

INSPECTION REPORT

CHERRY HINTON COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110746

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Boardman

Lead inspector: Mr Ray Morris

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th December 2004

Inspection number: 266597

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	163
School address:	Fulbourn Old Drift Cherry Hinton Cambridge Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	CB1 9ND
Telephone number:	01233 508772
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tim Thornton
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Situated in the Cherry Hinton area of Cambridge, the school is smaller than other primary schools with 163 pupils aged 7 to 11 in five classes. The school serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are similar to the national picture. Although the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average. These needs are largely moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Of these, two pupils have statements that outline particular learning needs. The school has a high percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language, representing fifteen different cultures, with nineteen pupils at an early stage of learning English. The overall level of pupils' attainment when they start school is below the national average. The school has been awarded the Quality Mark of the Basic Skills Agency, which recognises that it has good procedures for teaching the basic skills for literacy and numeracy. The building also houses provision for community activities currently managed by Cambridge City Council.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11982	Ray Morris	Lead inspector	Science, geography, history, religious education, personal, social and health education, special educational needs
9569	Jan Leaning	Lay inspector	
23870	Andrew Howe	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, English as an additional language
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cherry Hinton is a good, effective school with some very strong features. Teaching throughout the school is effective so that pupils learn well. Pupils' very good behaviour and the school's emphasis on the need for pupils to listen carefully and speak clearly are significant factors in their good achievement. The school is very effectively led and managed and provides a very positive atmosphere for learning. It provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is strongly supported by staff and governors
- Teaching is good but has some weaknesses; teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with special learning needs and those learning English as an additional language
- Pupils are very well cared for, their attitudes and behaviour are very good, and they achieve well
- Standards are above average in English and in art and design
- Very good relationships with parents and the community strongly support pupils' progress
- Newly acquired resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have yet to have a marked impact on extending pupils' learning in other subjects

Matters identified for improvement in the 2002 inspection have been dealt with very effectively. The quality of teaching has improved so that it was good in two-thirds of the lessons observed, and very good or excellent in a quarter. As a result, pupils now make more rapid progress in lessons. The curriculum has been developed so that links between subjects, and a very good range of activities that enrich learning, have helped to raise pupils' achievement. Provision for pupils to learn about cultural diversity has improved. However, the school has yet to ensure that the needs of higher-attaining pupils are fully met. **Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been very good** with a significant rise in standards. Very good leadership, especially that of the headteacher, and an increasingly effective governing body provide a firm basis for continued improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	C	B	A
mathematics	E	C	D	D
science	E	D	D	C

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

Pupils' achievement is good. When pupils join the school, many have below-average skills in literacy and numeracy, and a high proportion are learning English as an additional language. Although the 2004 national test results in mathematics and science were below average, standards in the current Year 6 are about the same as those expected for pupils' ages, while those in English and art and design are above average. A notable success is that results in English in last year's national tests were well above average when compared with similar schools. The school pays good attention to individuals' needs and so pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve equally well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is very good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Very good opportunities are

provided for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good and so pupils make good progress in most lessons. Staff build very good relationships with pupils so that teaching also promotes pupils' personal development. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a very good contribution to teaching and learning. Together with teachers, they encourage pupils to be very keen about their learning so that those with special learning needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are fully involved in lessons. Where teaching is satisfactory but has weaknesses, it is because activities planned for individuals or groups do not always fully engage pupils, so their progress slows, or tasks for higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenging. Teachers assess pupils' progress well, using the information to plan effectively for the next steps in pupils' learning. The emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills has been a major factor in pupils' improved progress since the last inspection.

Very good use is made of the multicultural nature of the school and local community. Links with a neighbouring school for pupils with special learning needs add a particularly valuable dimension to the school's work. As a result, the broad curriculum and a very good range of additional activities provide very good opportunities for pupils to develop healthy personal and social attitudes, and to experience a range of creative and cultural work.

Pupils are safe and very well cared for. They receive very good guidance in their personal development and, as a result, feel very positive about themselves and so achieve well. Staff are very receptive to pupils' views and, through the school council, pupils feel they make a positive contribution to the quality of school life. Effective arrangements for pupils joining the school are being improved still further by staff and governors working with the feeder infant school. Procedures for pupils transferring to secondary school are very good and ensure pupils make a confident and effective start to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's excellent leadership, very strong sense of purpose and high aspirations have given the school the impetus to improve rapidly over the past two years. Very good improvement has been underpinned by very effective senior staff and very good management. Improvements are carefully planned, and the impact on pupils' progress closely assessed. The governing body has a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which enables it to provide a good balance of support and challenge for senior staff. Its contribution to the school's improvement is developing rapidly, particularly through its links with a local company.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents express very positive views of the school and feel their children make good progress. A small minority have concerns about pupils' behaviour but inspectors judge that the school manages this very well. Pupils enjoy learning very much and are keen to come to school. Both parents and pupils express concerns about some of the toilet facilities, and inspectors agree that those used by the older pupils are inadequate. The school is already planning to remedy this situation in the coming year.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Ensure that all parts of lessons are taught consistently well
- Further develop resources for ICT so that they fully support pupils' learning in other subjects

