

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MINTERNE COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Sittingbourne

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118455

Headteacher: Mr W McGroary

Lead inspector: Mrs A M Grainger

Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2005

Inspection number: 271621

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Junior  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 388  
School address: Minterne Avenue  
Sittingbourne  
Kent  
Postcode: ME10 1SB  
Telephone number: (01795) 472 323  
Fax number: (01795) 475 223  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs J Burns  
governors:  
Date of previous 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> March 2000  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in a residential area on the south side of Sittingbourne. Attached to the school, and managed by it, is the Swale Speech and Language Unit. The unit provides for pupils with statements of special educational needs in the area of speech and language.

With 209 boys and 179 girls on roll, including 15 pupils in the speech and language unit, the school is above average in size. Almost all pupils have attended the adjoining infant school and are from a fairly broad mix of socio-economic backgrounds. Six per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Some of the pupils in the unit travel from further afield than those in the main school as the unit serves the whole of the Swale district. All but a few pupils are of white British heritage. The others are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. Only one pupil has English as an additional language and is fluent in English.

In the school as a whole, including the unit, there are 21 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, which is a little above the national average. In addition to the 15 pupils with statements of special educational needs in the unit, a further five pupils in the main school have statements of special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school mostly have moderate learning difficulties. There is very little movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual time of joining or leaving. Overall, pupils enter the school with attainment at the level expected for their age. However, some year groups enter with higher attainment.

The school has held the Investors in People award since 2000 and the Activemark Gold award since 1999. In December 2004, it also gained the Naacemmark for information and communication technology.

For the last two school years, the school's long-serving headteacher was seconded to the Primary Excellence Project to support other schools. The school had an acting headteacher and deputy

during this period. The headteacher has been back at Minterne Junior School only since September 2004.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                  |                | Subject responsibilities   |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 20782                          | Mrs A M Grainger | Lead inspector | Art and design<br>Music  |
| 9519                           | Mrs S Pritchard  | Lay inspector  |  |
| 25203                          | Mr R Cooke       | Team inspector | Science<br>Information and communication technology<br>Design and technology<br>Physical education<br>Special educational needs (main school)<br>English as an additional language |
| 23385                          | Ms S Gerred      | Team inspector | English<br>Geography<br>History  |
| 32596                          | Mrs G Phillips   | Team inspector | Mathematics<br>Religious education   |
| 15600                          | Mr C Richardson  | Team inspector | Special educational needs (speech and language unit)   |

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Minterne Community Junior School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils.** Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because teaching and the range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. Present standards in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in most subjects, and are above this level in mathematics, reading, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The school provides very well for the pupils in the Swale Speech and Language Unit. Leadership, management and the value for money provided by the school are all satisfactory.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- The very good provision in the speech and language unit.
- Pupils' good achievement in ICT and physical education.
- The pupils' very good attitudes to school, good behaviour, and very good attendance.
- The inconsistent account taken of pupils' differing needs in teaching in the main school.
- A lack of rigour in the checking of teaching and how well it supports pupils' learning.
- Not enough planned provision for pupils' spiritual development or to prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society.
- The very extensive range of additional activities through clubs, visits and visitors.

Improvement since the school was last inspected in March 2000 is satisfactory. Adequate action has been taken on the issues for improvement identified at that time, although further work is needed to develop the effectiveness of the checking of teaching and some aspects of the information for parents. The school has dealt satisfactorily with health and safety issues noted at the last inspection. The strengths in the provision for pupils in the speech and language unit have been maintained and built on. There continue to be strengths in the provision for pupils' moral and social development and in the resulting standards in their attitudes, behaviour and relationships. The range of activities additional to day-by-day lessons has also been maintained and developed.

### 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           | C    | C    | B               |
| mathematics   | C           | C    | C    | B               |
| science   | C           | D    | D    | D               |

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

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** The standard of work of pupils now in Year 6 is at the level expected nationally in science and English, although it is above this level in reading. Mathematics standards are above the nationally expected level. The better mathematics standards than shown by the tests in recent years, and also the good reading standards, reflect the strengths in the attainment on entry to the school of this particular year group. Science standards are better now, compared with the last test results, because

of successful action taken by the school to improve pupils' work in practical and investigative science.

Pupils develop their skills well in ICT and physical education because of good teaching. They reach standards above the level expected nationally in these subjects. Religious education standards are at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In all aspects of other subjects for which sufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgments, pupils are working at the level normally found in Year 6.

Pupils in the speech and language unit achieve very well in relation to their capabilities and prior attainment. Many reach, or come close to, the level expected for their age in mathematics in Year 6. They also do very well in developing their speech and communication skills. Pupils with special educational needs in the main school make satisfactory progress overall, although they do well when taught in small groups with activities based specifically on their needs.

**Pupils' personal development, including their moral and social development, is good.**

Pupils behave well as a result, get on very well together, and have very good attitudes to school. Almost all pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the attendance levels, which are consistently well above the national figures, and in the very good punctuality. Although much is done to promote pupils' moral and social development, less attention is paid to their spiritual development and to preparing them for life in a culturally diverse society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The overall quality of education, including the teaching, is satisfactory.** ICT and physical education are taught well. There are examples of good, and occasionally very good, teaching across the school in other subjects. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, rather than good, because there is inconsistency in how well teachers take account of pupils' differing needs and so vary both their direct teaching and the activities they provide. In the speech and language unit, very good attention is paid to pupils' individual needs, with activities and teaching styles varied to ensure that each pupil's learning moves on rapidly.

Coverage of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education is satisfactory. There is very good enhancement of the learning opportunities in day-by-day lessons, particularly in sport and music, through clubs, visits and visitors. All pupils are given the chance each year to participate in a drama production. The quality of pastoral care and the links with other schools make a good contribution to the pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.** The headteacher provides a satisfactorily clear educational direction for the school. Since returning to the school in September 2004, he has taken stock of its present effectiveness and has identified most of the areas in which improvement is required. He is working closely with the senior management team and all other staff to develop the quality of education. However, the present arrangements for checking how well teaching supports the learning of all pupils are not rigorous enough.

Governance is satisfactory. With the exception of one omission in the governors' annual report to parents, statutory requirements are met.

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

Parents and pupils have positive views of the school and are pleased with the opportunities it provides.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve the attention to pupils' differing needs in teaching in the main school.
- Make more rigorous the checking of teaching and how well it supports learning.
- Develop planned provision for pupils' spiritual development and to prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society.

### **IMPROVEMENTS TO MEET STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:**

- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents includes a statement on the school's progress in relation to the issues in the most recent Ofsted inspection report.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards presently in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in most subjects and are above this level in some key areas.

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

- Pupils in the speech and language unit achieve very well.
- Achievement is good and skills are developed well in information and communication technology (ICT) and in physical education.
- Pupils' progress over time is not as steady and consistent as it should be because teaching is not always matched closely enough to pupils' differing needs.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were close to the national average in English and mathematics, but below the national average in science. When compared with the performance of other schools whose pupils had similar attainment at the end of Year 2, the results in 2004 were above average in English and mathematics, but still below average in science.
2. The results in recent years have not been as good as in the period leading up to the last inspection, and the overall trend has been below that found nationally since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the achievement of pupils now in the school is satisfactory, and the school has halted the decline in the science standards indicated by the test results of the last two years. The targets set for Year 6 pupils are suitably ambitious and the school is making satisfactory progress towards them.
3. Standards presently in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in English overall, although above this level in reading. In mathematics, standards are also above the level expected, and they are at the level expected in science. The better standards

now than indicated by the 2004 test results in mathematics, and also in reading, reflect the strengths in the attainment of this particular year group on entry to the school. The better science standards are a result of the direct action taken by the school to identify and rectify weaknesses in the curriculum. In particular, successful action has been taken to increase pupils' competence in practical and investigative science.

