

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODSIDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Amersham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110266

Headteacher: Mrs S Harratt

Lead inspector: Mr L Lewin

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 June 2005

Inspection number: 274143

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:	111
School address:	Mitchell Walk Amersham Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP6 6NW
Telephone number:	01494 725897
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr F Nolan
Date of previous inspection:	April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Woodside Junior School caters for pupils from seven to eleven years of age. With a roll of 111, the school is smaller than most other primary schools. The roll has dropped in recent times partly as a result of local demographic trends, but also partly due to a drop in the number of parents choosing to send their children to this school. Most pupils are drawn from the immediate area, which consists of mostly private, but some local authority housing. The school has five classes.

Ninety-seven per cent of pupils in the school come from a white U.K. cultural background, with the remaining pupils coming from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. At 6 per cent, the school has a lower proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals than most other schools nationally and at 22 per cent, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need, at 3.5 per cent, is above the national average. The school has four per cent of its pupils who speak English as an additional language, but none of these are at the early stages of learning to speak English and do not require extra support in this respect.

The attainment of children on entry to school is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22330	Mr L Lewin	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education English as an additional language
19743	Mrs A Taylor	Lay inspector	
32253	Mrs K Wood	Team inspector	English Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a welcoming atmosphere and a satisfactory standard of education. Sound leadership and management and satisfactory teaching enable pupils to reach average standards by the time they leave the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership of the new headteacher and the effective work of the staff and governors have enabled the school to improve at a good rate over the last six months.
- Standards of writing fall below the expected level.
- Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are weak.
- The attendance rate at the school is unsatisfactory.
- Good provision is made to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- A good range of extra activities is provided to enrich the curriculum.
- Strong links have been established with the parents and the community.

Over the last few years, weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school led to a deterioration in the quality of provision and standards. As a result, the overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Working closely with the local education authority, governors have been proactive in moving to halt this decline. Over the last six months, the rate of improvement has been rapid, with the interim consultant headteachers and the recently appointed full time headteacher successfully turning the school's performance around. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory, discipline and behaviour have improved to a satisfactory level and a climate has been created in which staff and governors are working together effectively to ensure that the rapid pace of improvement is maintained.

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	E	E	E
Mathematics	D	C	E	E
Science	B	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.*

The above table confirms a drop in the standards over the last few years. However, sound and sometimes good teaching, improvements to the curriculum and the hard work of staff in improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work mean that **pupils now achieve satisfactorily**. Pupils currently attain average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. In English, although speaking and listening standards are average and pupils generally read well, writing standards are still below average. In all other subjects, not enough evidence was collected during the inspection to enable standards to be judged.

The school makes good overall provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school, pupils show satisfactory behaviour overall, although a small minority of pupils occasionally display challenging behaviour. The attendance rate is below average, largely due to families taking holidays during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff use their good relationships with the pupils effectively to boost the confidence and self esteem of all individuals. Lessons are planned carefully to ensure work is provided that captures pupils' interests. Generally, teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour. However, sometimes the work set does not match pupils' needs closely enough. When this happens pupils become restless, lose their concentration and a few show inappropriate behaviour and therefore underachieve. The headteacher has made a good start in developing new systems to check how well pupils progress. However, overall, not enough information is gathered to show how well individuals progress in different subjects. Staff produce good quality displays around the school, which enhance and encourage pupils' learning.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched with a good range of extra learning opportunities. Support and guidance for pupils across the school is sound and good links are maintained with the parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The two interim consultant headteachers worked effectively over the last two terms to aid the school's recovery. Their work is now sustained well by the new headteacher who has successfully established a strong team atmosphere in which all staff are fully committed to ensuring that the school improves at a good rate. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily and ensure all statutory requirements are met. The chair of governors in particular has worked very energetically to ensure that the school moves ahead in the right educational direction. After successfully implementing short-term action plans to accelerate its improvement, the school now rightly recognises the need to create a longer-term, detailed, strategic plan to show how it will develop in the future. Due to considerable changes in the staffing, the leadership and management of subject areas is weak, but the school already has well advanced plans to boost this area.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The pre-inspection questionnaires showed that parents feel their children like school, that staff are approachable and pupils are encouraged to become mature and independent. A significant number were critical of pupils' behaviour and did not feel sufficiently well informed. Inspectors judge that the school has made much progress with improving pupils' behaviour in recent times and that the new headteacher has made a strong impact upon strengthening communication with parents. The pre-inspection questionnaires completed by pupils showed that, in the main, they enjoy school, but a lot of them registered concerns about the behaviour of other pupils. Discussions with older pupils during the inspection indicated that behaviour has improved a lot recently and any problems are few and far between and handled effectively by staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards of writing.
- Provide a comprehensive system to track the progress of pupils in different subjects as they move through the school.
- Move forward with all action plans to improve the rate of attendance of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not as good as reported at the time of the last inspection.
- Reading standards are good but writing standards are below average.
- Effective initiatives have been put in place to improve standards and rapid progress has been made recently to improve pupils' achievement.
- The 'Thinking Space' initiative works well and improves pupils' achievement.
- Despite improvements made, some groups of pupils do not always achieve well enough.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.1 (25.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.9 (26.8)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.1 (28.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. Pupils enter Year 3 showing mainly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Over recent years, the school's Year 6 national test results have shown declining standards in all three subjects so that in 2004 they were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. The deterioration in standards was clearly linked to weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. Governors took appropriate action, working with the local education authority to rectify the situation. The work of the interim headteachers last term, the intensive support provided for teachers and strong teamwork induced by the current headteacher have all impacted successfully to improve teaching, curriculum provision and standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils now achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Past results show that there has been significant underachievement by pupils, but this is no longer the case, with pupils currently achieving satisfactorily. Standards are still not as good as reported in the last inspection, but they are now improving at a good rate.
2. In English, pupils read well and many talk enthusiastically about the books they read and their favourite authors. Speaking and listening standards are average. However writing standards remain below average and this area rightly remains a prime area of focus for improvement.
3. Although significant strides have been made to improve standards, there remain a few pockets of residual underachievement in some year groups. The school is acutely aware of this fact and is carefully targeting support to ensure that the achievement of the individuals concerned improves in the near future. In particular, the school has rightly recognised that the underperformance of some pupils is often linked to difficulties with their behaviour and attitudes to work. Initiatives such as the 'Thinking Space' sessions where intensive support is given to pupils to help them improve their concentration, listening skills and all round social awareness are clearly successful in helping pupils integrate more successfully and get the best out of lessons in the classroom. Occasionally, underachievement of pupils also occurs when tasks are either not rigorous enough or do not match the pupils' levels of attainment

