

INSPECTION REPORT

WICKFORD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Wickford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114813

Headteacher: Terry Flitman

Lead inspector: Andrew Matthews

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 April 2005

Inspection number: 268259

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:	371
School address:	Market Road Wickford Essex
Postcode:	SS12 0AG
Telephone number:	01268 733071
Fax number:	01268 570214
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms F Kemzura
Date of previous inspection:	19 April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Wickford Junior School is larger than most other primary schools with 371 pupils (177 boys and 194 girls). The majority of pupils come from the local area which has broadly average socio-economic statistics. The pupils' mobility rate of six per cent is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is slightly above average and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. A very small minority of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the school is average. There are twelve classes, with three classes in each year group. The school received the Active Mark in 2004, the Healthy Schools award in 2003 and Investors in People award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19410	Andrew Matthews	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Citizenship
3446	Helen Griffiths	Lay inspector	
10827	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Art and design Geography History
33628	Robina Tomes	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Music Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Ltd
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS	19
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Wickford Junior is a good and improving school. The quality of education provided by the school is now good and is beginning to raise standards. At present, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' personal development is very well provided for. Under the able leadership of the headteacher, the school reaches out most successfully into the local and wider community to enrich the pupils' lives as much as possible. Governors know the school well and give good support. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is effective and he is well supported by a hardworking staff and knowledgeable governors.
- The school is a harmonious community and its ethos is strong.
- The school curriculum is very good and this, together with good teaching, enables the great majority of pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils are very polite, behave well, work hard and are fiercely proud of their school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and rightly very pleased with the high standards of care for their children.
- Whilst pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) their achievement by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science needs to be higher.
- The quality of teaching is not consistent through the school.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. The good improvements made in the school's provision since the last inspection put it in a strong position to keep the upward pressure on standards at the end of Year 6. Significant improvements to the accommodation and well-directed training for all staff have benefited management, teaching and learning. Governors are now much more involved in the work of the school and provide good support for the school's leadership. The key issues of the last inspection have been addressed well, overall.

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	D	C	E
science	C	C	C	E

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

Pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory and this is reflected in the current Year 6 pupils' average standards in English, mathematics and science. However, due to improvements in teaching and the curriculum, the great majority of pupils, including those from different backgrounds, are now making good progress in lessons and the school is right to expect increasing improvements in Year 6 pupils' attainment when compared with similar schools. Evidence from the inspection, indicates that the results in English for the current pupils will be much improved due to the very successful writing initiative undertaken by the school. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations, except in physical education and ICT where standards are above average. Standards in swimming are exceptional. Pupils' progress in Years 3 and 5 is good but slows in Year 4, particularly for the higher-achievers who are not consistently challenged in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils are particularly well catered for and also achieve well.

Pupils have a good attitude to school and behave well. Pupils trust staff, are very well supported, and have very strong relationships with other pupils and adults. Attendance is above average and pupils arrive punctually for the start of the day. **The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, overall.** Provision for their social development is very good. Pupils' personal development is enhanced significantly by the work of the very active school council.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is now good, except in Year 4 where teaching is generally satisfactory. Here, pupils' progress slows and this has a direct impact on pupils' overall progress as they move through the school. The learning support assistants are well trained and give good support to pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. There have been good improvements in the way that pupils are assessed and this information is being used particularly well in the Year 6 classes to support pupils' progress towards their targets for English and mathematics. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work carefully and inform them how they can improve. However, the quality of marking is not consistent.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is very good, overall. The curriculum for physical education and ICT is particularly good. The curriculum is exceptionally well enhanced by an excellent and imaginative range of visits and very popular extra-curricular activities. The school's provision for pupils' with special educational needs is good. The school's accommodation and resources have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. The school makes good use of its spacious outside areas and the adjacent municipal swimming pool. The computer provision has improved and all pupils benefit from the new ICT suite. Whilst pupils use computers to enhance their learning in many subjects, even greater use could be made of ICT to record their science investigation findings and to develop their numeracy skills. There are very good links with the community and the school has built excellent educational links with local schools. A very good level of care is provided for pupils and the school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils with specific behavioural and learning difficulties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is good and he is rightly acknowledged as the driving force behind the many improvements that have been made since the last inspection. He has the highest aspirations for the school, a very clear vision of what needs to be done and works unstintingly to improve the school's provision. He is very well supported by his deputy and committed staff. **The leadership and management of other key staff are good.** Rigorous monitoring has correctly identified weaknesses in the school's provision. These are continually addressed with well-focused in-service training to develop the expertise of teachers and teaching assistants so that key objectives in the school's improvement plan can be met. The school's commitment to constant evaluation of its practice and the development of staff expertise is ensuring that the school has a good capacity to continue its recent improvements and raise standards further. Governance is now good. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meet all statutory requirements. They have a good range of experience and expertise and work closely with the school in planning developments. They have worked very effectively with the school in improving the learning environment.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents have very positive views of the school. The concerns of a minority of parents about bullying were investigated thoroughly but not upheld by the team. The school's partnership with parents has been particularly well developed since the last inspection. Pupils also have very positive views of school and greatly enjoy the wide range of opportunities they have for learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- Continue the upward pressure on standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good through the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Standards are average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory over time and there is very little difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are now making good progress in lessons but standards at the end of Year 6 are not high enough.
- Standards in information and communication (ICT) and physical education are above average.
- The current Year 6 pupils have made significant progress in writing this year.
- The progress of pupils in Year 4 is not as good as in other years.
- Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.1 (26.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.9 (28.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Results at the end of Year 6 over the last four years have been broadly average and the improvement trend for these subjects is lower than that for other schools. This is principally due to the weak English results for last year when the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was well below average. Results for 2004 show that pupils' attainment was below average in English and average in science and mathematics. When compared with similar schools the results for these pupils was well below average because the pupils had not made enough progress since Year 2. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that achievement is improving because of improvements in the school's use of targets. Pupils now have a good knowledge of their targets and this is helping them focus on what they need to learn next. As a result, the overall attainment of the current Year 6 pupils is higher than last year. Over the last four years girls have outperformed boys in all three subjects, with a significant difference in English. However, evidence from the inspection shows that due to the school's improved provision this gap has narrowed considerably this year, particularly in English, and there is now no discernible difference between the two. The challenge for higher-achieving pupils is now more consistent and most are making good progress. Similarly gifted and talented pupils also achieve well because of the very good provision made for them.
2. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average. Pupils in the current Year 3 are making good progress, overall, and noticeable progress in mathematics where the challenge and the quality of teaching are high. Progress slows in Year 4 because the quality of teaching is not as good as in other years and there is a particular lack of challenge for higher achievers. This was particularly evident in a numeracy lesson where work set by the teacher did not ensure sufficient learning. Pupils' achievement improves in Year 5 because they are systematically challenged in lessons and the setting by ability arrangements for numeracy are enabling teachers to speed up pupils' learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in reading are above average and there has been a significant improvement in these pupils' writing since last year. Pupils' attainment is in line with standards of the agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards are above

