning work to meet pupils' needs in English are good. It is not as well embedded in other subjects.
- Marking does not consistently inform pupils how they can improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (4%)	12 (22%)	25 (46%)	15 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Commentary

16. The very good ethos in the school is a very significant factor in the very high standards attained and the very good achievement of the pupils. The very good classroom management and good relationships between pupils, and teachers and pupils, create very good attitudes to learning, enabling teachers to teach effectively. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the methodical approach to teaching basic skills. Individual education plans are well constructed and form the basis for classroom planning for this group of pupils. Very good classroom management was reflected in the vast majority of lessons seen.
17. The most significant factor in engaging pupils in learning is the good knowledge and understanding of teachers to plan work that is engaging, stimulating and challenging. Teachers engage pupils by respecting their opinions, through good questioning and allowing discussion. These techniques were seen in the majority of lessons and were particularly evident in the very good and excellent lessons seen. For example, in an excellent Year 6 English lesson, very good discussion gave the teacher a very good insight into pupils' interpretation of a poem. This led to the exploration of feelings such as fairness, friendship, bullying and sympathy, and the similarities and differences of how these were explored in two poems. In a very good Year 5 art and design lesson, good knowledge and understanding

enabled the teacher to structure the lesson so that pupils created high-quality drawings of the face.

18. Pupils are grouped for English and mathematics from Years 3 to 6 according to ability. This enables work to be challenging, well planned and targeted to meet pupils' needs; for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, very good questioning and high expectations ensured the lower attaining pupils were all meeting at least national expectations.
19. Many lessons have good pace, which involves pupils and maintains their interest. This was seen in a Year 3 science lesson where pupils were introduced to using sampling techniques to compare the range of plant species in two different habitats. Good pace ensured pupils were focused and collected relevant data to enable them to make valid comparisons. Very good pace was also seen in a good Year 4 mathematics lesson where learning was well reviewed, consolidated and then developed to new learning to apply < and > symbols accurately.
20. Teachers use a good range of different teaching methods to inspire, challenge and involve pupils; for example the good use of the environment in a Year 3 science lesson and a good range of equipment to complete practical work in a Year 6 science lesson. Drama is also used to good effect; for example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson, pupils acted out aspects of the Old Testament to enact the development of Judaism. Good use is also made of demonstration; for example, in a Year 4 dance lesson taken by a learning support assistant, her knowledge and skills enabled her to demonstrate very high expectations. This challenged and inspired pupils to attain very well.
21. Teaching is less successful when the slower pace of lessons does not engage pupils sufficiently and where work is not planned in sufficient detail to match the needs of the full range of ability in the class; for example, in some science lessons in Years 5 and 6 and information and communication technology lessons in Years 3 and 5. Good examples were seen of marking to inform pupils how they could improve, particularly in English. However, overall, the quality of marking is inconsistent and does not systematically inform pupils what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers do not use information and communication technology sufficiently to support learning across the curriculum.
22. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics and science. Pupils' overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics is monitored through non-statutory national tests. These are used well in English, for example, to focus on writing, particularly that of boys. This focus has shown improvements over the last year. Monitoring of pupils' progress has also identified some weaknesses in pupils' investigative skills in science. However, overall assessment is not rigorously used by subject co-ordinators to plan work based on identified weaknesses within subjects or cohorts of pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**, and is fully inclusive. There are many opportunities for enrichment and the developing provision for the creative arts is also **good**. **Good** accommodation and **good** levels of resources meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very well organised.
- A wide variety of curriculum challenges, including the expressive arts, have been introduced across some subjects and these help to create the positive ethos in the school.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is helping pupils to widen their skills and aspirations.
- There is limited systematic planning for links between subjects of the curriculum.
- Scientific enquiry skills are under-used.
- ICT is not used well enough in classrooms to support the curriculum.

