

INSPECTION REPORT

**WALSH CE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Aldershot

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125156

Headteacher: Mrs A Watts

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine  
21552

Dates of inspection: 23-26 June 2003

Inspection number: 248669

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ash Street Ash Aldershot
Postcode:	GU12 6LT
Telephone number:	01252 329525
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Huzar
Date of previous inspection:	3 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Registered inspector	English Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9505	Mr D Haynes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and resources.
19897	Mr A N Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education Educational inclusion	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
23453	Mrs C Cressey	Team inspector	Religious education Art and design Music English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30000	Mr J Tresadern	Team inspector	Science Geography Design and technology Special educational needs	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The number on roll is about average for a school of this type, with 291 boys and girls organised into 11 classes. The pupils come from a wide range of family backgrounds. The immediate locality has significant pockets of social and economic disadvantage as well as areas where the opposite is true. One pupil in eight is eligible for a free school meal; this is average. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, about three per cent, mainly from Indian, Pakistani, and black African families. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language; the proportion is broadly average. Other languages include Yoruba and Swahili. A significant proportion of the pupils, one in ten, come from Traveller family backgrounds; approaching half of these pupils still travel, returning to the school periodically, with the remainder settled permanently. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high, being almost double the national average though the proportion with statements of special educational needs is small compared to other schools. Most pupils with special educational needs have difficulty with literacy, a few with numeracy; other significant needs include dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties, and four pupils have physical difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving at other than the usual times of enrolment or transfer is above average. The school receives pupils from five infant schools. The individual range of attainment among pupils on entry is very wide though the proportion entering with typical or higher attainment for their age is generally below average and in 2002 was well below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an above average, quickly improving school that offers good value for money. The ethos is welcoming and encourages pupils to give of their best. After facing significant difficulties since the previous inspection, the school has returned to an even keel and is forging ahead. Standards amongst the oldest pupils are returning to average levels and the pupils are achieving well. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour throughout the school are extremely positive, reflecting the very effective teaching and excellent leadership of the headteacher and key staff.

#### **What the school does well**

- The achievement of the pupils compared to standards on entry is good in reading, mathematics, and in half of the non-core subjects and is at least satisfactory in the rest.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining the nationally expected levels Standards are above average in information and communication technology, art and design, music, and religious education .
- The attitudes of the pupils to learning and their behaviour throughout the school are very good; personal development and relationships between pupils are excellent.
- The teaching is of high quality and is very effective throughout the school.
- The curriculum provides very good quality learning experiences.
- The links with parents are very effective.
- The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is excellent.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in writing, speaking, and listening are below average because not enough pupils attain the nationally expected level.
- In science, the proportion exceeding expectations is lower than it could be.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The previous inspection was in November 1997. The school has since been through a difficult period and is now improving quickly. Immediately after her appointment in 1999, the present headteacher requested a local authority review because of her concerns about low standards. The local authority review identified the school as one causing them concern because of the poor quality of teaching and falling standards. The headteacher immediately implemented a recovery programme supported by the local authority. Most of the teachers have changed since the previous inspection, half within the past two years. For a while, turnover of teachers was high and the recruitment and retention of teachers difficult; the picture has stabilised in the past year, reflecting very good staff retention strategies. Standards in English and mathematics were mainly well below average during the period since 1997, with signs of improvement showing only in 2002, particularly in mathematics where standards rose to average levels. Current standards are now broadly average in both subjects, though with further improvement necessary in writing and science. There is good improvement on non-core subjects, particularly information and communication technology; art

and design; and music. Governors and senior management addressed all of the issues identified for improvement from the last inspection, with good improvement shown overall.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores<sup>1</sup> in National Curriculum tests.

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

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

Well below average   E

Results for 2003 will soon supersede those in the table. The early indications for 2003 are that there has been a good improvement in all subjects tested. Results in mathematics have improved in the past two years and this shows clearly in the table, although the results in 2002 remained marginally below the ambitious targets for that year. Current standards in mathematics in Year 6 show continued improvement, particularly in the numbers of pupils exceeding the expected level for their age, and standards in this subject are comparable to those in similar schools. Test results in English did not improve enough between 2000 and 2002 although they met the overall targets for the subject; the school recognises the need for improvement. Current standards in English in Year 6 have improved to broadly average overall, reflecting the consistently good teaching; the pupils are on course to exceed their targets in the 2003 tests. However, the broadly average overall standards in English mask the fact that standards in reading are considerably higher than in writing, the latter remaining below the national average. Although current standards in writing show good signs of improvement compared to 2002, much more improvement is required. About a third of the pupils lack confidence when speaking in class and they do not always express themselves as clearly as they should when speaking or in writing. In science, although more pupils attained the nationally expected level in 2002 than in previous years, in itself a good improvement, too few exceeded the expected level and so the results overall were not as good as other schools. This broadly remains the case with current standards in science in Year 6, though with more pupils attaining and exceeding expectations compared to 2002. In the non-core subjects in Year 6, the proportions attaining or exceeding expected levels are above average in information and communication technology, art and design, music, and religious education. Standards are average in design and technology, history, geography, and physical education.

