

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWHALL COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Newhall, Swadlincote

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112635

Headteacher: Mr P K Collier

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone
No: 21114

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 247249

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chesterfield Avenue Newhall Swadlincote
Postcode:	DE11 0TR
Telephone number:	01283 217472
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Henstridge
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21114	Malcolm Johnstone	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion including race equality	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? What should the school do to improve further?
09003	Bryan Findley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21450	Daniel Kilborn	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
20645	Rosemary Webber	Team inspector	English Art and design Religious education English as an additional language	
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large community junior school for pupils aged from 7-11 years is situated in Newhall on the outskirts of Swadlincote in South Derbyshire. Its 321 pupils (169 boys and 152 girls) are taught in three ability classes in each year group. The roll has increased by about 20 more since the last inspection. The area served by the school has features of economic and social disadvantage. There is a mixture of private and rented accommodation but most pupils come from a large local authority owned estate nearby. The pupils' attainment on entry has risen gradually from being below average at the time of the last inspection to being generally above average now. Almost all the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and all are fluent in English. About 12 per cent of the pupils (broadly average) are eligible for free school meals. Twenty-one per cent of pupils (about average) have special educational needs and three pupils have a statement of special needs. The large majority of pupils who have special needs have moderate learning difficulties. Over the past two years, four teachers have left and five have been appointed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education. Many aspects of its work are improving at a good pace and standards are rising. Teaching is good overall with particular strengths in Year 5 and 6. This is bringing about improvement in pupils' achievements. The leadership and management of the school are good overall and the headteacher and all staff are united in their commitment to move the school forward. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are improving year on year; they are above average in history and geography
- The headteacher has built a strong and highly motivated team of teachers
- Teaching is often very good in Years 5 and 6
- There is a rich and stimulating range of extra-curricular activities
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and support learning well
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards and pupils' achievements in mathematics and science
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4
- The opportunities for pupils with special educational need to work with other pupils.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in January 1998. Standards in the important subjects of English, mathematics have risen year on year at a rate similar to the national trend. An influx of new staff over the past two years and good staff development have improved the quality of teaching. The key issues of the last report have been addressed well. Standards are now better in science and information and communication technology (ICT). Monitoring of the school's work and the use of data from national tests to identify and prioritise areas of weakness are now more focused. A strong senior management team has been built and the governing body are now more involved with developments in the school. The capacity for further improvement is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	C	C
Mathematics	E	D	D	D
Science	E	D	D	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards have improved gradually since the last inspection and in line with the national upward trend. There has been a particularly marked rise in the standards in English and these are now comparable with those in similar schools. In mathematics and science, standards for the pupils who are currently in Year 6 are now much closer to the national average since more pupils are likely to reach the national level than in 2002. Overall, however, they remain a little below the national average and are still not high enough in these two subjects. The school's targets for the next two years are likely to be met and together with evidence from the inspection, reflect a continuation of this rising trend. While girls tend to do a little better than boys, this is not significantly different from the national picture. On the basis of their prior attainment, pupils' achievements are sound overall. Good and often very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is raising achievement significantly and pupils are now making good progress in these two year groups.

The school's focus on writing has paid dividends and, together with pupils' skills in speaking and listening and reading, standards are now average. In mathematics and science, the school's emphasis on developing investigative and experimental work is helping raise standards. Standards are average in all other subjects except in history and geography where they are better than normally seen for pupils' age. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress with a few reaching the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. They stay together for all subjects and while this arrangement allows them to be taught in smaller classes, it limits opportunities for them to learn from average and above average pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils want to come to school, have good attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They take an active part in lessons and the many extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons, at play and around the school is good. Pupils are polite to visitors and look after their school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils play and work together well. Personal development is good and pupils take on responsibility eagerly. They initiate their own collections for a variety of charities.
Attendance	Good: there are consistently high levels of attendance, unauthorised absence is low and punctuality is very good.

On the few occasions when pupils' behaviour slips below these high standards, particularly in Years 3 and 4, it is invariably the result of teaching that fails to capture their attention well enough.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. It is satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 3 and 4 and is good and often very good in Years 5 and 6. Teaching was very rarely unsatisfactory. Pupils' learn best in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching meets the needs of the pupils well and promotes good progress. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 lead to some uneven progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The smaller classes for these pupils enable teachers to devote more time to individuals but there are no opportunities in lessons for them to learn from the average and above average pupils.

The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good and all lessons have an appropriate structure of whole class, group and individual learning. All teachers plan and prepare their lessons well and have good relationships with the pupils. The good teaching is characterised by brisk pace to learning, a good work ethic with pupils trying hard and persevering, stimulating use of resources, the assessment of what pupils already know to plan subsequent work and the promotion of a challenging and investigative approach to learning. All teachers mark pupils' work effectively and expect and usually get well presented work. Where the teaching is less effective, there is a lack of challenge in the work set for groups, explanations go on for too long and pupils lose interest. The assessment of pupils' prior learning is not used successfully enough to match the work to the individual needs of the pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has developed a broad and relevant curriculum covering all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. It meets all statutory requirements. Curriculum planning is good and is supported well by good schemes of work that are based appropriately on national guidelines.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. They receive good levels of individual support from the teachers but have no role models to base their learning upon.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good quality personal, social and health education, including a sensible approach to the teaching of sex and drugs education. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a good ethos of care and respect for all pupils. Assessment systems have been developed well. They are used satisfactorily to develop learning but need to focus on the setting of more precise targets for pupils.

The school has developed a good partnership with parents and the large majority are happy with the education and opportunities it provides. There is a very good range of activities outside lessons and these enrich pupils' learning in a variety of aspects.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is a good partnership between the headteacher and the newly appointed assistant head. Very good teamwork has been established. All the senior management are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement and put continuing improvement at the top of their agenda.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They are becoming more involved with the development of the school and are beginning to hold it accountable for the education that it provides.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a good general view of its work and has developed effective systems to monitor its academic standards. There are sound systems to check the quality of teaching but these have not been sharp enough to iron out inconsistencies in Years 3 and 4
The strategic use of resources	Strategic planning is good and most resources are used well.

The levels of staffing are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory and learning resources are good. There is sound understanding of the principles of best value. The shared commitment to improvement and the capacity for further development are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed and they would feel comfortable approaching the school with a query or problem. • The school is helping their children become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in the setting of homework • Information about how their children are getting on • The partnership between home and school.

Inspectors are in broad agreement with the positive views of the parents. There is little evidence to support the negative views of some parents. Homework was given in most classes during the inspection and was used well to develop learning. The inspectors consider the annual reports and general information on pupils' progress to be good. The partnership between home and school is judged to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 In the 2002 Year 6 national tests, standards were similar to the national average in English but below average in mathematics and science. In all three subjects an average proportion of pupils reached the higher level 5 but in mathematics and science, the proportion reaching the average level 4 was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools this same picture of standards was apparent.

2 While standards overall have improved gradually since the last inspection and in line with the national upward trend, there has been a particularly marked rise in the standards in English. Inspection evidence for the pupils who are currently in Year 6 largely reflects this position. Standards in English are in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics and science continue to rise and are now much nearer to the national average. This is because more pupils are likely to reach the national level 4 than in the 2002 tests. In these two subjects, however, standards remain a little below the national average and are still not high enough. In national tests over the past three years, girls have tended to do better than boys, although this has not been significantly different from the national picture. This is borne out by evidence of pupils work during the inspection.

