

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HEMPSTEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Gillingham

LEA area: Medway Towns

Unique reference number: 118423

Headteacher: Mr R Aston

Lead inspector: Mr Paul Canham

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 266991

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	350
School address:	Birch Grove Hempstead Gillingham
Postcode:	ME7 3SD
Telephone number:	01634 371 823
Fax number:	01634 233 328
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Cave
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Hempstead Junior School is larger than the average for this type of school.
- It caters for 350 boys and girls aged from seven to eleven years, with three classes in each year group.
- The school draws a significant proportion of pupils (40 per cent) from areas outside its immediate location; these areas have higher than average levels of deprivation.
- The large majority pupils are White British.
- The first language of almost all pupils is English and just seven per cent of pupils are supported through additional funding.
- The school has gained the Investors in People Award and the Healthy Schools Mark.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average; most of these have moderate learning difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, but this percentage does not fully reflect the school's socio-economic context.
- Attainment on entry to Year 3 is below average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1353	Paul Canham	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Art and Design; Design and Technology; Music; Science; Physical Education.
9079	Ann Moss	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
35197	Linda Rafferty	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Mathematics; Religious Education.
32702	Anna Savva	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special Educational Needs; Information and Communication Technology
1578	Maureen Sinclair	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; English as an additional language; Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>4</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>6</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>20</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Hempstead is a very effective junior school** and it provides very good value for money. Pupils' attitudes are very good, as is the school's ethos. Their achievement is good, and the standards in several subjects, including English, mathematics and science, are above those expected nationally for pupils aged 11. Pupils' personal development is very good because they receive skilful support and well-informed individual guidance. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good; together, they are committed to promoting equality. Governance is good. The school works in very close partnership with parents, with whom it has developed very good links.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good levels of achievement, which has resulted in standards in the most recent national tests and assessments that were well above national averages in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Year 6.
- Very good achievement of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those whose first language is not English.
- Very effective leadership by the headteacher and key staff, and good governance.
- Good teaching overall, with half judged to be very good or excellent.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour.
- Outstanding personal and social development.
- A very good curriculum, which is enriched further with very good after-school activities
- Very good links with parents.
- Very good support and guidance for pupils, based on careful monitoring.

### IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection is **good**. The school has successfully addressed the issues for action identified in the previous report. The strengths have been maintained and teaching has improved substantially. Work is now well matched to the needs of pupils through effective planning, and a good range of opportunities for independent learning has been well established; challenging tasks are provided for higher attaining pupils. Standards in reading, mathematics and religious education have risen. Attendance has improved and is above the national average, and parents are more positive about the school. The accommodation has been improved significantly as a result of the building programme.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.*

*\* Schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 6.*

The table shows that, when compared with those of all schools nationally, standards in 2004 were well above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. When the results are compared with those of similar schools, standards were well above average in all three subjects. Overall, the quality of pupils' work is improving at a faster rate than that found nationally. When

these standards are compared with those gained nationally, girls are outperforming the boys in all three subjects overall, although there are some variations year on year. There were no significant differences in the standards gained by pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

**Evidence from the inspection shows that achievement is good.** Attainment on entry is below average and pupils achieve well overall, although they achieve very well in English, particularly in reading. Standards of work seen in Year 6 suggest that the majority of pupils have reached the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), with significant proportions of pupils working at levels beyond those expected for their age. Because of the requirements of the inspection, it was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to judge standards in all subjects or curriculum areas. However, work of very good quality was seen in several subjects, including religious education, design and technology, history and music. No apparent differences in achievement were seen between boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is not a first language achieve very well.

**Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is very good.** Staff know the pupils well. Relationships and behaviour are very good and pupils show much interest in the school's activities. Attendance is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning; they are confident and develop into mature individuals by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is good** and examples of very good teaching were seen in all classes. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is good. It was not possible to gather sufficient evidence to judge teaching in all subjects. The school provides a very good curriculum, which successfully promotes pupils' creative development and skills in performing. Pupils benefit from a very good range of additional activities, which have been developed to enrich learning. The school makes very effective use of its good accommodation and very good resources. Provision is very good for pupils with SEN and for pupils whose first language is not English. The very good quality of care is highly valued by parents. The school has very effective links with parents and good links with the community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The long-standing headteacher provides very effective leadership; management is good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and, with the support of a committed team of staff, he has developed a school that meets the needs of its pupils and parents successfully. Governors are effective and the school fully complies with statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Parents are very supportive of the school.** They feel they are well informed and are very comfortable about approaching the school with concerns or suggestions. Discussions with pupils confirm that they are very happy at school. They feel safe and well cared for, enjoy their lessons and like their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Refine the school improvement plan so that the school can gauge its progress more precisely.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good. The standards of work seen in all the subjects which provided a focus for the inspection, including the core subjects, are at levels which are above those expected nationally.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good standards of work seen during the inspection.
- Very good attainment in Year 6 in national tests.
- Good achievement overall.
- Very good achievement for pupils with SEN and those for whom English is not their first language.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.9 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.5 (30.2)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 84 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. The most recent test data shows that, when compared with all schools, standards in 2004 were well above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. When the results are compared with those of similar schools, standards were well above average in all three subjects. Overall, the quality of pupils' work is improving at a faster rate than that found nationally. When these standards are compared with those gained nationally, girls are outperforming the boys in all three subjects overall, although there are variations year on year. There were no significant differences in the achievement of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
2. When pupils first enter the school in Year 3 their attainment is below that expected of pupils of a similar age. Assessment information shows that each year group includes a wide range of ability, although the range is skewed towards lower attainment. Pupils are more confident with numeracy skills than they are with those of literacy, particularly writing. When account is taken of pupils' attainment on entry and their good levels of achievement, the school is adding very good value to pupils' learning.
3. The curriculum is imaginatively interwoven with cross-curricular links and is supported by very good attention to individual pupils. This combination stimulates pupils' interest and they achieve well. Pupils achieve very well in English. Standards of work seen in Year 6 during the inspection indicate that in English, mathematics, science and ICT pupils are working at the expected levels, and a significant proportion are working at levels above those expected nationally. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed in response to good teaching, which puts a strong emphasis on the importance of discussion, and to the value placed on the contributions made by pupils in lessons. For example, in mathematics, pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their ideas with 'talk partners' and within groups. In several subjects, teachers are skilful at posing questions to challenge and extend pupils' understanding. Pupils whose first language is not English make very good gains in their learning because of the high quality of the support during lessons. Pupils with SEN achieve very well because they benefit from close support and targets that are tailored to their individual needs. Higher attainers express themselves fluently, using a good range of vocabulary. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to read, and lessons include a skilfully planned