4. Pupils achieve well in ICT and physical education. Effective teaching of skills in these subjects ensures that pupils make good progress as they move up through the school. Both subjects are also well resourced and supported by the accommodation, and they are areas to which the school has paid good attention over the years. Good achievement in physical education is not only promoted within lessons for all pupils but also in the very wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities in which many pupils participate. Strengths found in the standards in these subjects at the last inspection have been maintained. Standards in singing are also good, as they were at the last inspection.
5. Religious education standards in Year 6 remain at the level expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects, in the aspects of work for which sufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements, pupils in Year 6 are working at the level expected for their age. In all these subjects, achievement is satisfactory overall although, as in English, mathematics and science, there are some subjects in which standards are not as high as at the last inspection.
6. Throughout all year groups in the main school, and across the subjects, there are occasions when pupils' progress is uneven. Although it is good on occasions, it is sometimes not as good as it should be and is only barely adequate. As a result, the development of knowledge, understanding and skills does not take place steadily, consistently and smoothly. The result is that pupils' long-term progress is prevented from being better than satisfactory overall. The main reason for this is that teachers do not always match work well enough to pupils' differing needs. Most often, it is the lower attaining pupils who are most adversely affected, although there are instances of insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. There is no variation in how well boys and girls do in their schoolwork.
7. Pupils in the main school with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. They often make good gains when taught intensively in a small group with work matched to their needs. They also do well in ICT because they are given good support in lessons in the computer room. In physical education, they benefit from the focused skills coaching and do as well as other pupils. However, progress is less effective in whole-class lessons in other subjects, particularly when they do not have additional support from a teaching assistant.
8. The pupils with special educational needs in the unit do very well in relation to their prior attainment in English and mathematics overall, and in developing competence and confidence in the specific areas of speech and language. Their very good progress is a direct result of very effective teaching and activities that take full account of their individual needs. Often pupils in the unit reach, or come close to, the standards expected nationally for their age in mathematics in Year 6. The pupils' language delay results in them not doing as well in English as in mathematics in relation to nationally expected standards.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English       | 27.4 (26.7)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| mathematics   | 27.4 (27.2)    | 27.0 (26.8)      |
| science       | 27.8 (28.2)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

*There were 95 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

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

Pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to school. Their personal development, including their social and moral development, is good overall. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The attendance rate is well above the national figures.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to work and all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour is good because pupils know what is expected of them.
- Pupils get on very well with each other and with the adults in school, treating others with care and respect.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good.
  - THERE IS TOO LITTLE PLANNED PROVISION EITHER FOR PUPILS' SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OR TO PREPARE THEM FOR LIVING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE SOCIETY.

## **Commentary**

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is borne out by their very good attendance and punctuality. They show very good levels of interest and enthusiasm for their work and work very hard in almost all lessons. They respond particularly well in lessons in which they are actively involved, and in which teachers present exciting and challenging work in imaginative ways. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils worked very enthusiastically at a variety of well-planned practical activities which successfully developed their understanding of the use of co-ordinates.
10. Pupils particularly enjoy the very wide range of additional activities that the school provides, such as the visits to places of interest, for example Canterbury Cathedral, and the visitors who come to school. They are very enthusiastic about the numerous clubs that give them very good opportunities to practise skills they learn in school and also to learn new ones. These clubs are extremely popular and promote pupils' learning very well in addition to giving them opportunities outside lessons to work and play together.
11. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their behaviour and clearly understand the standards expected of them. Pupils played a significant part in developing the school's 'golden rules', which are displayed prominently around the school. Effective systems ensure that incidents of unacceptable behaviour, which are rare, are dealt with quickly. Pupils know why sanctions are applied and see them as 'fair'. Although five boys were excluded for a fixed period last school year, this was very unusual and was because the school found it necessary to set an example over an incident of smoking. There are very few incidents of bullying or harassment and the

school is quick to act should one occur. There is a well-established system for rewarding pupils' good work and behaviour.

12. Pupils develop very positive relationships with others. In lessons, and around school, they are courteous and friendly, get on very well together and work co-operatively in a range of situations. For example, they help each other when working together in the computer room. They treat others with respect and consideration because all staff set them a good example of being caring and respectful. The pupils from the speech and language unit are very well integrated and mix confidently with other pupils. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also mix very well with others. Pupils also show concern for those in need outside the school. They have been involved in raising money for local and national charities, including a children's hospice and 'Red Nose Day'. Some raised money for the British Heart Foundation by taking part in a sponsored swim.
13. Through daily routines, lessons and assemblies, pupils consider how to be good citizens, and think about important issues that affect their lives and the lives of others. Staff give pupils good opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school, such as taking the register to the office and preparing the hall for assembly, and each class elects a representative to the school council. Some pupils in Year 6 are prefects and some act as 'peer mediators', caring for others at break times. All pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. The older pupils who are 'peer mediators' show a very good understanding of their role in helping others to resolve differences and are able to consider situations from the point of view of others.
14. Although the school raises pupils' awareness of their own heritage and culture, it does not have a coherent plan for preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society. There are some examples of pupils learning about other cultures, for example, from visits of African drummers and through the study of texts from different cultures. However, the opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of other cultures are insufficiently frequent to help them to learn about the diverse cultures represented in society today. Similarly, in assemblies and lessons, staff miss opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality and self-awareness and there is little planned provision for this within the curriculum. Although the many strengths found in the provision for pupils' moral and social development have been maintained since the last inspection, the provision for spiritual and cultural development has not moved on much.

## **Attendance**

15. The attendance of pupils is very good. The school's attendance rate has been well above the national figures for some years now, and is even better than at the last inspection. Pupils are very keen to be in school and are rarely late. Their enthusiasm for school is partly fuelled by an alluring range of extra-curricular activities that include early morning sports sessions. Accurate registration procedures quickly alert staff to the rare occurrence of a pupil failing to turn up for school for no apparent reason. An automated telephone system encourages parents to leave messages about absence prior to registers being completed.

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

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Authorised absence | Unauthorised absence |
|--------------------|----------------------|

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| School data   | 3.5 |
| National data | 5.1 |

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| School data   | 0.2 |
| National data | 0.4 |

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

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

| Categories used in the Annual School Census |
|---|
| White – British                             |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean           |
| Mixed – White and Asian                     |
| Mixed – any other mixed background          |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian             |
| Black or Black British – African            |
| Chinese                                     |
| Any other ethnic group                      |
| No ethnic group recorded                    |

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

| Number of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 375                      | 5                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 2                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 1                        | 0                                 | 0                              |
| 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 overall quality of education for pupils in the main school is satisfactory, including the teaching, curriculum and support provided through partnerships with parents and the community. The quality of pastoral care and the links with other schools make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils attending the speech and language unit are given a very good quality of education.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching, pupils' learning, and assessment are satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching meets the needs of pupils in the speech and language unit very well.
- ICT and physical education skills are taught well in the main school.
- In the main school, teaching is not always well enough adjusted to pupils' differing needs.
- There are some shortcomings in the use of assessment.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (2%)    | 5 (10%)   | 25 (49%) | 20 (39%)     | 0 (0%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

