

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THOMAS HARDING JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Chesham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110305

Headteacher: Mrs G Allen

Lead inspector: Keith Sadler

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 2 March 2005

Inspection number: 268105

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 – 11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	210
School address:	Fuller's Hill Chesham Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP5 1LR
Telephone number:	01494 782211
Fax number:	01494 786098
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Flockhart
Date of previous inspection:	7 June 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Thomas Harding is an average sized junior school. There are 210 pupils on roll. The school is located close to the town centre of Chesham. The vast majority of pupils do not reside close to the school, there being little family accommodation in the immediate area. The reserved area includes a large section of the town where there are privately owned and public and housing association properties. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around the national average. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English is very high. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below that found nationally. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above average

The school gained a DfES Schools Achievement Award in 2000. In addition, the school was awarded Beacon School status in that year. The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality mark in 2002.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16405	Keith Sadler	Lead inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language Design and technology Physical education Music
14347	Joan Lindsay	Lay inspector	
18270	Jane Morris	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Thomas Harding is a successful school. It is effective** and provides good value for money. Teaching is good and has a number of very good features. This encourages good learning and achievement. The headteacher provides clear and incisive leadership and she is pivotal to the school's success. Subject leadership and management are very good. Governance is very good. There is a very good ethos for learning and all pupils feel included in the rich range of activities provided. Although standards in tests dipped in 2004, the overall impact of all these factors has led to above average standards being attained in most years.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher.
- The very good leadership of governors and subject leaders.
- Very effective monitoring and evaluation procedures, which leads to very good target-setting procedures and outstanding academic guidance for pupils.
- The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are very good; pupils love coming to school.
- The very good arrangements for the personal development of pupils including the personal, social and health education curriculum and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The very good curriculum.
- Very good arrangements for the care, welfare and health and safety of the pupils.

The school had no key development points that arose from the last inspection in 1999. However, the school has improved well since then. Standards, overall, have been generally well above the national average in four of the past five years. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and the curriculum and arrangements for the pupils' personal development have also improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability.** Pupils enter the school with below expected attainment levels. Their achievement is good in all four year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language progress very well in their learning. Due to the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, standards dipped in 2004. Prior to this, attainment has been generally above the national average in most years. Standards are in line with expectations in ICT, religious education and music. During this inspection there was insufficient time to make secure judgements in other subjects. However, there are indications that standards are in line with expectations in all other subjects except art and design and design and technology where standards may be above the national average.

**Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.** Pupils' attitudes to learning and to each other are very good. Their behaviour is very good and pupils thoroughly enjoy their school and learning. The school has nurtured an atmosphere that is free of bullying and other forms of harassment and pupils' relationships with each other are

outstanding. Pupils thrive on the many opportunities for them to be enterprising and to take responsibility. Attendance is well above the national average.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good**, with almost half of lessons seen being very good, and over 80 per cent being at least good. There are some very good features to the teaching and no weaknesses. Teachers plan lessons very well and their assessments of pupils' achievements are very good. Teachers create a very strong and positive ethos for learning. The teaching and learning of both pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very good. The curriculum is very good, with teachers ensuring that the work is made relevant by tackling different subjects in an integrated way. This boosts learning and helps to develop pupils' skills and understanding. Learning support staff make a good contribution to the educational provision, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. The school has very good arrangements in place for the pupils' care and welfare. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are very good overall. Academic guidance, which is based on outstanding arrangements for tracking pupils' progress, is excellent. Pupils' education is aided by the very good links that the school has with the parents and other schools and good links with the local community.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and her very good leadership has a very positive impact. Subject leadership is very good. The teamwork within the school is very strong. The school ensures that all pupils are included in activities. Governance is very good, with governors having a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Financial management is secure and the school runs very smoothly. There are very good self-evaluation processes in place.

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

Parents are very satisfied with the school and they have positive views. In particular, they say that the staff expect their children to work hard and do their best and that their children make good progress. They also think that the teaching is very good. Pupils are very proud of their school and have a love of learning.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

As at the time of the last inspection, there are no areas that require additional focused attention.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Pupils enter the school with below average attainment. Due to the good quality provision, they achieve well throughout all four year groups and by the time that they leave the school, standards are broadly in line with national expectations.

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

- Pupils, throughout the school and in all subjects, achieve well.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those that speak English as an additional language is good.
- Standards are average in comparison with both all schools nationally and similar schools.
- Although standards dipped in national tests in 2004, there has been a general improvement since the last inspection.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2004 show that there has been a dip in the pupils' attainment compared with the previous three years. However, standards were in line with the national average in comparison with all schools nationally, and, in comparison with similar schools, they were below average. This was expected by the school because in that year, there were more pupils with special educational needs than is usually the case. The school met its targets. There is little difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls or those who speak English as an additional language.
2. In the previous three years, standards in national tests were generally well above the national average in comparison with both all schools nationally and similar schools. These standards show an overall improvement since the last inspection, when standards in English were found to be average and they were above average in mathematics and science.
3. Inspection findings are that present standards are broadly in line with the national expectation in English, mathematics and science for pupils currently in Year 6. There are strong indications that standards in most subjects will be higher for the pupils currently in Years 5 and 4. Standards in ICT, religious education and music are broadly in line with expectations. Although no firm judgement can be made in any other subject, there are indications that standards are in line with expectations in history, geography and physical education. There are indications that standards are above average in both art and design and design and technology.
4. Scrutiny of the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds of pupils entering the school in Year 3 show that their attainment reading, writing and mathematics has been below average for some years. As a result of the good teaching, pupils achieve well throughout the school and make good progress. Inspection findings are that pupils' achievement is good in all subjects inspected.
5. The achievement of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs is good. Their achievement is in line with their peers because of the very good provision, in particular the quality of the teaching. The programmes of intervention for these pupils are very carefully thought through and their Individual Education Plans are of particularly good quality.
6. The school has a particularly high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Although many of these pupils enter the school with reading and writing skills that are in line with other pupils in the school, there is a relatively high proportion who are at an



early stage of English language acquisition. As a result of the very good provision, led in the main by the specialist teacher, these pupils achieve well and they learn effectively alongside other pupils in their classes.