combination of discussions, reading activities and writing tasks. As a result, pupils are confident readers and achieve very well in response to good teaching and well-focused additional support. Pupils' writing is developed very well. Good teaching extends pupils' experience of writing styles and introduces them to the works of a range of authors. Higher attainers write with flair and imagination. The school is introducing strategies for using role-play to develop pupils' literacy skills further.

4. Pupils in Year 6 talk about mathematics with confidence and explain the strategies they use to arrive at their answers. Higher attaining pupils can use simple formulae, while middle and lower attaining pupils use efficient written methods for their calculations. In science, pupils thrive on the challenges set in practical work and enjoy finding things out for themselves. Higher attaining pupils delve more into the reasons behind their findings. Lower attainers show a sound understanding of the science they study but have difficulty with subject-specific vocabulary and in achieving accuracy in recording their work. Owing to the focus of the inspection, it was not possible to gather enough evidence to judge standards in all subjects, although work of good quality was seen in ICT, design and technology, religious education and history. The quality of work in music was also good, with pupils performing well. No significant differences in achievement were seen between boys and girls.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good overall. Attendance levels and punctuality are both good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good attendance and punctuality.
- Very good behaviour and attitudes.
- Pupils' high esteem and confidence.
- The very good relationships between pupils and staff, and between pupils.
- The very good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and collaborate very well with others. They listen attentively, are very keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. These strong characteristics were seen in the large majority of lessons, where teachers set challenging tasks which pupils find interesting.

6. The school's strong moral code is the basis for acceptable behaviour, and this is consistently emphasised throughout the day-to-day life of the school and through the agreed rules displayed in the class areas. Teachers thank pupils for their contributions and efforts during the lessons, and this results in an ethos of mutual respect. For example, pupils in Year 3 were encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others during a discussion about signs and symbols in a religious education lesson. Systems for behaviour management are made clear, and pupils are encouraged to act responsibly, show respect, and listen to each other. As a result, standards of behaviour are very good in the classroom and around the school. At playtimes, pupils play harmoniously together. The very caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection period and both parents and pupils confirmed that bullying does not occur. Parents also confirmed that they were confident that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Racial harmony is promoted well. There have been no exclusions during the past year.

7. Pupils are encouraged to become independent, and willingly take on a range of responsibilities. These range from acting as class helpers, 'buddies' and peer mediators to becoming members of the School Council. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, and develop increasingly good levels of maturity as they move through the school. Pupils are

commended for their achievements in the 'good work' assemblies, which focus on celebrating positive behaviour. For example, during the inspection, the peer mentors and 'buddies' were praised for their impact on promoting good relationships between pupils in the playground, particularly in the 'place2be' area. Pupils in Year 6 take it in turns to act as monitors for different responsibilities across the school. During the inspection, pupils calmly and sensibly prepared the hall for assembly and helped organise play equipment at lunchtime.

8. Pupils work very well in pairs and in groups. They show respect for the feelings of others and enjoy the school's activities. Staff give a very positive lead in engendering very good relationships, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity. Pupils also collect money to help those less fortunate than themselves. The school plans for opportunities to promote a sense of wonder and reflection during assemblies and in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education. These lessons allow pupils to gain knowledge of different religious beliefs and practices, as well as opportunities to explore their own feelings and those of others. Pupils are encouraged to look beyond their own cultures during lessons such as history and geography. For example, pupils gain a good insight into their own and other cultures by studying Tudors and the Egyptians, and by visiting places of worship. The school's 'Events Week' is planned to enrich pupils' cultural and social experiences further.