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

16. Throughout the school, there is a significant amount of good teaching and learning, with occasional instances of lessons in which teaching and learning are very good. In the speech and language unit, teaching and learning are very good, as at the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good in the main school in ICT and physical education.
17. Although there are good features to the teaching and learning in the main school, what makes it satisfactory overall, rather than good, is that there is inconsistency in how well teachers meet pupils' differing needs. There was also some variation in how well teaching was based on an assessment of pupils' need at the time of the last inspection. This variable use of assessment is the main reason why pupils' achievement and their progress are not better than satisfactory overall. This weakness also prevents standards from being higher, including in English, mathematics and science.
18. In the mixed ability classes in which pupils are taught for many subjects, and in the classes based on prior attainment in which pupils are taught for mathematics throughout the school and for most English lessons in Years 4 to 6, the teaching and the activities are not always well enough varied to meet pupils' differing needs. Sometimes, the most capable pupils are not sufficiently challenged, for instance in mathematics, but more often the lower attaining pupils struggle with tasks that are too difficult for them. Occasionally in science, lower attaining pupils and some of average attainment are given worksheets to support them when they do not need them, for example in Years 3 and 5. When this occurs, these pupils do not move on as well in their learning as they should because they spend time on tasks that are too basic.
19. There are sometimes missed opportunities at the end of lessons to evaluate how well pupils have learnt and developed their knowledge and understanding. There is much effective marking, but teachers do not always make enough use of assessment information in planning the content of lessons or sufficiently assess learning during the course of lessons. In English and science, for example, regular marking provides pupils with helpful comments that support them in improving their work. The most effective marking results in pupils responding with their own comments. However, there are inconsistencies in how well individual targets are referred to in marking in English.
20. A significant strength in the teaching of ICT and physical education is the development of pupils' skills. This is achieved through clear instruction and effective demonstration. Teachers are confident and competent in these subjects and provide good examples for pupils. Most ICT and physical education lessons are well paced, with each activity building sensibly on that which has gone before. In ICT, there is good individual support from teachers and teaching assistants as pupils apply and develop their skills.

Effective development of pupils' skills is also a feature of art and design teaching, as seen in a Year 3 lesson on figure drawing.

21. Questioning is often used effectively. In the most successful mathematics lessons, for example, skilful questioning combined with interesting tasks challenges pupils well. Focused questioning successfully develops pupils' problem-solving skills. In other lessons in which teaching and learning are good, such as some in religious education and geography, work is well matched to pupils' differing needs. When pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment for guided reading sessions, teaching meets their needs well. This effective teaching in groups successfully develops pupils' understanding of a wide range of authors and their styles, and also contributes to fluency and accuracy in reading.
22. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, to which pupils respond well. Pupils persevere even when a task is difficult. There are examples of teachers developing independence and initiative in learning. In Year 6 in geography, for instance, pupils' learning is promoted well as they use maps, photographs and texts for research. However, there are also missed opportunities to develop initiative and independence when lessons are tightly directed by teachers even, for example, in the otherwise good teaching of ICT. Although questioning is effective in many lessons, not enough use is made of discussion to get pupils to put forward their own views.
23. What distinguishes the teaching in the speech and language unit is that work is very successfully and closely matched to the pupils' individual needs. This is reflected in the very thorough lesson planning and carefully selected teaching styles, which are varied as necessary. Additionally, the highly effective use of focused direct questioning by the teacher not only helps the pupils to experience success, but also provides opportunities for the development of their speaking and listening skills. This is an area that the teacher's planning emphasises very well. When integrated into main school lessons, pupils from the unit are well supported by teaching assistants. However, support is given only as and when required to ensure the pupils develop independence.

***Example of outstanding practice***

***An example of excellent teaching of English for pupils with statements of special educational needs in Years 3 to 5 in the speech and language unit.***

Using an interactive whiteboard, the teacher displayed pages of the book, 'Frog in Winter'. Very good direct questioning rapidly developed pupils' understanding of the features of the text – that some parts are narrative and some dialogue. All pupils were fully involved and the teacher's questions reflected her very good understanding of their individual difficulties. As a result of the phrasing of the questions, all pupils were confident to give answers with beams of pride. The teacher then read the text under a picture on each page and the pupils had to decide whether the text was narrative or dialogue. Pupils again listened very attentively. The teacher again used very well focused questioning to bring out descriptive words. After this, pupils were placed into ability groups and each group was given a copied page from the book with just the picture. They were asked to decide on probable narration and dialogue. This task was supported by very good teamwork involving the teacher, teaching assistants and the speech and language therapist. In the teacher's group, excellent relationships and questioning allowed the pupils to put forward their ideas with some very confident speaking. Back as a class, each group role-played their characters with confidence and enjoyment, showing excellent understanding of the

differences between narration and dialogue. Pupils applauded each group's efforts. In this lesson, pupils were provided with a very enjoyable, yet challenging, learning experience that resulted in excellent achievement for all pupils.

24. When pupils with special educational needs in the main school are supported in specific group activities, their learning is good. However, there are weaknesses in how well their needs are met, and how effectively teaching assistants are deployed to support them, in class lessons. These weaknesses, some of which were evident at the last inspection, reduce the effectiveness of the pupils' learning to a satisfactory level overall. Teachers' planning does not always identify appropriate tasks for these pupils and for teaching assistants to give support with. When this is the case, there are instances of pupils with special educational needs not understanding what they are required to do and sometimes wasting valuable time waiting for help to arrive.

### **The curriculum**

The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are very good. The accommodation and resources provide good support for the curriculum.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The curriculum for pupils in the speech and language unit meets their needs very well.
- There is good coverage of ICT and physical education, contributing to good achievement in these subjects.
- Learning opportunities are not always carefully enough matched to pupils' differing needs in the main school.
- Pupils' good ICT skills are not used and developed as well as they should be across the subjects.
- There are some missed opportunities to develop language through discussion and debate.
- There is a very good range of activities additional to day-by-day lessons, particularly an extensive range of clubs.

### Commentary

25. There is satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education in the main school. Weaknesses found at the last inspection in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy have been rectified. There are some good features to the learning opportunities in these key areas. In English, the whole-school approach to raising writing standards is developing pupils' accuracy in punctuation and their confidence in selecting imaginative vocabulary. In mathematics, a current emphasis on problem solving is ensuring that pupils have some good learning opportunities in this aspect. Understanding is also developed through opportunities for pupils to explain the strategies they use to approach problems. Similarly, the present focus on developing practical and investigative science has halted a decline in the science standards and has improved the curriculum in this subject.
26. Although there are some good features to the learning opportunities in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, there are also some aspects requiring improvement. Even though pupils are taught in classes based on prior attainment for English in Years 4 to 6, and for mathematics in Years 3 to 6, the learning opportunities are not always well enough matched to their differing needs. This weakness is also apparent in some classes in other subjects and reduces pupils' overall progress to satisfactory.
27. There are satisfactory opportunities overall for pupils to use and develop key skills in language, literacy, mathematics and ICT across the subjects. A good arrangement is in place for lessons in other subjects to be based in the computer room so that ICT skills can be developed and used to support work across the curriculum. However, there is not enough use of classroom computers to support further development of ICT skills and learning in other subjects. Not enough is done in English lessons, and in other subjects, to develop pupils' skills in discussion and debate. This is a relative weakness in the provision for older pupils that prevents their competence in speaking and listening from being better.
28. The development of pupils' ICT skills through the ICT provision in the computer room is good and is the main cause of pupils' good achievement in this area. The National Curriculum requirements are covered well, with additional opportunities in control technology provided through links with a secondary school. Physical education is another subject that is covered well. The good learning opportunities ensure that skills in a range of sports are developed to a higher standard than normally found at this age. The provision in ICT and physical education is well supported by the accommodation and resources. The strengths found in these two subjects at the last inspection have been maintained.

