

INSPECTION REPORT

**BRACKLEY CHURCH of ENGLAND
JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Brackley

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121961

Headteacher: Mrs. Katherine Spencer

Lead inspector: Mr. Andrew Howe

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th June 2005

Inspection number: 273695

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: Church of England Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 7 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 208

School address: Manor Road
Brackley
Northamptonshire

Postcode: NN13 6EE

Telephone number: 01280 707060

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. Paula Taylor

Date of previous inspection: 6th December 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized junior school serving the Northamptonshire market town of Brackley. It caters for boys and girls aged 7 to 11 and has 208 pupils organised in seven classes. Although the number of pupils has fallen since the last inspection, all 77 pupils from the neighbouring infant school will be transferring in September 2005. It serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are more favourable than the national picture. A lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils has special educational needs, covering a wide range of learning difficulties, including a statement of particular special needs. All but a very small number of pupils are white and of British background, and no pupil is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The great majority of pupils join the school having previously attended the neighbouring infant school. Their standards of attainment on entry to Brackley Junior School are average, although this fluctuates from one year group to another. The school has been through a major change of leadership and staffing since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher both joined the school in September 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23870	Andrew Howe	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, music, art and design
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30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	English, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good, effective school that has made substantial recent improvement. After a period of disruption which led to a fall in standards, pupils now achieve well in English, mathematics and science. By Year 6, standards are average, but improving steadily. Considering past weaknesses in provision, the pupils have achieved well, more recently, to reach these standards. The quality of teaching is good overall, but there were weaknesses in some of the lessons seen. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the senior staff and governing body. She has led the drive to raise standards very effectively. The school is held in high esteem by parents, who appreciate the improvements made in many aspects of its work. The current, good achievement of the great majority of pupils, rather than standards resulting from past weaknesses, led the inspection team to judge that the school is effective and provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because teaching is good
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well
- Teaching is good, although there are still weaknesses in some lessons
- High quality care ensures pupils are ready and eager to learn
- Pupils achieve very well in music, through high quality, enthusiastic teaching
- The school works hard to involve parents in the education of their children, which helps them to support learning successfully
- Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection, but pupils' progress in some classes is still not good enough

The school was last inspected in 1999. During a subsequent period of major staffing change standards fell. Although standards are currently average, and lower than in 1999, they are clearly improving in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are achieving well. The issues identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is better. Pupils now benefit from properly planned games and gymnastic programmes in physical education. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to learn about other cultures, and parents are well informed about homework. **Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.**

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The table shows that results have fluctuated since 2002, during a period when the school suffered considerable disruption. In 2004, the results were below average in English and well below in mathematics, but it is likely that the current Year 6 will gain at least average results in the 2005 tests. Standards of work seen during the inspection were higher than those suggested by the 2004 test results. This is because the quality of teaching and learning has improved.

Pupils' achievement is good. When pupils enter the school, overall attainment is normally about the same as expected for their ages, but this varies from year to year. Pupils are currently making good progress in Years 3 and 4 where the improvements of the past two years are having most effect. Progress is also good in Years 5 and 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Considering past weaknesses in provision, pupils in the current Year 6 have done well to reach these standards, which is due to the quality of teaching. Pupils achieve very well in music and reach standards that are well above those expected nationally. Pupils of all abilities, including those who have special educational needs, and from all backgrounds, achieve equally well.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered well. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils are very receptive to the lively teaching, so are eager to learn. Their good behaviour supports achievement well. They enjoy taking responsibility and are keen and eager to play a full part in school life, because of the very good range of activities offered. Good attendance and punctuality ensure that pupils are in school on time, ready to learn. Pupils are confident, well aware of their responsibilities to others.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are planned carefully and teachers' subject knowledge is good. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and relationships are very good, so the pupils are confident, want to work hard and do their best. Teachers generally have high expectations of the amount of work pupils should complete, and make good use of time, so that lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Tasks are often practical and lessons are active, which ensures pupils want to take part and are involved in their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to involve all pupils in lessons and to encourage curiosity. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. While all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory and the majority of lessons were good or very good, in a few lessons expectations were not high enough. Pupils' behaviour was not managed adequately, teaching methods were not sufficiently challenging or tasks were not matched to pupils' needs, which reduced pupils' achievement. In music, high quality, enthusiastic specialist teaching promotes very good achievement.

The school provides a good curriculum. It is enriched by a very good range of experiences which make learning interesting. Particularly good is the wide variety of clubs and activities outside lessons. Effective links are made between subjects, such as mathematics and science. In some subjects the work does not build pupils' skills step by step effectively enough, because similar work is taught to each year group, owing to weaknesses in planning. The school intends to revise curriculum planning for next academic year when single age group classes will enable different topics to be set for each year. Accommodation and resources are very good. They are used very well to enrich pupils' learning. Assessment is good. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and, in English and mathematics, provide useful feedback so pupils can improve their work. Learning targets for individual pupils are well used so they are aware of what they need to learn next. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school provides very good care for its pupils and has created a very constructive partnership with its parents. Links with the community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has been effective in raising standards. She has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the school's work and her determination has ensured rapid progress. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff. Management is good overall. Staff work well as a team and are focused on raising standards. Governors are supportive and prepared to act as critical friends. They have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas where improvement is still needed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and feel very well informed and involved, which helps them to support their children's learning successfully. They are appreciative of recent improvements. Pupils feel very well cared for, and so they are happy, very confident and ready to learn. They enjoy coming to school. Pupils trust and respect their teachers for listening to them and using their ideas very carefully to make school life better.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school needs to do to improve are

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school
- Raise pupils' achievement in ICT

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is currently good, even though, in the past, it was disrupted by weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. By Year 6, the pupils are doing well to reach standards in English, mathematics and science expected for their ages. In all subjects and classes, the inspection found recent, marked improvement in pupils' achievement. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve just as well as others.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because of confident, engaging teaching
- Standards are rising because teachers and pupils are firmly focused on improvement
- Achievement in music is very good due to high quality, specialist teaching
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets
- In ICT pupils in some classes do not make good enough progress