Commentary

23. The curriculum enables all groups of pupils to achieve well in most subjects because it is organised well to challenge pupils' varying abilities. The school currently has a full complement of staff that is well deployed to make the best use of their skills and experience. Teachers' planning is good; they plan carefully and review their plans in the light of pupils' learning, to ensure that the work is suitably demanding.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It is effective because it is tailored to meet their needs. Support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are well organised. Careful briefing by class teachers and thoughtful allocation to the needs of the pupils ensures that assistants make an effective contribution to pupils learning. However, classroom assistants do not yet take part in the lesson planning for the pupils they support.
25. There is limited systematic planning to apply and consolidate the knowledge, understanding and skills learnt in one area of the curriculum in another. However, teachers are beginning to make effective links between subjects and this includes opportunities to include aspects of literacy in some lessons. This means that the pupils learn to express themselves correctly using appropriate terms and styles, and are beginning to make links between their learning. Scientific enquiry skills are not yet taught in a systematic and planned way and this limits opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills and understanding in science.
26. The introduction of the expressive arts curriculum is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Dance and drama are effectively used to enrich and extend pupils' learning, engaging their interest and inspiring them to want to do well.
27. The use of information and communication technology is not sufficiently planned across the curriculum; consequently, opportunities for pupils to use and develop ICT skills across the curriculum are not exploited, for example, the use of word processing and power point to present their work or the use of spread sheets in science to record results of investigations.
28. All subjects have a good range of resources and this enables pupils to enhance and enrich their learning. The range of resources for pupils with special educational needs is good. The accommodation is good. Teachers make good use of their spacious classrooms. ICT has its own suite and there is a music room. The library is spacious and well stocked with a very good range of books.
29. The school provides pupils with many opportunities to enhance their experiences through school visits and visitors, which are planned throughout the school. These include visits to the local church, to the local town as part of Local Study theme and an orienteering day at Irchester Country Park, a residential visit to France, Roman experiences day and a visit by a Roman Soldier. Visitors include a Theatre group, a poet who visited on World Book Day and the Life Education Van.
30. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including a very wide variety of sports activities, and in addition, recorders, computer, newspaper, dance, and peripatetic music teaching. The school also takes part in local sports tournaments, including the District sports, which they won, and the Town swimming gala.
31. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' education is enriched well by the work of visiting specialists and extra-curricular activities, which include peripatetic music teachers, artistic productions and performances in the local area. As a result of this, learning is enhanced and pupils achieve well in these subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for the care, welfare and health and safety of pupils is **good**. The guidance and support for pupils is **very good**. The involvement of pupils through seeking and valuing their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a safe and secure environment where pupils are well cared for and where they receive very good pastoral support.
- Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included.

Commentary

32. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils are good. Members of staff are well aware of the welfare and medical needs of each of the pupils. The care for pupils with special educational needs is good. Health and safety procedures comply fully with local authority and statutory requirements and members of school management have a high level of awareness of this aspect. They ensure that risk-assessment of any new activities and equipment takes place.
33. The school has a good child protection policy and its procedures meet the requirements of the Northampton Child Protection committee; the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care.
34. Induction arrangements are good, particularly with the South End Infants School. The school takes part in the 'all schools transfer day' and regular visits between the school and the South End Infant School are organised. Transfer arrangement to the local secondary schools are good.
35. The friendliness and courtesy of the staff and pupils is a strong characteristic of the school. As a result, the school has been successful in developing very good and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. The very good relationships between all members of staff and the pupils contribute to the quality of the pupils' experiences and to the calm atmosphere felt in the school during the inspection.
36. In their questionnaires, the vast majority of pupils indicated that they have the confidence to seek support and guidance if they have any concerns about their work, or a personal problem. Members of staff provide good responses to such requests and, through the well developed pastoral support system, ensure that every pupil can receive well-informed support, advice and guidance.
37. As part of the personal, health and social education (PSHE) and citizenship curriculum, pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to express their opinions. Within 'circle time', pupils discuss social issues and matters of importance to them. In one PSHE lesson, pupils were asked to decide how their local Member of Parliament could deal with one of the problems which had been brought to the local surgery. After a great deal of serious discussion in small groups, they came up with ten very good ideas of what he could do. In addition to the PSHE curriculum, the school is developing more systems to seek the views of pupils through self-assessment in lessons and asking their views, for example, on writing together, as well the implementation of the planned school council.
38. The systems in place for monitoring pupils' academic development are satisfactory overall. English has the most effective system. Mathematics and science are soundly monitored, as are the remaining subjects. There is, however, insufficient rigour, particularly by subject co-ordinators in monitoring the progress of groups of pupils within each cohort.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnerships between school and home, other schools and the community are **good** and play a positive role in supporting pupils' learning at school and home. Parents are **very happy** with the school and the education it provides.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children.
- The open door policy of the school.
- The quality of information provided for parents is good.
- Parents are welcomed as volunteers in the school.
- Effective links with the community.