- The school has very good monitoring and evaluation processes and these, linked to the good quality teaching and learning are a key factor in the standards attained. Staff ensure that pupils are set challenging targets for improvement and that pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. This leads to good achievement in all subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26 (28.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.9 (28.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.2 (31.4)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development is also very good. It is supported very well by the school's particularly effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and very good personal, health and social education. Pupils' attendance is very good and their punctuality to school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very keen to come to school and they engage enthusiastically and talk animatedly about their learning and the many activities that are provided.
- Behaviour is very good and often outstanding in lessons and when the whole school gathers together for assembly.
- Pupils' freedom from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment is excellent, as are relationships.
- Pupils' personal development is fostered very successfully through the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme and religious education.
- The level of attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection.

### **Commentary**

- Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for their life at Thomas Harding School, as do their parents. Attitudes to work and school in general are very good and this positive approach to learning helps to promote good achievement. Around the school pupils are calm and orderly. They show very good behaviour, independence and self-discipline. In a significant number of lessons and assemblies, pupils' behaviour is often outstanding. In assemblies pupils gather together in a very mature way and there is complete silence with a sense of reverence for the whole school acts of collective worship. There are very few incidents of immature behaviour. Exclusions are rare, with that of only one pupil being recorded in the past four years.

## Exclusions

### *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	130	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	2	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	51	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	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.*

9. Pupils listen very well to their teachers and work industriously at the tasks given to them. They work very hard within a happy atmosphere and show they are very enthusiastic learners. Pupils co-operate really well and understand the need for teamwork. Lessons are organised to encourage pupils to work together very constructively and, as a result, they share ideas, thoughts and resources willingly. Pupils concentrate well and show perseverance. They show very good initiative and have high self-esteem. They are prepared to promote new ideas and carry them forward. The work of the school council is of a very high quality and offers pupils opportunities to develop their self-determination and teamwork. The council has been instrumental in making some significant improvements to the learning environment. For instance, it initiated the provision of blinds in classrooms and the refurbishment of toilet facilities.
10. The school fosters extremely impressive levels of racial harmony and relationships are of the highest order. At playtimes pupils relax and play safely together without fear of bullying or harassment. Pupils value each other's differences and contributions in the classroom. They are almost always polite to adults and their relationships with staff are very strong.
11. The school takes particular account of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spirituality is evident within the work of the school. For example, an art display celebrates the work of 'Mother Nature'. The very good programme of lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship, (PSHCE), has a positive impact on the very good behaviour observed. Pupils

have good opportunities to develop their own citizenship role through the school council and through the wide range of responsibilities given to them. This ensures their personal development is very good and helps pupils to show maturity that, by Year 6, exceeds their years. They show initiative by participating in a non-uniform day to raise funds for victims of the tsunami.

12. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to make the right choices about smoking and drugs through posters they have made. In assemblies they consider how it is right to be proud of one's achievements but to be 'boastful' is not appropriate. Clubs and residential trips make certain that pupils bond together in a common purpose. Older pupils look after younger pupils in the playground. Visits and inter-school sporting activities give pupils opportunities to develop socially. An appreciation of history, art and sport is fostered very well. The school also prepares pupils very well for life in a diverse multicultural society. Pupils work collaboratively and respect each other's beliefs and values. This ensures that the spiritual development of pupils is very good. School assemblies reflect the religious traditions of all pupils. The school makes certain pupils are given effective experiences of a wide range of other cultures and this prepares them very well for the cultural diversity of modern Britain. This whole aspect of the school's work is very good and has improved since the previous inspection.
  
13. Pupils like school and are very keen to attend. The level of attendance has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is now very good and currently well above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Procedures to monitor attendance are good and understood well by parents. Unauthorised absence is controlled very well. Extended holidays are discouraged. Punctuality at the start of the school day is good, enabling a calm and efficient start.

## Attendance

### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.2
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.*

## THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

The school provides a good quality of education based on teaching that is good and with some very good features and a very good curriculum. Care, guidance and support are very good and links with parents and other schools are very good; those with the community are good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features. Almost half of lessons seen were very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn well and thoroughly enjoy lessons.
- Teachers plan their lessons very well.
- There is a strong ethos for learning in all classrooms.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' learning are very good.
- The teaching and learning of both pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are very good.

## Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Although the overall judgement is similar to that of the last inspection, there have been very considerable improvements. In particular there has been a strengthening of the very good and good teaching and significant reductions in the proportion of satisfactory teaching.
15. Teaching in all year groups is of good quality. Teachers plan lessons very carefully and effectively, ensuring that good quality activities are provided which are pitched at just the right level to ensure that the pupils make good progress in their learning. In all lessons the teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and what the expected outcomes are. These are shared with the pupils, which helps their learning because they know how the current work builds on that learned previously. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the use that teachers make of assessments. In all subjects teachers question pupils well to elicit their understanding and good adjustments are made in light of their responses. These good assessments ensure that the targets that are set for pupils both engage them in the process of improving learning and ensure that they have a clear view of what is expected.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14 (47%)	11(37%)	5(16%)	0	0	0

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

16. The table shows that almost half of the teaching seen was very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the last inspection almost half of the teaching was satisfactory, so this shows a considerable improvement. The good quality teaching leads to effective learning and the good achievement evident in most subjects. In almost all classes, the teachers' management of the pupils' behaviour is very good. The strong ethos for learning and the commitment that staff have in ensuring that pupils learn well leads to the pupils having strong attitudes to learning: they love their school and thoroughly enjoy most lessons.
17. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers understand the pupils learning needs well and they are able to plan work to match individual abilities. This helps to make all the pupils to feel included and enables them to make good progress in their learning. The learning support staff are effective in motivating pupils with special educational needs. They support the pupils well both in classes and in small groups.
18. The teaching and learning of the high proportion of pupils that have English as an additional language are very good. These pupils are supported very well in lessons, mainly by the specialist teacher. As a consequence of her very good support, these pupils make very good progress. This is achieved because she ensures that pupils have a very good understanding of what is being required by the class teacher and that their linguistic limitations do not inhibit their learning.