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good and much better than at the last inspection. By Year 6, standards are average overall and above average in English and art and design.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards in writing, and particularly in speaking and listening, underpin pupils' good achievement in other subjects
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well
- Pupils of higher ability do not always achieve as well as they might in lessons
- Standards in art and design are above average

Commentary

1. Results in the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils were average overall compared to all schools nationally. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection two years ago because teaching is now significantly better than it was. The 2004 results were above average in English, but below average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools (similar schools are those whose pupils had reached the same level in Year 2) results were average in mathematics and science, and well above average in English. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was below average in mathematics and science compared to all schools but above average in English, and well above average when compared to similar schools. Boys' results in mathematics have been consistently better than girls'.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.0 (26.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.3 (27.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Many pupils enter the school with below average skills in literacy and numeracy and a high proportion join the school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Because teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, and is now good, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. The great majority of those learning English as an additional language attained the nationally expected standard in reading and writing in the 2004 national tests. Inspection evidence confirms that these pupils continue to make good progress because they are included in all learning activities and are well supported. They read accurately, speak increasingly confidently and listen attentively and with understanding.
3. Work seen during the inspection shows that standards in the current Year 6, in most subjects, are broadly average. However, standards in English are above average and, because pupils benefit from a particularly rich curriculum, they are also above average in art and design.

4. Very good leadership by the Headteacher and senior staff has ensured that the school's action to improve pupils' writing, and skills in speaking and listening, has been very effective. Additional training for teachers has led to improved standards in these aspects of pupils' work which are in turn having a positive impact on pupils' achievement in other subjects. For example, in religious education, pupils' ability to listen carefully and speak articulately helps them gain a firm understanding of religions such as Islam. Action to raise girls' performance in mathematics is also beginning to make a difference, especially on their attitudes to the subject. As a result, the gap in standards compared to those of boys is closing. Standards are also rising in both mathematics and science because pupils are given many more opportunities to solve problems and carry out practical investigations. However, higher-attaining pupils do not achieve their full potential consistently because the work they are given does not always challenge them sufficiently.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual so they arrive at school on time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths

- Adults establish very good relationships with pupils and the school's ethos is very positive; pupils, whatever their backgrounds, enjoy coming to school and learn effectively
- Behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is very good
- Assemblies and other activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively

Commentary

5. A caring ethos and very good relationships are strengths of the school, which create an atmosphere in which all pupils, whatever their background and circumstances, successfully develop their individual qualities. Pupils are polite to each other and to adults and say that their teachers are fair and kind. If they have a problem, pupils are confident they can approach any adult and they will be listened to. The school celebrates pupils' achievements in assemblies and through regular praise and encouragement. Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good because of the school's very high expectations for behaviour, which pupils understand very well. They are enthusiastic, settle quickly to their work, listen very carefully and concentrate well on their tasks. Pupils' self-confidence is fostered by responsibilities as school council members, for running the healthy eating tuck shop and for helping around the school in many other ways. There has been good improvement in pupils' attitudes since the last inspection.
6. Pupils' very good behaviour has a positive impact on their learning because very little time is lost through teachers having to deal with inappropriate behaviour in lessons. High standards are supported by the school's strong moral code, with a real emphasis on rewards and praise and on pupils taking responsibility for their own behaviour. The 'Autograph' tracking system (which records pupils' behaviour on a computer and represents it in a helpful, visual way) has been very effective in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Parents and pupils report that bullying is rare and are confident that any incident would be dealt with fairly and effectively. Parents are very appreciative of the high standards of behaviour promoted by the school and are keen to support the school's efforts. There has been good improvement in pupils' behaviour since the last inspection.
7. There has also been good improvement in provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and it is now very good. Pupils co-operate very well in lessons and around the school. They study different cultures and faiths in religious education lessons and assemblies provide very good opportunities for reflection as well as a strong spiritual element. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 religious education lesson on Islam, pupils gained a real insight into spiritual symbolism. During 'food week' pupils enjoyed sampling a range of foods from other cultures, and the very good

displays celebrating such things as Ancient Greece, Egypt, world food and different religions all enrich their understanding of cultural diversity very well. Many visits and visitors widen pupils' understanding and tolerance of others and pupils raise considerable sums for those less fortunate, such as the local children's hospice.

8. Attendance has remained satisfactory since the last inspection. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance and punctuality are rigorous and any lapses are quickly investigated. This has resulted in good attendance by most pupils but a few still do not attend school regularly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8%	School data	0.3%
National data	5.1%	National data	0.4%

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

9. There were thirteen fixed-term exclusions last year, for repeated incidents of violence, involving seven white British boys. The school's firm action shows its high expectations of good behaviour and is part of the reason why behaviour is now very good. There have been no exclusions this term.