3 The school's targets for the next two years are likely to be met and, together with evidence from the inspection, reflect a continuation in the gradually rising trend. On the basis of their prior attainment, the achievements of all pupils are sound overall. Pupils' attainment on entry has been rising gradually from being a little below average at the time of the last inspection to being above average for pupils now entering the school. As a result of this improved attainment on entry and the good and often very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, pupils are making increasingly better progress. The school's careful analysis of pupils' performance in national tests, the tracking of their progress through the school and the resulting focus on weaknesses in pupils' learning have also contributed to improvement. Analysis of the value added by the school to pupils' achievements reveals that almost all pupils make the expected rate of progress from year to year.

4 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together and their assessment and inspection evidence shows that some pupils in the group are likely to achieve average standards in the national English, mathematics and science tests. A feature of their success is the good quality presentation of work. The school has chosen to organise classes in ability bands. This arrangement means that pupils who have special educational needs stay together for all subjects. This allows them to be taught in smaller classes and receive more individual attention but limits opportunities for them to learn from average and above average pupils. There is also a tendency for boys to outnumber girls significantly in the lower ability bands.

5 In English, analysis of weaknesses in pupils' learning focused the school on developing pupils' writing. This has paid dividends and pupils now write well in a good range of styles and for different audiences. Their writing skills support work much better in subjects such as history and geography and this has had a knock on effect on standards in these two subjects. These are now better than expected for the pupils' age. Standards and pupils' achievements in speaking and listening and reading are average. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of most aspects of mathematics and science. The school has identified the need to develop pupils' use and application of mathematics and the skills of scientific enquiry. Teachers are now paying more attention to this aspect and some good work is raising overall standards in the two subjects.

6 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection and are now similar to those expected nationally. More systematic teaching of basic computing skills in the new computer suite, in-service training to improve teachers' knowledge and increasing use of computers to support learning in other subjects is gradually raising pupils' achievements. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. There is a good balance between the teaching of Christianity and other religions and world faiths within the subject and this widens pupils' knowledge and deepens their understanding well.

7 In art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, the work seen is similar to that expected for pupils' age and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In art and design, there is some good three-dimensional work, although pupils' observational drawing skills are not so strong. In design and technology work is particularly good in Year 5. In music, the new co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject and some of the work is now better than normally seen. The quality of singing is particularly good. In physical education, the provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities has had a good impact on pupils' achievements in the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 Pupils' good attitudes to learning, their behaviour and relationships with others have been maintained since the last inspection. These aspects have improved in Years 5 and 6 and are now very good.

9 Most pupils look forward to school. They busily organise themselves and soon settle in their classes ready for work at the start of the day. They listen well to their teacher and are keen to do well. Pupils are eager to participate in activities and express themselves sensibly and with confidence. They enjoy a wide range of trips or visits and attend after-school clubs in large numbers. Twenty-two pupils attended a gym club during inspection week. A few pupils in Years 3 and 4 lose concentration easily when faced with inappropriate levels of work or discipline.

10 Pupils with special educational needs respond very well in lessons and have good attitudes to work. Teachers prioritise improving the self-esteem of pupils. Positive reinforcement promotes confidence and pupils want to succeed. Their attitudes to work have an important influence on their rates of progress. The current banded organisation limits the exposure of pupils who have special educational needs to the behaviour of more successful and highly motivated learners.

11 Good levels of behaviour around the school confirm the views of most parents. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way and follow rules and routines well. They take very good care of their environment, for example, dining areas and the playground are kept clean and tidy. Pupils respond well to a system of rewards and rarely require sanctions beyond time out at play. There have been no exclusions from school sessions in many years.

12 The quality of relationships throughout the school is good and creates an atmosphere in which most pupils learn well through high levels of mutual support and co-operation. No patterns of aggression or intimidation were observed during the inspection. Pupils report very little bullying and generally play harmoniously in mixed friendship groups.

13 Over their time in school, pupils develop very good levels of personal responsibility. They take on responsible roles willingly in all year groups, for example, they serve as school council representative or litter patrol monitors as well as many other tasks that support the running of the school. Pupils also show individual acts of initiative and volunteer to organise

activities to support fund raising for charities, such as a quiz to support comic relief. A few boys in Year 3 classes are prone to silliness in lessons and show little regard for the impact this has on others.

14 Attendance levels are consistently high and have been either above or around average levels over recent years. Unauthorised absence is low and pupils attend school in very good time to get ready for lessons. These factors impact significantly on their attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. There is now a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. Across the year groups, six out of ten lessons were good or better and almost two out of ten were very good. In these lessons, the work provided for the pupils offered good levels of challenge and met their needs well. There were small proportions of excellent and unsatisfactory teaching. There was a marked difference in the quality of teaching between Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4, for example, three out of ten lessons were good or better but in Years 5 and 6, eight of ten lessons were good or better. All of the very good and excellent teaching was observed in these two year groups.

16 More effective and focused in-service training linked to performance management has helped raise the quality of teaching and learning. An influx of new staff over the past two years and the consistent and effective application of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, particularly in Years 5 and 6 have also contributed to the improvement. There is a good programme for monitoring the quality of teaching. This has been successful in Years 5 and 6 but monitoring has not been sharp enough to iron out inconsistencies in teaching and uneven progress in learning in Years 3 and 4.

17 The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good. Teachers have good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are embedded securely in the planning and delivery of the large majority of lessons. In literacy lessons, the key skills of spelling, reading, punctuation and vocabulary extension are taught effectively. Writing is now taught well and teachers consolidate and extend writing experiences across other subjects such as religious education, history and geography. The teaching of numeracy has improved as a result of recent emphasis on the use and application of mathematics. In some numeracy lessons, the opening mental mathematics sessions could be sharper. Teachers have begun to set individual literacy and numeracy targets for pupils. These, however, need to be sharper for the pupils who are just below the margins of the various National Curriculum levels in order to push them that little bit further. In both literacy and numeracy lessons, where the teaching is not so effective, some of the activities provided for the pupils lacked sufficient challenge, or explanations dragged on for too long. At these times, the rate of learning and pupils' attention dropped.

18 Teaching is good in history and geography where teachers bring the subjects to life through good use of resources and good subject knowledge. Teachers also emphasise the development of skills as well as knowledge of the subjects. The teaching of science is mostly good and has improved since the last inspection due to greater emphasis on investigative work. This is helping to raise standards and pupils' achievements in the subject. Teaching has improved in ICT where it is now satisfactory. Teaching in art and design, design and technology and music is generally satisfactory and sometimes good and in physical education it is mostly good.

19 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is generally satisfactory and often good, particularly in Year 6. The most successful lessons begin promptly and teachers prepare teaching programmes to meet targets in the pupils' individual education

plans. Learning support assistants work closely with class teachers. They know pupils' strengths and weaknesses and reinforce and extend learning with groups of pupils in the classroom. Detailed assessment records are maintained and these make it possible to gauge the progress pupils are making. Relationships in the classroom are very positive and pupils trust their teachers. Pupils are encouraged to 'have a go' and know that there is no need to fear getting the wrong answer. The lack of opportunity to work with pupils of all abilities is a limiting factor of the provision.