## The curriculum

The curricular provision for pupils is very good. Extra-curricular provision is good. The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. The curriculum has improved since the time of the previous inspection.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has developed a rich and diverse curriculum for pupils, where links between subjects are used well.
- The school makes particularly good allowance for art and design, design and technology and history.
- The overall provision made for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects is good.
- The school is very inclusive, and all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed.
- The school makes very good provision for developing pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE).
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The enrichment produced through extra-curricular activities and educational visits is good.
- There is a good number of teachers and teaching assistants, and they complement each other well in supporting the pupils.

## **Commentary**

19. All subjects of the curriculum are planned most carefully, and all statutory requirements are met. The school provides particularly detailed plans to ensure that the work given to pupils is both relevant and interesting. The school has taken care to provide a wide variety of activities and experiences within each subject, and has also linked subjects together whenever possible. This has helped to ensure a rich and diverse curriculum for the pupils. The school makes particularly good provision for art and design, design and technology and history. This has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and their achievement. The school currently also makes good provision for the development of English, mathematics and ICT, through their use in other subjects, and this has contributed to the good achievement being made by pupils. Planning for practical and enquiry activities in science has also been extensive, and this has greatly helped pupils' overall understanding in the subject. The curriculum is also enhanced by a day being allocated each term to a different subject, which was history last term and science this term, when pupils are able to enjoy an in-depth study of an aspect of the subject. Similarly, the Fair Trade Week not only develops pupils' understanding in various subject areas; it also allows them to learn about other cultures around the world.
20. The school makes every effort to involve all pupils in the full range of school work and activities, and therefore makes very good provision for the equality of opportunity for all pupils. In so doing the school allows them to achieve as well as they can. The school also provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about sex education, drugs awareness and the need to follow a healthy life-style. This leads to pupils having a secure understanding in their personal, social and health education.
21. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Good adaptations are carefully planned to ensure that all pupils are able to participate in the very good range of activities provided.
22. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils. These include football, netball, rugby, gymnastics, tennis, singing and art clubs, as well as the popular French club. These activities are well supported by teachers, teaching assistants and coaches from outside clubs. The school welcomes many visitors, including artists, writers, clergy and actors in historical costume as well as drama and music groups. The Mayor of Chesham has also visited the school. A range of educational visits is arranged to places such as the Black Country Museum, the British Museum, St Alban's and local churches and theatres. Residential visits are a regular feature for older pupils, and the visit to Osmington in Dorset is eagerly awaited. The school also makes good use of the local area of Chesham for various studies in, for example, geography. These activities make a most significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as enhancing their understanding and skills in different subjects.

23. The school's accommodation is good. Classrooms are at least adequate in size, with good additional space available for practical activities and small-group work. The hall, music room and library are pleasant, well resourced areas, and the library in particular is most welcoming. The ICT suite is adequate, but the school has plans to further develop this facility at the earliest opportunity. Improvements are currently being carried out to the pupils' toilets, and the new facilities are first-class. Rooms throughout the school are clean and well maintained, and displays of pupils' work greatly enhance their appearance.
24. Outside play-areas are pleasant, with suitable activity areas and quiet areas to suit the needs of different pupils. The environment is greatly enhanced by the large playing field, as well as the nature area, which is a source of much interest to the pupils. Resources are now very good in number and are generally of good quality. They are very good for English and mathematics in particular. Staff keep items stored neatly and tidily. The school is well staffed by a dedicated and well-informed group of teachers and support staff. They complement each other well in providing for their pupils.

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

The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Child protection and health and safety are very high priorities in the school.
- Pupils' academic monitoring is excellent and support for their personal development is very strong.
- Pupils are very trusting of adults and feel very much involved in the school.
- Pupils settle very well when they join the school.

### **Commentary**

25. Child protection and health and safety are both areas that have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher, who is the designated child protection co-ordinator, is well trained and experienced in dealing with any concerns. One of the governors has responsibility for child protection and the school's policy, which is based on local area guidelines, is reviewed annually. All staff, including support staff, recently received training in child protection and those who have joined since then have the school's procedures outlined to them as part of their induction.
26. Similarly, health and safety procedures are made known to new staff, who have to confirm they have read the school's policy. Governors play an active role in ensuring the premises are in good order and safe, and there is a range of risk assessments carried out to cover activities such as school visits. A high proportion of staff is trained in first aid and very good procedures are in place to provide cover throughout the day, to record any accidents and illnesses and to care for pupils with specific medical needs.
27. The school's arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' progress and their subsequent academic guidance are excellent. The school has comprehensive procedures for tracking the progress of pupils in almost all subjects. The very good assessment arrangements in place ensure that teachers take careful note of the pupils' achievements and, when linked to the tests that are provided, help to provide a clear picture of pupils' progress. This leads to pupils being provided with clear targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are guided particularly effectively. Their needs are very carefully assessed and very clear and concise targets are set. Pupils are very effectively involved in recognising their own progress towards targets set by the use of a "thermometer" which shows pupils how much they are progressing towards achieving the targets set in their Individual Education Plans.