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	126	13	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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 by the school is good because effective teaching, coupled with a stimulating curriculum, very good standards of care and very productive links with parents and the community lead to pupils making good progress.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and pupils' progress is checked carefully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage behaviour and learning very well so that pupils are attentive and work hard
- Pupils make very good progress in writing because their work is carefully marked and targets are set for improvement
- Teachers use a range of very effective methods which help pupils speak clearly and listen well
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are well supported by teaching assistants and specialist teachers
- Some lessons are not planned carefully enough to ensure that all their parts are equally effective

Commentary

10. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly and is now good. The headteacher and senior staff observe lessons regularly so that teaching is more effective and has some strong aspects. All the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and often good or very good but, in some lessons, weaknesses in teachers' planning resulted in some pupils not making the progress of which they were capable.
11. Teachers are very skilled at managing pupils' behaviour. Their firm and positive approach, coupled with effective use of the school's reward system, ensures pupils listen well and work hard. The presentation of lessons is confident and lively, so that pupils' attention is immediately engaged. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge. Where necessary, teachers use the school's 'Autograph' system for disciplining pupils, which successfully encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour. Above all, teachers make learning enjoyable so that pupils see lessons as fun and want to be involved.
12. Teachers start each lesson with a clear objective and share this with the class so that pupils know what they will be learning. In the great majority of lessons, teachers return to these at the end to check progress and emphasise what has been learned. In some lessons seen, however, these final sessions were too brief or missed out. Planning of teaching is generally good, but in a few lessons where the teacher worked with one group for a part of the time, the activities planned for the pupils working independently were inadequate so they made too little progress.
13. Assessment of pupils' progress is good. Teachers maintain good records and track the progress of individuals effectively. They ensure that pupils receive helpful comments on how well they have done and are constantly made aware of what they are learning and how to improve their work. This is particularly apparent in teachers' marking of writing, which is thorough and focused on the lesson's objective. In the best cases, a dialogue with the pupil is achieved which promotes the quality of their work very well. This is not applied in the same way to developing pupils' reading skills. Teachers also set very useful targets in mathematics and science, which help pupils concentrate on what they need to learn next.
14. Teachers are particularly adept at promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills and this permeates all lessons. Questions are used very effectively to challenge pupils so that they are required to explain, justify or describe. One word answers are rarely enough. For example, in a history lesson, pupils explained the process of mummification very clearly and effectively while, in a mathematics lesson, careful questioning enabled pupils to describe the methods they used when working with consecutive numbers. This thinking aloud reinforced the learning taking place. Pupils often work effectively in pairs so that they discuss their work confidently, develop their ideas or evaluate each others' work. They also listen respectfully to each others' opinions and respond appropriately.
15. Homework is well organised and followed up by teachers. It supports classroom learning and is completed by the great majority of pupils. There is a good balance of open-ended and routine tasks, which contribute to the pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.
16. Teaching assistants and other specialist staff support pupils' learning very well. Tasks are well organised to meet the needs of pupils who find learning more difficult or for whom English is an additional language. Teaching assistants explain concepts clearly and sensitively and ask useful questions so that pupils make good progress. Specialist teaching for pupils for whom English is an additional language is well deployed to help develop oral and written skills. In one lesson, pupils greatly enjoyed reading a play script, and were

given additional support which contributed significantly to their expression and understanding of new vocabulary. Although pupils with special learning needs enjoy consistently very good support, activities for the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenging. When they work with the rest of the class, more able pupils are sometimes required to complete tasks that are not demanding enough before progressing to tasks which really make them think. Sometimes they are given additional activities to complete which are similar to, rather than an extension of, those they have already done.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	5	11	8	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum enriched by a very good range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths

- The curriculum is carefully planned so that good links are made between subjects and, as a result, pupils find learning interesting and enjoyable
- Pupils' learning is enriched very effectively by after-school clubs and a very good range of extra activities both in and out of school
- Support staff are well trained and provide additional activities for pupils with special learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language, so that they achieve well

Commentary

17. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure it is relevant, coherent and enjoyable. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. In particular, the curriculum is enriched very effectively so that pupils gain a great deal both in and out of lessons, and subject leaders check lesson plans very carefully to ensure that the full curriculum is taught.
18. Since the last inspection there has been a complete overhaul of curriculum planning. Teaching and learning in all subjects are now stronger because teachers' lesson plans making sure that pupils build their skills step by step and so make good progress. Effective links are now made between subjects. A good emphasis on the teaching of writing in other subjects helps pupils to build these skills effectively and is one of the reasons for better standards of writing. For example, in history, pupils write at length describing the process of mummification as part of a topic on ancient Egypt. In all subjects there is a very good emphasis on speaking and listening so that pupils are required to explain and clarify their thinking and listen carefully both to their teachers and to each other. These links help pupils to improve their English skills as well as giving their work purpose and interest. Effective links are also made between history and art, including the creation of a very impressive three-dimensional mummy case. Links between ICT and other subjects were seen in an English lesson when the initial shared reading was led very effectively in the

computer suite using some literacy software. However, this quality of work is limited by the lack of computer provision in the classrooms.