average in ICT where a mixture of good teaching, good resources and pupils' enthusiasm is helping to drive standards higher. Standards in physical education are above average, overall, and exceptionally high in swimming because the school places a big emphasis on this aspect of the subject and the provision is excellent. Standards in design and technology are now in line with national expectations because there has been a successful drive to improve pupils' planning and evaluation skills. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations.

3. The well-focused support and training for teachers and teaching assistants has successfully raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensures that pupils are fully included and supported in the school's provision. As a result, all pupils, including those from different backgrounds, are achieving as well as their peers. This is particularly applicable to pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are achieving consistently well because of the good provision and careful planning for their needs. In lessons, teachers and learning support assistants interact very well with these pupils. They ensure that they are fully integrated into the work of the class and that extra support provided is focused clearly on challenging pupils to do their very best.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good, overall, and very good for their social development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have very good relationships with one another.
- Pupils take their school council responsibilities very seriously.
- Pupils show strong respect for one another's feelings and beliefs.
- The attendance rate is above the national average.

Commentary

4. Pupils are confident, happy and self-assured. They enjoy school and all it has to offer. New pupils settle quickly into school routines and interact very well with older pupils. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and want to do well. They are keen to enter into discussion and listen well to the views of others. Pupils respond very well to teachers' expectations of good behaviour. They are extremely courteous, friendly and co-operate well.
5. Behaviour is good, and often very good, throughout the school in lessons, assemblies and playtimes. This reflects the views of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. When work is particularly challenging, pupils rise to the challenge, become engrossed and achieve well. Very occasionally, when work is too easy, pupils find it difficult to concentrate and chatter unnecessarily. The school has good systems to promote good behaviour and pupils appreciate these. At playtimes, older and younger pupils and boys and girls play happily together. Although a few parents expressed concerns about bullying in the questionnaire, these were not borne out by the inspection: no bullying or harassment was observed. On the very rare occasion that bullying takes place, the pupils know that the school handles it quickly and decisively.
6. Pupils are enterprising and respond very well to the many very good opportunities for taking responsibility, through the school council, the school bank and through the 'buddy' and house systems. They are very keen to take part in extra-curricular activities. Relationships between pupils and adults and among the pupils themselves are very good and this security gives them the confidence to ask questions and put forward their ideas. For example, in the 'Plato's

People' session for gifted and talented pupils, pupils were not afraid to put forward unorthodox ideas; and in a Year 6 science lesson on understanding a fair test, very good relationships ensured that pupils were confident to take risks in the way they set about their investigations.

7. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good and both show improvements on the last inspection. Authorised absence is above the national average because parents persist in taking holidays in term-time. There is also a small number of families with attendance problems. Staff monitor attendance very effectively and are very well supported by the educational welfare service. There is no unauthorised absence. There were three temporary exclusions last year for unacceptable behaviour and all appropriate procedures were followed.
8. Pupils' moral development is good and their social development very good. Pupils behave with consideration for others and have a well-developed sense of how their behaviour might affect other people. In discussion, pupils particularly liked the many activities offered them and felt that they had a real say in school life through the school council. The school has very good systems to promote pupils' personal responsibility and to help them to live in a harmonious community. For example, the peer mediation programme, the house system and the role of the school council (the spending of whose annual budget is discussed and decided by class councils). The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and residential trips make a strong contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Participation in extra-curricular activities is very high.
9. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on their own feelings and beliefs and those of others through religious education, PSHE and assemblies. Philosophy lessons have recently been introduced to help pupils to think and formulate their ideas. The local vicar regularly takes assemblies. Some classes have a 'Wonder Wall', through which pupils are encouraged to think about such questions as "What was the first word?" and to reflect on other people's beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to think of others through raising money each year for a charity nominated by the school council.
10. Pupils' cultural development is good. Art, including pupils' work, is well represented in displays and a good variety of visitors, including artists and musicians, visit the school. The school works hard to help pupils learn more about other cultures. For example, pupils took part recently in a county-wide intercultural project and the school is looking for ways to build links with a multi-ethnic school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.1
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.

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	342	1	0
White – Irish	2	2	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The curriculum is very good and the enrichment is excellent. Accommodation and resources are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and hard work ensure a good pace to pupils' learning.
- The effective deployment of the teaching assistants makes a good contribution to teaching and learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs.
- The majority of teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and inform them how they can improve their work.
- Careful monitoring by the headteacher and the senior management team have combined to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers assess pupils' work well and use information effectively to ensure that work builds on previous learning.
- Teaching in Year 4 is not as strong as in other years.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	5 (13%)	18 (45%)	15 (38%)	1 (2%)	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.