precisely enough. Apart from these examples, overall, no differences in achievement were noted between boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

4. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in sessions where they are withdrawn from lessons and achieve well at these times. In class sessions, although they achieve satisfactorily overall, sometimes tasks provided do not match their needs precisely enough.
5. Better use is now made of ICT than at the time of the last inspection, with pupils generally reaching average standards by the end of Year 6 and showing a confident approach to describing how they use the resources. However, the sluggish performance of the computers in the ICT suite hampers the achievement of pupils in lessons. Pupils cover all the appropriate areas of the religious education curriculum and attain average standards. In all other subjects, not enough evidence was collected to enable standards to be judged.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, is good overall. The attendance rate is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour is improving. The school is becoming more adept at dealing with the minority of pupils whose behaviour can be very challenging.
- Pupils' cultural awareness is boosted well through the work they do with the school's overseas teachers.

Commentary

6. Pupils' generally show satisfactory attitudes to their work, but considerable variation is seen within this picture. Pupils are often well motivated and hard working, especially when the teaching is good. However, occasionally when the teaching is less well focused, pupils rapidly lose concentration and become restless.
7. Frequent changes in the teaching staff have had a particularly disruptive effect on pupils' behaviour over the last two years. In particular, the Year 5 class has had a large number of different teachers and, as a result, a significant minority of pupils in this year group have had behavioural problems. This situation has now been stabilised and effective support has ensured that the behaviour is now satisfactory overall.
8. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not as good as they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is largely because, up until the beginning of this year, measures to keep teaching and behaviour management at a consistently good level were not working properly. Parents have concerns about the standard of behaviour in the school. It is improving and the small minority of pupils with very challenging behaviour are being supported much better, with some good involvement from outside specialists, staff training and extra adult support. Testimonies from members of the community, who have complimented staff on the children's behaviour whilst out on visits, show pupils are now behaving much better. There is still some way to go before good behaviour becomes a habit and is consistent throughout the school.
9. The school works effectively to promote pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are particularly good at giving pupils clear messages about the way they should behave, in a way that captivates their interest. There is a lot for pupils to do in the way of extra activities and they are good at helping those less fortunate than themselves, by organising fundraising events. The work of the school council helps pupils develop a wide understanding of their social responsibilities and the clear code of behaviour that has been established ensures that pupils have a firm understanding of right and wrong. The provision for pupils to widen their horizons and appreciate the customs and practices of other cultures is dealt with well, particularly by using the experiences of the two overseas trained teachers

currently on the school staff. For instance, encouraged by their Australian teacher, pupils in one class are writing to pen pals in Australia to find out about the lifestyle of people living in that part of the world.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

10. The school is working hard to improve the current unsatisfactory attendance and has identified that half of all absences are due to families taking holidays during term time. Up until recently, systems in place to monitor and promote regular attendance were ineffective. A very recent change to electronic registration, a new relationship with the educational welfare officer, meetings with parents, appointment of more administrative staff and crucially, the strong intention and effective initiatives from the new headteacher to improve attendance, bode very well for the future. For instance, punctuality in the mornings has already improved as a result of introducing a breakfast club.