20 In the large majority of lessons, good relationships and enthusiasm feature strongly. The learning objectives are shared with the pupils so that they understand what they are expected to learn. Expectations of pupils are mostly high across the school but are particularly marked in Years 5 and 6. It is made clear to pupils what their appropriate level of work should be and they are expected to perform at or beyond this. All pupils are expected to present their work well and this is very largely achieved. The marking of pupils' work is good across all year groups and includes useful comments for pupils as to how the work might be improved. Planning is good and teachers use the framework of long, medium and short term planning and schemes of work consistently and well. Teachers evaluate their lessons well and in the best lessons this is used effectively to modify subsequent lesson plans. This is only satisfactory in other lessons across all subjects. Teachers set appropriate homework across the school; for example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 5 pupils on reading different scales, pupils were encouraged to weigh items at home using weighing scales.

21 In lessons where the teaching is most effective, a good pace of learning is maintained throughout the lessons and questioning extends pupils' learning by encouraging them to think more deeply about their responses. For example, in a design and technology lessons for pupils in Year 5, the teacher asked; 'How could this group have made their model better?' In these lessons, a very good work ethic has been established where pupils want to learn, work well with other pupils and are prepared to persevere and do their best. This was exemplified in a science lesson on electrical circuits for pupils in Year 6 where the pupils shared resources sensibly, discussed the possibilities of changing various elements and maintained intense concentration for the duration of the lesson. Most resources are used well. For example, white boards, flip charts, number lines, photographs and charts are used effectively to aid pupils' understanding. There is increasing use of the classroom computers to support learning across all subjects and the new computer suite is in regular use. Learning support assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils with specific educational needs and to others in the lower bands of each year group but their time is not always used well, for example, when the child they should be supporting is not in school.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

22 The school has developed a broad and relevant curriculum covering all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. It meets all statutory requirements. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. History and geography are now taught regularly and all aspects of ICT and design and technology are taught. Time allocations to all subjects are now reasonable and total teaching time meets government recommendations. Curriculum planning is good and is supported well by good schemes of work that are based appropriately on national guidelines.

23 The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. There is a broad and well-managed programme of lessons which supports the development of pupils in all year groups. Sex education and drugs education are covered effectively through science and religious education with more specific work in Years 5 and 6, for example, on the subject of puberty. The quality of personal and social education lessons is generally high, such as seen in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils learnt strategies for making safe choices and

minimising risks. In a Year 3 lesson pupils developed their listening and speaking skills to help avoid misunderstandings in their relationships with others. Lessons are also adapted well to address issues of behaviour occurring in the school and there are good links with assemblies and initiatives, such as Health Promoting Schools. Good use is made of outside agencies such as the police and health service.

24 There is an appropriate policy for equal opportunities and this is largely reflected in the work of the school. The school has a clear race equality policy based on national and local authority guidelines. The curricular provision for pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory. The school has decided to organize classes by banding them by ability in all year groups. While there are some advantages for pupils who have special educational needs, for example, classes are smaller and allow for more individual teaching, this organisation means that these pupils do not benefit from participating in activities across the ability range. They do not have the opportunity to learn from the often very good behaviour, strengths of discussion, extended use of language and the broader range of learning strategies shown by higher achieving pupils. Often these lower banded classes have a significantly more boys than girls and this has the potential for the boys to dominate the teachers' time. There has been insufficient analysis of the impact of this decision on pupils' achievements, educational inclusion and equality of opportunity.

25 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well established and have a positive impact on improving standards and achievements in English and mathematics. There has been recent provision of a computer suite and the numbers and quality of classroom computers have been improved. This has had a good effect on pupils' computing skills and the use of ICT in support of other subjects.

26 There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that are supported well by staff and pupils. These include sporting activities such as football, netball, hockey, cricket, dance and gymnastics and clubs for needlework, ICT, music, drama and homework. All pupils have the opportunity to attend residential visits to places such as outdoor adventure centres and places of local interest. These activities make an important contribution to pupils' experiences and personal development.

27 The school has developed good links with the infant and secondary schools that occupy the same campus. Links with the infant school have been developed particularly well. These links have led to a greater understanding of teaching methods and assessment in infant and junior schools and have led to a more effective transition between Years 2 and 3. Useful business links have been established with a local amenities site, a super store and a garden centre. These have given pupils a valuable insight into the world outside school.

28 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. At the time of the last inspection it was reported to be good. Spiritual development is good and is promoted effectively through assemblies, religious education and through the school's programme of personal and social education. Good opportunity is given for pupils to explore and consider their own personal opinions, feelings and emotions concerning a range of issues. This has helped them not only to gain a better knowledge and understanding of themselves but also to help them develop a sense of empathy with the lives of other people, for example in history and religious education lessons. Suitable time for reflection is given to pupils during assemblies in order for them to consider further the theme of the day. Local clergy and religious groups regularly visit the school to lead assemblies and this contributes further to the provision. Through the schools involvement in a national schools environmental initiative the pupils gain a good understanding of the importance of the natural world, respect for all forms of life and the need for conservation. Through music and art pupils are encouraged to appreciate the feelings and emotions that different styles of music and paintings provoke.

29 The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. The school has implemented an effective behaviour policy that is consistently applied and promoted by all staff. Adults provide good role models for pupils to follow. The good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils soon learn what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Opportunities for pupils to think about and discuss moral issues in order to develop further their understanding of what is right and wrong are well promoted in assemblies and through personal and social education. The school has effective systems to reward pupils' efforts, achievements and good behaviour and this contributes significantly to pupils' moral development.

30 The school provides many well-planned opportunities that support pupils' social development. For example, pupils are given a range of responsibilities that contribute well to the smooth running of the school. They prepare the ICT suite for lessons and the hall for assemblies and take registers to the office. Older pupils are encouraged to greet and show visitors around the school and teachers provide good opportunity for pupils to work in pairs and in groups during lessons. This develops their ability to work with others collaboratively and co-operatively. The school council effectively provides pupils with the opportunity to develop a sense of citizenship by giving them an opportunity to make important decisions about aspects of school life and how it might be improved. For example, pupils sensibly discussed how the sum of £200 could be best spent in order to improve the school playground environment. The very good range of extra-curricular activities, including inter-school tournaments and residential visits develops social skills well. Pupils effectively plan, organise and run many fund raising events, such as quizzes, for a range of charities.

31 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. There is a range of well planned visits to local places of interest and further afield, in history and geography and visitors are invited into school to share their knowledge and experiences. These give pupils valuable insight into their own and other cultural traditions. For example, pupils have visited Tamworth Castle and Birmingham Art Gallery and there have been visits from authors, poets, musicians and theatre groups. Art, history and geography lessons add to the provision for cultural development well. For example, in Year 5, pupils gain a good understanding of Aztec design as they make a printing block that depict the features of Aztec design and pattern. The opportunity to study the beliefs and traditions of a number of different world faiths such as Hinduism and Islam through religious education lessons add effectively to the provision. Pupils are adequately prepared for life in a culturally diverse society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 The school offers good levels of support and guidance that contribute positively to the welfare and safety of pupils and the progress they make in their academic and personal development. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective and this accords with the views of most parents. There are very good systems for eliminating bullying and for monitoring attendance.

33 Safety and welfare arrangements are good and pupils are cared for well by members of staff, who are committed to their well-being. A trained designated teacher effectively leads arrangements for child protection and staff are well aware of procedures. There are effective arrangements in the event of illness or injury and high levels of first aid expertise across the school. Health and safety procedures are generally good with regular inspections of the premises and reports to the governing body.