11. The quality of teaching has improved noticeably since the last inspection particularly in the proportion of good and very good lessons. This is because expectations have been raised by rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and well-focused support from the school and outside agencies. As a result, pupils' progress is now good in the majority of lessons and pupils are more enthusiastic learners. Whilst the school has a good capacity to continue this improvement, the impact of the improvement in teaching has yet to feed through into the pupils' long-term achievement which still remains satisfactory.
12. The great majority of pupils are now well challenged and making good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. Teachers' planning is now good and is becoming far better informed by assessment and evaluation of lessons. Year teams generally work together effectively and make good use of individual teachers' strengths within each teaching team in the planning process. As a result, strengths are carefully built on and weaknesses addressed in future planning and by focused support for individuals and small groups. Particularly good is the assessment and tracking in Year 6, where pupils' progress is very carefully monitored on a regular basis to ensure that they are on course to meet their end-of-year targets. The school has realised the importance of regular tracking of pupils' progress through each year to ensure that they make sufficient progress and rightly intends to incorporate the effective Year 6 model across all year groups as part of its development plan. The school makes increasingly good use of teacher expertise both within the school and using high quality teachers from outside. For example, the school has built very close links with a local secondary school that provides physical education teachers and older students to work with the pupils as part of class teacher in-service training. This is having a real impact on the quality of provision and the teachers' confidence and expertise, and results in pupils' above average attainment. Likewise, the school employs swimming coaches whose excellent teaching skills result in pupils reaching very high standards. Good use is also made of teacher expertise in ICT and music in Year 4, where one teacher teaches all classes for their skills session.
13. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons are now far more effective than at the time of the last inspection. In these sessions, teachers regularly refer to the lesson objectives and pupils are encouraged to review their own learning against these objectives. This extra information gives the teacher invaluable insight into how well pupils are learning. There is some good quality marking from a majority of teachers, where pupils are clearly informed as to what they need to do to improve their work and to move towards their personal targets. However, there is a lack of consistency in marking, some of which is superficial and unhelpful, such as was seen in the marking of mathematics work in one of the Year 4 and 2 classes. All pupils know their personal targets in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils are adamant that these are helping their learning as it enables them to focus on areas that need to be addressed next.
14. Teachers make good use of pupils' speaking and listening skills in lesson introductions and in the way they develop pupils' learning through careful questioning. Some effective use of 'talking partners' helps pupils to be fully engaged in the teaching session. This was used particularly effectively in a Year 6 mathematics lessons on place value work. The grouping of Year 5 and 6 pupils by ability for mathematics is helping teachers to raise attainment in this subject. As these groups now have a significantly narrower range of ability in them, teachers are successfully challenging all the pupils within this range. As a result, these pupils are achieving consistently well, with the more able pupils working at high levels. In other year

groups there are significant differences. Teachers in Year 3 are successfully addressing the needs of the wide ability range in their classes but, in Year 4, not all teachers are consistently meeting the needs of their pupils despite monitoring from the headteacher and focused support. This is resulting in too low a proportion of Year 4 pupils reaching above average standards in English and mathematics.

15. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and enables pupils to concentrate for good lengths of time and to produce a good volume of work in lessons. Teachers make effective use of the learning support assistants (LSAs) who show insight and understanding in their work with the pupils. Their work is particularly effective with some older pupils who are withdrawn for extra numeracy and literacy support. Pupils with special education needs are given good support and some pupils with particularly challenging behavioural problems are very well managed to minimise disruption to a class's learning. The classrooms of the older pupils have recently been equipped with interactive whiteboards and these are being used increasingly effectively to support teaching and learning. Teachers plan some very effective links with ICT in subjects such as art, geography, history, English and music, but during the inspection too little use was made of computers to support pupils' numeracy and science work. There is particularly good planning for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects and this has led directly to a most successful drive to improve standards in writing this year. The planning for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects is not as well developed and some worthwhile opportunities to integrate the development of these skills into other subjects are being missed.
16. The issue of homework from the last inspection has been well addressed and it is now used consistently to support pupils' learning, particularly in Year 6.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum with an excellent range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation is good, overall, and there is a good range of learning resources in most subject areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a very good improvement in curriculum planning and provision since the last inspection.
- The school offers an excellent range of opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The school prepares pupils very well for the later stages of education.
- The accommodation has been much improved.

Commentary

17. The school provides a broad, very well-balanced and coherent curriculum, with a good and secure level of continuity and progression and an excellent range of opportunities for enrichment. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for religious education. The school provides very effectively for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex and drugs awareness education. Provision for PSHE is both formal, through assembly themes and the well-planned scheme of work, and informal, by means of the positive relationships and day-to-day interactions between pupils and adults. There is a good level of equality of opportunity for all pupils from all backgrounds in most areas of the school's work, and this is particularly so in the provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs and for gifted and talented pupils. The school is very inclusive in all its policies and practices. There are consistent whole-school approaches to planning literacy and numeracy and to using these skills across the curriculum, although the planning for numeracy across the curriculum is less well developed. The school monitors the impact of the curriculum well and is quick to take action when weaknesses are found. Its willingness to

adopt new strategies and to seek and accept guidance on reformulating the curriculum has begun to reap significant benefits. This is particularly the case in English where the school's rapid response to the disappointing national test results in 2004 has already begun to show improvements in writing and in speaking and listening skills. There is a good match of teachers to the curriculum and a good match of well-qualified and hard-working support staff. Overall, this constitutes very good improvement since the last inspection, when weaknesses in the curriculum were a key issue for the school to address.

18. Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and very good for the pupils with statements. ICT is well used as a diagnostic tool and to support pupils with specific reading difficulties. It is also used to support the writing of individual education plans. Every effort is made to ensure that all pupils are included in all activities. All the pupils are offered a similar curriculum and tasks are modified and supported appropriately by learning support assistants. In the playground, yellow lines have been painted to ensure that a visually impaired pupil will find less difficulty playing. Many pupils with special educational needs attend the extensive range of clubs, which enhances their self-esteem. There is also a very effective gym trail club, organised for pupils with special educational needs, offering a range of specially developed activities to extend their fine and gross motor skills and to further build their self-confidence.
19. The school provides pupils with an outstanding range of interesting and relevant extra-curricular activities. These are very popular with the pupils and the great majority attend one or more of the clubs each week. At the time of inspection, a total of twenty clubs was on offer for pupils, an outstanding range for a junior school. These include French, German, ceramics, rhythmic gymnastics, football coaching with West Ham coaches, girls' football, netball, chess, dance and running. These opportunities, along with 'curriculum focus weeks', such as the recent Art Week, make a very significant contribution to the effectiveness of the curriculum.
20. The quality and use of accommodation is good, overall, and has been improved significantly and systematically since the last inspection. The school has a good-sized playground and a very large playing-field. Although some classrooms are rather cramped, there is a number of additional rooms and areas for work outside the classroom. These are used particularly effectively for small group work and specialist lessons such as art and design, design and technology and ICT. Resources for most areas of the curriculum are good.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The involvement of pupils in the school's work is excellent.
- There are good systems for monitoring pupils' academic standards and progress and arrangements for monitoring pupils' personal development are very effective.
- All adults know pupils very well and provide very good levels of care.
- The induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.
- There are very effective procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.