Commentary

1. Over the past three years, results in the Year 6 national tests have fluctuated, and overall improvement has not been as good as for most schools. The 2004 results, in particular, were below average in English and well below in mathematics, both compared to similar schools and the national average. These weak results were caused by a mixture of major staff changes and a crisis in the school's leadership and management, which had a lasting, negative impact on pupils' progress and attainment. The targets set for the 2004 test results, which were not achieved by some margin, were not set by the school's current management. However, inspection findings indicate that targets set for 2005 match the current attainment in Year 6 and show a marked improvement in standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.2 (26.8)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.4 (26.9)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.9 (27.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 64 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Provision in the school, and hence the pupils' achievement, has improved significantly over the past two years. The impact of better teaching and good leadership and management means that the standards seen during the inspection are much better than indicated by last year's national test results. Pupils attained average standards overall in lessons seen in English, mathematics and science, and their past work for the year is also at least of an average standard. In reading, mathematics and science, standards in Years 3 and 4 are now above average. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average because they listen well and express their views clearly. This is because, in all subjects, teachers plan activities that involve carefully structured discussion and the introduction of relevant vocabulary. Pupils demonstrate good use of their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design technology.

3. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is average overall. The standard of work seen in Year 6 indicates that results in the national tests this year are likely to be at least average. There is some variation in different year groups, but the recent improvement in standards in Years 5 and 6 indicates good achievement when considered in the context of the progress these pupils made during a time when the school had difficulties. Equally, the higher standards in Years 3 and 4 indicate that achievement is now good for these pupils and that the school is rectifying the deficiencies of the past few years. Pupils' good attitudes and personal development, fostered effectively by the school through many additional activities and very good care and support, represent another aspect of their good achievement.
4. Specialist teaching in music, which is enthusiastic and highly skilled, ensures pupils make very good progress and attain standards that are well above average. Pupils sing very tunefully in assembly with appropriate attention to diction, expression and dynamics. Pupils in Year 3 sing and play in rounds, holding their parts independently with confidence. They are learning to use notation accurately. Standards in ICT are average. Pupils in Year 6 display considerable expertise and enthusiasm for the subject, because they have been given good opportunities to develop their ideas, sometimes in other subjects, such as science. Pupils in some other classes do not achieve as well because teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their behaviour or learning.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting their targets. This is because of the well-directed additional support they receive, the supportive nature of the school community and their own good motivation.
6. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievement was good overall, except in ICT and PE. Pupils' achievement is also now good across the whole school, in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in ICT is now satisfactory. There was a slump in standards between inspections but the recent marked improvement in achievement indicates satisfactory improvement. There is no doubt that standards are rising.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are good. Their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are developed well. The good features identified by the last inspection remain and, with a sharper focus on personal development, improvement has been good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very receptive to lively teaching, so are eager to learn
- High standards of conduct are expected and good behaviour supports achievement well
- Good attendance and punctuality ensure that pupils are in school on time and ready to learn
- Careful attention to pupils' personal development helps them to become very confident and well aware of their responsibilities to others
- Pupils enjoy activities such as music, art, sport and drama enormously, including experience of other cultural traditions, although their wider appreciation of these is less well developed

Commentary

7. As Year 6 pupils stressed, teachers' "enthusiastic way of teaching encourages you to want to learn" so they thrive in the best lessons where learning is "fun and enjoyable". Although not all lessons are stimulating or inspire love of learning, pupils of different ages and backgrounds have enough experience of interesting, lively activities to be keen to learn and do well. As a result, they usually settle to work happily, do as they are asked and persist, even when tasks are hard and solutions tricky. Even in dull lessons, most pupils keep trying to do their best. Where the teaching is very good, pupils relish challenges, as in a Year 3 science lesson where an imaginative range of

questions about different sources of light encouraged pupils to strive eagerly to think of unusual answers.

8. After an unsettled period, during which, as parents and staff agree, standards of behaviour slipped, high expectations and a very clear lead from the senior management team have ensured that good behaviour flourishes. Most pupils behave very well in and out of the classroom, although a few individuals have particular difficulty in following rules or coping with less stimulating lessons. Pupils are very clear that behaviour has improved significantly just recently because boundaries are set clearly and action is taken promptly if anyone oversteps the mark. They are grateful for new, firm, prompt responses to bullying. Year 6 made the point strongly that “there are one or two attention-seekers but no hard case bullies now.” This is helped by interesting activities for pupils to enjoy at break and lunchtime. Exclusions have decreased, are rare, but are used appropriately if unavoidable.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	198	1	
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		
Any other ethnic group	6		

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

9. The school makes it quite clear to parents that regular, punctual attendance helps their children to do well, as then they do not miss key work. Most pupils have very few absences because they want to be in school enjoying all the varied activities. Families are well known to teachers and office staff, who contact them promptly if in doubt about reasons for absence. This reflects the high priority the school gives to the care of pupils and to helping those who fall behind with their work through absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. In the last year, the school has revised its programme of personal, social, health education and citizenship alongside routines designed to nurture pupils’ personal qualities carefully. It has a sharp focus on ensuring that pupils develop good social skills, respect for others, courtesy, self-esteem and maturity, both within specific lessons and its daily life. Older pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities they have for helping teachers and other children, for example setting up the hall for assembly and acting as friendship and gamesmanship monitors. They love doing office duties and being ‘buddies’ for new, Year 3 children. Pupils in all year groups appreciate the extra emphasis on trying to do the right thing and the rewards, such as ‘child of the week’ and a pizza party each term for the class with the most lunchtime awards. This has left Year 6 feeling that the school “has just been brilliant” because the atmosphere is so good that they are happy, doing well and confident about moving on.