Exclusions

11. The numbers of times fixed term exclusions have been used is high compared with most other primary schools nationally. It has been an exceptional year in this respect, largely because of the firm line the school has now taken regarding the small minority of pupils whose behaviour had spiralled out of control. Good systems are in place to ensure that all of these exclusions are handled sensitively and effectively. Where the exclusion process has been applied, a good level of support has been provided for the individuals concerned to assist their return to school at a later stage. There have been no permanent exclusions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	97	8	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	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 is satisfactory. Sound teaching, support and guidance and curriculum provision along with good links with the parents and the community enable pupils to progress at a satisfactory rate with their learning.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and not as good as reported in the previous inspection. The school does not have sufficiently developed systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress in different subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong support and training have helped the school improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers are mainly good at managing pupils' behaviour.
- Mathematics and reading are well taught across the school.
- Specialist music and sports teaching are used well by the school to enhance pupils' learning.
- Occasionally, expectations for how hard they should work are not made sufficiently clear to pupils and work provided does not match their attainment levels precisely enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	7	11	2	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

12. Over the last six months, the school has made considerable efforts to improve teaching and learning as a result of an interim inspection by the local education authority that found serious weaknesses. Since that time, intensive support and training targeted at the school have resulted in much improvement. Teaching is now satisfactory overall, occasionally good or very good and very occasionally unsatisfactory. The teachers now work well together as a team and are enthusiastic about and strongly committed to improving the quality of education in the school.
13. Much of the recently provided support and training for teachers focused rightly on improving the quality of learning objectives set, ensuring that work matches the attainment levels of different groups of pupils and improving methods of behaviour management. Generally, teachers now work successfully in these areas. For example, in a very good Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher showed a very skilful approach with managing behavioural difficulties effectively and efficiently so that the pace of the lesson was not interrupted. She provided appropriately challenging work for pupils at different attainment levels and ensured that all pupils including those with special educational needs knew exactly what was required of them. As a result, the pupils completed a lot of work in the session and made very good progress with their learning. Also, in a good Year 3 English lesson, pupils progressed well due to the wide range of strategies used by the teacher: using partner talk, class discussions, precise questioning and carefully targeted individual support to ensure all of the pupils in this lower attaining set remained focused on the writing task.
14. Overall, the teaching of reading is good. Teachers rightly place a strong emphasis on ensuring pupils gain good skills in this area of English, and the reading programme is well sustained by the good opportunities for pupils to practice reading in guided reading sessions and through the opportunities to read to the school's support staff and the good number of

adult volunteers. Teaching was good overall in the mathematics lessons seen, with teachers showing confident subject knowledge and providing clear explanations for tasks.

15. Very good teaching was seen in a music lesson provided by the visiting specialist music teacher and the school is also making effective use of specialist physical education teachers from the local secondary school to boost pupils' learning.
16. In the main, teachers plan interesting work that inspires much enjoyment in learning for pupils. For example, one project has currently involved Year 6 pupils in visiting a nearby pizza restaurant, evaluating different sorts of bread and learning how to make bread. Another link was made in a mathematics lesson, with pupils considering fractional quantities of a pizza.
17. Teachers are generally good at managing pupils' behaviour. They are firm, fair and sensitive to the needs of all of the pupils, and consistently reinforce the school's clear code of behaviour. This has been a particular area of improvement by the school in recent times and helps to ensure that in most lessons there is a positive and purposeful atmosphere. All staff have good relationships with the pupils and use these well to encourage all individuals and boost their confidence and self esteem.
18. In some of the satisfactory lessons, although learning was sound, pupils were not given a clear understanding of how much work they were expected to complete in the time given. This occasionally gave rise to restlessness amongst the pupils and they struggled to concentrate. Also, occasionally, this kind of restlessness was apparent when teachers did not set work that catered precisely enough for the needs of pupils of different attainment levels. In the two unsatisfactory lessons seen these factors were even more apparent with pupils not learning enough or completing enough work during the sessions.
19. Although teachers have tested the pupils in English and mathematics at regular intervals over the last few years, not much has been done with the information gained to help inform planning or set targets. Also, no proper procedures exist to assess pupils' performances in all other subjects. The headteacher has rightly recognised this area as a priority area for development, and has already begun the process of building a reliable system to track results and record progress.
20. Teaching assistants generally provide sound support for teachers and pupils. They have good relationships with pupils and, in particular, often play a key role in helping individuals with special educational needs to stay focused on the work they are doing. Good work was seen being done by the teaching assistants involved in running the 'Thinking Space' sessions. The work done at these times clearly helps pupils with learning difficulties to develop better concentration and the confidence to join in fully with classroom activities. Sometimes teaching assistants are not deployed as effectively as they could be in sessions where the whole class is working with the teacher. The school's voluntary classroom assistants and helpers are a valuable asset to aid teaching and learning throughout the school.
21. Staff work hard to produce attractive displays of pupils' work and other information. This does much to encourage the pupils and to help them develop a pride in their achievements.
22. Overall, pupils with special educational needs progress well with their learning when they are withdrawn for extra support in the various booster sessions provided by the school. Their progress with learning in class sessions is mainly satisfactory. Although these pupils are well supported by teaching assistants in group work, tasks set for them by teachers do not always match their needs precisely enough.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff make effective use of the school's good accommodation.
- Resources are good.
- Curriculum enrichment is good.
- There are currently no subject leaders for many areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