Commentary

21. Arrangements for pupils when they start at the school are now very good and show a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The arrangements include preliminary visits to the school by both pupils and parents as well as tea parties for new parents. The headteacher writes personally to each new pupil during the summer holidays, asking them to write a postcard about themselves, so that he can talk to them during the first week of term.

He also takes assemblies in the infants school. As a result of this very good preparation, pupils settle in quickly and confidently and make good progress. Parents at the meeting commented on how well their children settle into school and one Year 3 child commented that she had found her first year so enjoyable that she could hardly remember the transition.

22. Procedures for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education are equally thorough: Year 5 and Year 6 pupils visit their secondary schools and teachers from these schools take lessons in the junior school. As a final 'goodbye', all Year 6 pupils receive a 'good luck' letter from their headteacher during the summer holidays.
23. The school makes good arrangements for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs in line with the special education code of practice. Individual education plans are detailed and have specific and measurable targets. The school has good relationships with external agencies and appropriate support from them. Specialist teachers are available to oversee support for pupils with statements. The school has offered a good level of training to learning support assistants and they generally have a good understanding of pupils' needs.
24. The school has very good health and safety procedures. Child protection procedures are effective. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and for pupils in public care. He and his deputy have been trained recently, as have all staff. Staff are very aware of child protection issues and maintain a good record of concerns. Links with local social services and police are good. The school is part of the Children and Young People Support Group (CYPSP) and this has resulted in regular visits from the health visitor.
25. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for monitoring pupils' medical conditions are very good. Nearly all staff have been trained in first aid. Emergency procedures are thorough. Governors carry out risk assessments regularly. Additional assessments are carried out for trips and visits. Security is good. There is a strong bond of trust between pupils and all adults who work in the school. Adults know the pupils very well and monitor their personal development very effectively through class files, the monitoring of awards and annual reports. Some pupils in their questionnaire felt they were uncertain whom to approach with a problem. However, in interviews with all year groups, pupils spoke positively about the support and care they received if problems arose.
26. Pupils' academic progress and their personal development are monitored and supported very well. Assessment is used well in teachers' planning and pupils have a good knowledge of their targets and how these can help them improve. Learning support assistants provide good support for teachers and pupils. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in lessons. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is outstanding. Pupils feel overwhelmingly that the school listens to, values and acts on their opinions through class councils and through the school council. An example of this was seen in a council meeting during the inspection, when pupils agreed to talk to the school caterers about the contents of the snack trolley to promote healthy eating, to discuss the arrangements for monitors at play time, and to accept an invitation from the governors to discuss budgets. Pupils also helped to draw up the school's mission statement and they issue their own newsletter every fortnight.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are very good. Links with the community and with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with very good information.

- The school has very good links with parents through the web site, surveys, homework books and parent helpers.
- The school has very good links with the local and wider community and with local schools and colleges.

Commentary

27. In a good return to the questionnaire, parents and carers expressed positive views on most aspects of the work of the school. A small number who responded to the questionnaire did not feel comfortable about approaching the school and had concerns about bullying. Neither of these was borne out by the findings of the inspection. The school has regularly sought parents' views over the last three years and deals most effectively with the rare instances of bullying.
28. Information provided for parents is very good, through the web link, annual reports, newsletters, helpful booklets, workshops and consultation meetings. This is a considerable improvement on the last inspection. Some parents were concerned with the information about their children's progress, but reports are very good: they are helpful, diagnostic and constructive. Targets are shared with parents and a separate list is provided of what pupils have learned during the year. Details about the work pupils are to cover are provided each term. Home/school books and reading journals are used well as a means of dialogue between school and home. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed of events and the headteacher and all teaching staff are always available for informal consultation at the end of the day. The school prospectus is very clearly written, informative and attractively presented. The governors' annual report is clear and informative. The home/school agreement has been signed by all parents. Homework guidelines are given to parents. Homework is used consistently. Consultation meetings are well attended.
29. There are very good links with local secondary schools, ensuring a smooth transition for pupils, including visits by Years 5 and 6 and by students from the schools carrying out their work experience. The school is an active member of the local schools consortium and the LEA project on CYPSP. Gifted and talented pupils from other primary schools visit to take part in the 'Plato's People' sessions, when philosophical issues are explored. Pupils from a nearby primary school are to visit the school council for discussions about their work.
30. Parents support the school very well through the Friends Association, which runs a good range of social and fund-raising events and raises very good sums to buy equipment to enhance pupils' education. Very large numbers of parents help in school on a regular basis. The school has very good links with the local community. For example, local businesses support the school's annual fete, there are good links with a major football club and members of the emergency services come to talk to pupils. Members of the local community use the school on a regular basis. There are close links with the parish. The parish priest visits the school regularly. Pupils sing to local elderly people on their visits to residential homes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is good. Governance and management are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's future and manages its ongoing development very well.
- Governors know the school well and have strong links with staff.
- The school has strong self-evaluation procedures and has developed a good tracking system for monitoring pupils' progress.

- There are very good systems to support new staff and well-focused in-service training to enable them to become proactive in their management roles.
- The improving leadership and management roles of subject co-ordinators have not had time to have a full impact on pupils' overall achievement in English and mathematics.