9. Attendance levels have risen significantly since the previous inspection and are now above the national average. The school makes the promotion of better attendance a priority. It follows up any unexplained absences and awards certificates for good attendance. Parents are well informed of the importance of high levels of attendance, and it is made clear to them that absenteeism can have a detrimental effect on pupils' attainment, progress and personal development. However, a small minority of parents persist in taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. The punctuality of the pupils is good.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	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.*

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The school provides a very good quality of education. Teaching is good and examples of very good teaching were seen in all years. The very good curriculum is enriched further by a very good range of after-school activities. The quality of care is also very good and the school has very effective links with parents and good links with the community.

**Teaching and learning**

Assessment and the quality of teaching and learning are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Planning that focuses closely on the needs of individuals.
- Very clear lesson objectives.
- Effective questioning skills.
- The use of a range of stimulating strategies that engage pupils to the full.
- Very effective use of resources.
- Very good relationships.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	13	12	2	0	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. (No percentages given because fewer than 30 lessons were observe.)*

10. Teaching is good. Teaching was judged to be very good in almost half the lessons seen; one lesson was excellent. Examples of very good teaching were seen in all years, but all the teaching seen in Year 5 was judged to be very good. Owing to the focus of the inspection, not enough evidence could be gathered to judge teaching in all subjects, although teaching seen in English, mathematics, science and ICT was good. However, there are some inconsistencies, and there is a marked contrast between the lively and imaginative styles seen in the large majority of lessons and the small proportion of classes that, whilst being satisfactory, lacked the same flair and challenge in the teaching methods. Teaching is much better than that reported in the previous inspection.

11. Joint planning within year groups is an important driving force that underpins the consistency of the teaching; this, in turn, enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers plan very well together, ensuring consistency and a systematic approach to learning. Teachers plan a good range of activities, which enables pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding systematically over time. During the inspection, teachers planned their lessons well, with clear objectives and challenging tasks that matched pupils' different learning needs. For example, pupils in Year 3 benefited significantly from the clarity of learning objectives and the finely honed questions. These were focused on each pupil's stage of learning, drawing on their knowledge and understanding of computer simulations. As a result all pupils, including those with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language, made excellent gains in their learning.

12. In the very good lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were engrossed in their work and made very good progress. Pupils were captivated by the very effective range of stimulating teaching strategies. For example, pupils in Year 5 gained very good understanding of the blood and its pathway through the body by walking the route through an imaginary body marked out on the playground floor. In Year 4, pupils were captivated by the lively introduction, which used a poster of Paris to help them prepare for a piece of persuasive writing during a literacy lesson. In Year 3, the pace of the lesson and the use of a very good range of teaching methods, sensitively matched to the pupil's stages of learning, resulted in very good achievement and very good progress in the pupils' understanding of metric units and capacity.

13. All pupils benefit from the very effective use of support staff and other resources. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching and learning, although its use depends sometimes on the confidence of the teacher. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is very good. Teaching is sharply focused on individual needs, and the Individual Educational Plans have clear targets. In the lessons observed, pupils received well-tailored support directed at improving their learning. As a result of the very good support they receive from teachers and learning assistants, the pupils achieve very well. The close partnership between all staff involved in teaching pupils with English as an additional language results in pupils' very good achievement. During the inspection, for example, a specialist worked closely and productively with pupils in Year 6 during a lesson which focused on issues raised from the reading of Anne Frank's diaries. Pupils who are gifted and talented are also very well catered for. A range of exciting extra-curricular activities, such as an ICT club and the Ecology club, enhances their learning.

14. The very good relationships which underpin teaching and learning are used to raise expectations. Teachers insist on very good standards of behaviour and they are skilled at promoting equality of opportunity. The contributions made by pupils are valued and activities are planned at different levels to make it possible for all pupils to achieve well. Pupils are given good opportunities to work in pairs and groups and also to work independently.

## The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is very good. It is enriched further by a wealth of additional learning opportunities and after-school clubs. The accommodation is good. Resources, including staffing, make very good provision to support pupils' learning.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad and rich curriculum.
- A very good range of out-of-school activities.
- Outstanding provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- Good accommodation and very good resources.
- Effective cross-curricular links.

### Commentary

15. The school provides a stimulating range of learning opportunities which are planned to meet the differing needs of pupils. The school successfully gives its pupils a rich learning experience that focuses on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as skills in creative development and performing arts. The very good links that have been established between subjects ensure that pupils learn well through a range of activities, which are both rich and imaginative. In addition, pupils thrive on the numerous opportunities to work independently from the teacher; the lack of such opportunities was a weakness reported in the previous inspection. The provision for English and mathematics offers very good opportunities for the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are grouped by ability in mathematics, and additional support is given to groups of pupils in Year 6 to help with English. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support teaching in several subjects.

16. Enrichment is particularly good. Well-planned extra-curricular activities are strengths of the provision. Pupils eagerly attend the many after-school clubs, which foster learning in a wide range of activities, including sport, design and technology and music.

17. Statutory requirements are met in relation to the National Curriculum and religious education and collective worship. All pupils have full access to the curriculum, which is well managed and regularly reviewed. The school has established an effective system for year group teams to plan and monitor curriculum provision through a strong liaison between staff.