34 Good behaviour is promoted well because codes of conduct are made clear, such as class rules that are discussed at the beginning of each year. The school also monitors behaviour well and takes positive action where concerns are identified. A current initiative to improve lunchtime behaviour through training for staff, additional play activities and input to the personal education programme is proving successful. The school responds promptly in

response to bullying so that pupils feel comfortable and secure in school. An award system, such as team points, is popular with pupils and misbehaviour is usually handled effectively in most lessons. Most teachers set very good role models of politeness and respect. Personal development is monitored well through pupil profile records and this leads to effective levels of support from teachers and classroom assistants. The school secretary uses attendance information very well in order to follow up promptly on attendance issues. Very good use is made of the analytical tools in the computerised records and there is good liaison with the educational welfare service.

35 In English and mathematics, there are very good systems to record pupils' progress and track the improvement rate of pupils from their attainment when they enter school to when they leave. Systems in other subjects are satisfactory and developing well. There is a wide range of recording instruments, including reading records and diaries, assessments after units of work in most subjects, multiplication table work, mental mathematics and spelling records. The co-ordinator for this aspect of the school's work has been in post for only one year but has already worked effectively to develop these systems. Pupils' performance in national and school based tests is carefully analysed and weaknesses targeted. This has brought about marked success in pupils' writing and in the development of investigative work in mathematics and science. In order to develop assessment as a tool for raising standards and improving pupils' progress, the school now needs to develop the use of assessment further. For example, the use of information to set personal targets in English and mathematics needs to focus more precisely on pupils at the margins of the various National Curriculum levels. There are effective procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils who have special educational needs. Staff keep a wide range of records that are used to set and modify targets in the pupils' individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36 The good partnership with parents noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. It continues to support the quality of learning and the development of pupils. The vast majority of parents think well of the school. They are pleased with the progress their children make through hard work. They agree that their children like school, that teaching is good and that pupils are helped to become mature. These strengths were largely confirmed on inspection, although teaching in Years 3 and 4 could be strengthened. Some parents would like to be better informed about the progress their children make and would like closer involvement with the school. A few parents feel the amount of homework pupils get is not right. The evidence available to the team suggests that these concerns are not well founded.

37 The quality of information about the life of the school and about pupils' progress is good. Reports are clear about progress and detailed about what pupils can do. Reports are complemented by pupil profiles which include specific targets that are discussed at consultation evenings. The consistency in reporting has improved since the last inspection.

38 The involvement of parents in support of learning is good and the school plays its part in encouraging this support. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are involved in the drawing up of their individual education plans and reviews of the progress made by their children. All parents are welcome to help in classrooms and there is a small core of regular helpers that teachers can plan for. Parents also support trips and topics in lessons well, for example, in the artefacts provided about World War Two and the talk given by a grandparent on his wartime experiences. Curriculum timetables and topics are sent out each term so parents know in advance the work their children will be doing. There is good support for homework and homework diaries are used effectively for dialogue with teachers. The school experiences difficulty recruiting parent governors and organisers for a parents' association but there is good support for fund raising events organised by members of staff.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The overall leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is well respected in the community and works very well with the newly appointed assistant headteacher. He is a very visible figure in school and promotes school values well through assemblies and the personal support he gives to members of staff including newly qualified teachers. The results of his leadership and effective promotion of the schools aims are seen in improving standards, teaching and learning the good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, the very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and the high standards of care for all pupils. The good relationships among the staff and between staff and pupils together with the clear educational direction provided by the senior management team promote a good climate for learning and capacity for improvement.

40 The strengths reported in the last inspection have been maintained and identified areas for development have been appropriately addressed. In particular there has been good improvement in the monitoring of attainment and good analysis of assessment results in English, mathematics and science. This has been successful in bringing about improvements in writing, the use and application of mathematics and investigative work in science. The leadership and management of subjects by consortia have been strengthened by the inclusion of members of the governing body and new members of staff. The consortia have brought enthusiasm and knowledge to the development of their subjects. There are now better assessment systems that are beginning to have an impact upon standards. Sound systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning have been developed and include all co-ordinators and senior staff in, for example, sampling of pupils' work and lesson observations. These systems have been successful in bringing about some improvement in teaching but have not been rigorous enough to iron out inconsistencies and weaknesses in Years 3 and 4.

41 The school improvement plan is detailed, appropriate to the identified needs of the school and carefully costed in the context of the schools receipt of below national average funding. It gives good guidance in the short term but does not provide a more forward-looking vision for school development including a plan for building refurbishment

42 The leadership of special educational needs through a consortium is mostly effective. Each representative makes a valuable contribution to the ways in which pupils are supported. A member of the teaching staff leads the group and ensures that parents and staff are well informed of developments. The governor for special educational needs regularly attends meetings with the special educational needs co-ordinator and has expressed the desire to attend courses to enable her to support pupils in a more informed way. More rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the benefits and weaknesses of the organisation of classes needs to be undertaken to ensure that these pupils are achieving as well as they might in all aspects of their education.

43 A significant feature of the management of the school is the organisation of staff teams. These give a broader more representative view to developments and use the strengths of the teaching staff well. The school has received the Investor in People award in recognition of the clear commitment to training and development for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Performance management interviews are well established and have set appropriate personal targets for improvements over a period of one year. A mentor and the headteacher support new members of staff well. Staff reviews of performance and the planning of appropriate training and support help all staff to improve their contribution to the life of the school. Staff training has had a positive impact on raising standards in many areas of the curriculum, for example in English and ICT.

44 The governing body is developing its strategic role satisfactorily from a low base at the time of the last inspection. It is now better informed about how the school is doing in national assessment tests and receives regular reports from the headteacher and consortia

leaders. It fulfils its statutory duties effectively. The governors are still developing their role as a critical friend to the school. Frequent changes to the governing body and an inability to fill four vacancies have put a heavy responsibility on the hardworking chair of governors who works closely with the headteacher. Governors are involved in the school improvement plan and in the subject consortia teams. This adds to their knowledge and enables them to give informed opinions on the progress of planned developments.

45 Day-to-day monitoring of spending and budget management is good. The school secretary provides a very welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors and provides, in conjunction with the headteacher, a very effective overview of spending and routine management tasks. The recommendations of the last audit report have now been fully implemented. Taking account of the lower than average unit costs per pupil, the pupils' attainment on entry and the results attained the school provides satisfactory value for money.

46 Staffing levels in the school are satisfactory with sufficient teachers to teach the curriculum. The number of classroom assistants is barely adequate. Accommodation is satisfactory with good teaching areas but much of the fabric and furnishings are still in urgent need of replacement or decoration and, despite a heavy spending commitment on window replacement in the current year, there are no specific plans to upgrade other areas in the near future. With the exception of the library, which is sited in a space between classrooms, learning resources are good overall and greatly improved in ICT.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47 In order to raise standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- 1) * continue to work on improving standards and pupils' achievements in mathematics and science by;
 - a) developing pupils' use and application of mathematics and the skills of scientific enquiry consistently across all year groups
 - b) setting more precise individual targets for pupils, particularly those at the margins of the National Curriculum levels
 - c) in mathematics, speeding up pupils' mental mathematics skills and encouraging more discussion of different strategies for solving problems
 - d) in science, providing more opportunities for pupils to select their own materials and resources and plan their own lines of enquiry.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 54, 57, 61 and 67)

- 2) improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 by;
 - a) focusing monitoring more specifically into these year groups
 - b) providing opportunities for the teachers to observe teaching in the Year 5 and 6 classes

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 15, 16, 21, 40, 52 and 55)