23. The school is spacious with attractive and extensive grounds. The play areas and field provide a rich resource for outdoor lessons and activities and create an attractive environment in which to work. The grounds are well used by staff to support learning in different subjects where appropriate.
24. Resources are good for most subject areas. Books, materials and equipment are generally of good quality and support teaching and learning effectively. In ICT however, although there are a large number of computers, many are old and run too slowly. This slows both teaching and learning as lessons, prepared for delivery in the computer suite, do not always run to plan because of difficulties with the equipment.
25. Curriculum planning has been recently reviewed to ensure that it is broad, balanced and inclusive, meeting the needs of all pupils in the school. All subject areas are covered in full.
26. Provision for supporting pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. A good range of intervention programmes provides effective support for pupils when they are withdrawn from class. The special educational needs coordinator has a good understanding of individual pupils' needs and liaises closely with staff throughout the school to ensure that pupils receive the right kind of support. There are sound procedures for involving pupils and their parents in discussing learning plans and developing targets. Care is taken to consult external agencies such as the educational psychologist, medical services and the Pupil Referral Unit where this is appropriate. The coordinator works part time at the school, but plans her time effectively in order to ensure opportunities to meet with other support staff.
27. Curriculum enrichment is good. A wide range of school clubs is provided, including drama, recorders, ICT, breakfast club and table tennis. The clubs are very popular with the pupils and are well attended. Over 30 pupils attended the table tennis club seen during the inspection – learning games skills and ball control, as well as having great fun. The school has good links with external specialist providers. Pupils learn rugby skills with support from Chiltern Rugby Club and football skills with support from the Wycombe Wanderers Football Club. Singing and instrumental tuition are provided by the local education authority peripatetic music team. These sessions increase pupils' confidence as they work with a variety of adults in a range of different contexts while learning new skills. Many visitors support work in classrooms, lead assemblies and talk to groups. As part of the religious education curriculum, parents have visited to talk about their faiths and beliefs, bringing to life pupils' learning. A good range of visits is provided across the year to enhance pupils' learning in areas such as history and outdoor pursuits. These extra activities allow pupils to develop valuable personal skills and maintain interest and excitement in their learning.
28. Currently the development of the curriculum is hampered by the fact that only three staff have curriculum responsibility – changes with the school's staffing have meant that it has not been possible to appoint full-time coordinators for all subjects. The headteacher has rightly identified this area as a priority for development in the near future. She has established clear systems and monitoring arrangements in readiness for the forthcoming appointment of new subject coordinators in the very near future.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare are satisfactory overall. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice, and guidance. The school has effective systems for seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views.
- There are good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Pupils have too little knowledge about how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

29. After a period of some instability, the school now provides a satisfactory and improving standard of care and welfare. Staff have succeeded in creating a warm and friendly atmosphere where relationships between adults and pupils are positive.
30. Health and safety procedures are appropriate. Plans are well advanced to improve the central area that has many uneven flagstones. Suitable child protection procedures have been quickly established since the arrival of the new headteacher, who has recently received specialised training, with whole staff training planned for the start of the new term.
31. The guidance available for pupils on how they are getting on and what they need to do to improve is very patchy. In conversation with inspectors, pupils revealed they do not get much opportunity to find out how well they are progressing. The practice of giving pupils targets to aim for is still in the early stages of development.
32. Parents and some pupils expressed concerns about the way bullying has been handled in the past. The new headteacher has been proactive in responding to individual cases and following each incident with a phone call home to check that issues have been resolved. Improved measures at lunchtimes, including organised games, more staff on duty and Year 6 playground buddies who befriend those without anyone to play with, are all helping to make playtimes happier and more productive.
33. The school council is a success story and pupils enjoy carrying out positions of responsibility such as house captains and organising fundraising events and competitions for charity. Since its conception nearly a year ago, it has also set up and run the buddy system mentioned above. A pupils' questionnaire is planned for next term, as the headteacher firmly believes in finding out what pupils think about school and how they would like to see it improve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The schools' links with parents and the community are good. Partnerships with other educational establishments are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has made a positive start by establishing an open, approachable relationship with parents.
- A good number of parents help in classes and with fundraising for the school.
- A significant minority of parents still have concerns about the school.
- Good relationships with local secondary schools and the Pupil Referral Unit are helping to develop teachers' expertise.
- Strong community links are helping to bring the curriculum alive.
- Curriculum links with the infant school are underdeveloped.