11. The best lessons, assemblies and other activities make a notable contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. For instance, when singing was at the heart of an assembly, with a stunning introductory three-part harmony, many children's faces were alight with the sheer pleasure of the uplifting, African rhythms. Lively and colourful displays reinforce work such as that on the Tudor and Victorian periods, giving pupils a good sense of their own heritage. Although the school offers good opportunities for pupils to enjoy other cultures through music and in workshop weeks, awareness of the wider world, different children's lives and richness of other traditions is less well developed than their very good appreciation of the arts.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall. The curriculum for English, mathematics, and science is good and enables pupils to achieve well. Good links are often made with other subjects. There are some weaknesses in planning in some subjects, however. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Useful targets are set so that pupils know what they have to learn next. Pupils are cared for and supported very well. The school has a very good partnership with parents, and very good links with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils learn well because lessons are usually lively and interesting. In a few of the lessons seen, however, weaknesses in teaching slowed the pace of pupils' learning. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are good, which enables them to teach confidently and briskly
- Teachers present lessons imaginatively, with enthusiasm, and often make them practical, so pupils show a high level of interest
- Teachers foster good relationships which encourage pupils to be confident and keen to learn
- In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. However when this is not the case, pupils' interest wanes and the pace of their learning slows

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	7	7	8	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.

12. In all the lessons seen during the inspection, good planning was the foundation for successful teaching. Allied to a good grasp of the subject being taught, this gave teachers the confidence to proceed at a brisk pace, keeping pupils engaged in their learning. For instance, in a science lesson where the teacher was explaining the concept of density, her careful preparation of resources and thoughtful planning of practical activity ensured that the topic was approached in several different ways, consolidating the understanding of all the pupils in the class. Teachers give clear and careful explanations so pupils know what they are going to learn.
13. Teachers work hard to build positive relationships with pupils. They have a firm, friendly and collaborative style, which helps pupils to approach tasks with confidence and encourages them to enjoy learning. The positive management of pupils' behaviour is a strength in many lessons. Teachers have clear and high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour, which support achievement effectively. They often present lessons in a lively and enthusiastic way so that pupils respond very well in turn, displaying enthusiastic attitudes to their work.
14. Teachers use a range of resources effectively to enliven the presentation of lessons. Interactive whiteboards (a large computer display activated by touch) are used effectively to demonstrate new ideas, capture pupils' imagination and involve them in lessons. In mathematics, good use is made of small whiteboards both to help pupils record and clarify their ideas, and to help teachers assess pupils' understanding. In science, good use is made of first-hand experience to ensure teaching is relevant to pupils. However, little use is made of ICT in most lessons, which reduces pupils' access to a valuable learning resource.
15. Teachers also use a good range of strategies to vary the presentation of lessons. For instance, in many lessons pupils are asked to discuss ideas in pairs for short, focused periods. This involves all pupils in a speaking and listening activity and also enables the

teacher to assess understanding effectively. Teachers use questions well to stimulate pupils' curiosity and interest, and to assess their learning.

16. Marking is of good quality in English and mathematics. Pupils' misconceptions are corrected and suggestions given so that they can improve their work. This practice is less consistent in science.
17. Pupils have individual learning targets so that they know what they have to do to reach higher standards. Overall assessment is good because it is used constructively to help pupils evaluate their own learning and know what they must do next.
18. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers are skilled at planning tasks at the right level for these pupils and match the work closely to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. Most of these targets are well constructed and provide good guidance to pupils and teaching assistants. Assessment procedures have been improved recently to give a clearer picture of pupils' special educational needs, as opposed to identifying pupils who are less able. As a result, better support is being given both to those pupils who are considered to be below average as well as those who do have additional special needs.
19. The teaching of music is a particular strength. Music lessons are very well planned and teaching is aimed high. Very good subject expertise and a very positive, determined and brisk teaching style ensure that pupils reach standards that are much better than those expected for their ages.
20. Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching regularly and provide feedback to teachers so that they can improve their practice. This has played a big part in the evident, recent improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. All the lessons seen by inspectors were of at least satisfactory quality, but there were weaknesses in a few lessons, usually owing to expectations of work and behaviour not being high enough. In a few cases, teachers did not set clear boundaries for pupils' behaviour, adopting too relaxed an approach so that pupils did not work with care or concentration. In other cases, teachers did not expect pupils to be able to work independently or did not challenge more able pupils sufficiently. The teaching of guided reading was often good for the groups with whom the teacher worked but less effective for the other groups in the class because the tasks given were not demanding or clear enough. The challenge in teaching ICT was in some cases limited by the teachers' choice of software, which restricted pupils' opportunities for learning any more than narrow skills in the lesson.
21. At the time of the last inspection teaching and learning were judged good overall, with some weaknesses in ICT and physical education. Improvement since then has been satisfactory. Teaching in ICT is now satisfactory. After a period when the quality of teaching and learning is reported to have deteriorated, recent improvement has been rapid and has raised pupils' achievement.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum with a very good range of extra activities that makes learning interesting for all pupils. Accommodation and resources are very good and very well used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many opportunities for pupils to learn outside of normal lessons and this broadens pupils' experiences very well
- The accommodation and resources are used very well to help pupils learn
- There are some examples of pupils experiencing work that is not well planned to match their ability
- Not enough use is made of ICT in other subjects