29. When pupils with special educational needs in the main school are taken out of class for short sessions to work on specific programmes, such as Additional Literacy Support, Springboard Mathematics or reading programmes, the activities are usually well matched to their particular needs. In these sessions, pupils are helped to make good progress towards the targets set for them. However, as for other pupils in the main school, the learning opportunities in whole-class lessons are not always sufficiently well modified for their needs and this reduces their overall progress.
30. The curriculum for pupils in the speech and language unit is very good. Based on the National Curriculum, it is adapted to meet pupils' needs through simplified language, visual aids and multi-sensory resources. The use of Makaton signing and cued articulation provides very good support and prompts which help pupils to respond to questions well. A symbol system is used extensively to support pupils in developing recognition and understanding of words. This also gives pupils a clear visual indication of their speech and language therapy targets. The support for the integration of pupils into the main school lessons is very good and is provided as and when pupils have sufficient subject skills and confidence. As with ICT and physical education in the main school, the learning opportunities in the speech and language unit are well supported by good resources.
31. Apart from in mathematics, science, ICT, and physical education, the resources to support other subjects in the main school are satisfactory. The accommodation provides good support to the curriculum in the main school. The computer room, large hall and external facilities for physical education make a significant contribution to the range of learning opportunities the school is able to provide in these subjects. However, the accommodation in the speech and language unit is barely adequate for the present number of pupils. The classrooms are cramped and there is no separate quiet area for support staff to take a pupil, or small groups of pupils, for focused support, for example in functional language.
32. As at the last inspection, there is very good extra-curricular enrichment of the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to attend clubs before and after school, and at lunchtimes, in an extensive range of areas. These include some not often offered in primary schools, such as a magazine club and common room activities for Year 6 pupils. A wide variety of sports, music, chess, environment and science clubs are offered. These activities are very well attended. They motivate and interest pupils and help to develop positive attitudes to school and to learning. Visits to places of interest, including residential visits, and a wealth of visitors, such as authors, musicians and artists, add enrichment to the curriculum in a range of subjects.

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

The systems in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory overall, although there is good personal guidance. Satisfactory account is taken of pupils' views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The procedures for welfare and first-aid are good and carried out by well-trained staff.
- Attention to health and safety is good.
- Pupils have good opportunities to form trusting relationships with adults in school.
- There is no dedicated welfare room for pupils who are unwell.

- Pupils in the main school are not given enough guidance academically through personal targets.
- Pupils are guided well in their personal conduct.

### **Commentary**

33. There continues to be good attention to ensuring that pupils and staff work in a healthy and safe environment. Risk assessments carried out in school are good and include an audit of the accident book. Governors look to see whether any accidents could have been avoided. The specific health and safety issues identified at the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. Action has been taken to deal with the problem of congestion in corridors and cloakroom areas and pupils have been made aware of the need to act sensibly in these crowded areas. First-aid procedures work well. Pupils are reassured by the presence of a good number of fully trained staff who deal calmly and competently with their minor accidents and injuries and know exactly what to do in the event of a more serious injury. The school prospectus contains sensible advice to parents on road safety awareness around the school.
34. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are good. Staff are aware of the possible indicators of children at risk and all are careful to report any worries they have straightaway to the headteacher. Liaison with outside agencies, such as the educational welfare and the drugs education services, are purposeful and supportive. Healthy living is promoted well through lessons and through many pupils' active and sporty lifestyles. Pupils make good use of playground areas to take part in energising activities during their breaks from lessons.
35. The school makes good efforts through accurate record keeping to ensure that pupils with medical problems receive as high a level of care as possible. However, there is no dedicated room set aside to attend to pupils' welfare needs. The room used for this doubles up as an office for the deputy headteacher and, as such, contains furniture and equipment that cannot easily be washed down or disinfected. The same applies to the reception area where sick and injured pupils often sit so that staff can see them. Due consideration is given to making the school accessible to people with disabilities.
36. As at the last inspection, teachers take time to talk to pupils about their personal achievements and, in doing so, inspire their confidence and gain their co-operation. The reading support programme, which involves parents and community volunteers in hearing pupils read, makes a good contribution to pastoral support. This is because it encourages pupils to relate to adults other than teachers and school staff. Pupils turn readily to the adults in school for support on personal matters and are confident about asking for help when they are stuck on a particular piece of work. The 'peer mediation' programme encourages pupils to care for each other. The school council acts as a useful forum for seeking pupils' views.
37. Because assessment procedures are not well established and teachers do not always base their teaching and curriculum planning securely on an assessment of pupils' differing needs, there are some weaknesses in the academic guidance for pupils. Pupils do not all have clear academic targets with guidance on how to meet them. In English, for example, the marking does not always make adequate reference to targets. Most of the oral feedback given by teachers to pupils during lessons is helpful, but sometimes more focused on good attitudes rather than on how to produce good

work. The procedures presently in place for monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs do not ensure that checks on their progress are frequent enough, including in reviewing how they are doing in whole-class lessons.

38. Support and guidance for pupils in the speech and language unit is very good. The school is committed to fully including these pupils in all aspects of school life. These arrangements are effective in promoting the pupils' social development and academic learning. All pupils in the unit have a very good trusting relationship with staff who are committed to improving the pupils' social and emotional confidence. They appreciate working alongside pupils in the main school, knowing that they have the support of unit staff when required.

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

The links with parents and the community are satisfactory. The links with other schools are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school communicates very effectively with parents of pupils in the speech and language unit.
- Parents and others in the local community fundraise and give much time to benefit the pupils.
- The written end-of-year reports on pupils' achievements are limited in their usefulness for parents.
- Links with local schools enrich and strengthen the curriculum.
- Not enough use is made of the community to develop the pupils' cultural awareness.
- Some statutory information is missing from the governors' annual report to parents.

### **COMMENTARY**

39. Parents are pleased with the school, and it is easy to see why. The school continues to be valued and respected locally and parents are keen to send their children to it. It attracts a number of willing volunteers who take time to engage with the pupils, hear them read and, at the same time, offer a 'listening ear'. Parents are very active fundraisers. They give tremendous support to the school in this way and in helping to run the extensive range of school clubs. There are, however, no special arrangements to encourage local people or organisations to contribute something of themselves to the school in a way that would celebrate the diversity of cultures that makes up today's society.
40. There have been some improvements in communication with parents about the curriculum content and homework since the last inspection. Awards and certificates, newsletters and special events commemorate and demonstrate the significant achievements of the school, most notably in sport and in ICT. However, accurate information on pupils' academic achievement subject by subject is more difficult for parents to gauge. Regular consultation sessions between parents and teachers allow for valuable exchange of information, but the annual written reports on pupils' progress vary in their usefulness. The best examples make good use of the knowledge teachers have on what pupils have achieved over the year, certainly in terms of their personal progress. Targets for their academic progress are not as clear as all too often these are neither specific nor measurable.

41. There are too few displays of pupils' own work around the school to help parents and visitors assess the standards pupils attain in subjects such as art and design or English. What this means in practice is that opportunities for parents to draw conclusions on how well their children are achieving are more limited than they might be. A recent survey of parental opinion carried out by the school confirmed this view. The school made a satisfactory response by sending out interim progress reports in the autumn term. In the meantime, parents' views are still not sought frequently enough with the intention of influencing the school improvement plan or spending decisions.
42. The partnership with parents of pupils in the speech and language unit is very good. Parents are informed of events through a weekly newsletter. Additionally, a daily reading book is sent home with each pupil. This book informs parents of their child's progress in reading and also gives advice, if required, on how parents can support reading at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs in the main school are informed about their children's targets at parents' evenings when twice yearly reviews of progress take place. Parents receive copies of pupils' individual education plans. Standard procedures are followed for the involvement of parents of pupils with statements in the main school.
43. The prospectus provides parents with much helpful information and is a welcoming and accessible document. However, an omission from the governors' annual report means that parents have not been kept up to date on the school's progress since it was last inspected. The school's website gives parents the opportunity to access the latest newsletters and prospectus on line but has the potential to provide more detailed information than it currently shows.
44. Induction evenings for new parents are carefully planned and include 'PowerPoint' presentations to introduce the school, its staff and facilities. Transfer arrangements between schools help pupils feel confident about moving on to secondary education. The speech and language unit has established very good links with schools providing secondary provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties.
45. Pupils continue to benefit from the good links with other schools that support their personal development, including the many sporting links. Success in a wide range of sporting events helps to promote pupils' confidence in their abilities. Links with one of the secondary schools has enhanced the school's provision in ICT and has also provided support for mathematics work. The school, in its turn, often hosts staff from other schools keen to learn about good practice in the teaching of ICT.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership is satisfactory overall, including the leadership of the headteacher and key staff. Management and governance are also satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The speech and language unit is very well led and managed.
- The checking of how well teaching supports learning is not rigorous enough.
- The school has already identified and started to take action on some of the most important areas now requiring improvement.