18. Provision for the development of pupils' personal skills is outstanding. The well-planned curriculum includes discrete lessons that successfully raise awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. An intensive sex and relationship education programme helps pupils face the changes of puberty. The strong commitment to the Healthy Schools Initiative successfully promotes pupils' self-esteem, as well as their physical and emotional health and wellbeing.

19. There is very good provision for pupils with SEN and for those who are gifted and talented. Pupils benefit significantly from the individual targets within individual education plans (IEPs), which are well focused and regularly monitored by teachers. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is also very good. Working in close partnership with class teachers and the outside specialist, the co-ordinator ensures that pupils are given well-tailored support which matches their needs.

20. The school is located in its own spacious grounds, which include hard court areas and grass. A nature reserve has been established to help pupils with their understanding of science. The accommodation is good, and it has been improved since the previous inspection through a building programme that includes the development of a library and an ICT suite, and extensions to several teaching areas. A strong feature of the classrooms and communal areas is the high quality of the displays, which are interesting and informative and celebrate pupils' work. They add to the

welcoming environment and reflect the richness of pupils' learning. Very good quality learning resources are used well in all areas of the school. There is an effective team of staff, who are well qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum. Additional specialist teaching staff are used very well in music, religious education and ICT.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is very good and assists pupils' learning very well. The guidance for their personal development is also very good and pupils are fully involved in the work of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and respond quickly to their needs.
- The very good and trusting relationships.
- The high value the school places on pupils' views.
- The well-informed support, advice and guidance
- Excellent induction arrangements.

### **Commentary**

21. The school provides a supportive environment that is conducive to learning. Very close attention is paid to health and safety issues. Pupils' healthy and safe living is very well promoted through the excellent personal, social and health education programme. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and there is good liaison with outside agencies. Designated members of staff are up to date in aspects of first aid, and risk assessments are carried out regularly. Excellent liaison with the infant school ensures that children settle quickly into the school routines. Excellent arrangements are also in place for pupils who start school at times other than the beginning of the school year.

22. Assessment procedures are good and academic progress is well recorded. Information from analyses of the statutory tests helps with planning, and the progress made by individual pupils is carefully tracked with the help of a commercial software program. Most classes use a 'traffic light' system for pupils to communicate their level of understanding and for staff to assess the next level of learning. Systems for tracking and supporting the pupils' personal development are very good. Profiles of pupils are kept by the class teachers and are shared with other teachers as the pupils make progress through the school. Parents receive written reports twice a year and these contain information on personal development. The headteacher, class teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well. They are sensitive to the pupils' individual needs and give close support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils make good use of '*The Place2Be*', which helps them feel good about themselves by giving therapeutic and emotional support to those who are feeling vulnerable or unhappy.

23. The school places a high value on pupils' views. Pupils are given very good opportunities to talk about their concerns during lessons and through the School Council, which meets regularly to discuss issues of importance to the school. For example, representatives have been involved in choosing new playground equipment and producing a newspaper.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership with parents is very good. Links with other schools and colleges are also very good, and there are good links with the community.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very supportive parents.
- The detailed information given to parents about their children's progress.
- The very good links with other schools.

## Commentary

24. Information from the recent questionnaire and from the pre-inspection meeting indicates that parents are very satisfied with the school. Parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school and are very happy with the procedures to deal with any concerns or complaints. Parents feel that their children are being encouraged to become mature, and they appreciate the very good range of extra-curricular activities. Parents also feel that the school is well led and managed, that the quality of teaching is good, and that the pupils make good progress. Inspection findings confirm these views.

25. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning, for example by accompanying them on school trips, listening to them read, and giving support during the '*Events Weeks*'. The parents' association (Friends' Association) comprises a small but active group of very enthusiastic parents, who work closely with the school to organise social and fundraising events.

26. Parents are encouraged to talk to staff about their children on a regular basis and they are given good opportunities to discuss their children's progress during consultation evenings. Parents receive twice-yearly written reports on their children's progress and targets for improvement. The views of parents are regularly sought through questionnaires, and almost every governor is a parent of a child attending the school. Parents are confident that their suggestions are listened to and valued.

27. The good links with the community include those with the church, a mosque, a synagogue, a nursery, and a day care centre. Pupils regularly visit the local area and a nature reserve. They also use the local swimming pool for lessons. The community uses the school premises, for example, for a Keep Fit Club and a Karate Club, and the Friends' Association organises monthly discos. Visitors to the school include a touring theatre company, the local police force and the fire brigade. There are also good links with the wider community, and the pupils visit places such as museums and a dockyard.

28. The school takes in students from a local university for their initial teacher training, and pupils from other schools come in for work experience. Links with local schools are very productive and aid pupils' learning, as the school gains access to additional activities for pupils and training for staff. Strong links with local secondary schools ensure that there are good mechanisms in place to help pupils to move easily on to the next stage of their education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership by the headteacher and key staff is very good. Management is good overall, and there are very good systems for financial management. The headteacher has a clear vision for the continuing development of the school. Governance is good and fulfils its statutory duties successfully.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- Very good leadership of the curriculum.
- Good management.
- Very good financial management.