Commentary

22. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. Much work has been done to link subjects effectively. For example, learning in history is extended well in art and design lessons where pupils have experimented with clay to produce Tudor heads. However, the school is suffering from a legacy of having to plan the same topic lessons for different age groups. This is because, when numbers dropped, different age groups had to be put in the same class. As a result, topics in history, geography and religious education had to be planned so that the same lesson was taught, whatever the age or ability of the pupils in the class. This is still true of all classes and, as a result, there are some skills and knowledge that pupils have missed. The school is very aware of this issue and it will be addressed in September when all classes will be single age and the curriculum map will be reviewed. Despite weaknesses in planning the curriculum for geography, history and religious education, pupils' work shows they make satisfactory progress.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Curriculum time is used well to support their learning. For example, each morning, ten minutes' additional support is given to small groups of older children who find reading difficult. As a result, standards of reading in Years 5 and 6 have improved.
24. Pupils benefit considerably from a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, including trips into the local area, visitors into the school and the teaching of French. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have to join in with extra sports and about the cups they have won for their sporting successes. The most notable extra opportunities the pupils have are for art, sport and music. Having 'Artists in residence' has been very successful in motivating the pupils and encouraging them to have a go. The art display in the foyer is testament to the good work and the enthusiasm of the pupils. Music is very strong within the school. Pupils recall vividly the production last year of *Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat*. This year the school is rehearsing *Oliver*. These productions involve all pupils, in one way or another, and make a significant contribution to the high standards in singing and performance. The number of visits the pupils experience also supports learning well. This is particularly so with the residential trips. In both Years 4 and 6, pupils have the opportunity to stay away from home and work closely together as they undertake activities such as climbing and pond dipping.
25. Although teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards, opportunities are missed during lessons, other than in the computer room, to plan for ICT use. However, pupils in Year 6 have produced leaflets about the environment and multimedia presentations about space.
26. The accommodation is of a high standard. It is very well kept and pupils respect the welcoming environment. A programme of decoration has resulted in bright classrooms where pupils are eager and keen to learn. Rooms are available for specialist work in music and ICT and classrooms are spacious and well organised. Resources are generous and generally used very well to support the pupils in their learning. There are sufficient teachers and good use is made of expertise within the school to give all pupils good experiences. This is particularly so in music, where all pupils have high quality lessons that enable them to reach high standards. The curriculum at the time of the last inspection was judged to be good. There have been improvements in the links between subjects and the enrichment of pupils' experiences through a wide range of additional activities. This means that improvement has been satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. They receive good support and guidance on how to improve their work and do well at school. Pupils' views are taken very seriously. Improvement overall has been good because the positive features described in the last

inspection remain and benefit from recent, more sharply focused use of information about each child's progress.

Main strengths

- Pupils feel very well cared for, so are happy, very confident and ready to learn
- The school is doing well in its efforts to highlight gaps in learning and ensure good support is given to everyone, including individuals who struggle or need more demanding work
- Pupils trust and respect their teachers for listening to them and using their ideas very carefully to make school life better
- When children start at the school, they are helped to settle in well, particularly now that older pupils are expected to give friendly support to newcomers

Commentary

27. The school, led decisively by the headteacher, has a firm grasp of how important high quality care is in ensuring that all pupils, regardless of background, thrive here and do as well as they can. As a result, staff and governors pay very careful attention to all matters of health, safety and well-being, including child protection, so that pupils are kept safe from harm and can enjoy their lessons. Older pupils stressed the way in which the outdoor environment has improved recently, because outside areas are safer, without jagged branches, and far more attractive and welcoming. They feel that the school is very caring and wants the best for them, which, in turn, motivates them to try hard.
28. A wealth of information about how well pupils are doing, particularly in English and mathematics, has been put to good use by the headteacher with the development of a system to track just how much progress each child makes over a year. The school now knows whether rates of progress are fast enough and what each child finds easy or needs to practise. This is helping teachers to offer better advice to pupils on how to improve their work and ensure that they understand what to do to reach the targets they set together. The school has already planned to involve pupils and parents actively in discussing and working towards such targets to drive up achievement and standards. Pupils are clear that, generally, they can ask for and receive help in lessons when they need it.
29. Pupils and parents report a significant improvement in how children work and play together as a result of the very positive expectations set by the headteacher and deputy. Relationships in the school are very good, which fosters high levels of trust and makes children feel confident that someone will listen if they have a problem. Pupils commend teachers for listening to their ideas in and out of lessons and acting on their suggestions, for instance those of the school council on recycling. They complete an annual questionnaire about how well they think the school is doing, which helps to shape changes. Pupils are quick to praise the staff, including dinner ladies, who initiated changes as a result of hearing what they had to say, for example about the lack of things to do at lunchtime. The introduction of Year 6 play leaders, better-organised football and a range of other games, has made pupils feel that they have a real impact on improvements to school life.
30. The success with which pupils who have special educational needs are integrated into the life of the school is evidence of the good quality of care they receive. Teachers take considerable trouble to instil confidence and to tackle long-term and short-term problems positively. Staff ensure that pupils relate well to each other, regardless of any special educational needs. This is another positive feature of the care promoted by the school.
31. Good efforts are made to help new pupils to settle in quickly, based on strong links with the infants school, which result in joint Year 2 and 3 activities such as sports coaching, plus well-planned visits and project work. Before starting here, new, Year 3 children are paired with a Year 6 'buddy', who looks after them for the first half term and usually takes the role very seriously.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships with parents, the community and local schools are very good and enhance the range of opportunities for pupils to learn and experience success. Improvement since the last inspection has been good because the school has worked hard to rebuild and strengthen links after an unsettled period.

Main strengths

- Parents feel very well informed and involved with the school, which helps them to support their children's learning successfully
- The school contributes enthusiastically to local events, which enriches pupils' experiences and sense of community responsibility very well
- Local schools work together very well to ensure that moves from one to another are very smooth

Commentary

32. In general, parents think that the school is doing a good job because their children are very keen to come, they are expected to work hard and the school is welcoming and well led. Inspectors agree. In a few cases, because of incidents in the past, parents have reservations about how well behaved pupils are and whether bullying is a problem. Reservations about arrangements for new pupils to settle in reflect this, too, given Year 6's points about some difficulties and gaps in help when they started. Inspection confirmed that behaviour and induction are good and set to become even better.