- 3) provide more opportunities for pupils who have special educational needs to participate in activities across the ability range that allow them to learn from other pupils and to share their successes. Monitor the respective learning of boys and girls in the lower band classes where there is a marked imbalance to ensure pupils make similar progress. (These issues are discussed in paragraphs 4, 10, 19, 24, 42, and 59)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider these less significant weaknesses for inclusion in the action plan

- Develop school improvement planning to provide a more forward-looking vision for school development including a plan for building refurbishment. (paragraph 41)
- Make more consistent use of ongoing classroom assessments of individual pupils to plan more demanding work (paragraphs 53, 58, 85)
- Encourage more efficient use of the library by considering an alternative location and introducing the more common book classification system. (46 and 50)

*** It is recognised that the school is aware of these issues and has begun to take some relevant action**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	29	26	2	0	0
Percentage	1.4	17.1	41.4	37.2	2.9	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	321
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	39	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	30
	Girls	30	22	30
	Total	58	48	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (60)	63 (62)	80 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	30
	Girls	30	22	30
	Total	58	48	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (71)	63 (64)	80 (87)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

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	317	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded

0

0

0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	494,650]
Total expenditure	480,415
Expenditure per pupil	1,496
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,055
Balance carried forward to next year	14,235

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

321

Number of questionnaires returned

88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	58	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	63	5	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	17	2	0
The teaching is good.	41	52	5	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	57	17	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	48	5	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	11	63	14	7	6
The school is well led and managed.	30	56	2	6	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	57	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	47	8	6	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

48 Standards are in line with the national average in Year 6. The results of the 2002 national tests also reflect this picture. In these tests, standards were also comparable with those in similar schools. National test results show a steady improvement in standards year on year since 1999 and the school has broadly kept pace with the national trend of improvement over time. In relation to their attainment on entry, pupils' achievements are satisfactory over their time in school and are getting better. This is the result of improved teaching and a gradual rise in pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3.

49 Standards in speaking and listening are similar to the national average, with listening being the stronger element. Teachers provide good opportunity in many different subjects in order to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and this supports their learning well. Average and above average pupils adapt their talk to the purpose and develop ideas thoughtfully to convey their opinions. Teachers in Year 6, for example, use interviewing techniques through role-play very effectively to help develop this skill. In one lesson this encouraged pupils to discuss the life of Mother Theresa. As a result, the pupils showed good gains in their listening and confidence in their speaking. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to answer questions and are developing confidence when speaking in front of others. By Year 6 pupils express their ideas and opinions clearly. Across the school, pupils show that they listen carefully with understanding and respond promptly to instructions.

50 Standards in reading are in line with the national average. Above average pupils in Year 6 achieve well and read with good fluency, accuracy and expression. Teachers provide pupils with structured reading activities both within the literacy hour and in other subjects. As a result, pupils make sound progress in acquiring a range of reading strategies. Below average pupils and those who have special educational needs make steady progress in developing knowledge of the sounds of letters and letter combinations and this helps them attempt unfamiliar words with a reasonable degree of success. By Year 6, pupils know how to use a contents page, index and bibliography. They skim and scan text effectively in order to research information. Most average and above average pupils express preferences for types of books and have favourite authors. Above average pupils talk knowledgeably about biographies and autobiographies. Due to lack of space, the library is sited in an open space between classrooms and this makes it difficult for whole classes or large groups to use it. The classification system is also quite simplistic and not based on the standard system used in most libraries. This means that pupils do not develop the knowledge necessary for them to make the best use of libraries in general.

51 Standards in writing are in line with the national average. The school has placed a high priority on improving writing. The weaknesses identified in this aspect of the subject in the last report have been successfully addressed. Teachers now provide pupils with sufficient opportunity to write in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum. This has helped raise standards in subjects such as history and geography. Standards in handwriting have improved significantly since the last inspection. Across the school, pupils set out and present their written work well in all subjects. Because teachers pay good attention to promoting punctuation rules in lessons, pupils soon acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of punctuation. By Year 6 pupils use apostrophes, commas, exclamation and speech marks consistently well while writing independently. In descriptive and creative writing, pupils know the importance of using lively vocabulary in order to make their writing more interesting to the reader. By Year 6 pupils write in a range of writing styles, for example, they construct and set out appropriately a persuasive letter. Although standards in spelling are average overall, attainment is variable with some average and below average

pupils still making regular errors in the spelling of common words in their independent free writing.

52 Overall the quality of teaching is good. It is more effective in Years 5 and 6 where there is often very good teaching. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory and sometimes good. The National Literacy Strategy is well embedded in teachers' planning and all lessons have the necessary structure of whole class, group and individual work. In the most effective lessons across all year groups, teachers promote key skills such as spelling, phonics and punctuation rules consistently. They model and demonstrate skills well in order to support pupils' learning and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Questioning is skilful in extending pupils' thinking and understanding and teachers challenge pupils to give more detail in their answers. Teachers use ICT well to support pupils learning in the subject, providing opportunities for pupils to draft their writing and to practise and consolidate their literacy work. When teaching is not as effective, there are missed opportunities to promote basic skills in lessons and guided work is not always sufficiently structured to teach the key skills of spelling, phonics and punctuation. In these lessons, the teachers do not model and demonstrate skills as effectively as they should in order to support pupils' learning.

53 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The quality of teaching and learning and standards are carefully monitored by co-ordinators and as a result teachers are aware of areas in the subject that need further development. There are good assessment procedures to assess pupils' attainment. Teachers do not use this information rigorously enough to set individual learning targets for pupils, particularly those at the margins of the various National Curriculum levels.

MATHEMATICS

54 Standards are improving and in Year 6 they are now better than reflected in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. More pupils are likely to achieve the expected levels in this year's national tests in all aspects of mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is also increasing. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection and good progress has been made in raising expectations of what can be achieved. Despite this gradual improvement, standards are still a little below the national average and are not yet high enough. Attainment on entry for the current Year 6 was broadly average and current standards reflect a picture of just satisfactory achievement since that time.

55 Very good quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 is one of the main reasons for the improved standards. Teaching is markedly stronger in these two year groups. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is mainly satisfactory and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. In some lessons across these two year groups, while teaching covered the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy, activities lacked excitement and the pace of learning was not challenging enough to maintain pupils' interest. The features of strong teaching seen in Years 5 and 6 provide good models for developing the strategies used in other year groups. For example, the strong emphasis placed on teaching investigative mathematics has supported well pupils' abilities to solve problems independently and to apply their number skills to a wide range of situations. The links made with subjects such as science, ICT and design and technology are also effectively forged. By Year 6 pupils use computer programs to generate spreadsheets and calculate the different dimensions of rectangles with the same perimeter. They measure accurately and understand the importance of scale.

56 Teachers in Years 5 and 6 have good subject knowledge and use mathematical language well, encouraging pupils to use these terms in their questions and answers. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very effectively for older pupils and planning across these classes shows all aspects of mathematics are covered well. Work is well matched to the needs of groups within the bands, for example those who are most able and those with special educational needs. Older pupils particularly express their enjoyment of

mathematics because teachers make lessons interesting and challenging. Activities are carefully timed to maintain high levels of concentration and to secure a rigorous pace. Pupils concentrate well and usually meet the high expectations made of them. At the end of lessons, teachers support pupils to evaluate their success and to understand how well they have met the learning objectives. Pupils have a good knowledge of their learning and what they have achieved over time.