The achievement of the pupils currently in Year 6 is better than in 2002. In reading and mathematics, the achievement of almost all of these pupils, compared to their attainment on entry, is consistent with national expectations; this is better than the typical school. In writing, high attaining and average pupils achieve well but those with low attainment on entry do not always catch up with expectations by the time that they transfer to the high school. In science, low attaining and average pupils make the expected progress but the more able are underachieving. Pupils with special educational needs mostly make good progress and about two-thirds of them are likely to catch up sufficiently to attain national expectations in reading and mathematics by the age of eleven. The very small numbers of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Pupils from Traveller families make good progress; the majority of them attaining nationally expected standards by the time they leave the school. Girls attain marginally higher standards in the core subjects than boys do, though this difference is in line with the national picture.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, they contribute greatly to the positive learning environment. Pupils are keen to come to school. They concentrate well in lessons and work hard.

<sup>1</sup> Each National Curriculum level attracts a different number of points; the higher the level the more points awarded. For example, a pupil attaining Level 3 receives 21 points; Level 4, 27 points; Level 5, 33 points. The points awarded to each pupil in Year 6 are added together and then divided by the number of pupils to obtain an average for the school, enabling comparisons between schools based on the average number of points they each score.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and at play times. The headteacher has successfully reduced the very high level of exclusions found in earlier years. Incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour are very uncommon and neither parents nor pupils report this type of behaviour as a serious problem.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent and pupils relate very well to each other and to all members of staff. The range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility is very good and they accept their responsibilities diligently.
Attendance	Average and improving; it is higher now than at the time of the previous inspection.

The headteacher excluded two pupils during the reporting period because of their misbehaviour. This is much lower than previous years. The pupils successfully returned to school after their exclusion.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very 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.*

The teaching is very good overall and better than found in the typical school nationally. This represents a significant improvement compared to the previous inspection. Over the past three years, the headteacher, supported by the governing body, has acted very effectively to recruit and retain teachers and to form a high quality teaching team. All teachers use common methods in all lessons and this is leading to all pupils learning at a pace appropriate to their age and ability. The headteacher has established a strong leadership team of key teachers to support the development of teaching within the school. The systems established by the leadership team enable teachers to share good practice and to learn from each other. A major strength of the teaching is its general consistency within each subject. Because developments in different subjects began at different points in time, there are variations in effectiveness between subjects but these are minor rather than major. The teaching is very good in English and mathematics, with very effective teaching of phonics and basic number skills. The teaching in music is very good and this is a significant improvement compared to the previous inspection when teaching in this subject was unsatisfactory. Teaching is good or very good in all other subjects except in science and in design and technology, where teaching is satisfactory but needs to place more emphasis on pupils learning through experimentation and investigation.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Lessons are interesting and challenging. Planning is detailed and effective.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good and these pupils are well included in the work of the school. They experience a curriculum similar to the other pupils and many catch up with national expectations by the age of eleven.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good and all of these pupils make progress. The number of pupils involved is very small and most of them speak English fluently.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, the headteacher has established a reflective Christian ethos, very effective provision for moral development, excellent provision for social development, and well developed arrangements for supporting cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements are very good, with the teachers' extensive knowledge of each child underpinning them.

The implementation of the special educational needs policy is effective and pupils with learning difficulties receive good support. Record keeping and communication within the school are very good. Teachers know the pupils very well. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The partnership with parents is very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher and key members of staff is excellent. All of them lead very effectively through the example of their own teaching and their determination to raise standards. The headteacher has created a strong collective vision and united the school community. The management systems are very good, particularly the arrangements for monitoring and developing the teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good and they are appropriately involved in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good and the arrangements for observing lessons and sharing good practice in teaching are particularly effective.
The strategic use of resources	Very good, there is a good partnership between governors and senior management and very effective arrangements for planning the development of the school.