33. Reports on pupils' progress give parents a good idea of how well their children are doing, especially in English and mathematics where strengths, weaknesses and next steps to take are usually set out clearly. Pupils write short reviews of what has gone well during the year and where improvements are needed, which are often astute and perceptive. Rightly, the school has recognised that it has scope to use the best features of reporting and target setting for involving parents and pupils even more in reviewing and speeding up progress.
34. The school gives parents clear information on what is to be taught each term. Weekly newsletters detail events, successes, and diary dates well, so most parents feel extremely well informed about what is happening. Parents are very supportive so attend class and achievement assemblies with enthusiasm. They help out in class, on trips, with school clubs and on working parties such as that to improve the environment. They want to see the school and their children doing well, so are active in striving to improve the work of both. They listen to children read at home and volunteer to hear others read in school. The PTFA (parents, teachers and friends' association) is very active in fundraising and ensuring that families and children enjoy a wide range of extra, interesting activities, such as quizzes, bingo, discos and 'hot dog Fridays'.
35. The school has a firm place at the heart of its community with ever improving links with the church, including the annual harvest, Mothering Sunday and Christmas services and assemblies led by the vicar. It is involved enthusiastically in local events, festivals, Brackley Carnival and entertainment for groups of local residents, and provides space for adults involved in lifelong learning activities. As the school knows, its network of links with the wider community is not yet as well developed to deepen pupils' understanding of other ways of life and cultural traditions. However, the richness of first hand experience of local traditions, music and art ensures that pupils' sense of community is very strong.
36. The school works very well with local schools to develop policies, the curriculum and shared training to the great benefit of pupils as they move from one school to another. It ensures that work in sex, drugs and health education is coherent. Projects that bridge Years 2 and 3, or Years 6 and 7 work very well. Strong links trigger extra opportunities such as those for pupils to learn French and for gifted and talented children to receive sports coaching or take part in mathematics workshops.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good, well supported by other key staff. Management is good overall. Governance is good with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since her appointment eighteen months ago, the headteacher has been very effective in leading the drive to raise standards
- Strong teamwork across the school helps everyone to share the aim of improving pupils' achievement
- Governors are supportive, have a very clear picture of the schools' strengths and the things that need to improve, and are prepared to be constructively critical
- Financial management is clearly linked to the raising of standards

Commentary

37. The headteacher is a very effective leader, who has a clear view about what needs to be done to improve the work of the school. She believes that every pupil should be confident enough to learn. Together with her deputy she has adopted a determined approach to raising standards. This is shared by the staff, who are supporting the school well by implementing new policies and schemes of work in order to boost pupils' achievement. A key document in moving the school forward over the past two years has been the school

development plan. This is constructed by all staff and governors, who contribute to identifying priorities. Pupils and parents are consulted. It is evaluated each year giving clear direction on what needs to be done to raise standards further. The school has been involved in the Primary Leadership Programme to support raising standards in literacy. For example, after learning lessons from pupils' performance in the 2004 national tests, they have been given more opportunities to write at length. As a result, standards of writing in Year 6 have improved. Greater emphasis on teaching certain aspects of mathematics has enabled pupils to calculate more accurately. The headteacher is well respected and well supported by a hard working staff team. As a result, there is a good emphasis across the school on promoting higher achievement.

38. The headteacher and key staff check effectively on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, and the information gained has enabled them to determine how the curriculum should be developed. Most teaching is effective, and steps are taken quickly to improve that which is not. Feedback given on the lessons observed is both developmental and supportive. This is carried out within a team that is keen to improve teaching and learning in any way it can. Subject leaders are being given more opportunities to develop the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. They are clear about their roles. Performance management is in its early stages of development. Clear objectives for teachers to improve their work are set annually. Targets are set that relate to school priorities and to pupils' progress in English and mathematics, but there are also sensitive objectives that relate to personal and professional development. The school plans to extend performance management to teaching assistants. This attention to maximising the schools' performance makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.
39. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is being developed well. The management of teaching assistants is good as there has been a strong focus on further training to provide the skills to support specific aspects of pupils' needs. Systems have been put in place to ensure that pupils with additional needs are supported during lessons instead of being withdrawn for some activities. This means they are working with their peers all the time and are much better involved in the normal pattern of learning. Teaching staff, having received further training, review individual education plans, which provide good direction for teaching. However, the recording of the progress made by pupils' who have special educational needs on their individual plans is inconsistent in some classes. This makes it difficult for teachers to see how successful they have been compared with the rest of the class. The school is aware of this and is addressing the problem.
40. Governance of the school is good overall with some very good features. Governors are supportive of the school. The chair of governors meets with the headteacher each week on an informal basis and other members visit school as required. There is a good, working relationship with the headteacher. To keep in touch with the quality of teaching and learning, some governors take responsibility for a particular curriculum subject. This is linked to priorities in the school development plan. Governors are prepared to question senior staff and provide the necessary degree of challenge to ensure that decisions are tested and thought through. For example, meetings are held each year with senior staff to discuss standards in each subject and what strategies are being put in place to correct any weaknesses. As a result, the governors have a very good knowledge of the strengths of the school and areas that need development. There is a strong sense of partnership with the school, but there is also a clear sense of accountability through the way in which the governing body operates.
41. The school's finances are well managed. A large reserve built up over recent years has now been carefully spent on the improvement of the school fence and a small contingency reserve remains. Funds specified for such purposes as special educational needs are spent appropriately, and monitoring of expenditure is detailed and rigorous. The principles of best value are applied well. Stakeholders are consulted, and the costs of competing providers compared. Decisions are made taking into account the progress and welfare of pupils. The

school has addressed all issues arising from a local authority audit in recent years. At the time of the last inspection there were many strengths in leadership and management. This continues to be the case, although the school has been through a crisis in its leadership in the interim. The issues identified by the previous inspection have been tackled in a satisfactory manner and effective leadership has led to higher achievement and good teaching. This indicates satisfactory improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	599,720
Total expenditure	512,262
Expenditure per pupil	2,360

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,230
Balance carried forward to the next	87,458

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning, and tackle weaknesses, have improved pupils' achievement significantly
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average because teachers provide many opportunities for discussion
- Teaching is good overall and pupils are very willing to learn
- In some classes, the methods used to teach reading have weaknesses
- Leadership and management are good because there is a strong shared vision for the subject