57 Number work is improving but more can be done to speed pupils' responses to questions. There is an over reliance on recording on individual whiteboards in some starter sessions and this slows the pace of pupils' responses. In purely mental starters, many questions could be asked and answered more quickly to target individual needs and create a more vibrant and rigorous start to lessons. However, above average and most average pupils know their tables and apply the four rules of numbers with reasonable accuracy to calculate answers. They consider strategies to support problem solving but tend to rely too heavily on adult support in their eagerness to complete tasks accurately. Teachers are encouraging greater independence in learning through using questions which require pupils to describe their methods of working. This aspect of learning could be developed further in all lessons. Pupils are beginning to gain greater confidence to use different methods of calculation and enjoy listening to the range of explanations their friends offer for completing a task. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures is average. They particularly enjoy drawing, measuring and calculating angles. They know there are 180 degrees in a straight line and that a right angle is 90 degrees. Above average pupils know the difference between acute, obtuse and reflex angles. Pupils' knowledge of measures is secure in mass, capacity and volume.

58 Assessment procedures are thorough and teachers regularly assess pupils' work. More could be done to use this information to adjust subsequent lesson planning in order to support the needs of individuals and groups further. However, teachers have good knowledge of pupils' rates of progress and share this information with parents through open evenings and reports. Individual targets are set with pupils and this helps pupils to build upon their previous learning. These need to be a more precise for pupils who are the margins of the various National Curriculum levels. Homework is given regularly and this supports learning well, especially where parents regularly help their children.

59 Classes are taught in banded groups and, while most groups are usually challenged appropriately, insufficient account is sometimes taken of the range of ability within these bands, particularly within Years 3 and 4. In addition, there are no planned opportunities for pupils to experience learning in mixed ability situations. Pupils in the lower band do not benefit from working with more able pupils at times in order to share their wider range of problem solving strategies and descriptive language.

60 The two co-ordinators provide good leadership and management. One joined the school recently and together they analyse the needs of staff and pupils well. They lead staff training and regularly monitor planning and pupils' work. The headteacher and local authority have monitored the quality of teaching and there is a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. The capacity for further improvement is good. Resources are of good quality and most staff use them effectively in lessons. Mathematics has a high priority in the school's plan.

SCIENCE

61 Pupils now enter Year 3 with attainment slightly above average standards. Attainment on entry for the current Year 6 pupils and for pupils who took the 2002 National Curriculum tests was broadly average. Results from the National Curriculum tests show that standards were well below the national average in 1998 and were judged to be below average at the last inspection. Since 1998, standards have risen steadily year on year, keeping pace with the national trend. This represents satisfactory achievement over time from the low base in 1998. In the 2002 tests, standards were still below but close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 was average. The work Year 6 pupils were doing confirms this gradual improvement and, while standards are now very close to the national average, they are not yet high enough.

62 Standards are improving as a result of better teaching and more opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding by using a more investigative approach to learning. There is now a good scheme of work following national guidelines and a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

63 In Year 3, pupils have a good understanding of the principle of fair testing. In a good lesson testing different rocks for hardness, pupils work well in groups to produce their own experiments. Above average pupils use words like 'permeability' and have good ideas of ways to sort and categorise the range of rocks provided by the class teacher. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate appropriate knowledge of a range of scientific apparatus when devising their own experiments to sieve, funnel and separate solids. They are aware of the need to predict, identify a clear method, plan carefully and ensure their tests are fair. Most have a good understanding of different liquids and solids and are aware that they can be changed by freezing or heating. Pupils in Year 5 have good opportunities to explore the processes of evaporation and condensation. They use appropriate equipment to set up experiments and carefully record their findings on charts. This work supports work in mathematics and literacy well as pupils write reflections from their direct observations. When revising work from previous years, pupils in Year 6 demonstrate appropriate knowledge of electrical circuits. They know the difference between battery and mains power, form a variety of circuits accurately and use scientific terms and symbols correctly. They are well aware of the dangers of electricity.

64 While pupils' overall achievement over time is satisfactory, pupils made some good progress in lessons during the inspection. They enjoy the practical nature of their science work and handle apparatus and equipment with due care. Pupils co-operate well in groups, listen to their teachers and maintain good levels of concentration. This was exemplified in a good lesson for pupils in Year 6 who were investigating electrical circuits.

65 The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen is good overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and this enables them to teach confidently and answer pupils' questions well. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this is conveyed to pupils who are motivated and keen to learn. Most lessons move at a good pace and teachers make good use of their time to work with small groups, helping pupils to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully and most work provides different levels of challenge to meet the varying needs of pupils. In a few lessons and in some of pupils' past work from all bands, however, opportunities are missed to fully extend above average pupils. Assessment information is not yet used successfully enough in all classes to plan subsequent work that pushes pupils to the next level.

66 Teachers in all classes are successful in discussing with pupils how to make tests fair. As a result, pupils quickly develop a good awareness of how to set up experiments so that the results are valid. Good opportunities are given at the end of lessons to discuss

results and this reinforces learning well. There are good examples of teachers using computers to support learning in the subject.

67 The science consortium is led well by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. They have been influential in promoting a steady rise in pupils' standards since the last inspection but they are aware that standards are not yet high enough. The subject is well resourced and materials and equipment are well labelled and stored, making them easily accessible to staff. Good support is given to teachers to plan work and observation of teaching and regular scrutiny of pupils work has identified areas for improvement. For example, more emphasis is now being placed on investigative work, which increasingly gives pupils good opportunities to experiment and draw their own conclusions. There is still work to be done in firmly establishing this approach to learning, including opportunities for pupils to select their own materials and resources and plan their own lines of enquiry.

ART AND DESIGN

68 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the work seen is similar to that expected for pupils' age. Throughout the school, pupils have opportunity to work in a range of media such as paint, pastels, charcoal and fabrics in order to express their ideas. For example, in Year 6, pupils skilfully combine a range of materials and paint in order to decorate their hat designs depicting various fantasy themes. Pupils make sound progress in developing colour wash techniques in order to create shadow and depth in their painting. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good sense of shape, pattern and colour. This is particularly evident in pupils' abstract paintings and designs across the school.

69 Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their finished work. They show good awareness and appreciation of the style and techniques of famous artists. For example, pupils in Year 6 show a good sense of bold colour and shape in order to create impact when designing motifs for ceramics in the style of Clarice Cliff. In Year 3, pupils use light tones and shades skilfully to paint water lilies in the style of Claude Monet.

70 Teachers develop art skills very effectively through other subjects such as history. For example, in Year 5 pupils interpret Aztec design and pattern very skilfully when designing a printing block. They use these in order to produce good quality fabric prints that depict traditional Aztec art. In Year 4, pupils produce good quality paintings of Ancient Egyptian pharaohs and gods. Teachers provide pupils with suitable opportunity to work in three dimensions and as a result pupils produce some good quality work. For example, in Year 3, pupils mould and manipulate clay well in order to make model animals and in Year 6 pupils use slab and coil techniques in order to make bowls and containers. While pupils have sketchbooks to help develop their ideas and designs for future work, overall there are not enough opportunities for them to develop their observational drawing skills and as a result pupils attainment and progress is not as strong than in other aspects of the subject. .

71 The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and demonstrate skills and techniques very effectively in order to support pupils learning. They have high expectations and expect pupils to produce quality work. Resources are well prepared and are used well in order to allow pupils to make choices about what media and materials they want to use in order to develop their ideas and designs. Computer programs that explore the use of colour are used satisfactorily to support learning in the subject. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and they manage pupils well during lessons.