29. The procedures to monitor pupils' personal development have also improved and are now considered to be very good. The great majority of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire believe staff encourage their children to become mature and independent. All staff, even those new to the school, know the pupils very well and ensure that if there are any concerns these are raised and dealt with as sensitively as possible. Personal, social and health education lessons, timetabled weekly for each class, give teachers an opportunity to monitor and record pupils' personal development. The annual written report that parents receive also includes a paragraph on their child's personal and social development that can be used to track progress throughout the school. Staff will call on expertise from outside the school for pupils with specific needs such as to develop their speech and language skills and this gives additional support. The impact of such very good levels of support, advice and guidance is that pupils feel very secure in school and are therefore enabled to learn well.
30. As a result of the excellent relationships and rapport that exists in the school, pupils have developed a very strong level of trust in adults. They are confident that if they have any concerns they will be listened to and issues will be resolved. This adds to their sense of security and enjoyment of school, which has a very positive impact on learning.
31. Pupils are given a very strong sense of being involved in the school through formal routes such as the school council. The class representatives are given the opportunity to canvass their peers and also to feed back after the monthly meeting, so that pupils can air their views on matters such as charity fundraising and improvements to the playground. There is also a suggestion box for pupils to put their ideas into. Pupils are also involved in the school by being given responsible roles such as being "thumbs" monitor at the end of assembly (assessing how quietly their classmates leave assembly) and acting as "A-Team" leaders, working with younger pupils to give them structured playtimes. Such involvement of pupils does much to develop their self-esteem and maturity as well as increase their sense of involvement in the school community.
32. Pupils spoken to during the inspection all settled happily when they joined in Year 3 and the induction arrangements are very well established. Pupils meet their teachers in the infant school environment and then come for a visit so that the transition to the next stage of their education goes very smoothly. This has a positive impact on their learning.

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

Links with parents and with other schools and colleges are very good. There are good links with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school makes very strenuous efforts to involve parents and to deal with any concerns
- There are very well established, mutually beneficial links with other schools
- Good use is made of local facilities

### **Commentary**

33. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned the questionnaire generally hold very positive views of the school and links with parents are considered to have improved from the good levels seen at the last inspection. Parents are particularly pleased with the progress their children make, the standard of teaching and the knowledge that staff expect their children to work hard. The evidence from the inspection confirms all of these views.
34. A small number of parents feel that the school does not seek the views of parents and some would not feel comfortable about approaching the school. However, these opinions are not supported by inspection evidence. For example, the school uses questionnaires to canvass parents' views on matters such as the homework policy and also takes resulting comments

into account. Teachers are very accessible to parents at the end of the day and the headteacher makes every effort to see parents as soon as they ask. In an effort to involve parents more, "drop-in" sessions are arranged for parents to observe literacy and numeracy lessons. In addition, parents' consultation meetings that are held each term, are now organised over two days covering an evening and after school. Furthermore, coffee mornings are arranged for parents who have English as additional language and the school has a member of staff who can translate for those parents. Each class now has an appointed parent representative to further improve communication with parents.

35. Parents receive good quality information from the school, including regular newsletters, good annual written reports and a prospectus and Governors' Annual Report that contain all the statutory information. They also receive regular curriculum letters with guidance on how they can support their child at home and, overall, parents do contribute well to their children's education at home and at school. This includes helping with homework, listening to them read regularly, volunteering to help in school and running activities such as the cycling awareness course. The very active Parents' Association also makes a valuable contribution to the school by providing funds for additional resources such as interactive whiteboards. All of this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
36. The very strong links with other schools include involvement in the Schools' Sports Co-ordinator Scheme, which has led to extended extracurricular activities for pupils and also led to the set up of the Year 6 "A Team" involvement in structured play. This has helped to enhance pupils' skills as well as their personal and social development through participation in inter-school events. Very close ties are in place with the infant school from where most pupils transfer. This means that expertise is shared in relation to special needs for example and joint training events take place. When pupils do transfer across, the transition is made as smooth as possible, particularly as the infant school staff decide on which pupils should go into each Year 3 class at the junior school. This is also the case when pupils transfer on to secondary school, as pieces of work in literacy and numeracy are started in the junior school and continued when pupils move on to Year 7. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit for "taster" days and to meet staff so that they have some familiarity with the school. Three governors who sit on the junior school governing body, are also governors at other schools, which helps to enhance the links. All of the above has a very positive impact on staff expertise, and pupils' experiences and learning.
37. Links with the community have been maintained at the good levels seen at the last inspection. The local area is used well to enhance subjects such as geography and art, with pupils undertaking traffic surveys and using the surrounding countryside to inspire their artwork. The local library and museums are visited and the pupils go out into the community to participate in the Chesham Carnival, in music and dance festivals and to sing for senior citizens at Christmas time. The community links not only enhance learning for pupils but also give them a sense of their place in the wider community.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good throughout the school. This ensures that appropriate priorities for development are set and that the work of the school is monitored and evaluated very effectively.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school.
- Subject leadership is of very good quality;
- The governing body is very effective.



## Commentary

38. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good and are a key reason why the school is so effective. She provides a very strong steer for the school, having a clear and incisive vision for the future. She leads and manages the school both very efficiently and effectively. The school has gone through very significant staff changes in the past year, including there being five new classroom teachers who are replacing four senior members of staff. The head has minimized the potential negative impact of these losses and has ensured that the school's provision is of good quality. This has been achieved because the head has ensured that the very positive and strong working ethos that she has created in the ten years that she has been at the school has provided a firm foundation for new teachers to the school. Parents recognise her many qualities and they are right in their view that she is pivotal to the success of the school.
39. Governors are very effective. They fulfil statutory duties effectively and through regular meetings, ensure that important decisions about the future of the school are made carefully. Liaison between governors and staff is productive and provides governors with a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors are fully supportive of the headteacher and are not afraid to challenge and question the reasons for decisions being made. The budget is used well in ensuring that the school's priority for raising standards is met.
40. Subject leaders fulfil their role well. In almost all areas of the curriculum, leadership and management are very good. Co-ordinators have a very good understanding of the strengths and needs in their respective areas. This is obtained through continual dialogue, and very close monitoring of teaching and learning. All co-ordinators review teachers' planning and offer useful support for future improvements. In almost all areas, co-ordinators have had an opportunity to observe teaching. The outcomes of the monitoring are used well to pin-point future actions through very good subject plans. These contribute very well to the overall school improvement plan.
41. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is co-ordinated particularly well. The headteacher, who fulfils this role, provides very good support for teachers ensuring that the carefully prepared Individual Education Plans are of high quality, relevant to pupils' needs and are systematically reviewed on a regular basis. The impact of this very good management ensures that these pupils make very good progress in their learning.
42. The management of the school is very good. Efficient routines are in place and the school is an orderly community. Administrative staff work very effectively and efficiently to support the teachers. The current school improvement plan is of good quality and ensures that the school's priorities are met. Very good account is taken through high quality analysis of the school's current performance. Clear targets for development are set and criteria for evaluating success are established. The priorities identified in the plan are closely allied to costs. Staff development is carefully linked to the school improvement plan through the very good performance management processes that are in place.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	638,370	Balance from previous year	26,633
Total expenditure	614,595	Balance carried forward to the next	50,408