Commentary

39. The vast majority of parents see this as a good school where the staff are committed and care deeply for their children. There are two parents' meetings each year plus an open evening for parents to discuss the annual report, which includes details of progress and achievement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the education of their children and are fully informed of their progress in school.
40. Parents appreciate the open door policy of the school and the accessibility and approachability of the staff if they have any concerns. The general information provided for parents is good; this includes regular newsletters from the headteacher and a Children's Sports Newspaper written by pupils. Each term a curriculum information sheet is issued which tells parents what their children will be studying. Good use is made of the home/school booklet to record pupils' progress and to pass messages to and from the school. There is a comprehensive school prospectus and an informative Annual Governors' Report to Parents.
41. A small but active Parent-Teacher Association organises regular social and much appreciated fund raising events. Parents regularly support school functions and celebrations and a number of parents work in the school as volunteers or help on educational visits.
42. Links with the community are good and these include the local clergy, Member of Parliament, schools, RSPCA, librarian, Fire Service, Police, St John Ambulance, school nurse, Rotary Club and Rushden and Diamonds Football Club, which widens pupils' awareness of the school's place in the community and enriches the curriculum. Links with the community, visits and visitors provide very good levels of enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development.
43. Strong links exist between the South End Junior School and other local schools through the Networked Learning Community. Regular cluster meetings are held with local secondary and primary school staff, and specialist teachers from the secondary schools have supported the development of the expressive arts programme. Joint meetings have been held with secondary school staff to ensure curriculum continuity. The school provides work experience placements for local secondary schools.
44. A number of parents have asked for help in how they can support their children at home through curriculum evenings; such meetings are planned. Others felt that their views were not asked for in the general development of the school. The inspection team judged the school's involvement of parents and acting on their views as satisfactory. To further increase their parents' involvement, the school has already planned the circulation of a questionnaire to counsel parents' views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher are **good**. The leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. School governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides good leadership and has positive aspirations for all staff and pupils.
- The headteacher and the governing body have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- Monitoring by the senior management team of the school's priorities is undeveloped.
- Leadership of English is very good.
- The rigorous analysis of teaching and learning to address subject weaknesses is less effective in mathematics, science and the foundation subjects.
- Work with pupils who have special educational needs is well led and managed.

Commentary

45. The headteacher's good leadership is central to the school's success. She has a clear vision for the development of the school and this is communicated well to all staff and governors. This is clearly seen in the way she has gained a strong whole school commitment to the reorganisation of the school curriculum to ensure increased emphasis on the development of creative arts, which is proving to be a successful strategy in raising standards. She impacts upon the work of the school at all levels. There is a very strong sense of belonging to a mutually supportive team in which everyone is treated with respect. Teachers enjoy working at this school and the very positive ethos ensures that the school rarely has difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff. All of the adults in the school provide good role models for children.
46. The governance of the school is good. Governors provide challenge and support in equal measure and use their personal expertise to help shape the future direction of the school. The headteacher and the governing body work well in partnership. They compare the school's performance with similar schools and this helps them to set targets for improvement. They share a common vision and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Staff and governors have good involvement and ownership of the school improvement plan, which has improved since the last inspection. This is now satisfactory and generally well targeted to address the most important development priorities. The level of teamwork amongst other staff and governors is good also. There are good procedures in place for day-to-day financial management and control, and the principles of best value are applied effectively.
47. Management by the headteacher is good and the school operates efficiently as a direct result. She monitors pupils' progress and teaching and learning systematically. As a result, teaching in the school is good, often very good, and pupils' achievement very good. She has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She is improving the management by the senior management team by reviewing their roles and responsibilities and developing their abilities to monitor the school priorities through greater delegation and accountability.
48. Leadership and management by the senior management team are, therefore, satisfactory. They have been through various stages of reorganisation since the last inspection when this was identified as a key issue for development. Since then there have been a number of changes in staffing and the current team has only recently been formed. Improvements have been made to clarify the management structure and the team now meets on a regular basis to ensure the smooth running of the school. Apart from the headteacher, the senior management team do not, however, yet spend sufficient time in a rigorous evaluation of the work of the school and are, therefore, not currently overseeing the consistent implementation of school

policies in all classes. As a consequence, they do not currently have a significant impact on driving school improvement priorities.

49. The role of subject co-ordinators has also been clarified since the last inspection. They now have clear job descriptions and produce action plans to promote the development of their subject. Apart from English, however, these are not sufficiently focused on addressing subject weaknesses. This is because other co-ordinators do not yet monitor teaching and learning on a regular basis or analyse the results of assessment in sufficient detail in order to improve planning. Leadership and management of special educational needs are good.
50. Procedures for the induction of new staff are effective and staff have good opportunities for continuous professional development. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training. There are good arrangements in place for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs, including effective organisation of learning support assistants in all classes.