Commentary

34. After a period where parents were losing confidence in the school, work by the interim consultant headteachers and the new headteacher are now starting to reap benefits. Parents have noticed the improvements and are regaining their confidence in the schools' ability to deliver an acceptable quality of education. The headteacher has adopted an open, welcoming style and many parents see her as a 'breath of fresh air'.
35. A significant minority of parents still have concerns; mainly centred on the number of teachers who have come and gone, and the quality of pupils' behaviour, which they feel has deteriorated. Inspection evidence finds the school fully staffed for the next academic year and behaviour being dealt with much better than before, although there is still some way to go before good behaviour becomes second nature to pupils.
36. The school benefits from a hardcore of dedicated parents who regularly help in class when needed. Through the parent teachers association, they organise the annual 'Fun Day', which raises thousands of pounds for the school and thereby helps to boost the school's resources.
37. In recent times the school has developed good working relationships with other schools. For example, advice and support from the nearby Pupil Referral Unit has made a big difference to the way in which pupils with very challenging behaviours are dealt with, and the school is a much calmer, more productive place as a result. The pupils benefit from expert sports coaching provided by teachers from the secondary school through the national sports coordinator programme.
38. Good relationships with the infant school enable a smooth well planned move from one school to another. However, curriculum links between the two schools are few and far between; this is an area the school recognises it needs to improve.
39. This is a school that has a tradition of getting out into the community. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils walked into town to visit a pizza restaurant and find out how pizzas are designed and made. They then used this knowledge to make pizzas for themselves. Good use is made of the local environment for visits; for example a trip to Hampton Court has occurred to support history learning. An impressive number and range of visitors come to the school to share their chosen area of expertise with the children. For instance, the local member of parliament visited to answer questions on her role.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are sound overall. Governors carry out their roles satisfactorily and ensure all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have worked energetically and effectively in recent times to bring about improvement.
- The two interim headteachers worked successfully over the last two terms to help the school make rapid improvements.
- The new headteacher leads the staff well and has achieved a lot in her short time at the school.
- Leadership of subject areas is currently weak, but the school has effective plans in place to boost this area in the very near future.

Commentary

40. Weaknesses in the school's leadership and management over the last two years led to the overall quality of education and standards declining. Frequent changes in the teaching staff during this period also had a negative impact on the quality of provision. Governors worked hard to rectify the situation and the chair of governors in particular has been very proactive in

working with the local education authority to bring about the necessary changes for improvement. The two interim consultant headteachers, who ran the school over the last two terms, put in place a raft of initiatives that successfully put the school back on a course of improvement. In particular, strategies to stabilise the teaching team and provide intensive support and training for staff have proved effective in enabling the school to improve pupils' overall achievement. As a result, pupils now achieve satisfactorily, behaviour has improved and the school has strengthened many areas of its provision.

41. The new headteacher, who started at the beginning of the current term, has already made a very positive impact on the school and is providing strong leadership for the staff. She has created an atmosphere in which staff and governors now work together as a team, and she ensures that very good levels of communication are maintained between all members of the school community. She has successfully launched a wide range of actions to tighten up all round school efficiency and to improve the quality of provision. In particular, she has successfully begun to strengthen the school's relationship with parents, laid a firm basis for improving staffing in the future and created strong links with other individuals and organisations to enhance provision. For example, links with the music service and secondary school sports department have been fully utilised to provide extra activities so that pupils now benefit from extra specialist teaching in these areas.
42. The headteacher has ensured that the school is now efficiently geared to evaluate its own performance. She recognises that until recently, too little use has been made of assessment information to help the school evaluate pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of teaching and curriculum provision. The headteacher has a clear overview of standards and the quality of teaching through the regular monitoring of lessons she has carried out.
43. In recent times, governors have moved rapidly from a situation of not having a clear overall understanding of the school's effectiveness, to a situation where they are now well informed about and involved in the running of the school.
44. An effective short-term development plan has successfully helped guide the school through its improvement over the last six months. The headteacher and governors now recognise the need to create a fully comprehensive action plan to show how the school will develop over the next few years.
45. The headteacher and the school's senior teacher work effectively to lead and manage the subject areas for which they are responsible. However, the leadership and management of other subject areas is a weaknesses, with many subjects lacking a coordinator at the present time and little in the way of detailed action plans to show future developments. However, the headteacher has worked well to prepare for addressing this weakness in the very near future.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	512,180
Total expenditure	507,012
Expenditure per pupil	4,567

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	60,138
Balance carried forward to the next	65,306

46. Governors work closely with the headteacher and administration staff to ensure the best possible use is made of all available resources. The school handles its budget efficiently. Currently, the school is maintaining a larger carry forward in its budget than would normally be expected. However, much of the funding is already 'earmarked' and any extra funding is intended to support staffing costs during the current phase where the school is experiencing a drop in the number of pupils on roll.

47. The friendly and efficient way in which the administration staff work, helps the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis.
48. Considering the average standards now achieved, the satisfactory quality of education and the satisfactory overall leadership and management, the school provides sound value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils read well and discuss their stories and books confidently.
- Resources and materials are of good quality and support teaching and learning effectively.
- Standards in writing are below average but are rising.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently well developed.