72 Leadership and management of the subject are good and strategies to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and standards are effective.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73 Standards are similar to those expected for Year 6 pupils. This reflects the position at the time of the last inspection, although improvements have been made in the development of pupils' evaluative skills. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Where the teaching is good, this is more rapid. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a new scheme of work based on nationally recommended guidelines. This ensures good continuity and the development of skills progressively as pupils move through the school. The new scheme has given teachers a clear planning structure and staff training days have increased levels of confidence and expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching in the lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to very good.

74 Pupils' design and technology skills and understanding develop well as they move through the school and by Year 6 they use design sheets appropriately to plan and improve their designs for hats and shelters. They link their work well to science when looking at suitable materials for covering shelters, carefully considering different materials for strength, warmth and weatherproofing. They use their mathematical skills by measuring struts and supports accurately and take good account of angles in their shelter frame designs. Some residential visits focus on design and technology work and good examples of full sized 'thrones' enhanced Jubilee week activities. Real shelter building using a range of natural materials found in the woods gives good direct experiences and supports learning very well. Pupils in Year 5 use their design and artistic skills appropriately when making their own biscuits. They consider the size, cost and customer appeal and use their imagination well when naming their own attractive wrapper designs.

75 In a very good lesson related to musical instrument design pupils in Year 5 evaluated their designs and sought to improve the range and sound of their instruments, for example, by adapting the size of cylinders for drums. A group enhanced their cultural knowledge when carefully making African thumb pianos. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced a range of effective 'pop up' books which linked appropriately to festivals and their literacy work. Carefully made money containers demonstrate good needlework skills and pupils throughout the school have good opportunities to evaluate and improve their designs and products.

76 Pupils have good attitudes to their work and choose and use a range of resources with care. They cooperate well on joint ventures such as group shelter building and share ideas for their designs well.

77 Teachers set high standards for pupils' work and levels of concentration. There is a good emphasis on health and safety when using the equipment and tools provided and well-prepared resources are used effectively in lessons. This careful preparation and planning of lessons ensures a high level of interest by pupils and good pace to learning in most lessons. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their ideas and are actively encouraged to consider ways of improving designs to meet the objective of the final product. Computers are used satisfactorily to support work in the subject.

78 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject by organising meetings for the staff with the local authority advisor. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each topic and a written evaluation made linked to the learning outcomes identified in the scheme of work.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

79 Standards in both subjects are above those expected for pupils in Year 6 and this shows good improvement since the previous inspection. Most pupils make good progress.

Both subjects are regularly taught and this enables standards to be maintained in all year groups through the good links made to the teaching of basic skills as well as knowledge.

80 In both subjects, good policies and schemes of work provide effective guidance for teachers. Teachers adapt the latest national guidelines to more precisely meet the needs of pupils and to take advantage of local resources. For example, the visit of a planning officer to a geography lesson extended the work of pupils in Year 5 when they considered the effects of traffic in their town.

81 There is a strong emphasis on developing investigative opportunities in history with pupils using secondary sources of evidence, for example, to gain knowledge of how the Aztecs lived. In geography, very good use is made of the community, for example to enable pupils to observe how land is used and to consider changes as new priorities are identified. The school is seeking ways to develop additional links with local community members to bring relevance in learning and extend pupils' interest and understanding. In history, pupils are encouraged to work as archaeologists when using secondary evidence in their research. The school recognises the importance of building up a good range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' thinking.

82 In both subjects, good links are made to other subjects, particularly mathematics and English. Pupils consider the need for persuasive writing when designing a poster to encourage residents to recycle waste. In mathematics, pupils compare and contrast the Ancient Egyptian number system with their own and this supports pupils' cultural development. Links are made to ICT as pupils use Internet facilities to research artefacts found at Sutton Hoo.

83 In discussion, pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of events leading up to the Second World War. They discuss in depth the hardships of rationing and understand the difficult decisions that parents made to protect their children, for example the evacuation of children to safer locations away from industrial cities which were the targets of enemy bombing raids. In geography, pupils in Year 6 confidently name mountain ranges of the world and contrast life in other countries and locations with Newhall. By Year 6 they know the purpose of different types of maps and on field trips, for example in Year 3, they create their own maps with symbols and keys.

84 Pupils look forward to history and geography lessons, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where the teaching is frequently very good. Pupils in Year 6 are fascinated by the rapid changes in fashion during the twentieth century and prepare their evidence thoroughly in order to answer questions. They extend their learning by researching at home using Internet facilities. Their high level of interest is evident in good quality speaking and listening opportunities where pupils use the language introduced in their lessons well, for example, 'decade' and 'style'. They recognise how styles of clothes and fabrics are used and link designs to periods of time. Good links are made to design and technology. Pupils also use information from a range of sources to support their points of view.

85 The quality of teaching in both subjects is good with very good elements. Teachers plan their work carefully and use language well to promote learning. They share lesson objectives with their pupils and evaluate how well those objectives have been achieved at the end of lessons. This forms part of the assessment strategy that guides planning. Very good quality preparation is underpinned by very good relationships. Teachers respect the pupils and praise their hard work. The standard of presentation of work in most classes is good and reflects the high expectations of the teachers. Teachers' marking is satisfactory and could include more comments on how work might be improved. A weakness in the teaching in some classes is the insufficient precision of work to extend different levels in learning. Although classes are banded learning and teaching is at its best when teachers use their

professional judgement to make provision to meet different strengths and weaknesses in learning within these bands.

86 The leadership and management of both subjects are good. Teachers are well led and supported by the co-ordinators. They work effectively with groups of teachers from each year group to evaluate the effectiveness of subject planning in order to support pupils' development of the knowledge and skills in the subjects. They welcome opportunities to work alongside colleagues to evaluate teaching and learning. Resources for both subjects are very good. For example, new atlases and large world maps support the teaching of geography well. Co-ordinators are aware that there is a minor weakness in the range of resources to develop cross-curricular links using ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

87 In Year 6 standards are similar to the national expectation. This represents good improvement from the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. The teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection although no direct teaching was observed then. Well-targeted training has raised the confidence and competence of all staff. Good use is made of the facilities in the computer suite to focus on basic computing skills. Younger pupils up to Year 5 have a good range of subject skills. The school has been successful in transferring these skills to other areas of the curriculum and the suite and classroom computers are used appropriately to support work in other subjects. All pupils have good timetabled opportunities to use computers for their literacy and numeracy work. The achievements of all pupils, including those with special educational needs are satisfactory and improving with more planned regular experiences.

88 By Year 6 most pupils have developed many skills to an appropriate level. These include retrieving information from CD-ROMs, searching the Internet, word processing and simulations. ICT is used well to support work in mathematics with pupils achieving well in their ability to create spreadsheets using a formula to log data related to the perimeters of quadrilaterals. In science, they develop their prior knowledge of databases successfully by extending this to include predictions on rates of evaporation. They confidently log on to programs, scroll, blank out, highlight and extend data for further interpretation. Pupils in Year 5 use the search icon and investigate characteristics of a list of pupils. They organise the data according to features such as height, weight and colour of eyes. They use different search criteria to successfully develop their basic computing skills well while supporting their work in mathematics. Pupils use their knowledge of different multiplication tables to convert measurements related to characters in a popular children's book. This captures the pupils' attention well and they develop better understanding of decimals from their work. Year 4 pupils have satisfactory skills; they click and type information appropriately and build their own databases from personal information collected as homework. They interpret data from bar charts, amending and adapting it for their purpose. Above average pupils in Year 3 log on successfully but some average and below average pupils need help from the teacher to follow instructions accurately. The topic of how to follow instructions related to fire warning is understood by all pupils and supports well their personal and social development.