Financial Information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total Income	899,280
Total expenditure	848,621
Expenditure per pupil	2,518

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	42,380
Balance carried forward to the next year	50,670

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good support for writing, such as rigorous monitoring and assessment and support systems for identified groups of pupils.
- The use of drama motivates pupils very well in the subject.
- More able pupils are challenged through very good teaching.
- Very good management has ensured that the school is focusing on priorities, for example, writing.

Commentary

51. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, with more pupils achieving at the higher level. Pupils are now achieving very well. Groups identified for extra support, such as pupils with special educational needs, are very well catered for because their needs are precisely identified. The staff know what to do to help these pupils achieve very well and include them in lessons very effectively. More able pupils are also identified through the school's system of setting. These pupils have challenging targets to aim for and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve, and they achieve very well. Boys' writing has been targeted and this has now improved.
52. Teaching and learning are good because of the careful checks on provision by the subject manager. She knows what needs to improve, such as using pupils' writing in other subjects more effectively, and sets an outstanding example in her teaching. The school's initiatives in improving writing have been successful and underpinned through well planned and rigorous assessment. Teachers maintain pupils' interest through a broad range of strategies, such as using 'discussion partners', recording ideas on whiteboards and using drama as a stimulus. In an outstanding lesson with Year 6 pupils, their skills knowledge and understanding of how to unpick the meaning of poems, revise the language and text features for poetry were very well developed. Pupils discussed how linked poems related to one another by themes and format and then compared chosen poems. The beginning of a video was used very effectively to inspire collaborative work. The use of a response partner enhanced learning effectively.
53. All teachers do not consistently set targets for individual pupils or groups of pupils. Consequently, not all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Marking and presentation are inconsistently applied across the school; this means that in some classes pupils do not take as much care with their writing as they should do and teachers' marking does not help them to do this.
54. Writing continues to improve because the co-ordinator consistently monitors what pupils are doing in their lessons. She works hard to encourage boys to write through the introduction of drama as a stimulus. The planned introduction of media work is already having a positive effect on pupils' achievement; this was demonstrated in an excellent lesson in Year 6. Writing across subjects of the curriculum is improving and is beginning to develop well, particularly in history, where the Victorian topic lends itself to writing a diary, a letter to a friend and a report on living conditions. Pupils in Year 5 write notes in preparation for a presentation on the local history of Rushden. The use of ICT as a stimulus for writing is under-used and this does not help pupils to develop their enquiry skills in history and geography.

55. Pupils read to each other, as well as in groups or individually. They enjoy reading and are beginning to make more use of the library, which has recently been re-stocked with a very good range of books. Groups of pupils are encouraged to read in the library at lunchtimes and through the reading club. Reading is timetabled each week and teachers focus on specific skills. Pupils in Year 3 read different types of letters, they talked about the purpose and the audience of the letter, and then compared them. This developed their reading, speaking and listening and reasoning skills well. Learning support assistants support the development of reading well, as they work with pupils both in classrooms and in the library on a regular basis to develop retrieval skills.
56. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject manager has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and has identified the strengths and weaknesses very well. She is currently working very hard to monitor and assess writing and this is having a positive impact on standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Pupils use their skills in reading, speaking and listening very well in other subjects but do not write often enough for different purposes in other areas of the curriculum in all classes across the school. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped in the subject. This restricts pupils' learning in applying what they have learned in writing in relevant situations to organise their thoughts and find the best way of presenting them.

Example of outstanding practice

This was a Year 6 higher ability group English lesson that explored how linked poems related to one another through common themes and format.

Pupils were expected to compare chosen poems as an introduction to creating their own. The teacher demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject as she set the scene for this exciting and inspiring lesson. Relationships were excellent and this led to a very high level of expectation by both teacher and pupils. Pupils were keen and eager to take part in the lesson because of the exciting use of selected clips from the film 'Forest Gump' and the range of feeling and emotions such as fairness and friendship and empathise with the feelings of the bully and the victim it provoked. A notable feature of her teaching was her use of the pupils' thoughts and feelings experienced on a previous trip to develop and extend vocabulary. This linked skilfully to compare to the poem 'The Highwayman' with 'The Hurt Boy' and 'The Birds'. The ensuing discussion helped all pupils to understand the link between the beginning and the end of a poem. The emphasis on the reader feeling emotion gave pupils a clear insight into what they had to do to create their own poems. Paired work helped all pupils produce an exciting piece of work that was of a very high standard. This excellent teaching inspired and motivated all pupils and the very high expectation of the teacher ensured that the achievement of all pupils was very high.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Setting arrangements ensure challenging work so that all pupils make good progress.
- The level of challenge for more able pupils is good as a result of well-focused teaching.
- Teaching is mostly good and sometimes very good.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics and achieve well.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is not well established and there are some inconsistencies in assessment, marking and presentation.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in teaching and learning in mathematics.