## Commentary

46. The headteacher provides a satisfactorily clear educational direction for the school. Since returning to the school in September 2004, he has taken stock of its present effectiveness and has successfully identified most of the key areas in which improvement is needed. He has recognised that, whilst the checking of teaching takes place, it is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the overall quality of teaching is raised from satisfactory to good. He knows that pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but that it could be better if teaching is consistently based on an assessment of pupils' differing needs.
47. In order to bring about improvement, and to increase the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher is working with the senior management team and the whole staff to ensure that there is a common vision and shared focus for development. This is proving successful and the senior management team is becoming increasingly focused on main projects for development, such as how assessment is used to promote learning. As this 'project focused' approach is starting to become established, each member of the senior management team is taking on a clearer individual role in relation to the main priorities for improvement. The deputy headteacher provides satisfactory support for the headteacher in relation to the main areas for development and also makes a significant contribution to the day-by-day management of the school.
48. Other key staff understand the main areas for improvement and play their part in whole-school development. The science co-ordinator, for example, has worked closely with the headteacher to halt the decline in the science standards, and has contributed well to the staff focus on this area. As a result, the new emphasis this school year on practical and investigative science has been successful in improving provision. There is good leadership of ICT and physical education, which are areas that have been given a good amount of attention over the years. Although the co-ordination of some subjects, such as art and design, are rather informal and underdeveloped, the priorities identified for each subject link sensibly with whole-school priorities. There are now co-ordinators for all subjects.
49. The special educational needs co-ordinator works very closely with the teacher in the speech and language unit to provide very good leadership and management of the provision, maintaining a strength found at the last inspection. All unit staff contribute to a strong team approach that is firmly focused on meeting each individual pupil's needs. There is also a very clear focus on how the unit provision might be developed and improved further.
50. In the main school, the leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory. The special educational needs co-ordinator is conscientious in keeping records and liaising with staff. The effectiveness of the intensive teaching of small groups following specific support programmes is well monitored. However, there is insufficient evaluation of how well the provision in class lessons supports pupils with special educational needs.
51. The monitoring of teaching is satisfactory overall and has developed adequately since the last inspection. It has identified some key areas for improvement, particularly in how well teaching is based on assessment. However, the inconsistencies in the teaching that reduce its overall quality from good to satisfactory are not being tackled rigorously enough. There is not a sharp enough evaluation of how well teaching contributes to the learning of different groups of pupils. For example, the school has

not clearly identified precisely why particular groups of pupils miss out when teaching and the activities are not varied according to pupils' differing capability.

52. The governing body has a satisfactory awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and involvement in shaping its educational direction. Governors share a common vision for the school's development with the headteacher and staff. With the exception of an omission in the governors' annual report to parents, all statutory requirements are met.
53. The approach to financial management is satisfactory. A careful check is kept on finances to ensure that the school keeps within the budget it has set and good attention is paid to gaining value for money in purchasing. However, the school's accounts have not been subject to an independent audit for some years. The present carry-forward in part results from savings on the salaries of senior staff over the last two years when the headteacher was on secondment. The monies accrued from these and other savings are earmarked to go towards improving accommodation, including that for pupils in the speech and language unit. As at the last inspection, there is satisfactory consideration of whether the school provides best value for pupils and their parents.

## Financial information

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

| Income and expenditure (£) |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income               | 867,204 |
| Total expenditure          | 835,130 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2,169   |

| Balances (£)                             |        |
|--|--------|
| Balance from previous year               | 31,847 |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | 63,921 |

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

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

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

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

- The whole-school approach to raising standards in writing is improving specific skills, such as punctuation and choice of vocabulary.
- Teaching is not always well enough matched to pupils' differing needs.
- The checking of teaching and how it supports learning is not rigorous enough.
- The teaching of reading in groups based on prior attainment is successful.

#### **Commentary**

54. Pupils' results in the end of Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2004 were close to the national average. They were above average when compared with the results achieved by other schools whose pupils had attained similarly at the end of Year 2. Standards in the present Year 6 are at the level expected nationally in speaking, listening and writing, and above this level in reading. These standards represent satisfactory progress for the present Year 6 in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Although standards now, seen in pupils' school work and in the test results in recent years, are lower than they were at the last inspection, all groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily overall.
55. The school has been working to raise standards in writing. As is the case nationally, pupils are not doing as well in the school in writing as they are in reading. The school's approach is proving successful in focusing pupils' attention on key aspects of their writing. This is particularly evident in the good use of punctuation and choice of interesting vocabulary that is now found in all year groups among the more capable pupils and also among the average pupils in Year 6.
56. Teachers give good attention to the development of a range of reading strategies and skills. In small groups, based on pupils' prior attainment, they effectively develop pupils' understanding of a wide range of styles and authors. Work in lessons is supported well by parents through homework and through the regular individual support given by community volunteers in school. As a result, by Year 6, the more capable pupils in particular and also some others show good understanding of a range of texts, which they read accurately, with good fluency and expression.
57. Pupils in all classes have many opportunities to respond to teachers' questions, to give explanations to the class, and to talk in pairs. Almost all pupils are confident in such speaking and listening activities. However, pupils have few opportunities to develop skills in discussion and debate as they move up through the school. This is a relative weakness in the provision for older pupils that prevents the competence of the average and more capable pupils from being even better in speaking and listening.
58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching in every year group, but there is also some teaching that is only just satisfactory in Years 4 to

6. The reason for the variation in the teaching quality is that there is inconsistency in how well teachers use information gained from marking, assessments and tests to plan work at different levels. This variation is evident both when pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and when they are taught in classes based on their prior attainment. The result is that work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils and that pupils' long-term progress is no better than satisfactory.
59. Teaching assistants, when well directed, give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Where this is the case, the pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them. However, there are occasions when teaching assistants are not used effectively enough and there are missed opportunities in whole-class lessons to give intensive support to individuals and small groups.
60. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and most provide useful comments that help pupils to improve their work. They often ask questions to move learning forward. Pupils of all capabilities often take action in response to make their writing better. However, reference to pupils' specific targets in marking is inconsistent. As a result, there are some missed opportunities to develop higher standards of writing and to move learning on more quickly.
61. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory. The co-ordinator works closely with the headteacher and staff to implement whole-school strategies to raise standards, such as the initiative to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Whilst there is an adequate amount of checking of teaching and learning, it is not sufficiently rigorous in identifying precisely how well teaching supports the learning of different groups of pupils. As a result, the full extent of the variations in how well teaching is matched to pupils' differing needs had not been picked up. The significant amount of good practice in teaching is not shared well enough with other staff. Although ICT skills are used adequately overall, there are missed opportunities to make better use of pupils' good skills to develop their work in English.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

62. There are satisfactory opportunities overall for pupils to use and develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects, such as in history, geography and science. However, the extent to which pupils use and develop their writing skills in other subjects is inconsistent. There are some missed opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills and to enhance their learning in other subjects. Where writing is used well, pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding in other subjects as well as improving their writing skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers provide some good opportunities for pupils to be involved in problem-solving activities and to talk about their work.
- Teachers do not always adapt activities to meet pupils' differing needs.
- The co-ordinator provides a very good example in her teaching.