89 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good and very good teaching in Year 6 lessons. Following extensive training since the last inspection, teachers are confident in using computers and planning is well based on a national scheme of work which helps teachers develop skills progressively from year to year. Successful lessons are characterised by very clear lesson objectives to pupils, good support for individuals during sessions, high expectations of behaviour and level of work and an excitement in learning. In the minority of less successful lessons teachers did not have back up work prepared in the event of system delay or failure and higher attaining pupils were expected to work at a similar level to other pupils. Good assessment systems review pupils'

progress but these are at an early stage and do not yet inform lesson planning effectively in all classes.

90 In all year groups, pupils have good attitudes to their work; they co-operate in pairs when necessary and handle resources very carefully. Resources have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. Leadership and management of the subject are effective. The very knowledgeable co-ordinator has worked hard along with consortia colleagues to raise and maintain standards and improve teachers' confidence and expertise. There is a good subject development plan which features appropriate areas for further improvement. It is recognised that the school needs to further develop pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT systems to control events in a pre-determined manner and to sense physical data. This is a weaker aspect of pupils' knowledge and experiences.

MUSIC

91 In Year 6 standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age. Since the previous inspection, the school has maintained its standards. The appointment of a new co-ordinator has helped raise the profile of the subject. The quality of singing is a strength and pupils sing in three and four parts with confidence and clarity.

92 The policy and plans are of good quality and the school uses the latest national guidance to teach the subject. The new co-ordinator has some exciting ideas to develop music across the curriculum. There have been recent improvements to the range of opportunities available to pupils to support their learning, for example a small school choir meets weekly and the school offers pupils the chance to learn to play instruments such as the trumpet.

93 The teaching of music is good. A particular strength is the secure subject knowledge and use of good organisational and management skills to ensure pupils treat instruments with respect and follow instructions carefully. Lesson introductions remind pupils of their earlier learning and enable them to practise the skills they have learned and to develop them further. For example, in a good lesson seen in Year 6 the teacher motivated pupils by raising the expectations of singing in up to four parts while maintaining the pace, rhythm and clarity of the tune and lyrics. Pupils enjoy singing and are developing a wide repertoire of songs.

94 Lessons are planned to include a balance of activities that include practical music making using a range of instruments, composition and appraisal of their own work and that of famous musicians. Good links are made with literacy and numeracy as pupils use specific vocabulary and count the number of beats in a bar. Pupils work co-operatively and enjoy composing together. This aspect of teaching and learning is particularly good. They compose sequences of sounds and record their compositions using symbols. They enjoy performing them to their peers. Pupils also copy rhythms and understand simple notation. They evaluate their performances and use terms such as 'pitch' and 'tuned' in their responses to questions. They recognise the difference between crotchets and quavers and in their study of rhythmic patterns, compare the similarities between the notation of an extract of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony with Mike Oldfield's composition, 'Portsmouth'. Pupils recognise how the pace of the music helps to create mood and emotion. Music from different cultures is also played as pupils come into assembly, for example from Africa. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

95 The performance of more able pupils exceeds that of those in other banded classes. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to share their compositions and successes together and this is an area for improvement in the subject. Pupils' behaviour is good. There is a high level of enjoyment and pupils listen attentively and are keen to participate. They make suggestions to enhance both performance and composition. They accept constructive

criticism and strive to improve. Pupils enjoy making music and sharing it in performances, for example at Christmas concerts.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96 Standards are broadly in line to those reported in the last inspection and are similar to those expected in Year 6. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make mostly good progress in the lessons seen across the school. Teaching is mostly good. The school has been awarded the Sport England Achievement Award. This recognises the commitment of the school to promoting physical activity and school sport.

97 By the end of Year 3, pupils work co-operatively in groups to practise and refine dance movements to the rhythm of music. They vary their speed appropriately and keep in good time and when matching sequences to music with an African/Caribbean flavour they explore and share different ideas well to improve their performance. Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate a variety of balance positions in gymnastics and link these effectively together. Above average pupils in Year 5 demonstrate good control when practising skills related to tennis. Working with a partner they throw and catch with reasonable accuracy and most show good hand-eye co-ordination when hitting balls with a range of bats. They use these skills well in focussed competitive situations based on the rules of tennis.

98 Throughout the school, pupils move appropriately in the good warm-up sessions that begin lessons. They respond well to instructions, moving at different speeds and changing directions with good control. They enjoy their physical activity lessons and are keen to improve their skills.

99 Above average pupils have good opportunities to engage in competitive activities in a range of sports against local schools. The very good range of extra-curricular sports clubs impact well upon the standards attained and the social development of the pupils. Most pupils are on course to achieve the national 25 metre standard in swimming by the time they leave the school. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential visits that include outdoor adventurous activities. These activities promote pupils' social development well

100 Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and appropriate subject knowledge. This ensures that pupils work quietly and remain on task during well-paced lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively and this develops social skills well. Teachers' planning emphasises all aspects of the subject appropriately and is firmly based on a good national scheme of work. This gives lessons a clear structure with key skills developed progressively from year to year. There is good emphasis on health and safety in all lessons and in most lessons appropriate reference is made on the benefits of exercise and how it affects the body. Opportunities for pupils to comment critically on the performance of others are an area for development in a minority of lessons.

101 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has ensured that the subject has retained a high profile and that planning and teaching are monitored to ensure continuing development. The school benefits from large playing fields shared with their neighbouring secondary school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

102 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus for religious education in Year 6.

103 There is a good balance between the teaching of Christianity and other religions and world faiths within the subject. Through both religious education lessons and well-chosen

themes in assemblies, pupils make good gains in their learning about stories from the New Testament and by Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the life of Jesus and his teachings. Pupils use their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills well to support learning in the subject.

104 Teachers have secure subject knowledge about other world religions and this enables pupils to gain a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of world faiths. For example, in Year 3, through an appropriate sequencing activity of events, pupils develop their knowledge about the Hindu story of Rama and Sita. In Year 4, pupils learn about the traditions of the Sikh faith as they study the 5 K's and in Year 6, pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam.

105 Good opportunity is given for pupils to study the lives of famous people who lived by their faith. This enables pupils to develop their own views and opinions effectively. It also develops a sense of empathy and an understanding of the needs of others. For example, in Year 6, through an effective role-play activity, in which pupils were asked to put themselves in the position of Mother Theresa, pupils thought about and appreciated what motivated her to help the poor and starving children in the streets of Calcutta.

106 ICT is used well by teachers to support learning in the subject. For example, all year groups are encouraged to access the Internet in order to search for information regarding religious topics studied.

107 The quality of teaching is good and teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in pupils' good attitudes to learning. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods such as role-play in order to develop pupils' learning. They plan their lessons well often using artefacts to capture pupils' interest. They maintain an effective pace of learning. All teachers have good relationships with pupils which enable them to feel comfortable in expressing their ideas and opinions through discussion. They use good questioning to develop pupils' thinking and understanding.

108 The leadership and management of the subject are good. Curriculum planning is securely based on the local agreed syllabus and is reviewed effectively each year. This, together with well-planned in-service training opportunities, ensures good coverage and delivery of the syllabus.