Commentary

58. Pupils come into the school with above average levels of attainment. With good teaching, they achieve well and make good progress. As a result, by Year 6, standards in mathematics are well above expected levels. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were described as average.
59. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, good questioning skills and plan lessons with clear learning objectives. Teaching of basic numeracy skills is good. They have very good relationships with pupils and good organisational and management skills, which result in well-structured lessons with good pace and challenge. Setting arrangements in all year groups are well managed and in most classes pupils learn well because the work is well matched to their individual needs, especially in the average and high attaining classes. All pupils when questioned state that they enjoy the setting arrangements. They respond well to the high level of challenge and are keen to do well. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behaviour and concentration in lessons is very good. Homework is used well to reinforce learning and almost every pupil completes this. Teaching assistants are well used to support children with special learning needs.
60. Marking and assessment strategies are inconsistent, however, and as a consequence of this, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they need to do next to improve further. Individual and group target setting had commenced but this has now lapsed in most classes and has ceased to have impact upon pupil progress. Presentation of work is also variable both within and across year groups. Pupils with special learning needs in mathematics are given regular, individual opportunities to work on computers at set times in the day to consolidate and extend their mathematical thinking but the use of ICT in mathematics lessons is not widespread. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily across the school, although some mental oral warm up sessions lack a clear purpose.
61. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and provides regular advice and support for colleagues. Some informal monitoring is completed but this is not yet rigorous enough to impact upon school improvement. Resources are satisfactory. There is a clear action plan for development but this is not based upon a thorough analysis of pupil progress or teaching and learning strengths and weaknesses.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Work in children's books suggests that pupils are given some good opportunities to extend their numeracy skills. It is seen most frequently in design and technology, where the skills of calculation, measurement and knowledge of shape and angles are used frequently. There is also evidence of mathematics being applied in science lessons and occasionally in art and design and music but is less evident in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement in Years 3 to 6 are above average.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to investigate questions they have raised for themselves.
- Assessment procedures in science are satisfactory overall but do not monitor pupils' progress in science investigation as well as other areas of the science curriculum.
- Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology.

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour.

Commentary

63. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection. Standards in the 2003 national tests were above average and the numbers of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 were well above average. This addresses the criticism in the last report that higher attaining pupils did not have work that matched their needs. Inspection evidence shows pupils achieve well. Pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in knowledge based on areas of 'Live processes and living things', 'Materials and their properties' and 'Physical processes' of science are very secure. However, whilst Year 6 pupils fully understand fair testing and can explain investigations they have carried out, they are given few opportunities to devise investigations to answer questions they have raised for themselves.
64. Teaching is good overall. All teachers plan and manage their classes well. They involve their pupils through challenging discussion and questioning, and give them opportunities to collaborate and carry out practical work. Lessons have good pace and all pupils are fully involved. Teachers' good knowledge and understanding challenges pupils. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves and give reasons for answers. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were challenged to consider how the different structures of the eye related to their function, for example, strong cornea for protection and flexible lens to focus. Good management and the teacher's knowledge and understanding was also seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were introduced to 'field work' sampling. Good questioning in this lesson enabled pupils to compare differing areas of the grounds and begin to suggest reasons. Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to all lessons seen, enabling all to learn effectively. Teaching, although never less than satisfactory, was less successful when pace of lessons was at times slow, where practical work did not extend pupils' investigative skills sufficiently or where work was not planned to meet the full range of ability in classes.
65. Overall, there are satisfactory assessment procedures and these are used appropriately to plan subsequent work to emphasise and develop identified weaknesses. However, pupils' developing skills in science investigation are less well monitored and consequently work in this aspect of science is not well matched to their needs. The school are addressing this through a review of assessment procedures.
66. Although information and communication technology is being used in science, for example, researching information from the internet, opportunities are not fully exploited sufficiently, for example, the use of word processing to record science work, the use of digital cameras, the use of spreadsheets to record information and power point to present work done in science.
67. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school has already identified the issues raised in the report. The school is at an early stage of identifying cross-curricular opportunities to enable teachers to apply and consolidate work across the curriculum, for example, the use of graphs to link mathematics and science with physical education in monitoring changes in heart rate and breathing rate during physical activity.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management has inspired staff.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support other subjects in the curriculum.