Expenditure per pupil	2,768
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# **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

### **English**

Provision in English is **very good**.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons, they concentrate well and achieve very well.
- The leadership and management of the subject is very good.
- Very good opportunities are provided to enhance pupils' reading and writing skills through teaching and learning in most subjects.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of presentation, particularly by the more able pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make very good progress and achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

43. In the 2004 national tests for 11 year-olds, standards were below average. In previous years, results in tests have been generally above average in comparison with all schools nationally and well above the national average in comparison with similar schools. The 2004 test results were a result of the bigger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
44. Inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment is improving in both reading and writing. These findings are more positive than the 2004 test results and there are strong indications that test results will improve to the previous above average levels.
45. Pupils enter the school with below average skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. As a result of the very good provision – in particular the very good quality of teaching – pupils make good progress and all groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve particularly well. This is due to the very good support they receive both from teachers and from learning support assistants.
46. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly average. Very many good opportunities are provided for pupils to talk with one another and in small groups. In addition, teachers question pupils particularly well and this helps the pupils to learn how to provide accurate and extended answers to questions. For example, in one reading session where a teacher was working with a group of Year 6 pupils, her questioning, when asking pupils to review different characters in the plot, made them think carefully about their answers and provide extended reasons to support their viewpoint. During the inspection, many such incidences of good questioning in English and other lessons were seen.
47. As a result of very good teaching, reading skills are above average. Pupils are generally confident readers and many thoroughly enjoy reading; there are few pupils that struggle with the decoding of words and are not fluent readers. The school has recently embarked on an improvement project to strengthen the pupils' skills through the use of the guided reading approach, and there are strong indications that this is successful.
48. Writing is well taught. The review of pupils' work reveals that pupils make rapid progress in writing from a relatively low starting point. Very effective planning ensures that there are many opportunities for pupils to use literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum and this makes a significant contribution to the pupils' good progress and achievement. All teachers constantly

challenge pupils to make their writing more interesting and they provide very good support to help pupils to use their imagination. Pupils learn well to write in a variety of styles including biographies, short stories, poems and letters. Pupils thoroughly enjoy report writing whether, for example, they are preparing a newsletter in English, recording scientific investigations or reporting on aspects of Tudor life in England. Although the skill of handwriting and presentation is taught well, the quality of presentation, particularly by the more able pupils, is inconsistent.

49. The teaching and learning of English is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons very well, they ensure that the work provided is of good quality and they pitch the lessons at just the right level to enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Teachers' enthusiastic approach captures the pupils' interests and, in consequence, the pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons. They concentrate and behave well, support each other and make very good progress.
50. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator's knowledge and very good sense of purpose makes a particular contribution to the very good provision. She is very thorough in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and provides very good advice to other members of staff. Data is used very well to pinpoint any weaknesses and the resultant plans for development are of very good quality. Also the priorities established are appropriate. She ensures that the curriculum is of very good quality by supporting teachers' planning of lessons, providing suggestions for improvements and generally ensuring that English has a high profile in the school.

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

51. This is a particular strength. There are many examples of the use of writing across the curriculum. This is due to the very good planning for most subjects in which opportunities to extend language and literacy skills are highlighted in most topics. Furthermore, these planned opportunities in history, geography, religious education, design and technology and science build successfully on the unit of work being studied in English. Hence, when Year 3 pupils study the location of information in English lessons, this is linked to gathering information from topic books in studying the Romans. Similarly as part of the unit on writing non-chronological reports, planning in geography provides for writing about village settlements. In science, pupils write about teeth and magnets and in design and technology their work centres on making Roman pots and writing about how they plan and evaluate their work. Such high quality planning throughout the school ensures that there is an integrated and cohesive approach to learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are broadly average at Year 6. Based on their prior attainment, all pupils are now achieving well. Overall provision is similar to that reported at the previous inspection.
- The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good, with teachers making very good use of assessment to ensure that pupils are provided with work that suits their needs.
- Teachers make good use of other subjects to enhance pupils' numeracy skills.
- The attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils are very good. They clearly enjoy their work in the subject.
- The role played by the subject co-ordinator is very good.

## Commentary

52. In the national tests in Year 6 in 2004, overall standards were broadly average. In the previous year standards were well above average, and at the time of the previous inspection they were above average. Standards currently attained, as with those last year, do not signify a fall in overall provision, but are the result of a higher than normal proportion of pupils with special educational needs. They also indicate year groups where a significant number of pupils have either joined or left the school during the four years of their junior schooling.
53. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress in their learning. They are generally confident in tackling most aspects of mathematics, and the oldest pupils show the expected levels of understanding and skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils confidently undertake work in all four aspects of number, including those involving decimals. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures, and most pupils are able to recall individual multiplication and division facts to  $10 \times 10$ . Pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and most readily find a fractional or percentage part of a whole number, and reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. Most pupils confidently plot points in all four quadrants to produce various shapes. Many pupils can measure angles accurately, and calculate angles of different shapes, although some find this difficult. Pupils throughout the school tackle suitable and often challenging practical and problem solving activities. However, a number of pupils have difficulties understanding and answering questions in word form, and this is having a detrimental effect on overall standards.
54. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned and resourced very well, and teachers fully and actively involve all pupils during the mental sessions at the start of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they explain clearly the work under consideration and they make good use of the appropriate mathematical terminology in explaining the methods and processes. They also make particularly good use of the interactive white boards to demonstrate various procedures for the pupils. Pupils are provided with the opportunity to talk about their work, both with adults and other pupils, and this benefits their understanding. Teachers make sure that pupils are kept engaged with a range of appropriate activities, and suitable help is provided both by themselves and the teaching assistants. Teachers make very good use of assessment to ensure that these activities are suitable to pupils' particular needs. Much well directed help is given by adults, and as a result all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, make good gains in their overall mathematical knowledge and understanding.
55. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy their work in mathematics, the mental sessions in particular, and their attitudes are very good. They are prepared to answer questions and offer opinions. They settle to their written and practical tasks with considerable interest and enthusiasm, they work well with other pupils, when required, and they make good attempts to find answers and provide solutions. Most pupils take considerable care with the presentation in their books and some take a pride in their work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and most provide helpful, encouraging and sympathetic advice for them, to help them improve their work further.
56. The subject co-ordinator supports her colleagues very well, and she has also contributed much towards the overall provision for the subject. She regularly monitors the work being produced by pupils, and she also observes lessons being taken by other staff members, to see for herself the standards being achieved in class. In particular she has provided support and advice to teachers new to the school. She has helped to improve the range of resources for the subject, and has worked hard with colleagues in developing the use of the interactive white boards. She is fully aware that a number of pupils find problem-solving activities difficult, and she is currently looking at ways to overcome this issue. Her leadership is very good.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