### Commentary

29. Strengths in leadership and management have been maintained and developed further since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has built a strong and cohesive staff team, all of whom have a commitment to high standards and to providing a rich range of experiences for pupils. His very clear vision focuses strongly on the wellbeing and needs of individual pupils. This is implemented very successfully within the arrangements for SEN and for those pupils deemed to be gifted and talented. This level of care and consideration is extended to staff and is evident in the headteacher's approach to managing agreements on workforce reforms. The individual career aspirations of staff are also taken into account during performance management reviews and are balanced well against school priorities.

30. Performance management is well established and is closely related to the priorities for school development. The deputy head teacher has successfully set up assessment systems. These are used well to identify strengths and weaknesses and to guide teaching. The information feeds into school improvement priorities and into the systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning. The school acknowledges that the improvement plan should be refined further to enable the school to gauge its progress more precisely.

31. Subjects benefit from strong leadership and management in several areas of the curriculum, including English, mathematics, science, ICT, music, SEN and English as an additional language (EAL). Subject leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development and how they can bring about improvements. They gain good information about their subjects through monitoring, planning and collecting samples of pupils' work. The management of SEN and of gifted and talented pupils is very good. Procedures for SEN are fully in line with the Code of Practice and requirements relating to the annual review are met. Support staff are well informed, trained and deployed. Pupils' IEPs identify specific targets for learning and provide a very good basis for planning and on which to judge progress. The school has drawn up a list of gifted and talented pupils and their progress is carefully monitored. The management of EAL is also very good. The co-ordinator has developed a strong team of committed staff. A fine balance of withdrawal and in-class support aids progress and the school keeps very good records of pupils' progress.

32. Governors are closely involved with the school's work and have a good picture of its strengths and weaknesses. They also have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and monitor the school's work through visits, links with subject leaders and planned meetings. The school's approach to financial and resource management is very effective in helping the school achieve its educational priorities. Governors have a good awareness of the school's financial management and of obtaining best value. They are fully involved in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of spending decisions. The bursar carries out day-to-day financial administration very effectively. When account is taken of the quality of education and its impact on pupils' achievement, and of the below average costs, the school provides very good value for money.



**Financial information for the year 2003 to 2004**

<b>Income and expenditure (£)</b>	
Total income	843,694.00
Total expenditure	842,086.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,496.00

<b>Balances (£)</b>	
Balance from previous year	211,675.00
Balance carried forward to the next year	*213,283.00

*\* To help finance the building programme that the school has undergone. This included extensions to classrooms and communal areas.*

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good leadership and good management.
- Good teaching.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- Effective promotion of literacy across the school.

#### **Commentary**

33. Pupils achieve very well, especially in reading, as they move through the school. Their very good achievement is due to strengths in leadership, the quality of teaching, and the pupils' very good response to learning. Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations in speaking, listening and writing, and they are well above expectations in reading. Standards are higher in reading than those reported in the previous inspection.

34. The very good leadership and effective management ensure that the school is fully aware of what it needs to do to bring about improvement in English. The subject leader ensures that teachers and other adults, working collaboratively in year teams, make particularly good use of information from well-established assessment procedures to help with planning. As a result, pupils are given a clear picture of what they are doing well and how they can improve their work further. For example, the performance of boys is now more in line with that of girls, and there are detailed plans to improve speaking and listening further through the use of drama.

35. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. A strong feature of all lessons is the way in which teachers create opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary. Pupils of all abilities are given time and encouragement to express themselves clearly and to understand words that are not familiar to them. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke with assurance when talking about preferences and their likes and dislikes during discussion. The success of the close partnership between support staff and class teachers was particularly noticeable in this lesson; pupils whose first language is not English made very good progress because of the high quality of the support and the language sustained during discussion. Pupils are responsive to the wide range of teaching strategies which are used to engage them and stimulate their interest. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 5, higher attaining pupils used persuasive language during a debate on the issues surrounding the building of houses within the local area. As a consequence, pupils were enthused by this well-organised activity. It resulted in thoughtful responses and a greater awareness of moral and social issues associated with housing developments and subsequent changes to the local environment.

36. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to read by themselves and in class. Teachers skilfully integrate discussions with reading activities and writing tasks. As a consequence, most pupils are confident readers and achieve very well in response to good teaching and well-focused additional support. For example, during a very good lesson seen in Year 5, a group of lower attaining pupils benefited significantly from the close attention given to their individual learning objectives. Expectations were high, and the teacher skilfully linked the pupils' understanding of the text and vocabulary with each individual pupil's writing objectives. What teachers do particularly well is to introduce pupils to a good range of authors and styles of writing. Teachers read stories expressively and enthusiastically, which increases pupils' understanding and enjoyment of the texts.

During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 talked easily about their favourite authors, and the type of books they liked, and showed very good prediction skills. Parents have been very supportive of the school's efforts to develop reading, and the very good links with them have helped to raise standards. Many pupils use the local library on a regular basis.