Commentary

31. The leadership and management of the school have improved significantly in all areas since the last inspection. Governors meet all statutory requirements and now provide good support for the work of the school, playing a major contribution in its leadership and development. The combination of information gleaned from governor visits, classroom observations and from the headteacher's detailed regular reports gives them a very secure appreciation of the strengths of the school and the areas that need to be improved. This information is used most effectively in the drawing up of the school improvement plan. Governors are keenly aware of the progress and end-of-year targets for the Year 6 pupils, and also receive information about the progress of all the other year groups during the year. As a result, they have a good understanding of the progress of all classes, which enables them to carry out their role of critical friend. Governors have been particularly supportive of the headteacher, especially in the work to procure Investors in People and Healthy Schools status. Governors have a very good understanding of the value for money principles and have applied these most effectively, particularly in improving the school's learning environment.
32. The headteacher has worked very hard and effectively to improve the school's provision since the last inspection. He provides good leadership for the school and is very well respected by governors, staff, pupils and parents. His rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has accurately identified some weaknesses in Year 4 which are being tackled effectively. Even with a comparatively high turnover of staff for the size of school, he has developed a cohesive and effective staff team, which firmly puts the raising of pupils' achievements at the forefront of the school's work. He is, however, aware that the much improved school provision needs to have a more significant impact on standards at the end of Year 6. He has a very clear vision for the school, so that all staff know exactly what they are working towards. He is innovative in the way he approaches new initiatives. For example, the new regulations concerning regular class release for teachers has enabled him to enrich the curriculum further by employing qualified dance and Spanish teachers who will teach all classes. He leads the curriculum development particularly effectively and is regularly implementing initiatives to ensure that pupils of all abilities are supported and challenged in their work. The school has a strong ethos and is a well respected and well ordered community in which pupils feel most secure and highly valued.
33. The headteacher works particularly effectively with his deputy and together they make a strong team. They have instigated computer assessment and tracking procedures that are giving the school much clearer information about how well pupils are achieving. This program is also highlighting the groups where focused support is needed to enable pupils to reach their full potential. At present, this work is particularly well developed in Year 6, where pupils' progress is being tracked very carefully towards their end-of-year targets.
34. The management of the school is good. New staff settle quickly because they are very well supported and all members of staff have a secure understanding of how the school runs from day to day and carry out this out in a consistent fashion. The role of the co-ordinator has been particularly carefully developed since the last inspection and is now consistently good. For history, geography, English, ICT and for gifted and talented pupils, the leadership is very good. All co-ordinators have regular release time for monitoring the provision and standards in their subjects and this is clearly reflected in high quality subject development plans.
35. The school has developed very good self-evaluation procedures and uses these most effectively to draw up improvement plan priorities. The views of governors, staff, parents and pupils are carefully considered. These, together with information from the school's effective monitoring systems, enable the school to set very specific targets for its improvement plan.

Since the last inspection, these have had a positive impact on the school's provision, although less so on pupils' achievement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	895,654	Balance from previous year	25,904
Total expenditure	861,645	Balance carried forward to the next	59,913
Expenditure per pupil	2,298		

36. The office manager and her team provide excellent support for the school in general and the headteacher and governors in particular. This is especially the case with the school's finances, where the school makes very effective use of the office manager's skills. As a result, the school budget is managed very carefully. Much of the higher than average carry-forward into the present year has been earmarked to maintain the class structure during a time of falling rolls and to pay for teacher planning and preparation time under the new workplace agreement.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching in Year 6.
- The school has made an effective response to the disappointing results in writing in the previous year's national tests.
- The subject is led and managed very well by the subject co-ordinator.

Commentary

37. Pupils enter the school with broadly average literacy skills and, although progress is not consistent as they move through the school, most have made satisfactory progress in English skills, overall, by the time they leave the school and a number have made good progress. This is a similar judgement to the last inspection. However, standards in last year's Year 6 national tests were below average when compared with all schools and well below average when compared with similar schools. Standards have improved since last year because of improvements in teaching and the school's successful focus on writing skills. Standards in reading in Year 6 are now above the national average, which indicates good achievement and standards in writing, which were below average in the previous year's national tests, are now in-line with national averages. Girls outperformed boys by a wide margin in last year's test but the gap has closed considerably this year, with little difference between the genders. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and every effort is made by the school to raise their attainment by carefully planned work and good support and encouragement.
38. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. It is noticeable that a minority of pupils lack confidence and find it difficult to put their ideas into words. The school has made a sustained effort to encourage and improve speaking and listening skills as a step towards improving writing. In most lessons observed, teachers actively encouraged and helped pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills by encouraging them to work together and discuss their answers.
39. Overall, achievement in reading is good and, by Year 6, standards in reading are above average. Most pupils demonstrate an enjoyment of books and all pupils are encouraged to read with parents and carers at home. Reading journals have been introduced to help pupils reflect more on the books they are reading and pupils are fully aware of their individual and class targets for both reading and writing. There are good opportunities for pupils to engage in guided reading activities during literacy lessons and pupils are encouraged to use the school and local libraries. Special events, such as World Book Day, the school's reading award and reading circles contribute positively to pupils' interest and enjoyment in reading.
40. Staff have worked hard and successfully to improve the standards in writing after the weak national test results in 2004, and a number of strategies have been introduced with this aim in mind. These include more drama activities and very imaginative 'set ups' for creative writing. For example, to stimulate report writing, the school caretaker, dressed up as a thief, and 'stole' an object from the classroom, following which pupils wrote a police report of the event. This approach has been particularly successful in motivating boys to write. Due to this whole-school focus, and due particularly to the very good teaching in Year 6, standards in writing in Year 6 have improved significantly since the previous year's national tests and are now likely

to be back in-line with the national average. Handwriting and presentation standards vary throughout the school due to teachers' different expectations – in the best cases, pupils' work is well presented and legible, cursive handwriting is evident.

41. Observations of lessons and a scrutiny of work from all classes demonstrate that teaching in English ranges from broadly satisfactory to very good and is good, overall. The close scrutiny of pupils' work in exercise books provides enough evidence to confirm that the quality of teaching fluctuates significantly between classes. For example, it is only satisfactory in Year 4 and not all pupils in this year are achieving as well as they should, whilst, in Year 6, teaching is very good and pupils are achieving strongly. Very good classroom-organisation and behaviour-management skills, evident in most classes, allow most lessons to progress at a good pace. Marking varies from class to class but in the best cases, as in Year 6, the teacher's comments clearly indicate to pupils what they have to do to improve; in other classes teachers' comments are less helpful.
42. The subject-co-ordinator leads the subject very well. There are very good systems in place to assess pupils' progress and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The data from this monitoring is used very well to ensure that the great majority of lessons build appropriately on pupils' previous learning. Resources for the subject are good and the well-stocked school library is well utilised.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. There has been a whole-school focus during the current school year on the use of writing skills in subjects such as history, geography, religious education and science and this is having a positive impact. Teachers make good use of ICT in their lessons and pupils have good opportunities to use computers for research.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and this is enabling the majority of pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Improvements in mathematics provision have not yet had time to raise standards at the end of Year 6.
- Subject leadership and management are good and have improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' progress in Year 4 is not as good as in other years and older pupils' tables' knowledge is not secure.
- Teaching assistants are well-qualified and provide good support to pupils.
- Greater use could be made of ICT to support the pupils' learning.