57. Numeracy is taught most successfully in mathematics lessons, with teachers putting much emphasis on developing pupils' ability in handling numbers. Teachers also make most suitable allowance for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and geography. Good use is also made of ICT, especially in relation to data-handling.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Years 3, 4 and 5 are above average.
- Standards in scientific enquiry have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good and enables all pupils to achieve well.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed very well in science lessons.
- Adult helpers contribute significantly to pupils' learning.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and has a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

### **Commentary**

58. In 2004, Year 6 results in the national tests were average. Standards were lower than those recorded in recent years and they were also lower than those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school has well documented and comprehensive information that shows last year's results reflected a higher percentage of pupils with special educational needs. Very good assessment information and inspection evidence indicates that currently Year 6 pupils are working at the national expectations and at a similar level to those of the previous Year 6 group. This is because a high number of pupils have special educational needs. However, in Years 3, 4 and 5, standards are higher and pupils are working at an above average level. Standards throughout the school are showing a marked improvement in relation to pupils' knowledge and use of enquiry skills. There has been a significant improvement in this aspect of pupils' science work since the previous inspection.
59. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well and make good progress.
60. Teaching is good overall, with some lessons being very good. This good quality teaching enables pupils to learn effectively and they achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as their second language are very well supported and they too progress well.
61. Teachers make certain that in science lessons all pupils are highly motivated. Pupils are enabled to take responsibility for their own learning and display very good initiative. They can and do work both collaboratively and independently. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, plan thoroughly and are very well prepared. They place rightly an emphasis on the investigative process so pupils develop enquiry skills, record findings and evaluate their results with increasing competence. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were experimenting with 'spinners' to explore the effects of air resistance on the force of gravity. Pupils were able to offer explanations as to how gravity works on objects. They could predict and explained clearly what they thought would happen in their tests. They knew how they had to make their tests fair by controlling variables. Similarly, in a Year 4 lesson to encourage pupils to discover more about the insulating properties of materials, the scientific process was of top priority and was clearly understood by pupils.

62. In a Year 5 lesson, when pupils were investigating the effect of exercise on their pulse rates, they showed very good use of numeracy skills when using stopwatches and pulse meters. Literacy and ICT skills are also promoted very well in science. Recording results and investigation reports gives pupils opportunities to further these skills in a variety of ways. The school is very focused on this aspect of its work. Labelling, list making and research all contribute well to developing these attributes further. All pupils are encouraged to record for themselves. Those who find it more of a challenge to write information down are assisted. Simplified versions of recording sheets are available to help pupils complete their tasks. This makes certain that they are fully included. For example, during a lesson on materials in Year 3, lower attaining pupils were well supported in this way. Learning support assistants are often at hand to give very valuable support. Also volunteer helpers from the community contribute to pupils' good achievement as was seen in a Year 6 lesson on forces, as the additional adult support meant pupils took part in detailed discussion about the effect gravity has on moving objects.
63. The leadership of the subject is very good. Lesson observations leading to appropriate, targeted support and in-service training have assisted good improvement in the teaching of science investigations. The co-ordinator has a very thorough understanding of the subject and monitors teaching and learning very closely and effectively. There is a highly structured programme for monitoring teachers' planning and a timetable for regular classroom observations, coupled with structures for evaluating standards through work scrutiny. The outcomes of all these procedures are used to inform plans for the future development of the subject. The detailed and very thorough work of the co-ordinator is having a positive impact on standards and is improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in Years 3, 4 and 5 are above average.
- The use of interactive white boards is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching in ICT and other subjects.
- Teaching is good and makes certain all pupils achieve well.
- The leadership of ICT is very good.
- A learning support assistant provides very good support for both the technical and teaching aspects of the subject.
- Very good links are forged between ICT and other subjects.

### **Commentary**

64. Standards in ICT in Year 6 are currently in line with national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. All Year 6 pupils are achieving well because they are supported very proficiently and are benefiting from the additional emphasis placed by the school on this aspect of the curriculum. The influence of the increased use of ICT within other subjects and the investment by the school in interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning is having a significant impact on standards in Years 3, 4 and 5, where standards are above average. In these classes too there is good achievement. The present Year 6 pupils have not had access to the increased provision over time and as a result their standards are still average. The subject is well taught, not only as a discreet subject, but also as part of work in many areas. As a result, pupils of all abilities and those who have English as an additional language are very confident in using computers to enhance their learning in many subjects.
65. Teaching is good overall, with some lessons being very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher very effectively taught pupils the refinements of

'Excel'. They were able to input data onto a spreadsheet and make very good use of the power of this ICT application to change the pound into different currencies. As a result they were able to compare the exchange rates offered by different, fictional banks and chose the one they would visit to get more value for their money. In Year 5, pupils confidently worked on a history based topic, creating hyper-links between their text and pictures of the 'Twelve Labours of Hercules'. Teachers constantly explore new ways of using ICT within their teaching. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace with many opportunities for pupil participation. Pupils keep a detailed log of the work they have accomplished in ICT and this clearly shows the progression in their learning and the development of their skills week by week. For example, Year 3 pupils drew on their experiences of the previous week when they sent and replied to e-mails. During this lesson pupils demonstrated good use of 'spell check' in their e-mail text and the more able used the 'address book' facility confidently.