37. Pupils' writing is developed very well. They benefit significantly from the well-paced lessons and very strong emphasis on teaching the correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Good progress in Year 3 is systematically built on through the school. Good teaching extends pupils' experience of writing styles and introduces them to some of the complex language and issues in the works of a range of authors. Planning is closely matched to pupils' stages of learning, and some tasks are carefully structured to help them empathise with the plight of others. For example, after being prompted to consider searching reasons for the fate of Anne Frank, a group of higher attainers in Year 6 wrote some thoughtful work on discrimination. Pupils' imaginative writing was also evident in the examples of good poetry on display throughout the school.

38. Very good relationships, which featured strongly in all lessons, were used well to raise expectations and encourage independent learning. Pupils with SEN achieve very well throughout the school because they benefit from close support and targets that are tailored to their individual needs. Gifted and talented pupils also receive additional well-focused support to help them to do as well as they are able. Pupils learning English as an additional language make very good progress in acquiring spoken English. The well-trained leader for ethnic minority achievement works very closely with the external specialist and promotes a strong sense of partnership between all staff. The school successfully extends pupils' knowledge and comprehension of English once they have acquired the basic skills.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

39. Pupils' speaking skills are enhanced by plenty of opportunities in other subjects for discussion; specific-subject vocabulary, in mathematics and science for instance, is also promoted well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly used to support pupils' literacy skills. There are very good chances to write in English and other subjects, such as religious education. However, the school is aware of the need to seize the opportunities in science lessons to capture the enthusiasm generated by investigations and practical work and to use it in the writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective leadership and management.
- Good teaching.
- Pupils' very good attitudes.
- Lack of detail in the action plan.

### **Commentary**

40. Pupils, including those who have SEN and those deemed to be gifted and talented, achieve well in mathematics. The good achievement is due in no small measure to teachers' high expectations and pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations and are similar to those reported in the previous inspection. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls.

41. The subject is well led and managed. Colleagues value the effective support given by the subject leader, which includes updates and information from monitoring and assessment procedures. The information is used effectively by teachers, who use the 'traffic light system' to gauge the level of pupils' understanding. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are encouraged to assess their own level of understanding. Marking is good because specific comments are written to highlight the next steps in learning, which are then linked to individual pupils' targets. The systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress are used to determine the group settings, the use of intervention strategies for individual pupils, and the deployment of teaching assistants. These strategies underpin the good and very good teaching seen during the inspection. Weaknesses in teaching noted in the previous inspection report have been addressed. Pupils respond well to clear learning intentions, high expectations, a brisk pace to learning, and effective use of reviews at the end of lessons. In lessons, pupils thrive on the opportunities to work independently of the teacher.

42. In response to the good and very good teaching, pupils have very good attitudes to learning. In Year 6, pupils talked about mathematics with confidence and used the correct vocabulary. In lessons, pupils responded well to the good opportunities to explain the strategies they used to arrive at their answers. They showed a very good understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and their equivalents. Higher attaining pupils showed they can multiply and divide whole numbers by 10, 100 and 1000, calculate fractional or percentage parts of quantities, and use simple formulae involving one or two operations. Pupils also demonstrated that they can interpret and record graphs and diagrams, including pie charts. Middle and lower attaining pupils in Year 6 used efficient written methods of addition, subtraction, short and long multiplication and division, and they showed how they calculate the area of simple shapes.

43. Teachers maintain the interest of their pupils very well through the briskly-paced activities and the wide range of teaching and learning strategies. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their ideas with 'talk partners' and within groups. Teachers are skilful at posing questions to challenge and extend pupils' understanding. For example, in a very good lesson, pupils in Year 3 responded to incisive questioning by using arrow cards to partition hundreds and thousands. Pupils benefit from well-focused support given by teaching assistants, who are able to reinforce the key learning objectives in the planning. For example, as a result of support that closely matched their needs, pupils in Year 3 made very good gains in their learning and in their understanding of capacity and standard metric units. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support mathematics.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. There are good opportunities to use and develop mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects, such as science and history and geography, where pupils complete tables and graphs to interpret information. Pupils in Year 6 used their knowledge of reflective symmetry and rotation to create excellent silk print designs.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Effective leadership and management.
- Good teaching.
- The good attention given to practical investigations and scientific enquiry.
- The over-dependence on worksheets.

## **Commentary**

45. Pupils achieve well because teaching gives them a good range of learning opportunities during practical work and investigations. As a consequence, pupils found science exciting in the lessons observed, and made good gains in their understanding of investigative science, plants, and the path through which blood passes around the body. Standards in Year 6 are above national expectations and better than those reported in the previous inspection. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls.

46. Science is well led and managed. The subject leader has introduced some good assessment procedures, but she is aware of the need to develop their use further. Marking is generally good. Pupils are given a clear picture of what they are doing well and how they can improve their work.