Commentary

49. English results in the Year 6 national tests have been declining in recent times. Over the last six months much improvement has taken place as a result of the effective support and training provided for teachers. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily and reach average standards overall in English by the end of Year 6. Despite this recent improvement, standards are not as good as reported at the time of the last inspection.
50. In speaking and listening, standards are average. Pupils contribute appropriately to whole class, group and paired discussions. Most listen carefully to others and wait their turn to speak, reacting patiently to the few pupils who find this difficult. Pupils with learning difficulties or specific learning needs are well supported in this respect. In class, they have good support from teaching assistants in their group activities and, in addition, many have opportunities for one to one or small group sessions with specialist teachers and learning assistants. During one such small group session observed, pupils participated fully in a range of activities that successfully boosted their social skills, collaboration and confidence. Parents, teachers and pupils describe the range of withdrawal groups as having a positive impact upon learning, particularly in terms of personal confidence and behaviour management.
51. Standards in reading are good. Pupils enjoy their books and stories and are keen to discuss characters, plot and other books by the same author. In addition to the attractive library, pupils have access to a good range of reference books and fiction in shared areas. The school puts a strong emphasis on reading. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to read to an adult, with the school making full use of a good number of volunteer helpers and teaching assistants to support this area. Pupils read with expression, have a good understanding of punctuation and distinguish between different types of writing, for example poetry, play scripts and non fiction. In the best lessons, teachers read aloud with good pace and expression to interest and engage pupils. They usually use a range of questioning techniques to make sure that all pupils participate fully in discussion about the text being considered.
52. The development of writing skills is a current focus for school improvement. Standards in writing are below expectations with inconsistency in attainment across year groups. Pupils' work in books and displays demonstrates that strategies already in place are having a positive impact on teaching and learning although there is still some way to go. Most pupils have made good improvement to their handwriting, presentation and spelling during the last term. This improvement is aided by the greater emphasis teachers now place on getting pupils to produce pieces of extended writing for different purposes. Classroom displays illustrate the range of genre studied and include useful prompts to remind pupils about punctuation and grammar and also to highlight the targets for learning.
53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers generally show confident subject knowledge and explain ideas clearly. In the best lessons seen, teachers ensured that tasks

were suitably challenging for all of the different attainment groups. In the satisfactory lessons seen, tasks did not always provide sustained and sufficient challenge for pupils and this meant that pupils did not concentrate as fully as they could on producing their best efforts.

54. Teaching assistants are used effectively in most classes to support pupils with special educational needs. As a result, most make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. However, teaching assistants are not always fully and effectively deployed during sessions when the teachers are teaching the whole class together.
55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed literacy coordinator has provided valuable support for staff in planning and delivering writing skills lessons and has a range of staff training sessions planned for the autumn term. Assessment strategies are not fully developed and the coordinator recognises that this is an important area for development and has included it in her action plan. She has good subject knowledge and a good understanding of what is required to improve teaching and learning in English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Reading skills are applied well across the curriculum and teachers provide a satisfactory selection of non fiction books to support learning in other subjects. Speaking and listening skills are constantly reinforced during whole class introductions or discussions. As a result, pupils develop confidence in expressing their views and in providing evidence to justify their opinions. Although some good opportunities are provided for developing writing in other subjects, the school recognises that there remains much scope for extending this area further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has successfully improved pupils' standards of a work in recent times.
- Good teaching has improved pupils' achievement to a satisfactory level.
- Action plans for future development of the subject are not detailed enough.
- Systems for gathering and using assessment information are at an early stage of development.

Commentary

57. In recent times, standards in mathematics, as reflected by the Year 6 national test results, have been deteriorating. However, over the last six months, actions taken by the school – specifically involving intensive support and training for the staff - have reversed this deterioration so that pupils now achieve satisfactorily overall and now reach average standards by the end of Year 6 as was noted in the school's previous inspection.
58. By Year 6, most pupils show the ability to explain their mathematical ideas with reasonable clarity, as noted for example in a lesson where they discussed the fractional proportions of a pizza. In this very well taught lesson, the teacher laid a strong emphasis on pupils gaining an understanding through a practical and visual approach. Teachers also place an appropriate emphasis on mental calculation and make good use of mathematical games to encourage learning in this area. For example, good use of a 'follow me' card game in a Year 6 mental mathematics session made all the pupils think quickly, and most showed sound ability to work out calculations based on their multiplication tables knowledge.
59. Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. The above examples of strong teaching in Year 6 illustrate how the school has successfully improved the standard of pupils' work. Training input for teachers has been effective in ensuring that lessons are well planned and that clear objectives are set so that pupils know what they should learn by the end of each

lesson. Teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour in lessons and, in many sessions seen, any problematical behaviour was efficiently dealt with without spoiling the pace of teaching. For example, in a good Year 3 session, one pupil was quickly and quietly asked to spend time at the 'time out' table to consider his actions and the teacher continued with the work in progress without any noticeable disruption to the flow of activity. The pupil concerned was also well supported in his time out task by one of the teaching assistants. Occasionally, in some of the satisfactory lessons seen, while teachers' questioning effectively drew upon the skills of pupils of different attainment levels, the tasks set did not always match pupils' needs precisely enough. At these times, pupils did not always concentrate and work hard enough.

60. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The coordinator has a clear view of the standards of work across the school and liaises with and supports colleagues effectively. However, systems for gathering and using assessment information are at an early stage of development and action plans for developing the subject are not sufficiently detailed.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Sound use is made of mathematics in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils were seen making graphs of a survey they had carried out for a design and technology task and Year 5 pupils learned how light and sound sensing equipment produces a graphical representation of data on the computers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The focus on investigations has had a positive impact upon teaching and learning.
- Tasks and activities need to be planned more carefully to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Resources are good.
- Assessment procedures are under developed.

Commentary

62. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science by the end of Year 6 were above average. There has been slippage in standards in recent times and pupils recorded below average standards over the last two years in the national tests. Over the last six months, determined efforts by the interim consultant headteachers and staff have raised achievement to a satisfactory level. The science curriculum has been fully reviewed by the new coordinator so that a greater emphasis is now placed on scientific enquiry, which has had a positive impact on both teaching and learning. Standards are now average at the end of Year 6.
63. Pupils enjoy their science lessons and are keen to discuss their work. Year 3 pupils confidently explained how they were going to ensure their investigation into the varied strengths of magnets would be a fair test. They used appropriate scientific vocabulary and had a good understanding of cause and effect. Year 6 pupils investigated absorption, predicting outcomes, discussing the materials and equipment needed and the most effective testing methods. In all the lessons observed during the inspection, the more able pupils had appropriately challenging activities and tasks. Teachers' planning was less effective for the middle and lower ability groups where the same work was undertaken by all pupils. The lower ability pupils were well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and achieved well, whereas some of the middle ability groups found the work a little too easy. In lessons where the support staff worked with specific pupils or groups during the initial explanation or discussion session, the least able pupils made good gains in their understanding.

64. Teachers have access to a good range of resources to use in practical lessons and use these well to develop the pupils' investigative skills. Pupils record their work using a variety of different strategies including charts, graphs, diagrams and investigation prompt sheets. Scrutiny of work books and displays show good coverage of science topics and themes with effective development of knowledge and skills. Some teachers use marking to identify what the pupils need to do to improve their work and their understanding of the subject, but this is not consistent practice across the school.
65. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The enthusiastic coordinator has good subject knowledge. Although she only recently took up the post, some monitoring activities have already taken place and an action plan has been produced. This plan rightly prioritises the development of assessment systems and strategies to ensure that all pupils are making sufficient progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers show confident subject knowledge.
- The school has a good range of ICT equipment, but many of the computers run slowly and this sometimes hampers progress in learning.
- The school lacks a detailed development plan for this subject.

Commentary

66. As at the time of the last inspection, standards in ICT are average across the school. However, improvements have been made since that time with the addition of a computer suite, interactive whiteboards in the classrooms and greater use of ICT across the curriculum. Year 6 pupils spoken to were confident in explaining how they use spreadsheets, research for information on the Internet, make slide shows with PowerPoint, use email and use sensor equipment linked to the computers. In the work seen in lessons in most Year groups, pupils gained sound knowledge and understanding. They achieve satisfactorily in this subject across the school.
67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers mainly show confident subject knowledge and, for example, use the interactive whiteboards in their classrooms effectively to enhance pupils' learning. They also provide clear explanations so that pupils gain a full understanding of what is required of them with ICT tasks. However, the progress of learning in some lessons seen was hampered by the sluggish performance of the equipment in the computer suite, where many of the machines are relatively old and tend to run at a slow speed. Lessons sometimes faltered as pupils became frustrated waiting for something to appear on their computer screen or where the equipment did not work properly at all.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The coordinator has been trained as an ICT technician and has supported her colleagues by providing training in the use of the interactive whiteboards. She also runs a well attended ICT after-school club. The school lacks a development plan for ICT. It is therefore unclear how staff will make the best possible use of the school's resources in this subject in the future. The coordinator has implemented a new assessment system this term, but collection of and use of assessment information is at an early stage of development and it has not yet had time to influence teaching and learning and raise standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Although much good use is made of ICT, opportunities to use computers to support learning in lessons are sometimes overlooked. Discussions with pupils show that they make sound use

of their ICT skills in a range of subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils described how they researched on the Internet to find Islamic designs for a religious education/art project, used a program to construct symmetrical shapes, made pie charts and graphs and constructed play scripts on the computers.