19. Visits and visitors also help to make the curriculum very stimulating. For instance, in a history lesson about Ancient Egypt, frequent reference was made to a visit to Saffron Walden museum, which enabled pupils to put the lesson into context, based on what they had seen. A good range of extra-curricular activity enriches the curriculum. Clubs for mathematics, chess, football, homework and Spanish provide valuable additional opportunities for learning. Work with a visiting artist and links with pupils at a nearby special school have greatly enriched both pupils' learning and the school environment. The school also works in partnership with the local secondary school to enhance the sporting opportunities offered to pupils.
20. Good support for pupils with special learning needs ensures they all take part and contribute their ideas to lessons. Very experienced teaching assistants contribute a great deal by both supporting pupils in class and with special programmes in English and mathematics outside class. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also receive good support. Effective induction into the school, which ensures that these pupils' needs are accurately assessed, is followed up with regular tracking of their performance. Teaching is effective in ensuring that these pupils acquire new vocabulary, develop confidence in basic skills and go on to achieve well in English, mathematics and science. The strong emphasis on developing basic skills in English and mathematics has recently been acknowledged by the award of The Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark.
21. Although the layout of some classrooms poses problems, staff make good use of the school's accommodation. Attractive displays, such as the very good paintings in the hall and sculptures in the corridors, reflect many aspects of the curriculum. The school recognises that the quality of toilet provision and outdoor play equipment need to be improved and plans have been drawn up to do this. Resources are satisfactory. Recent improvements to the school's computer suite and to classroom book provision have yet to make a significant impact on pupils' achievement in the wider curriculum. The school is well staffed with experienced teachers and teaching assistants, who work effectively as a team.

Care, guidance and support

The school has very good procedures to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils benefit from very good support and guidance. Staff are receptive and very good at taking pupils' views into account.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very clear procedures ensure pupils are safe and very well cared for, but inadequacies in some toilet facilities have yet to be addressed
- Pupils receive very effective guidance in their personal development and, as a result, they say they have a trusting relationship with an adult, feel positive about themselves and learn well
- Arrangements for joining and leaving the school are good and ensure pupils make a confident and effective start on the next stage of their education
- Staff are very receptive to pupils' views and respond to them

Commentary

22. As this aspect of the school's work was not commented on at the last inspection, it is not possible to judge improvement since then. However, the school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. Nominated staff are regularly trained in child protection and all adults know the correct procedures to follow. A good balance is struck between offering a warm welcome to visitors and preventing unauthorised access.

Regular risk assessments are carried out by the governing body and the headteacher and remedial action promptly taken when necessary. However, parents and a substantial proportion of pupils are justifiably concerned about the inadequacies of some toilet facilities. The governing body is aware of the problems and has scheduled refurbishment as a priority in the next financial year.

23. The school provides additional, carefully assessed support for pupils with particular emotional needs, and parents of the pupils concerned are very appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. As well as this, all pupils (and their parents) have available fortnightly 'drop-in' sessions when they can discuss, in confidence, any health matters with a nurse. As the nurse is also attached to the local health centre, this provides a particularly useful service and is a strength in the school's provision. An important aspect of the school's guidance for pupils' personal development is the very good relationship staff have with pupils. As a result, pupils confirm they have a trusting relationship with an adult and this makes a positive contribution to their ability to learn.
24. Effective arrangements help pupils and their parents to get to know the school before they transfer from the infant school. Comments from parents on how the process could be improved are being acted upon and governors from both schools, as well as staff, are actively involved in this. Preparation for transfer to secondary school is very good because links with the local sports college provide pupils with opportunities to get to know staff well in advance of the event. Additional days to try out aspects of secondary school life, together with an effective procedure for passing on information about pupils, ensure that transfer is a positive experience.
25. Arrangements when pupils for whom English is an additional language join the school are a strength. The school is welcoming and strives to ensure that these pupils benefit from all the school has to offer. Pupils have their needs assessed immediately so that they settle well, and their progress regularly checked. Support staff intervene sensitively in lessons to help pupils understand what it is they have to do.

26. The school very effectively involves pupils in decisions about school life. The school council, chaired by a Year 6 pupil, meets each week to discuss matters of importance to pupils and then reports back to classes on developments. Council members have been instrumental in bringing about improvement in the playground environment and cloakrooms. They have promoted a healthy eating policy in school and are currently involved in introducing a system of playground 'buddies'.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are very good and have a significant impact on pupils' achievement. Links with other schools are effective and contribute well to pupils' learning.

Main strengths

- Parents are very well informed and find staff very approachable so that any concerns are quickly addressed
- Links with local companies have significantly strengthened the governing body and helped improve provision in ICT
- Pupils' learning and their understanding of others in the wider community are enhanced by working with pupils with disabilities