47. Pupils' very good attitudes to the subject reflect the good and very good teaching. Teaching is engaging because it includes a wide range of practical tasks that are closely matched to the pupils' stages of learning. The very good teaching is lively and uses imaginative teaching strategies to capture the pupils' attention. As a result, pupils in Year 5 were seen to be highly motivated and they made very good gains in their understanding of the blood and the path it follows through the body. In another very good lesson, pupils in Year 6 developed a good understanding of investigative science because they were encouraged to find out for themselves and talk openly about the findings. When probed, higher attainers drew upon their understanding of science and predicted with accuracy the outcomes of the investigation into the rate at which different types of sugar dissolve. Lower attaining pupils, and those with SEN, showed confidence and achieved as well as others in the classes. They were well assisted in their work by the class teacher and other adults, who showed sensitivity and good knowledge of the pupils' stages of learning. Pupils' knowledge of science is generally good, but they are not always able to apply it to their explanations in support of practical work.

48. In all lessons, expectations were high and the teaching frequently challenged pupils to draw upon their knowledge and understanding. Pupils benefited significantly from teaching that was well paced and engaging, and full of science that related to pupils' everyday lives. Pupils are encouraged to find out for themselves and talk about their work, though the school acknowledges that there has been an over-reliance on worksheets. Pupils are beginning to record their work in greater depth. A strength seen in all lessons was the use of questions that were well matched to pupils' stages of learning. Pupils often rose to the challenge and responded confidently, aware that their answers would be valued by the teacher and other pupils. During a lesson seen in Year 4, information and communication technology (ICT) was used well to extend learning opportunities and help pupils understand the different make-up of solids, though there was little evidence of its use in pupils' recorded work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Strengths and weaknesses:**

- Good leadership and management by the recently appointed subject leader
- Effective technical support
- Good resources
- The wide variation in the quality of teaching.

## **Commentary**

49. Pupils achieve well and standards in Year 6 are above national expectations. They achieve well because they have good access to computers in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with SEN, are making good progress and developing confidence in the use of ICT,

because they are encouraged to find out for themselves and retrieve information from different sources. Pupils' work shows good examples of communication and graphics and evidence of their own multi-media presentations. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced an outstanding Powerpoint presentation as part of their project on Ancient Greece.

50. Improvement since the previous inspection is good.

51. Leadership and management are good. Since his recent appointment, the subject leader has worked well with the technician to improve the resources and strengthen the support for staff and pupils. This strategy has had a positive impact on the provision; staff are more confident in their use of the equipment and programs. Plans are in place to develop further the use of the computer 'interactive' board as a means of assisting learning and understanding. Pupils benefit from a systematic approach to the planning of ICT and from a programme of activities that ensures they make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. The subject leader has planned a systematic process to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Information from monitoring will help with planning and provide evidence for the next steps in the subject's development.

52. Teaching is good overall, although the range of teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to excellent. When working in the recently developed ICT suite, pupils in Year 3, including a significant proportion with SEN, made outstanding gains in their knowledge and understanding when using simulations to help solve problems. With the help of the technician, the teacher successfully drew upon her good subject knowledge and skills when giving support and advice to pupils. Pupils were very responsive to the focused questioning, and their interest was captured by the challenging tasks. The rapid pace of the learning led to high levels of achievement. By contrast, pupils in Year 6 made steady gains in a lesson that had sufficient challenge but varied in pace. At times, a small number of pupils were not fully engaged in the tasks, although they responded well when the teacher intervened. Pupils enjoy using the self-evaluation system, which provides evidence of their understanding when compared with the information in the scheme of work. Pupils spoke highly of the good range of computer clubs, which provide challenging tasks for the higher attainers and opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge of a range of programs.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

53. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is good. Aspects of the subject are used well in several subjects, such as in English, when pupils draft their work, in mathematics, when they create patterns, and in music, when they are composing. In physical education, computers are used to calculate averages from data collected during practical work. Information and communication technology (ICT) plays a valuable role in encouraging personal research, with good examples of links in history, geography, music and design and technology.

### **HUMANITIES**

54. Not enough evidence was gathered to make firm overall judgements about provision, achievement or standards in geography, history, and religious education. Evidence was taken from a small sample of teaching, discussions with pupils, displays around the school, and a scrutiny of pupils' work.

55. Pupils' **historical** knowledge and understanding are successfully promoted by the skilful use of a wide range of stimulating artefacts and a lively approach to teaching. Displays around the school show that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum, which includes a strong emphasis on cross-curricular activities. For example, pupils in Year 4 had built Tudor style house, and pupils in Year 6 had been involved in studying and drawing artefacts as part of a project on Ancient Greece. Displays of Egyptian artefacts and drawings of Greek urns all help support a lively approach to teaching history, making it an exciting experience for pupils. Pupils also benefit significantly from

visits to places of historical interest, such as Dover Castle. The richness of the practical experiences was evident from the quality of pupils' work and from the small sample of teaching seen during the inspection. Pupils responded well to the imaginative use of ICT programs, 'snippets' of video, and a range of texts and artefacts.

56. **Geography** is also well supported by a good range of resources and cross-curricular links. For example, a project on France included evidence of good links with literacy and history. Pupils also learned some French, studied maps, and plotted key landmarks in Paris. During a very good lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were encouraged to work as teams and agree strategies that would encourage others to visit Paris. This activity required pupils to negotiate skilfully and to summarise and present the information in a convincing way. A good range of data-handling skills is used by pupils to present information. For example, charts and grids are used to show the differences in weather conditions, and pupils in Year 3 created interesting postcards written from St Lucia, highlighting the physical and human features.