66. The subject leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of ICT. Lessons and planning are monitored closely. In-service training has been profitable and has had a direct and positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Areas identified as requiring improvement in order to support the continued development of pupils' standards in ICT are being addressed through well-written action plans that form part of the school improvement plan. She fully understands and has secure plans for the next phases of the subject's development. These plans are well in hand and include the re-design and refurbishment of the current suite and provision for the purchase of new computers and additional resources. The school is very aware of the additional impact this will have on pupils' learning. The subject leader and all other teachers are very well supported by an accomplished teaching assistant. This teaching assistant provides backing, both as a technician, and as a learning support assistant. She performs a valuable role. Her work has a noticeable impact on standards, as she very effectively supports learning by aiding teachers during lessons and also by working with groups of pupils to extend their skills.

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

67. This is a particular strength and there has been significant improvement in this area since the previous inspection. Teachers employ ICT in a variety of subjects and ways. Examples of pupils' work are kept in a portfolio that teachers can refer to and this provides them with additional ideas for planning ICT into their lessons. Word processing is used regularly. Teachers in Year 4 use interactive resources to support their guided reading effectively. Pupils use spreadsheets to produce graphs from data. They create multi-media presentations in a variety of contexts. The use of the digital camera is wide-ranging and there is evidence of it being used as a very effective tool to support teaching and learning. Control technology is explored thoroughly in, for example, the design of lighthouses and traffic lights. In science, sound sensors are employed successfully. ICT makes a considerable contribution to almost every subject through a carefully planned programme.

## **HUMANITIES**

Only one lesson was seen in each of the subjects of history and geography and hence it was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in these subjects. Religious education is reported in full.

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards by Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils' achievement is good. Overall provision has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Teachers provide a wide variety of learning experiences for pupils, and teaching is good.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to be tolerant of others.



- The attitudes of pupils towards the subject are very good, and they particularly enjoy celebrating different festivals.
- The co-ordinator keeps detailed records and photographs to illustrate the standards being achieved.

### Commentary

68. By Year 6, pupils are suitably informed about a number of world religions, successfully explaining many aspects of the Christian, Islamic, Jewish and Buddhist faiths. They achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Standards are broadly in line with both national expectations and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils know that all religions have distinctive traditions and life-styles. For example, pupils in Year 3 explain how Jews celebrate the Passover, and how Moslems celebrate Eid-UI-Fitr. Pupils in Year 4 are aware of the importance of 'light' and 'water' in many religions, and they provide appropriate examples to illustrate their understanding. Pupils in Year 5 are increasingly aware of the various texts that are important to different peoples, and they recognise the importance of the Qur'an to Moslems. Pupils in Year 6 know about some of the teachings of Buddha, and in particular they explain his emphasis on 'The Middle Way'. Pupils are aware of the need for love and understanding in their dealings with others, and they recognise in particular the importance of their own families. Pupils, throughout the school, clearly understand the need to be tolerant of other people's dress, lifestyle and ritual. They identify ways in which prejudice may arise, and they explain the need for this to be avoided.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons throughout the school are well planned, and interesting ideas and information are presented to pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, through most suitable activities, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. This is also the case for pupils who have English as an additional language. Teachers ensure the pupils' interest through a most thoughtful variety of learning experiences, such as asking thought-provoking questions, making good use of religious artefacts, video-clips and visits to religious buildings, and the opportunity for pupils to express their thoughts at length, both through writing and discussion.
70. Pupils are most keen to provide a variety of thoughtful answers and observations. They enjoy the range of activities and experiences provided, especially handling religious artefacts, joining in drama activities and celebrating different festivals. They work well with other pupils when necessary, and are most keen to complete the tasks set. Discussions with pupils show a considerable interest in the subject, and their attitudes are clearly very good. Pupils usually take care with the presentation of their work, and in their marking teachers regularly add comments of praise or advice.
71. The subject co-ordinator has only recently joined the teaching profession, and so has only just taken over the subject. However, she is keen, enthusiastic and a good practitioner. Her leadership is satisfactory, and she has already collected much evidence to illustrate the work being tackled in the school. She supports her colleagues whenever necessary, and she has ensured that a suitable range of artefacts, and other resources such as books and CD ROMS, are available for use in lessons.
72. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in **geography**, and so no overall judgement is made. In the lesson seen, in Year 3, the pupils studied aspects of land use in the local area. They produced maps and pictograms to show how much land is used for such things as housing, farming and industry. The teaching was good, the pupils were very well behaved and the standard of the work produced was in line with that expected. A study of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work completed so far, show that appropriate coverage is made for the subject during the year. For example, this year, pupils in Year 3 have studied a range of maps and identified different types of settlements, and those in Year 4 have learnt about deserts and tropical rainforests. Pupils in Year 5 have studied the problems caused by traffic, and have suggested ways in which improvements can be made. Those in Year 6 are learning about rivers, and features of those rivers, as well as finding information about

mountains and mountain ranges. Pupils throughout the school show appropriate concern for the environment, both on a local, and on a worldwide, scale. Inspection evidence suggests that standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

73. During the inspection only one lesson was seen in **history**, and no overall judgement is made. In this lesson, in Year 6, on schools in the time of the Ancient Greeks, the teaching was very good. Particularly good use was made of a range of research materials. Pupils enjoyed this lesson, their attitudes were very good and they achieved well. Discussions with pupils in other classes, on different aspects of history, together with a study of samples of their work, also showed that pupils attain above expected levels of knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 could discuss in detail the life-styles of the Romans, and why they chose to invade Britain, and those in Year 4 could explain why, as a result of the Blitz in World War II, children had to be evacuated. Pupils in Year 5 had a clear understanding of many aspects of life in Victorian times, especially when comparing the lives of rich and poor people. Throughout the school, good use is made of time-lines to ensure pupils' understanding of chronology, and pupils are also able to discuss with some confidence the lives of famous historical figures, such as Boudicca and Queen Victoria. Inspection evidence suggests that provision has improved since the previous inspection, with the co-ordinator having contributed significantly to this improvement.