Commentary

44. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, standards improved over the previous year and were average compared with schools nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was also average. However, the progress that the year group made since being in Year 2 was well below average. Evidence from the inspection indicates that improvements recently put in to place are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6 are now making good progress because of consistently good teaching. Pupils' progress slows in Year 4 because the teaching does not consistently challenge the range of different abilities in the classes, particularly the more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality support they receive in lessons. Standards in Year 6 are average, as at the time of the last inspection. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their end-of-year

targets and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. However, pupils' knowledge of their multiplication tables is not secure and restricts their progress in mental operations.

45. Throughout the school, teachers have been successful in their efforts to improve pupils' number skills, with pupils showing good confidence in the way they use numbers to solve problems. Pupils in Year 3 are taught in mixed-ability classes and are making good progress because the teachers assess the pupils' work carefully and give clear indications to pupils when marking their work what they need to do to improve. This is not the case in one Year 4 class where much marking is superficial and unhelpful. However, the principal weakness in this year-group is that the teachers are not meeting the needs of all pupils successfully and particularly the more able, too few of whom are working at the higher levels. The slowing of progress in this year is a principal reason for school's weak overall added-value at the end of Year 6. The school is rightly considering introducing the grouping of pupils by ability in these three Year 4 classes to address this weakness.
46. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are set by ability in their respective years. Year 6 pupils are benefiting further by booster withdrawal groups, which reduce the class size and enable teachers to focus on helping pupils to achieve their full potential. This organisation in Year 6 is having a positive impact on the progress of all these pupils. By Year 6, the pupils solve mental calculations involving all four number operations reasonably accurately but are slowed by their insecure knowledge of multiplication tables. They recognise equivalent fractions and understand the relationships between these and percentages and decimals. Mental maths starters at the beginning of lessons are effective in reinforcing and revising pupils' previous knowledge. Particularly effective is the way pupils assess their own work at the end of the lesson. Pupils find this particularly helpful because they know that teachers take their assessments seriously and will do their very best to help when difficulties arise. It enables teachers to focus more accurately in their follow-up work. Most pupils' progress is enhanced by high quality marking, which not only informs the pupils how well they have understood the lesson but also what they need to do to improve. In Year 4, however, teachers' marking is less helpful. Whilst most pupils' work is marked conscientiously, corrections are not consistently carried out, and not all pupils are learning from the mistakes they make.
47. Pupils enjoy lessons because teaching is good, overall, and enables them to build effectively on their previous learning. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because of the well-focused in-service training that has taken place. The school has received good support from the local education authority mathematics team, and this has had a significant impact on the teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. Assessment has also improved and is now good. National test papers and other assessments are carefully analysed by the subject co-ordinator. The results of assessments are being used particularly well in Year 6 to track pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets. This detailed tracking enables the teachers to identify groups of pupils who are in need of extra support. This process has identified a significant minority of pupils who have benefited from focused intensive support.
48. Teachers plan well from the satisfactory curriculum and give a strong emphasis to developing the pupils' problem-solving skills. They share the lesson's learning objectives with the pupils, so that they are well aware of what is expected of them. Teachers and the learning support assistants work together effectively in supporting the pupils' learning. Where pupils are grouped by ability in Years 5 and 6, mental mathematics sessions move along at a brisk pace, whereas in Years 3 and 4, the sessions are slower to ensure that pupils can keep up. The narrower ability range in the Years 5 and 6 groups enables the teachers to challenge the pupils more successfully, and particularly the most able, whose number skills are above average. Most lessons have good pace, with the best having clear time limits for activities. The teachers make good use of practical resources to enhance the learning of younger pupils but too little use is made at present of computers to reinforce learning.

49. Subject leadership and management are good and have improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator checks the quality of planning and has monitored the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. She is very enthusiastic and has identified how standards and achievement can be raised further in her comprehensive subject action plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. The pupils make some good use of their mathematical skills, such as in design and technology, science and ICT database work. However, teachers do not plan systematically for the development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. The school rightly accepts that teachers need to plan more formally to ensure pupils are given more opportunities to use their numeracy skills in a wider range of contexts.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on practical skills and scientific enquiry.
- The subject is well led and managed by the co-ordinator.
- Assessment is good and is used well to analyse progress.
- Teaching is good, overall.
- Pupils could make more use made of information and communication technology in science.

Commentary

51. Standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection and are average. Standards were also average in last year's national tests when compared with all schools but well below average when compared with similar schools. Standards seen during the inspection are average. Evidence from the inspection shows that the majority of pupils, including those with special needs, are making good progress due to the good teaching and the very good support from learning support assistants.
52. By the end of Year 6, pupils have good attitudes to science because they enjoy the practical nature of many of their lessons. The school's emphasis on investigative approaches has led to pupils having a good knowledge of fair tests and they use this effectively in their collaborative work. Teachers help to develop pupils' scientific knowledge by expecting all pupils to make a hypothesis before they start an investigation and to explain their conclusions. As a result, pupils use scientific terminology confidently and accurately. Pupils present their work neatly and make good use of diagrams and charts to show their findings. Whilst pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in their recording and measuring activities, there are too few planned opportunities to use ICT to record the findings of their work. Pupils in Year 4 are making satisfactory progress in their knowledge of local habitats in parts of the school grounds.
53. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, and has improved since the last inspection. This is particularly so in the way pupils are managed. As a result, pupils in all classes behave well and are now able take a full part in practical activities. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective challenge ensure that children are motivated to learn. For example, in a well-planned Year 6 lesson, pupils investigated the best way to keep a substance warm using their previous knowledge of insulating materials. They collaborated in groups to design a fair test; listened well to one another, chose suitable resources and agreed the best way to record their work. The teacher's good subject knowledge and very good relationship with the pupils enabled her to develop pupils' ideas and thinking by careful questioning. In this stimulating and well-paced lesson, pupils made predictions based on their

experience, tested them and drew conclusions. They recorded their data appropriately in their books. The very good support by the learning support assistant in this class enabled all pupils to be fully included in the work.