- Assessment procedures are not impacting sufficiently on planning to address the full range of abilities in classes.

Commentary

68. There has been satisfactory improvement in information and communication technology since the last inspection because, although standards are still satisfactory by the end of Year 6, as they were at the last inspection, expectations have increased significantly since then. Improvements have been particularly significant since the installation of the computer suite and the increased confidence of staff through the personal use of laptops supplied through the school. The school is well placed to make further improvements.
69. Teaching is satisfactory. Strengths are the enthusiasm of staff to address an ever-increasing range of expectations, for example, control technology and computer-aided design. Teachers have good management skills and, when combined with the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, this leads to effective learning. Teaching is particularly effective when good teacher knowledge and understanding is used to match work to pupils' previous attainment and to extend higher attaining pupils appropriately. This was evident in a Year 4 introductory lesson, controlling a 'screen robot' to draw, for example, a square. Extension activities were provided to create other shapes, use different colours and letters. This careful planning was also evident in a challenging Year 5 lesson where pupils created procedures to control, for example, the conditions when appliances in a computer-created bedroom were switched on and off. Less challenging lessons were where there was insufficient planning to extend higher attaining pupils.
70. By Year 6, pupils use spreadsheets to 'plan a party' for the class, given the cost of various foods and a budget. They create power point presentations related to work in history on Victorian life, for example, toys and use a word processor to write their own Victorian story. They create simple animations giving the characters rules and interrogate simple databases.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. The application and consolidation of the skills learnt in information and communication technology to other areas of the curriculum are in the early stages of development. Overall, other subjects are not using information and communication technology sufficiently as a 'tool' to support learning.
72. Leadership of the subject is good. Due to a clear vision for improvement, good role models and support, there has been increased staff confidence and skills and these are beginning to be used more extensively across the curriculum; for example, in the increased use of interactive whiteboards. The leadership has identified the need for more accurate assessment to ensure pupils are challenged sufficiently through work that is securely based on their prior attainment. Accommodation and resources are good and are being increasingly well used.

HUMANITIES

Religious education is reported in full. There was insufficient evidence to report in full on geography or history and they were not foci for the inspection; however, work was sampled and discussions were held with staff and pupils.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching gives pupils a sense of the importance of the subject.

- There are opportunities for reflection, and for consideration of the values of world faiths.
- The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- There are no assessment procedures.

Commentary

73. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, by enhancing and enriching the curriculum and improving standards, which are now above the national average. In the last inspection, standards were judged to be satisfactory. All groups of pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6.
74. A strength of the curriculum is the way it is enriched and linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example, the expressive and visual arts and how these are used to give religious messages to believers. This linking to the expressive arts also contributes to pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding. The very good teaching, seen in Year 6, skilfully integrated drama, literature and history with religious education as pupils listened carefully to the story of Moses. Discussion of the story as a class and in pairs helped pupils to understand the story and see the links with modern history. Pupils' feelings were vividly shown as the story of the 'Plagues' unfolded, pupils gasped in awe as the story of the 'Angel of Death' was told. Because of the sensitive teaching, pupils' knowledge and understanding was further extended and developed as links to the Passover were explained. The very good drama that followed showed clearly that this area of the curriculum is helping to link subjects together.
75. Pupils are introduced to a range of religions. Pupils in Year 4 learn about the Salvation Army and its origins. Good links to local history and geography were made as pupils recalled the location of the Salvation Army Church and the role that it plays in the community. Pupils in Year 3 excitedly used their drama skills to bring to life the significance of Shabbat Shalom Celebration. The lively discussion that was intertwined into the drama emphasised enjoyment of family life and this helped to give pupils an in-depth experience of the Jewish religion and way of life. It inspired pupils to think of family values and developed their moral and cultural learning well.
76. Teaching is good overall. Teachers know the subject well and the quality of the teaching inspired pupils to learn, and their attitudes to their learning were very good.
77. The subject is soundly managed and organised. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to ensure that the subject is supported and enriched by very good quality resources and by inviting speakers into school. Because the school work as a team, she has been able to enhance provision very well by introducing the expressive arts. Currently, there is no system for assessment in the subject and this is a weakness.