57. The subject leader for **religious education** has been instrumental in raising the profile of the subject during the past two years. The school also engaged a subject specialist to help with the planning and support staff. As a consequence, resources have improved and staff have been inspired by the richness of the course material and the range of topics. The impact of the subject's very good leadership and management is evident from the action planning and the quality of pupils' work. The locally Agreed Syllabus is supplemented by detailed planning across each year group. A good range of major world religions is covered, and the curriculum is enriched by frequent opportunities to discuss moral issues and human emotions, and by visits from outside speakers. Displays around the school show the value the school attaches to the main faiths. Examples include Kiddush prayers, writings about Ramadan, the pupils' own 'Ten Commandments', and the display of the five Ks as part of the Sikh religion. The subject therefore plays a valuable role in extending pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural awareness and understanding.

58. Pupils in Year 3 are currently studying symbols as part of an introduction to Sikhism; they are encouraged to use their own photographs of themselves or family members wearing costumes. Pupils in Year 6 are studying Judaism. In both lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were given good opportunities to discuss their feelings and understanding of the religions and to reflect on the experiences of others. To add richness to the quality of pupils' learning, the school organises a number of visits to places of worship. These include a mosque, the local church, and Canterbury Cathedral. The local vicar, who is also a governor, gives good support to the school by taking regular assemblies and by assisting in lessons.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

59. Not enough evidence could be gathered for judgements to be made on any subjects in this curriculum area. However, information gathered from the significant number of well-presented displays, from a small number of music lessons, and from school assemblies and after-school activities showed that pupils are given a very good range of opportunities to work creatively and to develop performance skills. The richness and good quality of the evidence reflects the imaginative and challenging approach the school has taken in the development of the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects.

60. Displays of pupils' work in **design and technology** showed that they have good opportunities to work creatively, and to apply their creative skills to the design and the assembly of working models. For example, pupils in Year 4 had planned and built models of Tudor houses. Linked to this project was the making of miniature costumes similar to those worn during the Tudor period. The school places a strong emphasis on the whole designing, making, and evaluation process. This was particularly evident in the major project undertaken by pupils in Year 6 which focused on the design and construction of model bridges. An important part of the evaluation included the testing of their strength and how the outcome related to the design. As an additional challenge, the school enters a local competition, where model bridges, constructed by groups of pupils from

several schools, are tested by the Royal Engineers at their headquarters. Those pupils deemed to be gifted and talented were given an opportunity to build a battery-operated vehicle for a local competition. The techno-vehicle was made from a kit during an after-school club and it relied on the pupils' ability to work with precision from detailed plans.

61. In **art and design**, sketches, collages, paintings, and drawings help provide attractive displays around the school. Examples of good quality work included paintings in the style of Monet, Picasso, and Van Gogh. Pupils in Year 6 had also designed and made some very attractive cards that included a design on silk fabric. Pupils benefit significantly from a **music** curriculum which has breadth and depth and is taught by two specialists. Their expertise and enthusiasm for the subject are reflected in the pupil's attitudes and in their willingness to take a full and active part in lessons, during singing assemblies, and in after-school clubs. Music is a strong feature of the school, and the pupils' very good attitudes in the small number of lessons seen during the inspection were reflected by the teachers' skilful and energetic approach to teaching the subject. Very good teaching gave pupils good opportunities to work collaboratively, perform, evaluate each other's work and refine their performances. Pupils with SEN develop confidence and self-esteem in practical sessions. As a consequence, pupils develop a good understanding and knowledge of music and they enjoy performing. The good quality of the compositions, the improvisation, the playing, and the pupils' ability to evaluate and refine their work reflect the school's strong commitment to ensuring that pupils experience a rich practical experience during their time in school. The **physical education** curriculum includes sufficient time for pupils to develop skills in games, gymnastics and dance, and swimming. In addition, many pupils have extended opportunities to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities which place a strong emphasis on competitive conventional team games and individual sports.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

The provision is **excellent**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very strong leadership and management.
- The well-integrated curriculum.

### **Commentary**

62. Pupils benefit significantly from a programme that is led and managed by a very experienced and committed subject leader. The range of counselling and support mechanisms is excellent. The school engages a specialist who brings expertise and awareness of the potential of the programmes entitled 'Place to Be' and the 'Place to Talk' as a catalyst for personal development and achievement. Pupils and staff benefit from the opportunity to think and talk in a neutral and safe environment; the facilities are extensively used. Pupils are clear about the procedures if they have a problem. In addition, pupils can discuss issues with the carefully trained 'peer mediator', who can be found in a designated area of the playground.

63. The School Council has introduced pupils to the concept of democracy and is just one of the many activities that involve them as active participants in the school community. There is, for instance, a great array of monitors and opportunities to serve others. As a result of these initiatives, pupils' understanding of citizenship, and of rights and responsibilities, is very good. The planning for the more formal teaching of citizenship is very well advanced, with the school intent on taking part in local citizenship award schemes. The school positively teaches moral codes through its emphasis on school rules and its successful involvement in the Play Fair Awards. Very good relationships and an extremely strong caring ethos underpin pupils' development.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).*