Commentary

27. A range of very good quality information ensures that parents become actively involved in their children's learning. Lively and informative newsletters, curriculum information and meetings are all much appreciated by parents. The governors' combined annual report to parents and school prospectus is comprehensive, and annual reports to parents about their children's academic progress are very clearly presented, so that they know how well their children are doing and how they can help them improve. Parents of pupils with special learning or other needs are particularly appreciative of the extra support provided, and the way in which the school involves them in decisions about their children's education. For example, parents of pupils learning English as an additional language are interviewed when their children start and their views contribute to the initial assessment. Additional reports on pupils' progress are sent to these parents and the support teacher is also available at open evenings.
28. Parents give very good support to the Friends Association, which is very successful in helping the school with its work. Currently, a considerable sum of money is earmarked for improving the outdoor play facilities. Parents are very pleased with the school. They say that teaching is good, the staff expect hard work and treat their children well, and that children are happy.
29. Links with the local community have provided very good resources to promote learning. Two members of a local company have become school governors and their expertise is proving extremely valuable, not least in the improvement of provision for ICT. Volunteers from the local community provide additional reading help, and representatives from churches of various denominations regularly take part in assemblies. Parents are invited to year group assemblies and they say that this gives their children confidence and enhances their children's self-esteem.
30. Pupils join those at a nearby special school for weekly art and other projects. These are enjoyed by pupils at both schools, and make a significant contribution to their spiritual and social development when they co-operate, for example, to create large three-dimensional models as part of an on-going art project. The very good liaison with the on-site community officer ensures that parents, pupils and the school can make the most of the provision. Most pupils transfer to the nearby secondary school, whose teachers work with Year 6 pupils in sport and other curriculum activities. Transition is very smoothly managed. Pupils visit for taster days and special events, and staff ensure that all records are passed on so that the receiving school has detailed information about its new pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding and she is very well supported by the senior staff. Governance is good, with some very good features.

Main strengths

- The headteacher's very high aspirations for the school have led to significant improvement since the last inspection
- Senior staff share the very high ambition for the school's improvement
- Very good systems for managing the school's work contribute to pupils' good achievement
- Governors are becoming increasingly effective partners in the school's drive for improvement

Commentary

31. The headteacher has been in post four years, arriving soon after the school was found to need special measures. The success with which the key areas for development have been dealt with, and particularly the manner in which she has raised the quality of teaching and learning, is indicative of her very strong leadership qualities. The school has made very good progress since its last inspection two years ago and is now providing a good education for pupils in a very positive learning environment.
32. Senior staff provide very good role models for colleagues. Together with the headteacher they play a full part in promoting a very clear sense of direction, based on high-quality strategic planning, with a relentless emphasis on improving the quality of teaching in order to improve pupils' achievement and raise standards. All staff, including teaching assistants, administrative staff and midday supervisors, work very effectively together with a shared commitment to the school. Subject leaders provide very good leadership especially in English, science and mathematics because they regularly check the quality of teaching, analyse test results and set targets for improvement. As a result, pupils' achievement is improving and standards are rising.
33. Provision for pupils with special learning needs is very well managed. The special needs co-ordinator meets regularly with a particularly well-qualified governor so that the governing body is fully informed about the school's progress in this area. A notable strength is the support, incorporating a range of expertise from outside the school, provided for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs so that they make very good progress in their personal and social development.
34. The school is very well managed. School improvement planning is based on a strong culture of systematic self-evaluation and rigorous analysis of information from the national tests for Year 6. This means staff are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and can develop suitable strategies to address areas of concern. Although not yet available to teaching assistants, the school has a very effective performance management process for teachers, which is having a very good impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The school gives very good support for the training of both teaching and other staff, who are encouraged to pursue further professional qualifications. The headteacher has established a cohesive system for tracking pupils' academic and personal progress, with any concerns being identified and dealt with effectively. As a result, standards are improving and, with the high expectations set for it by the headteacher, behaviour is now very good.

35. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. A number of them are newly appointed but they are very supportive of the school, and are establishing a strong sense of partnership with staff. Through their appropriate committees, most governors are involved effectively in school improvement planning from an early stage and challenge the school to be precise about what it is aiming to achieve. They are aware of the areas being developed through the school's improvement plan, and arrange regular visits to check on progress. In the past four years, governors have been involved successfully in shaping the direction of the school. For example, they have made tough decisions on class sizes and have, as a result, contributed to the substantial reduction in the school's deficit budget. Very good links with a local company are having a significant impact on the development of ICT in the school. Much has been done to increase the effectiveness of the governing body so that its contribution to the school's improvement is becoming increasingly marked.
36. Finances are managed very well. All financial decisions are linked to the school improvement plan, and the governors have a system to analyse the budget and challenge the school's priorities so that available money is used to best effect.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	475204
Total expenditure	454726
Expenditure per pupil	2707

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-22590
Balance carried forward to the next	-2112

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of writing is very effective, so that pupils achieve very well
- Teachers use every opportunity in lessons to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills
- In writing, marking and the setting of targets provide pupils with good guidance on what they need to do to improve their work
- The teaching of reading, particularly the lack of emphasis on setting targets for improvement, is not helping pupils to make as much progress as they could