Commentary

42. In the 2004 Year 6 national tests, results were below the national average and below average when compared to similar schools. Standards have fallen since the last inspection. Trends over time show a steep fall in 2002 with results beginning to rise again in 2003. The decline is explained by the impact of a high degree of turbulence in staffing with many teachers leaving the school at that time. Standards are now improving quickly due to better checking on the quality of teaching and learning in recent years, and firm action taken to raise pupils' achievement. As a result, the school is expected to achieve the targets set for performance in the 2005 national tests. Standards in the current Year 6 are average overall. Pupils, including those with additional needs, achieve well.
43. In speaking and listening, standards are above average in all age groups. This is because most lessons are planned to encourage discussion. For example, talking partners are used regularly to encourage pupils to talk to each other after listening to the teacher and then explain their views. In a very good Year 4 mathematics lesson, the pupils identified errors in their calculations because they were given opportunities to discuss their work together. Pupils of all ages are respectful listeners, wait their turn and this promotes a good quality of learning.
44. In reading, standards are average overall. They are higher in Years 3 and 4 where pupils talk in a lively and interesting way about their favourite stories, and read aloud with understanding. The majority of pupils make satisfactory use of the variety of well chosen and entertaining reading which the school provides. In Years 5 and 6, pupils look forward to the lessons because they are given opportunities to choose the reading material for group work and this promotes a love of books and supports the development of reading skills.
45. The school has identified writing as an area for development and has altered the curriculum to give better opportunities for pupils to write extensively. Therefore, standards have begun to rise and are in line with national expectations. By Year 6, pupils of average and above average attainment can vary the length and grammatical structure of their sentences to add interest to their writing. They are careful in their choice of words and use complex vocabulary when writing in a persuasive style. Handwriting is joined up in all age groups, but it is more fluent in Years 3 and 4.
46. In the majority of lessons, the quality of learning is good, and often very good, indicating good recent progress. This is a result of the pupils' keenness to learn, their enjoyment of English, and of good or very good teaching. The relationships between pupils, teachers and other adults are very good. This is because teachers have a firm, friendly and collaborative approach, which is the driving force behind the best teaching. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support given by the teaching assistants. For example, three pupils in a Year 6 class identified

the key features of a ballad, then wrote their own, because of guidance given to them during the lesson. Where teaching was satisfactory, but had weaknesses, the learning was over directed. This reduced opportunities for pupils to work independently. Planning is good, and so lessons are well structured, stimulating, and hold pupils' interest and attention. The teaching of reading in groups is managed more effectively in some classes than others. The quality of the teaching of reading skills to the focus group is generally good. However, the organisation of other activities undertaken at the same time does not consistently help pupils improve their reading. Marking is of consistent quality. Pupils' misconceptions are corrected and areas are identified so that they can improve their work. Target setting is well established. Pupils are aware of the targets that have been set and can explain how well they are achieving them.

47. English is well led by the literacy team, which has a strong and effective view of the importance of literacy and a good vision of priorities to improve pupils' achievement still further. The recent introduction of a system for checking on the quality of teaching and learning, and supporting teachers in tackling weaknesses, has done much to raise standards. Resources are good and well used. The library is spacious, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to choose a quiet area to sit and read. The school is aware of this and is planning improvements. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with national expectations in reading and writing and above average in speaking and listening. Pupils made good progress. Teaching was good overall. The picture is similar now. However, in the context of the decline in standards between inspections and the above average standards in reading in Years 3 and 4 currently, improvement is judged to be satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Pupils' literacy skills are used and developed well across the curriculum, particularly with regard to developing extended writing. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils write accounts of the disparities in Elizabethan society explaining the plight of the poor, and in geography letters are written to persuade people not to destroy the rain forests when studying the effects of mankind on the environment. There is good provision for oral work. Teachers give careful attention to explaining vocabulary in other subjects. The school plans to develop this further over the next year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well
- Lessons are exciting and stimulating and pupils are keen to learn
- Good leadership and management has resulted in recent good improvements

Commentary

49. Results in the Year 6 national tests have fluctuated over the last few years, and in 2004 they were well below average. However, good leadership and management of the subject have resulted in the weaknesses in mathematics being accurately identified so that effective strategies have been put in place to tackle them. As a result of good support from the local education authority, knowledgeable and passionate leadership of the subject, and work with parents, standards in work seen in the current Year 6 are now average. Although, historically, pupils have not achieved as well as they might, all pupils are now achieving well. The effect of the recent good improvement is particularly evident in Years 3 and 4, where standards are above average. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have worked very hard to catch up on the learning they have missed in the past, so that they are now working at a level that is expected nationally. In lessons they work hard and really concentrate. They are keen to finish their work and to contribute to class discussions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they can make good progress.

They are fully involved in sessions and enjoy learning and using mathematical ideas and language. Pupils who are more able have work that is challenging for them, and they respond positively by becoming excited about using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and explain what methods they are using.

50. Teaching and learning are good overall, although the quality varies too much from class to class and across the school. Where it is outstanding, pupils make exceptional progress in their thinking and really enjoy lessons. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, the teacher had very high expectations of the progress pupils could make and moved the lesson on at a very brisk pace, changing the challenges she presented to the class so all were involved. In this lesson, pupils identified the rule for adding three consecutive numbers. All of the class confidently explained what the rule was, and then managed to find out which three numbers added up to a given total. Most pupils actually jumped out of their chairs with excitement and enthusiasm when they realised how easy it was. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils applied their mathematical knowledge very well, so that they could use a variety of methods to calculate difficult addition and subtraction problems. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils making good progress and they give clear, careful explanations so pupils know what they are going to learn. Resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards, are generally used well to help pupils learn. In most lessons teachers use small boards for the pupils to write on. This means that in whole-class sessions where pupils are required to give quick-fire answers all can be involved as teachers ask for the answers to be shown. There are, however, some examples where these boards were not used and teachers chose individual children to answer. This resulted in some pupils not being involved in the lesson and sometimes losing interest.
51. Assessment is good and pupils have individual learning targets. These are often referred to in lessons so pupils are reminded of what they need to do to reach higher standards. Teachers' marking is generally good, with encouraging remarks and suggestions for improving the work.
52. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection. The overall picture in mathematics is very similar to that of last time, although standards are now lower than those reported. However, the good recent improvement has raised standards and the school is very well placed to improve them further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. Teachers place great emphasis on pupils using their knowledge in mathematics lessons, and further encourage them to use this in subjects such as science and design technology. For example, in science, pupils in Year 4 have accurately measured parts of their body and compiled a frequency graph to compare measurements. Pupils in Year 6 have used a formula when calculating the mass and density of water. In design and technology, pupils in Year 3 measure accurately when designing a frame for a photograph so that their picture will fit in neatly.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well
- Good teaching develops pupils' enjoyment and scientific curiosity, as well as their investigative skills
- Pupils display very good attitudes towards science
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in teaching science