History

78. History was not a main focus for the inspection. Two lessons were observed. However, display and work in pupils' books show that pupils' attainment and achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching. Display shows that the history curriculum is rich and visitors make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' understanding as they re-live history. Pupils in Years 3 develop their knowledge of the Romans as they learn about homes and the lifestyle of Roman people in Britain. In Year 5, they study local history about the boot and shoe industry. Literacy skills were developed well as pupils wrote questions to ask a visitor to school the next day, who had worked in the boot and shoe industry.
79. In Year 6, pupils study Ancient Greece, focusing on The Gods of Mount Olympus. A very good drama session enhanced and enriched learning for these pupils. In the few lessons seen, teaching is secure and teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject.

They use the drama well to develop and enrich the subject and this gives pupils a developing understanding of how their learning is linked. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has worked hard to help raise the profile of the subject within the school. Resources are sound.

Geography

80. Geography was not a focus for the inspection. However, display and work in pupils' books, together with observation of one lesson, shows that attainment and achievement are satisfactory. There was not enough evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching. In the lesson seen in Year 4, pupils were learning about water supplies in the past and how these affected the quality of daily life. The skilful teaching drew together the important aspects of life in Victorian times to illustrate how the water industry has changed, including the present day benefits to society, such as health care. Literacy skills were well developed and pupils were encouraged to think, discuss and make a decision, for example, using a map to discover where the highest number of cases of Cholera were. Pupils in Year 3 study the four seasons and investigate different types of weather in different seasons. In Year 4, pupils investigate rivers and visit a local park to discover the stream which runs through it. Year 6 pupils study India and The Ancient Greeks. These topics are closely linked to the history curriculum and are well supported by drama. Co-ordination of the subject is sound. Resources are satisfactory overall but the school grounds are under-utilised.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and music are reported in full. There was insufficient evidence to report in full on design and technology or physical education and they were not foci for the inspection; however, work was sampled and discussions were held with staff and pupils.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above nationally expected levels.
- High quality displays are a significant feature of the school.
- There is a strong whole school commitment to art and design.
- Marking and assessment strategies are inconsistent.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped.
- There are some inconsistencies in curriculum coverage across classes.

Commentary

81. Development of the creative arts has been a major focus for the school in recent months and, as a direct result of the high priority it has been given in all classes, standards in art and design have risen significantly and these are now above expected levels at the end of Year 6. The very well attended whole school 'Exhibition of Art', in which every child in the school had a painting exhibited, exemplified the school's commitment to art and design. Standards in this display were well above average.
82. The quality of teaching seen in most art and design lessons during the inspection was very good but scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence obtained from discussions with pupils indicates that teaching is good overall and, as a result of this, children achieve well. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well prepared. They make very good use of questioning skills to extend and challenge understanding. Good use is made of praise in all lessons, encouraging all pupils to participate and to give their best effort. Girls and boys alike have very positive attitudes towards their work and display pride in their achievements. Learning support

assistants work in partnership with the teachers and the support for children with special educational needs is good. The range of media that children use in art and design is gradually being extended and most pupils now demonstrate good control in a range of skills, including drawing and painting, fabric printing, textile weaving and three dimensional works in paper, collage and clay.

83. The recently introduced new scheme of work is beginning to have a significant impact. However, there are some inconsistencies in curriculum coverage within year groups and in some classes the range of work is still rather narrow. Pupils also have a limited understanding of the work of other artists. The marking and assessment of pupils' skills in art and design is also inconsistent and in many classes still in early stages of development. Artwork is beginning to be used effectively to support learning in other subjects such as design and technology and history. The use of ICT in art and design is not well developed. Resources are good and suitably organised on well-equipped trolleys.
84. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject leader is very enthusiastic, has very good subject knowledge and receives good support from the headteacher. She provides very good support for colleagues. Training has been effectively targeted to increase staff confidence and this is having an impact upon improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, she has not yet had sufficient opportunities to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning across the school and, as a consequence of this, inconsistencies in curriculum delivery and coverage are not being fully identified nor addressed.