Commentary

37. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. By Year 6, standards are above average overall and, given that many pupils join the school with below average skills, achievement is very good. The improvement stems from the constant emphasis placed on teaching the key features of good writing, and a strong focus on developing speaking and listening skills, which is apparent in all subjects and results in attentive and articulate pupils.
38. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Pupils listen well for extended periods and explain ideas clearly. In one very good lesson, when discussing a character, a child told the class, "She shows that she is a very emotional person and she sympathises with the cat." Frequent use of paired discussion fosters relevant and mature responses and the emphasis on oral work promotes achievement in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve very well. This is because they are helped by skilled support staff and because good activities are planned to foster language development effectively, for example through reading play scripts in groups.
39. Reading has not received the close attention that other aspects of the subject have in the school's priorities for improvement. Pupils' progress is not yet supported, for example, by individual targets for improvement. Nevertheless, standards in reading have improved and are now average. Pupils show satisfactory comprehension of a range of texts and read accurately, with expression and interest. Pupils with special learning needs, and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. They read with accuracy and enjoyment and can explain a straightforward story line through reference to the text. In lessons, when pupils are reading together in groups, those working with the teacher achieve well, such as when they learn to skim the text to find information. However, in some of these lessons, activities for the other pupils who are not working with an adult are inadequately planned and, as a result, time is wasted.
40. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils write at length and in increasingly complex sentences. Work is accurately spelt in cursive handwriting. The good range of work covered helps pupils improve their ability to use parts of speech, change tenses, and write descriptively. For example, when describing a special person, a Year 4 boy wrote, "I remember my granddad when I hear the lawnmower, when I smell the flowers..." Pupils enjoy writing. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils identifying dilemmas created by an author's writing, and then writing their own stories with a dilemma, were reluctant to stop! They

achieved very well because teaching was very enthusiastic and purposeful and so they worked hard and most produced varied and interesting stories.

41. Teaching is good and often very good. Teachers consistently share lesson objectives with pupils so they know what they will learn. All teachers use questions very effectively so pupils listen carefully and respond relevantly. Talking about an author's device for gaining the reader's interest, one teacher asked, "What's a hook?" A pupil immediately responded with, "Something that pulls you into the story!", showing a confident grasp of how writing works. Where teaching is very good, there is a relentless focus on the main target for the lesson, so pupils maintain a good grip on why they are carrying out an activity. Very good use is made of the last part of the lesson to reinforce the main teaching point. Pupils are asked to evaluate each other's work in pairs and to edit their writing. Lessons are well planned so that reading and writing are linked because teachers use texts as examples to demonstrate how writers work.
42. Teachers assess pupils' written work effectively. Marking, and setting targets for improvement, are used very well so that pupils know exactly how to improve their work. However, setting targets for improvement does not happen routinely for reading and, as a result, few pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. Pupils' progress is checked and results of tests used to inform planning.
43. Leadership and management are very good. Since the last inspection, very effective steps have been taken to raise standards, including the revision of planning, staff training to improve pupils' speaking and listening, improvement of resources, and checks on standards of work and teaching. Staff share a common approach to the raising of standards in writing. Resources are adequate but the school library requires development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. Language and literacy are developed very well through other subjects. The emphasis on speaking and listening is evident in all lessons. For example, in a physical education lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to describe their movements and pupils listened well to the teacher and to each other. In religious education, pupils listened well to a Bible story re-told by both the teacher and each other, making notes throughout, and showed respect for each other's versions.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are average and pupils achieve well
- Teaching is good, ensuring that pupils learn well and display very good attitudes and behaviour
- Leadership and management are good, with very clear strategies for improvement
- In some lessons, higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently

Commentary

45. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Action to involve pupils in more problem solving activities and to raise the achievement of girls is having a positive effect so that standards are now average and pupils achieve well.
46. The quality of teaching is good, ensuring that pupils gain new skills and knowledge effectively. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn. The positive tone of lessons is set with good

starter activities which engage and motivate the pupils. When sufficient time is allowed, the final part of lessons is used well to help pupils evaluate their learning. In some of the lessons seen, however, these sessions were rushed and of little value. Teachers encourage pupils by using humour and praise, and involve them in answering open questions, challenging them to explain the reasoning for their responses. As a result, pupils are very keen to show their understanding. Teachers have good command of the subject and generally ensure that tasks and resources are matched well to the needs of different ability groups, so that pupils learn and achieve well. However, in some lessons seen, higher attaining pupils were given additional activities that required them only to do more of the same work, rather than providing an increased level of challenge. Relationships are very good and teachers have very high expectations for behaviour. As a result, pupils display very good attitudes to learning and work well together in pairs and small groups. Homework is set regularly in order to give pupils further practice in what they have learned in school. Work is marked thoroughly but comments do not often identify ways pupils can improve. Pupils with special learning needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported by teaching assistants and so they are fully involved in lessons.