- THERE IS NOT A SHARP ENOUGH EVALUATION OF HOW WELL TEACHING CONTRIBUTES TO LEARNING.

### Commentary

63. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, the school's results were close to the national average. When compared with the performance of other schools whose pupils had attained similarly at the end of Year 2, the results were above average. The test results in recent years have not been as good as at the last inspection, which is, in part, attributable to natural variations in the different year groups. The standards currently in Year 6 are above the level expected nationally. These standards represent satisfactory progress for these pupils in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. This particular year group entered the school with results in the end of Year 2 tests that were above average. Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
64. Pupils' satisfactory achievement results from a satisfactory overall quality of teaching and learning. The quality of teaching and learning now is much the same as at the last inspection. As in English, there are examples of good, and even occasionally very good, teaching and learning.
65. Pupils are taught in classes based on prior attainment for mathematics, but within these classes there are pupils with a range of capabilities. Although the planned work meets the needs of the majority of pupils, teachers do not always make sure that it is at just the right level for all pupils. As a result, some pupils are not sufficiently challenged, whilst others struggle because the work is too difficult for them.
66. During one lesson, the teacher gave all the pupils in a Year 5 'average ability' class the same activity. The pace of learning for the relatively less capable pupils within the class was slow as they spent too long on the more basic task of inputting data into a spreadsheet. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, also for an 'average ability' class, all pupils worked on the same calculations. The activities were too difficult for some of the relatively less capable pupils. It is because teaching is not always well enough matched to pupils' differing needs that the resulting quality of learning is no better than satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs get on well when they have intensive support on activities matched to their needs. However, like other pupils, their learning is reduced when the work is not closely matched to their needs.
67. In the most effective lessons, teachers use questions skilfully to make pupils think about their work and give them interesting tasks that continually challenge them. For example, in a lesson in Year 3 for an 'upper ability' class, there was a buzz of excitement as pupils discussed the best systems for recording their answers to the problems in their 'Brain Academy' booklets. The teacher supported the pupils very well, checking their understanding and challenging them to explain their systems and the number patterns they recorded. As a result, pupils worked very hard, behaved very well and achieved very well.
68. Developing pupils' problem-solving skills has been a recent focus for the school. Teachers now provide pupils with some good opportunities to try different ways of solving problems and to explain the strategies they used. Through well-focused questions, they help pupils to think logically about the problems and to record their work systematically. For example, at the beginning of a Year 6 lesson with an 'upper

ability' class, pupils used different approaches to help them to put the correct numbers into a grid to meet given criteria. Pupils clearly explained why, for example, they put in the multiples of three or the prime numbers first, and how the strategies helped them solve the rest of the problem. Similarly, in a Year 5 lesson, also with an 'upper ability' class, pupils were helped to confidently explain the strategies they used to solve a practical problem involving measurement.

69. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school has rectified most of the weaknesses identified at that time. The subject now has a co-ordinator, who was appointed shortly after the last inspection, and leadership and management are now satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model for others in her teaching of mathematics and has contributed well to the improved focus on problem solving in mathematics. She tracks pupils' progress and keeps a close check on what pupils do each year. However, the checking of teaching is still not rigorous enough. The full extent of the variation in how well teaching meets pupils' differing needs had not been identified.

## **MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

70. There is satisfactory use and development of pupils' mathematics skills across other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 use graphs to record the temperature and rainfall in London and Bangalore as part of their work in geography, and pupils in Year 5 make good use of spreadsheets in ICT to work out the perimeters of polygons. In Years 3 and Year 4, pupils use timelines to plot major events in the history topics they study. However, in science, for example, pupils do not use graphs sufficiently to record their findings from investigations.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is a good whole-school focus on developing pupils' investigative skills.
- Some good action is being taken to review and improve the science curriculum.
- Pupils' presentation and recording of work in science are of a good standard.
- Assessment and monitoring processes are not sufficiently established or rigorous.
- Some inappropriate use of worksheets restricts the development of pupils' skills.
- Discussions at the end of some lessons are insufficiently focused to reinforce pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

71. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests in science were below the national average in 2004. They were also below average when compared with the performance of other schools whose pupils had similar attainment at the end of Year 2. The trend in the 2003 and 2004 results has been downwards and below the national trend. However, the school has identified areas of weakness and has focused on improving these aspects, particularly the need to develop pupils' investigative skills. As a result, standards are improving.

72. The standard of work in Year 6 is now at the level expected nationally across all strands of the science curriculum, and pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. The presentation of pupils' work is of a good standard, and pupils record information well. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum, including health education, drugs awareness, and sex education.
73. There is now a strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative work and there are some good examples of this in Year 6. The vast majority of pupils throughout the school are able to make predictions, carry out experiments and draw conclusions. Pupils show a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test from Year 3. However, much of what they do is strongly influenced by teachers and teaching assistants and real independent enquiry is at an early stage.
74. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers mostly plan their science lessons well and have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. This results in a positive atmosphere that supports learning well. Examples of good teaching and learning are evident in several classes and in most years. In these more effective lessons, teachers use correct scientific vocabulary, demonstrate good subject knowledge and activities proceed at a good pace. These features of teaching promoted good learning about the effects of friction in a Year 6 lesson and understanding of evaporation and condensation in a Year 5 lesson.
75. In some lessons, teachers' planning does not take enough account of pupils' differing levels of prior attainment and capabilities. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, activities that involved the recording of nutritional information from breakfast cereal packets were almost identical for all pupils. Some of the lower attaining pupils had difficulty in understanding the work and struggled. There were also moments when the most capable pupils marked time because the activity was too easy and they were able to complete the task in a shorter time than was allocated to it. Too little use is made of discussions at the end of lessons to check pupils' understanding and reinforce their learning. In one lesson, an unfortunate choice of organisation resulted in pupils wasting time and missing opportunities to learn from each other while apparatus for a scientific investigation was collected from outside the classroom.
76. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive satisfactory support to help them to participate in all parts of lessons. In some lessons, supportive worksheets are provided. However, printed worksheets are at times inappropriately provided for pupils who do not need them, for example in some work in Years 3 and 5. When this happens, opportunities are lost for pupils to develop skills in producing tables and recording data in their own way.
77. There are some examples of good marking throughout the school, with teachers using constructive comments to take pupils' learning forwards. In the best examples, pupils respond positively to teachers' suggestions. There are examples of science being linked to other subjects, such as in mathematics in recording data and in English in developing pupils' recording skills. However, not enough use is made of ICT across the school and very limited use is made of bar charts and other similar devices in interpreting data. Colourful posters and the display of key words in some classes support the science curriculum, but very little of pupils' work is displayed to encourage and support learning.
78. The co-ordinator, who fully took over responsibility for the subject in September 2004, has a clear vision of how to rectify the present weaknesses, move the subject forward and raise

standards. There is a detailed action plan in place with clear priorities for improvement. Long-term plans of work and policies are currently under review and are being improved; new assessment procedures are being trialled; and some good processes are in place for checking provision through sampling pupils' books and tracking pupils' progress. However, the present arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough to identify all the key areas in which teaching and learning can be improved. For example, the weaknesses in how well work is matched to pupils' differing needs in some classes had not been fully recognised. Resources for science are good and are being further developed.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the level expected nationally in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers are well trained, have good subject knowledge, give clear instruction, and teach ICT skills well.
- Resources to support learning in ICT are very good.
- Too little use is made of computers in classrooms.
- The range of opportunities for independent learning in lessons in the computer room is limited.