Design and technology

85. It was only possible to observe one lesson in design and technology during the inspection. Therefore, no firm judgement can be made about provision in this subject. Further evidence was obtained by sampling work and through discussions with pupils about their experiences. Work in books and on display shows that although the standards that pupils attain across the school are inconsistent, by the end of Year 6, standards attained are just above those expected nationally and achievement is good overall. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards were found to be in line with national expectations.
86. Pupils discuss their work with enthusiasm and show positive attitudes to design and technology. Schemes of work are sound and pupils experience a satisfactory range of opportunities to design and make objects in almost all classes. They have a good grasp of basic techniques, such as joining and gluing skills, and use tools and material to good effect to make products of a good standard. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where pupils had made well-designed construction bridges and moving vehicles.
87. The subject leader has good subject knowledge and has clear plans for improvement. She provides good support for colleagues and has been instrumental in raising staff confidence and in ensuring increased curriculum coverage in recent months. Resources for this subject are good and very well organised. Marking of work is inconsistent and assessment for learning is in need of improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently established to address inconsistencies.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations, particularly in singing.
- The specialist teaching is good.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy music lessons.

- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped and do not inform planning.
- Good resources.

Commentary

88. The school has recently introduced specialist teaching in this subject and, although only in place for nine months by the time of the inspection, it is very evident that this strategy has had a positive impact upon pupil progress and achievement across the school. Teaching is good overall, and as a direct result, standards are clearly rising. Most pupils at the end of Year 6 now attain standards that are above those expected nationally, maintaining the position at the 1998 inspection.
89. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils achieve well in most lessons. Lessons are usually well structured and most provide a good balance of opportunities for pupils to both sing and to compose music, using a range of tuned and untuned instruments. Children clearly enjoy their music lessons and exhibit very positive attitudes. They participate fully in all activities. Singing is particularly good and is a strength of the school. In some lessons, however, progress in learning is slower when too much is planned and pupils are given too little time to consolidate and extend their composing skills. There is a good scheme of work in place, ensuring progression and continuity in the development of musical skills, but the use of information and communication technology to support the development of compositional skills is not well established. Good emphasis is given to the development of musical vocabulary and knowledge of other composers. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good knowledge and experience of playing a range of instruments and they have a good awareness of the work of a range of composers, including Beethoven, Bach and Mozart. They use musical vocabulary, such as quartet, quaver, semi-quaver, crotchet and tempo, in describing their work.
90. The specialist teacher is also the subject leader. She has a good awareness of the current strengths and weaknesses in curriculum provision and in teaching and learning and she has produced a clear action plan to address these. Music is taught in the music room, which is well resourced but a little cramped for whole class sessions. In addition to the taught whole class lessons, many pupils also have opportunities to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments and there are now plans in place to introduce a school orchestra, which will be a positive step in the development of this subject. Systems for the assessment and recording of pupils' learning are underdeveloped and are not used to plan work that is firmly based on pupils' prior attainment.

Physical education

91. Three lessons were seen in physical education. The school's scheme of work shows all areas of the curriculum are appropriately covered and school records show that the vast majority of pupils are able to swim 25 metres before leaving the school. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. He has introduced a scheme of work and this is ensuring each element of the subject is addressed each year. He is currently reviewing assessment procedures to ensure progression of knowledge, understanding and skills from year to year. A particular strength of the subject is dance, where an excellent lesson was seen in Year 4. This was taken by a very knowledgeable and experienced learning support assistant, who teaches this element of the physical education curriculum throughout the school. This is making a significant contribution to the creative arts curriculum initiative being developed by the school. It also contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through interpretation of feelings, working in groups and to experiencing a range of different dance styles from different cultures. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, enabling them to learn successfully.
92. The school offers a well-supported range of extra-curricular activities, which includes football, netball, tag rugby, cricket, grass roots football, dance, basketball and athletics. Inclusion is good, with boys playing netball and girls football. There are good links with local clubs, for

example, Rushden and Diamonds Football Club and Northamptonshire County Cricket Club, who support the school with visiting coaches. Accommodation and resources are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

93. Insufficient evidence was obtained to make a secure judgement on this area of the curriculum. The comments below are based on discussion with staff, pupils and a review of documentation.

94. The personal, social and health education includes sex education and the dangers of drug misuse, and provides pupils with good information to help them make decisions about their own lives. Good use is made of 'circle time' in all classes to allow pupils to discuss a range of issues that affect their lives and to discuss social issues and matters of importance to them. There are good opportunities in other subjects to promote personal development, for example, in physical education, experimental work in science and collaborative work in mathematics. In addition to the PSHE curriculum, the school is developing more systems to seek the views of pupils through self-assessment in lessons and asking their views (for example, on writing together), and a school council is being developed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

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	3

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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

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