47. Much of the improvement in standards and pupils' achievement since the last inspection can be attributed to the improvement in leadership and management of the subject, which are now good. An audit of provision and the analysis of the results of national tests for Year 6 have helped identify strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, planning now ensures that National Curriculum requirements are fully met and teaching and learning are well supported by new schemes of work. The introduction of an after-school club to stimulate interest in solving mathematical problems has also contributed to pupils' sense of enjoyment evident in lessons. There is a clear ambition to improve standards still further and staff are well supported in doing so by in-service training and development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily through other subjects. For example, in science, Year 6 pupils illustrate the results of their investigations into forces by drawing line graphs. In ICT, pupils in Years 4 and 5 learn about properties of shape when a computer program challenges them to maximise the number of different shaped chocolates that they can fit into a box.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good because teachers use questions effectively to help pupils explain what they have learnt
- The emphasis on practical investigations is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement
- Teachers' written comments on pupils' work do not make clear what pupils have to do next in order to improve

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve well and so standards are now average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.
50. The school has analysed the results of national tests carefully to acquire an accurate picture of what pupils know, understand and can do. This revealed weaknesses in pupils'

skills in carrying out investigations and experiments. As a result, teaching has improved and is now good because lessons are carefully planned to help pupils learn through good quality, first-hand investigations related to their own experience, and because pupils are becoming more capable at carrying out scientific experiments in a methodical manner. For example, Years 3 and 4 pupils compared the extent to which light passes through different materials so that they could choose the most suitable one for making shadow puppets. They controlled variables so that the test was fair, and recorded their findings in simple tables and graphs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, meanwhile, devised ways to separate substances suspended or dissolved in water. Teachers are knowledgeable and help pupils to think logically by using careful questions which challenge the pupils to review what others have said in the light of what they already know. For example, a teacher accepted without comment a pupil's explanation about how water would evaporate if placed on the window sill. She then invited the class to reflect on alternative reasons for what they thought might happen, and encouraged them to follow up their hypotheses with practical investigations. This was good teaching because it progressively developed pupils' thinking and helped them refine it on the basis of evidence they collect themselves.

51. Most pupils take a pride in their work, but older pupils do not yet evaluate what they have done and what they could do to improve their investigations were they to repeat them. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils, and pupils know what they are expected to have learnt by the end of the term. Pupils' progress is checked and recorded so that teachers are building an increasingly useful bank of information about how effective teaching has been and what pupils need to do next to improve. Written work is marked regularly, but teachers' written comments do not always provide a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve their work.
52. Leadership and management are good. The standard of pupils' work, teaching and teachers' lesson plans are checked and staff discuss how these could be further improved. However, lessons do not always challenge higher-attaining pupils with more demanding activities. Often, plans simply specify additional tasks at a similar level of difficulty, rather than more demanding ones, which would extend pupils' thinking further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

No overall judgement on provision can be made as only one lesson was seen during the inspection. However, additional information from teachers' planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.

53. In the only full lesson seen, for pupils in Years 4 and 5, teaching was good and standards were average. The teacher's very good knowledge and a very well prepared and challenging task enabled the pupils to learn well and gain new skills and understanding. A good starter activity, which challenged pupils to decide how to fit the greatest number of chocolates in a box, was used effectively to engage pupils and to ensure they were clear about the task and the skills needed. However, the introductory activity was more challenging than the follow-up ones, and so some lower attaining pupils found it difficult to complete it in the time allowed. Pupils were encouraged to work in pairs and the teacher gave them very good support to enable them to achieve well, overall. Relationships were excellent and, as a result, the pupils' responses and behaviour were very positive. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported by teaching assistants who provided them with suitable, simpler tasks that enabled them to achieve as well as their peers.
54. The subject is led and managed very well. The computer suite is a very good resource and enables pupils to gain new skills and apply them in a variety of interesting activities. The school knows the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has clear and realistic plans to continue the very rapid improvement seen since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Lessons in the computer suite are planned so that ICT provides satisfactory support for pupils' learning in other subjects. Although the current lack of computers in some classrooms often prevents pupils from following up the work they have done in the computer suite, a good example of the use of ICT was seen in a Year 3 English lesson. Pupils learning English as an additional language were effectively helped with their reading by a computer program, so that they could play an active part with the rest of the class in writing a play script.

HUMANITIES

56. Only one lesson was observed in history, and none were seen in geography, because the humanities were not a focus for this inspection. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in these subjects. Pupils' work from the current year was available, however, which allowed some judgements to be made about standards and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.
57. In **geography**, discussions with teachers and scrutiny of plans and samples of pupils' work indicate that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met and that standards are average.
58. In the one **history** lesson seen, in a class of Year 3 and 4 pupils, teaching was good because the teacher had good knowledge of the subject and, using a picture to good effect, quickly engaged pupils' interest so that they listened carefully. He used correct vocabulary to explain the process of mummification in ancient Egypt and, with careful use of questions, helped pupils explain their own ideas effectively. Information acquired on a recent visit to a local museum enhanced the quality of their work so that all pupils were able to write an account of the mummification process.

59. Work in history is effectively linked to that in other subjects, helping pupils apply what they have learnt in other lessons, and providing appropriate opportunities for writing. For example, in ICT, pupils download information about Egypt from the internet, while design and technology skills are developed when they plan and make a model shadouf (a simple machine used by ancient Egyptians to extract water from the Nile). Year 6 pupils studying the ancient Greeks develop their writing skills when they create a newspaper with articles composed in different journalistic styles.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is good.