### **Commentary**

79. The standards of pupils' work in Year 6 are above the level expected nationally in all strands of ICT, as they were at the last inspection. These good standards result from a strong emphasis on the teaching of skills and good coverage of the ICT curriculum. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils because of the support they receive in lessons.
80. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are well trained in teaching ICT and have good subject knowledge. They are confident users of ICT and, as such, provide pupils with good examples. Most lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers give clear instructions and take the pupils step-by-step through the learning of new skills, such as when using PowerPoint presentations in Year 5 and accessing a website in Year 3.
81. The interactive whiteboards are used well to demonstrate what pupils are required to do next. In a Year 3 English lesson, pupils were helped to drag and drop words and phrases into new positions through following the teacher's instructions and using the whiteboard. Pupils are able to experiment with a range of options as they try out each new skill, such as in Year 5 when they use a range of options to animate text. Similarly, in a Year 6 lesson, the pupils were given good opportunities to use a range of options to control a vehicle.
82. Most of the time, pupils receive good individual help from teachers and teaching assistants who circulate during the main parts of lessons. However, there are occasions when a pupil has difficulties and has to wait for help to arrive, as occurred in one Year 5 lesson and also in a Year 3 religious education lesson in which pupils used the computers in the computer room. Teachers are not always fully aware of this. In one Year 5 lesson, in which teaching and learning were otherwise good overall, the

pace of the lesson was slowed because a discussion of skills already acquired such as in cutting, pasting, and saving was not sufficiently matched to all the pupils' level of understanding. In particular, the most capable pupils did not move on sufficiently at this point in the lesson.

83. Most lessons are very closely directed, with all pupils working on the same activity at the same time on the computers. Whilst this is effective in taking learning forward, particularly in ensuring that skills are developed, there are times when this approach restricts the range of activities available. As a result, opportunities for really independent work are often limited to extension activities during the lunch hour for those pupils who wish to attend.
84. As at the last inspection, pupils behave very well in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They work well together in groups and pairs and are keen to share what they have learnt with others. Some pupils ask their neighbours for help and advice. These are readily given. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to share and evaluate pupils' work at the end of lessons because insufficient time is allocated for this.
85. The overall leadership and management of ICT are good. The school has just gained the Naace Award for its good practice in ICT. The requirements for this award include the establishment of appropriate practices for the monitoring of teaching and learning, for tracking pupils' progress, and for good curriculum coverage. There is a good system in place for self-assessment whereby pupils record the development of their own skills in each aspect of the ICT curriculum. There are good links with a local secondary school, with secondary staff expertise being used in the teaching of control technology.

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

86. The overall use and development of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects is satisfactory. There is a good programme in place for teaching ICT across the curriculum, with each year group allocated four sessions per week in the computer room. These times are appropriately allocated to a range of subjects. However, only a small amount of pupils' ICT work is displayed around the school and little is seen in pupils' workbooks in other subjects. Although classroom computers are occasionally used by pupils with special educational needs, these computers are insufficiently used more generally in day-by-day class lessons. The interactive whiteboards in classrooms tend to be used in the introductory parts of lessons only.

#### **HUMANITIES**

##### **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

87. Provision in geography and history was sampled through lesson observations, an analysis of pupils' work, and discussion with the co-ordinators. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a secure judgement on overall provision in these subjects.
88. The available evidence indicates that the standards in geography and history in Year 6 are at the level expected nationally. However, in history, pupils do not have a sufficiently secure awareness of the different ways in which aspects of the past are represented and interpreted. Although the present standards are not as high as at the

last inspection, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The evidence indicates that teaching and learning meet pupils' needs satisfactorily as they move up through the school.

89. Two lessons were seen in geography in which teaching and learning were good. In Year 6, pupils studying life in Southern India were given good opportunities to develop research and enquiry skills as they used maps, photographs and text to find out about the lives of street children. Tasks were varied well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, and the levels of challenge were realistic. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher organised an effective practical activity with sand and water. This, together with good use of a video animation on the interactive whiteboard, helped pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of coastal erosion well. In both lessons, teachers maintained a high level of interest from pupils by means of varied and well-prepared activities.
90. An interesting range of learning opportunities is provided to make history meaningful for pupils. Pupils in Year 3, for example, gain knowledge about Ancient Britain and of the various invaders and settlers, such as the Celts, by means of interactive animations projected onto the whiteboard. Resources, visits and visitors to school enhance pupils' learning and are used to bring history to life. For instance, pupils in Year 6, when studying the Tudor period, visit a Tudor house in a local village. As a result, pupils successfully develop an increasing awareness of how people lived in the past.
91. There are some satisfactory examples of the work in history supporting and developing skills in literacy, such as when pupils write letters or factual reports from the point of view of people from the past. However, the use of ICT to support enquiry skills in both history and geography is not sufficiently well established.
92. The leadership and management of geography and history are satisfactory. There are policies and schemes of work in place, which offer helpful guidance to teachers. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for the co-ordinators to check pupils' work to ensure that geographical and historical skills are being taught. However, there has been little observation of teaching to evaluate the effectiveness of what happens in lessons. The school recognises that this is needed to develop the subjects further. There are no whole-school procedures for checking and recording pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects and this is a weakness in provision.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers place a good emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge of Christianity and other religions.
- Work is not always adapted to meet pupils' differing needs.
- Visits and visitors are used well to support pupils' learning about Christianity.
- There are no visits or visitors to help develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths.

### **Commentary**

93. The standard of pupils' work in Year 6 is at the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus, as it was at the last inspection. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall, as they were at the last inspection. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn and achieve satisfactorily.
94. There are examples of good teaching and learning in religious education. Where teaching is good, the work is well matched to the needs of the pupils, so learning is promoted well. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used questions skilfully. As a result, all pupils could join in the discussion and explain the importance of celebrations such as funerals and weddings. In a Year 4 class, the teacher grouped pupils carefully and gave them an exciting task that took account of different ways of learning. As a result, pupils enthusiastically acted out different scenarios, demonstrating that they understood the moral of their play and how it applied to everyday life.
95. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of world faiths and plan work so that pupils increase their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths satisfactorily as they move up through the school. As a result, pupils gain some insight into the similarities and differences in how, for example, followers of different faiths worship and the importance of their sacred texts. For example, pupils in Year 3 know how Jewish people celebrate a Bar Mitzvah and show a good understanding of the significance of the Torah.
96. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not pitch the tasks correctly for all levels of capability and pupils are often given the same work to complete. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils used the Internet to find information about synagogues. However, many lower attaining pupils struggled because they could not read the information on the screen, and they did not get enough help from the teacher or teaching assistant to access the work. The matching of work to pupils' different capabilities, particularly for those of lower attainment in reading and writing, is a major factor preventing standards from being higher.
97. Visits to local churches and visits from representatives of different Christian denominations help pupils to gain first-hand knowledge about personal faith and aspects of ritual. However, there are no opportunities for pupils to visit places of worship of other faiths or for visitors from other faiths to talk to pupils. As a result, pupils are not prepared sufficiently well for life in a culturally diverse society. Moral and social themes in lessons and assemblies give pupils good opportunities to think about how they should behave and their place in society. However, on occasions, in religious education lessons, teachers do not give pupils enough time to discuss their beliefs, ideas and concerns or to reflect on how these affect their lives.
98. The leadership and management of religious education are still satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who took over responsibility in September 2004, is very knowledgeable. She has worked hard to provide teachers with guidance on what pupils should be taught in each year. Although she has correctly identified some of the areas for development, she has not had time to implement improvement plans. Over time, there has been an adequate amount of checking of the quality of provision, although the monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough. As a result, not all the aspects of teaching that could be improved, including through the sharing of existing good practice, have been identified precisely enough.