HUMANITIES

70. Inspectors saw two lessons in religious education and none in geography or history. Other evidence was gained through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work in books and displays. Insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements on teaching, learning, achievement and standards in geography and history.
71. The school's curriculum map indicates that **geography** is given full coverage across the school. Fewer lessons are taught in geography than other humanities subjects. The school is aware of this discrepancy and intends to review the time allocation for this subject at the end of the summer term.
72. The high quality **history** displays around the school are created from a good mixture of pupils' own work, commercially produced materials and artefacts, some of which have been brought in from pupils' homes. Year 6 pupils, during their work on World War II, brought in an exciting variety of wartime items including gas masks, ration books, newspapers and letters to enhance their classrooms. Their detailed writing, diaries and letters demonstrate their keen interest in this theme. In Year 5, studies of Tudor times and an educational visit to Hampton Court Palace, resulted in an attractive display including reports, diaries, three-dimensional models and puppets dressed in Tudor clothing. A discussion with pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed they had enjoyed their work on Ancient Greece and they described the facts they had learned with enthusiasm. Teachers work hard to bring this subject 'alive' for their pupils and arrange appropriate educational visits to stimulate interest and further research.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on learning about world religions.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are no assessment procedures in place to help teachers monitor pupils' progress.

Commentary

73. Pupils reach average standards in this subject and achieve satisfactorily. Standards are not as good as reported at the time of the last inspection
74. The subject coordinator has only recently taken responsibility for this subject and a good start has been made in monitoring the curriculum. The school curriculum map indicates that religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. No assessment procedures are currently in place although the action plan has this included as an area of priority.
75. Two lessons were seen during the inspection, one of which was good and one very good. In the very good lesson, the teacher used a lively teamwork strategy to review prior learning about the signs and symbols used to identify beliefs in a range of world religions. The pupils demonstrated a good understanding of this area of work. They were encouraged to understand and value the beliefs of others whilst acknowledging the similarities and differences between religions. The session developed into a consideration of signs and

symbols that would reflect pupils' own personalities and beliefs. Some interesting and sensitive ideas were produced and pupils were keen to share and discuss them.

76. Scrutiny of workbooks indicates that pupils have opportunities for personal reflection about a wide range of themes. For example, they learn about faiths and beliefs and consider the feelings and opinions of others. They also consider stereotypes, prejudice versus respect, and some interesting work has been carried out in connection with Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' speech.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. One lesson was seen in design and technology, one in music and none in art and design or physical education. Overall, insufficient evidence was collected to enable judgement to be made about standards of work or the quality of provision in these subjects.
78. Appropriate planning is now in place to enable a full coverage of the **art and design** curriculum. All teachers now plan for their classes to ensure that pupils gain the appropriate skills in a continuous and progressive way. Good efforts are made to broaden pupils' experiences; for example, Year 6 pupils produced attractive and well displayed paintings in conjunction with a local artist.
79. A sound emphasis is in place on developing pupils' **design and technology** skills. In a satisfactory lesson seen in Year 6, pupils evaluated different types of bread, researched breads on the Internet and worked with support staff in cooking their own bread. The work linked well with a visit previously made to a pizza restaurant. Although this was an interesting lesson for pupils, the pace of learning was occasionally slow because not all pupils made enough effort and time was wasted moving between different activities.
80. Pupils have an appropriate range of opportunities to study the full National Curriculum in **music**. In the assemblies observed during the inspection, pupils sang tunefully and rhythmically. Also during assemblies seen, pupils were given good opportunities to listen to and appreciate music from other cultures. The headteacher has strengthened the school's music provision by engaging the services of a music specialist for the current term, to take lessons and provide training for staff. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument with peripatetic music teachers. Further enhancement to pupils' musical experiences is provided by events such as the trip made to participate in a mass concert at the Royal Albert Hall.
81. The school is now making good efforts to provide pupils with a wide range of **physical education** activities. A proactive approach by the new headteacher has enabled the school to link into the national sports coordinator initiative so that pupils benefit from the assistance of secondary school physical education specialists to teach them. Pupils' learning in this subject is enhanced well by the good range of extra-curricular sports activities provided. The pupils also benefit by participating in inter school athletics activities. Swimming is given appropriate emphasis, with pupils in Years 3 and 4 attending pool sessions throughout the year.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. No lessons were observed in this subject during the inspection and no judgements are therefore made about the quality of provision or standards.
83. Pupils cover an appropriate range of work in personal, social and health education and citizenship through both dedicated lessons and through themes that are well integrated into other subjects such as science and religious education. Pupils are taught to consider the feelings of others, to celebrate difference and respect others' beliefs, to eat healthily and to keep themselves safe. The school council encourages members to act as good citizens and provides a valuable forum for pupils to contribute their ideas and views on a variety of school issues. They take their responsibilities very seriously and feel that their opinions count with staff and governors when considering school initiatives. The school has close links with a

range of external services to extend provision in this sphere. These include a local veterinary surgeon, the school nurse, the vicar, and staff from the local Pupil Referral Unit.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	5
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).