Main strengths

- Pupils are provided with valuable experiences which foster their spiritual development
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills

Commentary

60. By Year 6, standards are average and pupils achieve well. This represents good progress since the last inspection.
61. Teaching is good. A notable quality of all lessons was the extent to which teachers encouraged pupils to listen and reflect carefully before venturing an opinion about the subject being considered. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils spent time looking at examples of Islamic art before explaining how its theme of continuously repeating pattern reflects the Muslim belief that Mohammed's wisdom is never-ending. In an excellent Year 4 and 5 lesson, the teacher used questions very effectively to encourage pupils to reflect on the underlying messages implicit in common logos, such as those of clothing and motor manufacturers and the World Health Organisation, and how they relate to what the organisations stand for. Meanwhile, the story of Christmas was retold in a Year 3 and 4 lesson in a way which not only reinforced pupils' understanding of Christianity but also made a significant contribution to their ability to listen carefully. Pupils concentrated well while the teacher retold the story, and recorded the salient points in a meaningful way so that they could then recount them.
62. Leadership and management are good. The school's schemes of work comply with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and teachers' plans are checked to ensure that teaching is effective. As a result, pupils not only learn about different religions but they are also provided with opportunities to reflect on the impact that they have on the daily lives of those who follow them. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

63. There was insufficient time to observe enough teaching in any of these subjects to make a judgement on overall provision. Pupils' work from the current year was available, however, which allowed some judgements to be made about standards and the quality of the curriculum, particularly in art and design. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.
64. In **art and design**, pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, attain above average standards in both two and three-dimensional work because they experience a wide range of activities. They produce careful and detailed drawings in pencil and other media, such as charcoal and pastels. They paint well, starting by learning colour mixing techniques. They go on to produce portraits, for example based on Tudor pictures and, in Year 6, produce ambitious and striking group paintings which are displayed in the hall. Examples of good three-dimensional work include African masks and very effective sculptures, created with a visiting artist.
65. There were a number of strengths in the teaching seen, including good use of sketchbooks for pupils to collect and experiment with images, good questioning which helped pupils concentrate on what they needed to do to improve their work, and an appropriate emphasis on the elements of art such as line, shape and texture. Teachers demonstrate

effectively and ensure that key vocabulary is learnt. A failure to keep to time sometimes prevents the final session of a lesson being taught, reducing its overall effectiveness as a result. Pupils enjoy art and concentrate well in lessons.

66. Good links are made between art and other subjects such as history, for example through work on ancient Egypt. Art projects, including that with a local special school on the design and creation of costumes and scenery for joint productions, enrich the curriculum and make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Leadership and management are effective.
67. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. However, a display of completed work in which pupils designed and made mechanical toys, using different materials and with knowledge of gears and handles to turn cams, indicates that standards are average and the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met.
68. In **music**, the quality of singing during assembly indicate that standards in this aspect of the subject are average. Although pupils have opportunities to sing, play instruments and listen to music in lessons, parents feel there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part in musical activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree that fewer opportunities are made available for pupils to learn an instrument than in some other schools, but those for pupils to listen to and enjoy music are similar to those found elsewhere.
69. In **physical education**, teaching and learning were satisfactory in the two lessons observed. Standards in gymnastics and dance were average, representing satisfactory achievement in these lessons. Work is well planned and the objectives are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn. Teaching of skills is accurate and pupils are given opportunities to work independently and to create sequences of actions. Teachers encourage pupils to describe and evaluate movements and this fosters teamwork and discussion.
70. Pupils in Year 3 made satisfactory progress and had interesting ideas when moving around to create shapes with others, although the quality of their actions was not developed sufficiently by the teacher. Higher-attaining pupils moved nimbly with control and some pupils devised their own sequences. Pupils in Year 5 understood the need for warm-ups and improved their performance in dance when practising sequences to recorded music. However, there was a weakness in some of the teaching when activities were overly repetitive and inaccurate timing meant that lesson objectives could not be fully realised.
71. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Schemes of work are fully in place to support teaching and learning. There are plans for improvement based on knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in what is already being done. Discussion with the subject leader indicates that standards in swimming are above average and all pupils can satisfy National Curriculum requirements in this aspect of the subject by the time they reach the end of Year 6. The school has good links with the local Sports College which help it improve the curriculum and teaching. There are also links with local clubs and opportunities for boys and girls to participate in competitive team sports.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

72. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in this subject because only one full lesson was observed. However, discussions with pupils and staff and information from school documents indicates that personal, social and health education is strongly promoted.
73. There is a very good programme for the teaching of personal, social and health education. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and promotes their ability to work together and respect each other's views. For instance, in one lesson pupils discussed the nature of friendship and ways to resolve problems and improve communication. In another lesson they learnt about democracy and teamwork. In these lessons, as they do through their daily experience of school, they develop their understanding of society and how rules are agreed for the benefit of all. The very good school council plays an important role in providing pupils with a voice and emphasising that they can help shape their own community. For example, many playground improvements have been discussed by pupils who are beginning, as a result, to derive benefit from a range of activities that enhance social play. The school is currently preparing to train pupils to act as playground mediators.
74. Health education is promoted through formal lessons in science and, informally, through contact with the school nurse and the school's emphasis on healthy eating. Particularly effective are the additional lessons provided by specially trained teaching assistants for pupils who need support to establish good social relationships with their peers.

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

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