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

Provision in art and design, design and technology, and music was sampled through lesson observations, an analysis of samples of pupils' recorded work and a scrutiny of teachers' planning. Discussions were also held with co-ordinators. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a secure overall judgement on the quality of provision in each subject.

### **Art and design**

99. The standard of pupils' work is at the level expected nationally in Year 6, and a few pupils are working at a higher level. For instance, there are examples of higher attaining pupils producing well-proportioned pencil sketches of hands and recording detailed observational studies of cross-sections of fruit. The work of most other pupils is less detailed, but competent. Pupils successfully develop skills in composition in painting, confidence in using a range of materials to communicate ideas, and gain some knowledge of the work of famous artists. However, there is only limited attention to developing awareness of other cultures through the artists studied.
100. The evidence indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good features. There is secure teaching of skills, such as how to show proportion in figure drawing in Year 3. These skills are then used and developed in later years. In Year 4, for example, many pupils successfully apply their knowledge of figure drawing in paintings of Victorian schoolrooms and of Florence Nightingale at work. There are occasions when pupils' differing needs are met through variation in the level of support teachers provide. However, throughout the school, the tasks set are usually much the same for all pupils regardless of their prior attainment and capabilities.
101. The leadership and management of art and design are satisfactory overall, although at an early stage of development and rather informal. The present co-ordinator has only held responsibility for the subject since September 2004. She has carried out a review of resources and provides advice and support to colleagues as required. She has identified the main areas requiring improvement, which link with whole-school priorities. In particular, the subject lacks formal assessment procedures to help teachers to match work to pupils' differing needs and the effectiveness of provision has not been checked in recent years. Whilst recognising that she needs to work with colleagues to develop these important areas across the work of the school, the co-ordinator also sees one of her key tasks as being to raise the profile of art and design in the school. Although there are some examples of pupils' art and design work on display, pupils' work in this subject is not as evident around the school as detailed in the last inspection report.

### **Design and technology**

102. Discussion with the co-ordinator, who took over responsibility in September 2004, and observations of pupils' work around the school indicate that there is satisfactory coverage of the design and technology curriculum. Assignments that involve designing and making in Year 3 have resulted in the production of some attractive photograph frames and an understanding of basic structures. Other items produced by older pupils include pop-up toys on a Christmas theme and slippers, which are of the standard expected of pupils of this age. However, pupils' design and technology work is not a major feature of display around the school.
103. The long-term plan of work has been reviewed and a revised scheme has been implemented in Years 3 and 6. Implementation of new schemes for Years 4 and 5 are recognised by the school as an immediate priority. There is a satisfactory action plan with relevant priorities. This plan includes the continued review of current practice and resources. The indications are that the school had identified the areas most in need of improvement and is setting out to tackle them.

## **Music**

104. Standards of singing are good. In whole-school assemblies, pupils sing tunefully, enthusiastically and with clear diction. Pupils in the school orchestra also perform to a good standard. In the one lesson observed, in Year 4, pupils worked at the level expected nationally in listening, composing and performing.
105. Evidence indicates that, as at the last inspection, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Basing lessons on a commercial plan of work, teachers ensure that pupils undertake a satisfactory range of activities. In addition, pupils have very good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular clubs and activities, including a school band, and music and drama productions each year. Specialist instrumental lessons are also offered at a charge to those pupils whose parents wish them to learn to play a wind instrument, the violin or guitar.
106. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management for music and has steadily developed the range of opportunities available to pupils. Having been available to staff to guide them in introducing and implementing the current long-term plan of work, the co-ordinator recognises that the next step is to review its effectiveness and to identify where development is required. This important next stage links with the school priority of developing the checking of teaching and learning and evaluating how well teachers meet pupils' differing needs across the subjects.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above the level expected nationally and pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully, provide good examples for pupils, and develop pupils' skills well.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The school achieves considerable success in sporting events and competitions.
- There are no systematic procedures for the regular checking of teaching and learning or for tracking pupils' progress.
- Opportunities for pupils to reflect on and evaluate their work in lessons are inconsistent.

## **Commentary**

107. Standards in physical education are above the level expected nationally both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. The school enjoys a good reputation for its sporting achievements. It participates in a wide range of competitive sporting events and a large proportion of pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities. Pupils of all levels of capability respond well to the high expectations of teachers. As a result, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in lessons and display good standards of skill in all activities.
108. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some particularly effective teaching and learning in Year 6. Class teachers provide very good examples for their pupils. They dress appropriately, give clear instructions, demonstrate well what they

require pupils to do, and participate in some activities. In a Year 3 dance lesson, good planning and effective reinforcement of the instructions given on a compact disc helped the children to improve their interpretation of the music and movements of the characters in a story. Good demonstration by the teacher and an awareness of when to help resulted in good learning in a Year 4 hockey lesson.

109. Other lessons observed were also marked by clear instructions, high expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining and effective demonstrations of good practice. Many lessons include opportunities for pupils to reflect and comment on their own performance and that of others. A Year 6 basketball lesson included opportunities for pupils to be creative and to learn from each other. In some lessons, however, insufficient time is given to demonstrating and evaluating performance. Where good examples are demonstrated and commented on and pupils are given time to try again, very good learning takes place.
110. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen and follow instructions well, respond appropriately to questions and work very well together in a range of groupings. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers and with each other. Their positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships contribute well to the standards they reach.
111. Extra-curricular activities are well supported by parents and by both teaching and non-teaching staff. The adults involved make a substantial contribution to ensuring these activities take place and are readily accessed by pupils. There is good support for competitive events away from the school. Links with other schools through sport are also good. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in an annual residential visit that provides a range of outdoor education opportunities.
112. With the support of the headteacher, parents and other school staff, the physical education curriculum is well managed and led. Resources and accommodation for physical education are good and are well used. The curriculum is good and contains all the required elements. There are, however, no systematic processes for the regular checking of teaching and learning or for tracking pupils' progress and the standards they attain. The school recognises that these are areas for development in order to build on and develop the existing good practice.

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

Provision in this area was sampled. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of provision.

113. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Its caring atmosphere supports pupils' personal development well. The range of learning opportunities for personal, social and health education, which is under review, is satisfactory. It provides appropriate activities that support learning about diet, health, sex and relationships education, the dangers of drugs misuse and personal safety, as well as emotional health and wellbeing. The school helps pupils to develop a safe and healthy life-style, gain confidence and develop good relationships. There are good contributions from outside agencies, such as the school nurse, life bus and visiting theatre companies.
114. Pupils' involvement with the School Council provides a satisfactory opportunity for them to experience certain aspects of democracy at first hand and to feel valued as

school citizens. Citizenship and a sense of responsibility are further developed through the opportunities for pupils to work with younger children in the adjoining infant school and with each other through the 'peer mediator' programme.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement*

**Grade**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>                       | <b>4</b> |
| How inclusive the school is  | 4        |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 4        |
| Value for money provided by the school                               | 4        |

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b> | <b>4</b> |
| Pupils' achievement               | 4        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Attendance  | 2        |
| Attitudes   | 2        |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                 | 3        |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development     | 3        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>           | <b>4</b> |
| The quality of teaching  | 4        |
| How well pupils learn  | 4        |
| The quality of assessment  | 4        |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs                      | 4        |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2        |
| Accommodation and resources                                      | 3        |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                         | 3        |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                          | 4        |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views              | 4        |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents             | 4        |
| The quality of the school's links with the community             | 4        |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges               | 3        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The leadership and management of the school</b> | <b>4</b> |
| The governance of the school                       | 4        |
| The leadership of the headteacher                  | 4        |
| The leadership of other key staff                  | 4        |
| The effectiveness of management                    | 4        |

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

*poor (6); very poor (7).*