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

During the inspection, too few lessons could be seen in art and design, physical education and design and technology to enable secure judgements on provision to be made. Music was inspected in full.

### **Music**

Provision in music is **satisfactory**

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

- Pupils achieve well and enjoy lessons.
- The curriculum is enriched by good opportunities for pupils to learn a range of instruments taught by visiting specialist teachers.
- The standard of singing in assemblies is above average.
- There are too few opportunities for instrumental players to make music together.

#### **Commentary**

74. Standards in music are broadly in line with the national average. In lessons, pupils attain average standards. As a result of the good teaching, pupils enjoy lessons and achieve well. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, in which pupils were given the task of planning a composition to a set theme one group, in planning a limbo dance on a desert island, worked particularly well together. This collaborative learning is a feature of most lessons. The pupils listened carefully to each other and selected appropriate instruments from the very good range of non-pitched instruments available. After considerable negotiation and rehearsal they produced a good quality composition which appropriately reflected the strong rhythmic requirements of the given theme.
75. Year 6 pupils, in a very good lesson, quickly learned the words and theme of "I wanna sing scat". The teacher's infectious enthusiasm and her high quality singing captured the pupils' interest, which led to them being able to hold two parts effectively when performing the song. Later in this lesson, the teacher introduced xylophones and metalophones as well as enabling pupils to play their own instruments such as flute, keyboard, violin and guitar, to accompany the newly learned song.

76. Singing is of good quality in assemblies. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically and there is a very strong sense of both enjoyment and involvement.
77. The quality of teaching is good. Planning is very good and teachers ensure that the work set matches the varying abilities of the pupils. This aids learning because most pupils' interest is captured and this leads to them making good progress.
78. The curriculum for music is satisfactory. Provision for music is enriched through the extra curricular teaching of woodwind – including saxophone, clarinet and flute, keyboard, guitar and violin. Almost a quarter of the school's pupils have tuition in one of these instruments. In addition, there is a singing club, and each year the school holds a musical evening. However, there is not enough opportunity provided for pupils to play together as a school orchestra and hence there are too few ensemble occasions for pupils learning to play instruments taught by outside teachers.
79. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She offers good advice to teachers, develops the music curriculum and ensures that the subject has an appropriate profile in the school.
80. The quality of the art displays round school and in a school portfolio suggests that standards in **art and design** are above average and have improved since the last inspection. The school has a policy to allocate some specific days to the promotion of art focussed activities. Planning for these days and the general plans show pupils are given numerous opportunities to experiment with a wide range of media. Sketchbooks indicate that pupils are learning to observe closely and they are given specific tasks that help support the development of the use of line, tone and texture. Pastel drawings by pupils in Year 4 are of a high quality and show an awareness of the use of these skills. In this particular work, pupils explored the theme of 'relationships' such as those between a mother and child and also a group of friends together in the playground. The outcomes of this work are on display and convey, very successfully, feelings aroused in various circumstances. Evidence suggests pupils' skills are developing well. Year 5 pupils have recently undertaken some lessons on perspective. They were especially keen to explain how they had worked on creating urban and rural scenes using layers of tracing paper and black paper to create striking, visual images. They had taken great care to produce their landscapes and were very proud of the impressive outcomes that took account of the use of perspective well.
81. No lessons were seen in **design and technology** and therefore no judgement on provision can be made. However, there are indications from the good range of displayed work, the portfolio of design and technology evidence and review of the curriculum that provision is at least good and that standards may well be above the national expectation. For example, in a display "Hats R Us" Year 6 pupils have designed, made and evaluated hats. Pupils developed individual styles, colour and decoration in this very good quality work. It is evident that the curriculum for design and technology is of good quality, which encourages high quality work. For example, Year 3 pupils make photo frames and in Year 4, money containers, sandwiches and storyboards are designed and made. In Year 5 there is good evidence of the pupils' evaluations of Victorian candleholders and moving toys that they had designed and made..
82. **Physical education** was not a focus of the inspection and one lesson was observed. This Year 5 lesson was of very good quality. This gymnastics lesson was taught very well and, as a consequence, the pupils achieved very well and attained standards that were well above expectations. They thoroughly enjoyed the rigour and challenge that the teacher set in the main activity in which they were required to develop a gymnastic routine that included three different jumps and two balances. As a result of the teachers' prompting, the pupils, working in pairs, planned their performance well. They worked very hard to make improvements in precision and quality of their performance and this resulted in very good achievement, due to the consistent and concentrated effort they put into their learning. Pupils linked the skills very well with most showing good fluency as well as control. The teaching in this lesson was enhanced by the presence of a teacher from a local secondary school who is supporting the

teaching and learning of physical education. There are indications that the curriculum for physical education is very good and that the subject is led and managed very well.

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

83. One lesson in personal, social and health education was observed. Also, the school council was observed in operation. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in this area of learning. In the one Year 4 lesson seen, the quality of both teaching and learning was good. In this lesson, pupils were learning how people make decisions and what influences them. The teacher used a theme of cigarette smoking to elicit the objectives and she cleverly introduced a range of good and thoughtful activities to show how adults' views of smoking may be influenced. The pupils then went on to consider why people still smoke, even though they know it is unhealthy for them to do so.
  
84. It is evident that this is a particular strength of the school and the provision for personal, social and health education plays a strong role in the very good attitudes to learning and mature approach to schooling that is promoted in the pupils. This is an aspect of learning that permeates the work of the school. It is apparent in all lessons through the pupils' outstanding relationships, strong personal development and very positive attitudes. The school's inclusive and very positive ethos for learning is evident in each classroom every day.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</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	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	2
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>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
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	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).*