Commentary

54. In the current Year 6, standards in science are in line with national expectations. The results of the 2004 tests were average and continued the improving trend established the previous year. Pupils achieve well. They work hard and develop good investigative skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers involve them successfully in active and enjoyable lessons.
55. Pupils achieve well because they approach science with very positive attitudes, work hard and are eager to find out about the world around them. Pupils in Year 6 show they have been consistently taught how to organise an investigation to ensure it is fair and reliable. They use scientific vocabulary, such as molecules, particles and density. They show good developing awareness of the relationship between mass and density, which indicates high expectations by teachers. Pupils in Year 4 explain the effects of forces, such as air resistance and friction. They explain the links between cause and effect clearly – “the smaller the surface, the faster something will move through the air”. Pupils record their findings in charts, tables, diagrams and written accounts, but their presentation is often untidy and not systematic enough to promote scientific thinking.
56. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge so that they can demonstrate and explain scientific concepts with confidence and at good pace, fostering scientific curiosity. Lessons often feature practical work so pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress, for instance learning to identify a range of light sources correctly. Teachers are successful in developing pupils’ investigative skills, such as the ability to predict the outcome of experiments or control variables. Through careful questioning, they ensure that lessons require pupils to consider how to make tests fair and how to explain their observations. Lessons are often ambitious and teachers have high expectations. They also try to make activities relevant and interesting. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to engage pupils and illustrate new concepts. However, limited use is made of ICT by pupils during the course of their scientific work. Opportunities are missed to use technological aids for measuring, sensing, research and recording. Teachers make good links to mathematics in science lessons. Pupils are often required to measure in various units, for instance taking temperatures at regular intervals and entering results into tables. They record data in bar charts and line graphs. Teachers mark science work thoroughly and regularly. However, they are not consistent in pointing out how pupils could improve their work.
57. Assessment in science is generally good. Teachers maintain useful records and assess pupils’ progress at the end of units of study. Pupils are involved in the assessment of their own learning and are set specific targets which help them see what they need to learn next.
58. Leadership and management in science are good. The quality of teaching and pupils’ work is checked on carefully and, as a result, improvements are made. For instance, recent training in developing investigative skills and assessment in science has clearly had a positive effect on teaching. There is good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and priorities for improvement are appropriate. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich pupils’ scientific experience.
59. During the inspection the quality of teaching seen was all good or better. Although standards were judged to be good at the time of the previous inspection and are judged average currently, there has been definite recent improvement. Achievement is good. Therefore there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn in ICT and, by the time they reach Year 6, display considerable expertise and enthusiasm

- Achievement overall is barely satisfactory, because teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils
- Improvements to provision have ensured all pupils can access the full ICT curriculum
- There is insufficient use of ICT in other subjects

Commentary

60. In the current Year 6, standards in ICT are in line with those expected nationally. Achievement in Year 6 is also satisfactory because pupils demonstrate a range of skills and understanding of various ICT programs, as well as a good deal of enthusiasm. Pupils' achievement overall is just about satisfactory, but they make slower progress in other year groups where expectations are not as high. Pupils with special educational needs make adequate progress because they receive sufficient support in lessons.
61. Pupils in Year 6 can assemble a sophisticated multimedia presentation about the environment, drawing on a range of resources such as the internet for images, sounds and text. They use word processing and publishing programs to write science reports, play scripts, and leaflets. They use a spreadsheet to construct a budget for a school trip. These pupils display considerable expertise and enthusiasm for ICT, because they have been given good opportunities to develop their ideas. Pupils in Year 3 chose sounds to fit images using a program that required them to drag and drop icons. They were insufficiently challenged by this activity, due to the limiting nature of the software being used. This was observed twice during the inspection.
62. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully. Good use is made of demonstration and explanation, which motivates pupils, who are keen to use programs. However, expectations of pupils' behaviour are not always sufficiently high so that, although pupils are keen to work in the computer suite, they lack concentration and the room is too noisy. This slows progress. This is compounded when technical difficulties occur. Teachers involve pupils well in discussions about their work so that they are able to evaluate their own learning.
63. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. The subject is well resourced now and this represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils learn the full range of ICT skills during their time at the school and teachers' improved confidence, together with a better organised curriculum, also indicate satisfactory improvement. Some technical support is available, but technical problems continue to impede teaching and learning. In Year 3, imaginative timetabling with music enables smaller groups to be taught in the computer room, which enables closer supervision. This is not yet having a marked effect on standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Not enough use is made of ICT in other subjects. Although teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards, opportunities are missed during lessons, other than in the computer room, to plan for ICT use. However, pupils in Year 3 have used text and graphics to design book covers in English. Multimedia presentations were seen with geographical and scientific content, for instance on the solar system.

HUMANITIES

65. No lessons were observed in geography or history, partly because few lessons were taught in these subjects during the inspection, but also because they were not a focus for the inspection. Two lessons were seen in religious education. Owing to the lack of first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. Examples of pupils' past work were available, however, from which to make judgements about the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.
66. In **geography and history**, the curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 6, pupils have learnt about how humans can affect the environment, and what they can do to re-use resources and recycle wherever possible.

They understand about pollution and begin to explore the idea of renewable energy by looking at solar power and wind turbines. Throughout their time in the school, pupils learn about various environments and are confident when identifying features that occur naturally, and those that are man made. Pupils' learning is supported effectively by residential trips in Years 4 and 6, where pupils explore rivers and woods and learn about the effects of the weather on different landscapes.