54. Leadership and management are good. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved. The policy has been reviewed and updated, and new assessment and tracking arrangements have been put in place in order to analyse and monitor individual achievement. The school has published a scheme of work that is well supplemented by material that develops the practical activities and investigations. Over the last term planning has been monitored and improved. National test data is analysed in order to monitor strengths and ensure that weaknesses are addressed in future planning. The results of the monitoring are used effectively to improve teaching and learning. There are plans to extend the development of ICT in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and the quality of teaching have improved since the last inspection.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum is of a very good quality and enables pupils to access a wide range of programs.
- The leadership and management of the subject since the last inspection have been very effective.
- Although pupils use computers to support their learning in many subjects, more planned use could be made of ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics and science.

Commentary

55. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are above average in all areas of the subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. Pupils use computers confidently and, at the end of Year 6, pupils' communication and multi-media skills are particularly high. Computers are used well in most subjects but are underused in mathematics and science, and, as a result, pupils are missing good opportunities to use and consolidate their computer skills to support their learning in these subjects.
56. Pupils in Year 3 use the Internet effectively, as when they find information about gods as part of their Egyptian topic. They use e-mail confidently and make good use of a 'compose' program as part of their music lessons. Pupils in Year 4 build well on these skills. They are developing good data-handling skills and use the Internet confidently, as when they find information about their history topic on Vikings. Pupils' word processing skills are developed further in Year 5. They use a publisher program effectively and cut and paste information from the Internet to create good quality brochures on the life and work of Cezanne as part of an art topic. They are particularly confident in the use of a new communication program and make very good use of an interactive geography site as part of their water cycle work. They have a good knowledge of how to create a spreadsheet, what they clearly demonstrated when they planned the costings for a party. By the end of Year 6, pupils view computers as a natural learning tool and show great confidence in all their work. They collaborate effectively and learn well from one another. They are rightly proud of their skills in the use of PowerPoint, which led to high quality presentations on their Second World War history project. All pupils have their own e-mail address and regularly communicate with each other on subjects such as homework. The great majority of pupils have computers at home, but the school does its best to ensure equality of opportunity by holding a computer club for those pupils who are not able to access the Internet at home.

57. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good. Good quality training has given teachers confidence to teach and use all aspects of the subject. The school also makes good use of the specialist skills of a Year 4 teacher who teaches all classes in her year. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons because they enjoy the challenges set and have a clear understanding of how computers aid their learning. They enjoy the collaborative aspect of the subject, which makes a good contribution to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The school is fortunate to have the skills of a highly trained learning support assistant who works regularly with classes in the ICT suite. The school has developed a very good curriculum, which makes good use of newly-developed programs to enhance pupils' learning. The two recent co-ordinators have done a very good job in developing the subject. Issues from the last inspection have been very well addressed and the school is now well-resourced. Particularly good use is made of the new computer suite, which enables whole-class teaching. The present co-ordinator checks teachers' planning and monitors lessons. The school has developed a good system for assessing and recording the development of pupils' skills. The good quality subject development plan clearly identifies priorities. Teachers make particularly good use of interactive whiteboards with the older pupils, and the school has rightly set aside further monies to extend the use of the boards throughout the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. There is some very good use of computers to support pupils' learning, particularly in literacy, geography, history and music. However, greater use could be made of their ICT data-handling skills in science and more use made of the school's good range of mathematical programs to support pupils' learning in numeracy.

HUMANITIES

Only one short lesson was observed in history and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on provision in this subject. Standards have been maintained, overall, in the humanities.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The school has a good range of resources.

Commentary

59. Two lessons were observed and these observations, in conjunction with a scrutiny of pupils' topic books and a discussion with Year 6 pupils confirm that standards are in line with expectations, as at the time of the last inspection. Two lessons were observed during the inspection, in Year 6 and Year 4. The quality of teaching in these lessons ranged from good to satisfactory and was satisfactory, overall. In the best lesson, a Year 6 lesson on planning a mountain camping trip, the teacher's very good relationships with the pupils, his evident enthusiasm for the subject and very good classroom management and questioning skills led to pupils responding confidently and responsibly. As the lesson progressed, the very good pace and the use of a very good range of relevant resources, including ICT, led to good progress in learning. There was good planned provision for pupils with special educational needs in the lessons observed.
60. Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator, in a very short time, has gained a very good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject across the school. There is now a whole-school scheme of work in place for geography, and a good range of visits and

visitors considerably enhances the curriculum. A whole-school system of end-of-topic assessments has been introduced and this provides the co-ordinator with a good overview of standards in the school. Resources for the subject are good and ICT resources are well used by teachers and pupils.

61. Due to timetable organisation, it was only possible to observe one brief **history** lesson during the inspection. As a result, no secure judgements can be made on the overall quality of provision or teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' topic books and a discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that standards are broadly in line with expectations by the end of Year 6, as at the time of the last inspection. A scheme of work is now in place that provides the basic curriculum and ensures continuity and progression in key skills as pupils move through the school. Subject leadership is very good: the subject co-ordinator has developed a very good overview of the subject and an effective whole-school system of end-of-unit assessments has been introduced to track pupils' progress.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils are achieving well in lessons.
- The school makes good use of visits to enhance the curriculum.
- Learning support assistants work effectively with pupils.