67. Pupils learn much about historical events. By the end of Year 6, pupils have studied the Second World War and understand about the effect it had on everyday life in Britain. They know about rationing and what this meant, and begin to empathise with the plight of children who were evacuated away from their families during the war. They have also looked at Tudor times and thought about the beginnings of the Protestant church. Pupils throughout the school use their English skills well. They write careful explanations of how ancient Egyptians carried out the mummification process and have researched Egyptian gods.
68. In **religious education**, the curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
69. In a very good lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils learnt about Buddhist beliefs and maturely discussed "doing the right thing" and what this meant in practice for them. By the end of the lesson, pupils understood that the teachings of Buddha are relevant to them and their everyday lives. Pupils in Year 3 learnt about a parable that Jesus told and acted out what they thought a Good Samaritan might do to help someone. By the end of Year 6, pupils have explored what belonging means and how important this is, especially to people who follow the ways of Judaism. They know about stories from the Old Testament and have learnt about Abraham and Moses.
70. Learning in all three subjects is significantly enriched by visitors into the school, as well as by visits into the local area. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had a Victorian day when they all dressed up and experienced what it was like to be educated in Victorian times. Pupils visit the local church and look at the various features, comparing them to those that may be found in a Mosque. There is, however, a legacy of pupils experiencing the same work. This is a result of planning for mixed-age classes so that pupils in different classes had the same topic to study. This resulted in pupils having the same work to do, whatever their age or ability. In some classes, the most able, older child had the same work as the younger, less able child. The work in the books shows that this is still happening. The school is very aware of this and curriculum planning has been reviewed so that, from September, there will be topics dedicated to single age groups and pupils will not have the same work, regardless of their age or ability.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. No lessons were observed in design technology, physical education or art and design to enable judgements to be made about provision, standards, achievement or teaching. Sampling of work and displays helped inspectors draw the following conclusions.
72. **Design technology** is linked well with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 had designed and made photo frames in connection with their art studies. Pupils in Year 4 had designed a hydraulic system for pumping water out of the river Nile in geography. The older pupils had made lighthouses that were powered by using electrical circuits that reinforced their scientific skills. Recently the profile of the subject has been raised with the inclusion of a design technology week during the school year. The school now follows a scheme of work that meets national curriculum requirements, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In **physical education**, the school has addressed the issues from the last inspection. Teachers now follow a games' scheme that ensures pupils build their skills step by step throughout the year. All staff teach a full gymnastic programme. The profile of the subject has been raised since the last inspection with developing links with sports clubs and secondary schools. Professional coaches enrich the curriculum with after school clubs run to develop the pupils' skills in rugby, netball and a wide range of outdoor pursuits. In **art**

and design pupils use sketchbooks to collect visual information and develop their drawing and painting techniques. They experiment with line, shade and tone, as well as drawing in the style of famous artists, such as L.S. Lowry. A good deal of the work in art is related to historical themes. For instance, careful observational drawings have been made of ancient Greek vases, and Tudor portraits in a range of media, such as charcoal and pastel, are tastefully displayed in the hall. There is evidence of three-dimensional work through quilling and Tudor busts on display. Other artists used as an inspiration for pupils' work include Van Gogh and Klimt. The school has made effective use of visiting artists during an arts week, who helped the children to produce a highly imaginative forest environment display using mono-printing, wax resist and a range of techniques to create the most fantastic creatures from wire, paper pulp, glitter and fabric.

MUSIC

Provision in music is very good.

Main strengths

- Pupils achieve very well because of inspirational specialist teaching
- Many pupils have access to a range of musical extra-curricular activity which enhances their experience of school
- Music makes a significant contribution towards enhancing the school's positive ethos

Commentary

73. By Year 6, standards are much higher than expected for pupils' ages and achievement is very good. Year 6 pupils can perform a calypso in parts from scratch, following notation and showing very good awareness of how their parts contribute to the whole piece of music. Pupils in Year 3 can sing in a round, holding their melody. They can also play simple tunes on the recorder, following notation and then fitting in ostinato and other accompaniments to make a pleasing piece of music. Pupils sing well in assembly, tunefully, clearly and with a good sense of dynamics.
74. Teaching is very good, because a talented specialist takes all classes. Excellent subject knowledge, a passion for the subject and very good teaching skills ensure that pupils make very good progress in lessons. Lessons are very brisk and relationships are very positive – firm, determined, but full of praise and smiles. Pupils enjoy their music lessons very much, and are attentive and enthusiastic. Teaching is also characterised by high expectations of what pupils can do and clear explanation.
75. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activity. Pupils have good opportunities to play a wide range of instruments with peripatetic instrumental teachers. This work is then drawn together in an orchestra. There are two choirs and very good provision for recorder tuition. The leadership and management of music are very good. There is good awareness of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and appropriate priorities for its development. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good.
76. Music is a significant part of every child's experience at this school. In assemblies, through high quality productions, such as *Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat*, through performances for church events and experiences such as the African drumming workshop, pupils learn to work together towards shared goals. Music is vital in promoting the school's very positive ethos amongst all its pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. No lessons were seen in these subjects and so they were sampled. The school makes every effort to promote pupils' well-being through well-planned opportunities for classes to discuss issues that are relevant to them. *Circle Time* is a regular lesson used to discuss worries or concerns that pupils may have. Any whole-school issues are taken to the school

council so that pupils begin to understand about living in a community and taking decisions that affect everyone.

78. There is a good programme for helping pupils understand about how their bodies will change as they get older, and about how this will affect them physically and emotionally. The programme extends to teaching the pupils about the dangers of misusing drugs, so that they understand that some are necessary to cure illness, whilst some are dangerous and illegal. Pupils are also taught about the issues surrounding solvent abuse and know that it is highly dangerous. The school works very closely with the local infant school to ensure a shared approach. This means that pupils have a well-coordinated programme to promote their understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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