Commentary

62. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in lessons. Observations of two lessons, discussions with pupils and an analysis of completed work show that the overall quality of teaching and learning are now good. Pupils have a sound understanding of the traditions and beliefs of Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism and know about the significance of symbols and artefacts associated with these faiths. The school makes good use of visits, for example, to local churches and a synagogue, to give pupils a deeper understanding of the faiths being studied.
63. In most year groups, pupils make good progress because the lessons are well planned and interesting to the pupils. In one good Year 3 lesson, in which the pupils were completely engrossed, the teacher used her voice well to enhance the pupils' understanding of how a person or god could have many different faces. Pupils contributed well to the discussion and showed a good understanding of the issues raised. There is good support from the learning support assistants, who work effectively with pupils with special educational needs and ensure that they are fully included in the lesson. The school has a very good ethos of respect and tolerance for one another, which is clearly shown in the way pupils reflect on issues and questions under consideration.
64. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the subject. She has worked hard to ensure a smooth transition from the old to the new locally agreed syllabus. She has monitored planning and begun to plan assessment activities so that the school can track pupils' progress and standards through each year. She has attended focused in-service training activities and adapted the new planning to ensure closer and more meaningful links with topics in different subjects. Teachers use the good range of resources effectively to develop the pupils' understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65. Too few lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology and music to be able to make a judgement on provision in these subjects. Standards, overall, have been maintained since the last inspection.
66. In **art and design**, one lesson was observed and work was sampled. On display around the school are a number of examples of good and very good work, many as a result of a successful 'Art Week', which included a number of good quality joint projects with local artists. However, a scrutiny of the work in pupils' sketch-books indicates that standards in art and design are currently broadly satisfactory by the end of Year 6. Pupils throughout the school undertake an appropriate range of activities, following a published scheme of work based on the national guidelines for art and design. This provides secure continuity and progression in the key skills. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. A ceramics club and art club are held on a weekly basis and pupils have visited art galleries to support their studies. The subject is well resourced. The range and quality of consumable resources are good and the school makes good use of its two art rooms and a kiln.
67. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work indicate that standards have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations in **design and technology**. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and enjoy its practical and collaborative nature. The school has developed a scheme of work, which it has integrated with other areas of the curriculum. For example, a Year 3 topic on designing a sandwich was linked with writing instructions in literacy and a school topic on healthy eating. Pupils use a satisfactory range of materials. Where standards have improved significantly is in planning and evaluation. Pupils now have a very clear idea of the importance of designing before making and realise that honest evaluations of their finished product help in future work. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management, has improved the subject planning and assessment procedures and is carefully developing resources.
68. In **music** only one lesson was seen. Discussions were held with staff, singing in assembly observed and documentation scrutinised. In the lesson seen the teaching was good, pupils responded well to the teacher's high expectations and participated confidently in a range of musical activities building well on the pupils' previous learning. In whole-school singing, pupils sang tunefully and with expression, with higher involvement from the younger pupils. The school has a thriving choir and orchestra. A number of pupils take advantage of the very wide range of peripatetic lessons that offer tuition in eight instruments. There are currently 52 children in the choir, with boys being strongly represented. Good support is offered to pupils with special educational needs, a number of whom sing in the choir. Both the choir and the orchestra perform regularly throughout the year, including the summer concert and the local church at Christmas. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She has a good knowledge about the progress pupils make in the subject due to the effective assessment procedures she has implemented. Staff are supported well and most are now confident to teach their own music lessons. Visiting musicians work with different classes to extend musical understanding. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in the subject, including composing and enhancing presentations.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations, overall, and exceptional in swimming.
- The school makes excellent use of outside expertise.
- Many pupils take part in the excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

69. The provision has improved since the last inspection and this has had a real impact on standards, which are now consistently above national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well, overall, but exceptionally well in swimming. This is because the school plans a weekly half-hour lesson in the adjacent municipal swimming pool for all pupils and hires excellent swimming coaches who teach all lessons. As a result, pupils make extremely rapid progress and standards are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6, with pupils showing very good stamina, style and confidence in the water. The school caters very well for its talented swimmers, with a significant number of pupils joining local swimming clubs. Boys and girls of all backgrounds work hard, are enthusiastic and achieve equally. They collaborate well, with the subject making a very good contribution to their social and moral development.
70. By Year 6, pupils work hard in lessons and enjoy practising skills to improve their personal performance. Teaching is very good, overall, and generates a huge enthusiasm amongst the pupils. The school has built up very strong sporting links with the local secondary schools. As a result, sports teachers from these schools take lessons regularly alongside teachers. This has a two-way benefit for the school in offering the pupils high quality teaching whilst developing the coaching and teaching skills of class teachers. This initiative has had a major impact on raising overall standards since the last inspection. As part of the workforce remodelling reforms the school is employing a qualified dance teacher, who will teach all classes in the school to release teachers for planning and preparation. In the one dance lesson observed during the inspection, pupils achieved well because of the high quality input from this teacher.
71. The school makes good use of its extensive facilities, including a large playground and playing-field. The very good curriculum is enhanced by an extremely wide range of after-school clubs and a range of competitive matches against other local schools. The leadership role of the co-ordinator is now very good and has improved since the last inspection. He has built extensive links with Essex County Cricket Club and West Ham Football Club. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are given every encouragement to join the training offered by these and other sports clubs. The school has developed an informative assessment sheet to record pupils' basic skills as they move through the school. Whilst this is a new initiative, it should enable teachers to build even more effectively on pupils' previous learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Provision for PSHCE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are given extensive opportunities to take on responsibilities.
- The school council is very proactive in the life of the school.

Commentary

72. Although only two lessons were seen in PSHCE, it is evident that the school integrates the subject very well into many aspects of its work. This has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour and the way they treat one another. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils, who have a very clear understanding of the need for rules and the importance of maintaining them. There are well-planned opportunities for them to take part in discussions and to develop social skills, such as learning to take turns, share, work and play together, and help each other. The older pupils are sensitive and caring in their support of the youngest pupils. The system of peer mediators has had a particularly good impact on behaviour on the playground. The school has received a 'Healthy School' award, highlighting the strengths of its work in all aspects of PSHCE, with pupils having a very good knowledge of the importance of personal hygiene, diet and exercise. Sex education is dealt with sensitively in science

lessons. Awareness of drug and alcohol abuse is carefully planned and taught in PSHCE lessons. Teachers make very good use of 'circle time' to enable pupils to discuss issues that are important to them. The school council is extremely active and influential in the life of the school. It has been very well developed by the headteacher and offers pupils a genuine opportunity to play an active part in the life of the school. Representatives from all classes take part in a school council, and the impact of its work is seen around the school; for example, the wide range of games that pupils can use at playtimes. There are further plans to develop the council's effectiveness even more. This involves representatives meeting with council members of another school to discuss their work and share ideas. For the first time, the school council will be making an input into the school's development when they meet the governing body to share ideas about areas they feel need to be addressed in the next school improvement plan.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).