The headteacher has created a school where raising standards is the prime focus of its vision, with all energies appropriately directed towards this goal. The governors and senior management apply the principles of best value very well to purchases and school developments. The number of teachers and their range of qualifications and teaching expertise are appropriate for the number and ages of the pupils and for them to teach the National Curriculum in full. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is sufficient in size and in its provision of specialist areas. Its condition is satisfactory except in the hall, where there is a need for redecoration and repairs to the ceiling. Resources are satisfactory except in the library, where there is a need for a greater quantity and range of books.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• There is an expectation that pupils work hard.</li> <li>• The behaviour of pupils is good and much improved over recent years.</li> <li>• That they can talk to the headteacher and teachers about their child's progress or any problems.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school offers a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents thought that homework was inconsistent.</li> </ul>

Almost two-thirds of parents responded to the questionnaire; this is very high when compared to the typical school. The views of parents are very positive, much more so than at the time of the previous inspection when approaching a third of parents responding to the questionnaire had concerns, for example, about the handling of complaints; provision of information; and the behaviour of pupils. Parents' views have changed radically since then. The only concern that arose before this inspection relates to homework. The inspectors have checked the arrangements for homework and they find that they are good overall. The arrangements are in line with the school and national policies and no significant inconsistency arises between year groups.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The broad view is that the achievement<sup>2</sup> of the pupils is good when compared to their attainment on entry though there are a few variations between subjects. Standards<sup>3</sup> in Year 6 are average in mathematics; broadly average in English, but below average in science, particularly in relation to investigative skills. In both English and mathematics, more than three-quarters of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level for their age and this is consistent with schools nationally. Standards in reading are much higher than in writing and are above average overall. In reading, the proportion attaining the nationally expected level is around 85 per cent whereas in writing it is just over 50 per cent. About a third of the pupils have difficulty expressing their views when speaking and standards in verbal communication are below average overall. In science, about 80 per cent of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected level but this proportion is not as large as in the average school. In all three of these core subjects, about a quarter of the pupils are exceeding the expected level; while this is in line with the average school in English and mathematics, it is not as good as the average school in science.
2. The Year 6 pupils had taken the 2003 national tests before this inspection but the results remain unpublished. The early indications are that about 80 per cent of the pupils attained or exceeded the nationally expected level in English and mathematics, with more than 90 per cent in science and this represents a good improvement in all subjects compared to 2002 and shows clearly a sustained trend of improvement over at least two years. The inspection is able to explore experimental and investigative skills in more depth than is possible in national tests and this is why the tests are higher by 10 percentage points than the inspection evidence. The early indications of the proportions exceeding expectations in 2003, 15 per cent in English, 25 per cent in mathematics, and 36 per cent in science, also show improvement but not as much as in the proportion attaining expectations, particularly in science. The improvements in 2003 compared to 2002 are particularly commendable given that more than a third of pupils in the current Year 6 have special educational needs compared to a quarter of the pupils in Year 6 in 2002.
3. The 2002 test results for Year 6, the latest published, were average in mathematics but below average in English and science. Except in mathematics, the results in 2002 did not compare well with schools with pupils from similar social and economic backgrounds. Between 1997 and 2001, the results in all subjects tested declined markedly relative to the national picture. The school was experiencing enormous difficulties at that time and receiving support from the local authority. The results in 2002 showed good signs of improvement in mathematics and satisfactory signs in English and science, particularly in the proportions attaining the nationally expected level. However, there was not enough improvement in writing in 2002 or in the proportion of pupils exceeding expectations in science. In mathematics, more of the pupils exceeded the nationally expected level than did so in English, particularly writing, or did so in science, underlining relative underachievement in these latter two subjects compared to mathematics. The standard of current work shows sustained improvement in mathematics and in reading compared to 2002, together with continued improvement in writing and science though standards are below average in writing and could still be higher in science. In the 2002 tests in English, mathematics and science, comparisons between girls and boys' results show girls did better, though this variation is in line with the national picture. Three years ago, the girls were not doing as well as the boys and they have recently caught up.
4. The pupils with special educational needs mostly have difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Other pupils with special educational needs all have long-term, general difficulties with learning, behaviour, emotional and social and of a sensory and physical nature. In Year 6, about three-quarters of the pupils with special educational needs are attaining the nationally expected levels in reading, mathematics, and science, having made good progress over the past two years and caught up. The remainder are two or more years behind expectations and have significant difficulties. In writing in Year 6, two-thirds of the pupils with special educational needs are at least a year behind and many are two or more years adrift. Though making progress, it is insufficient for them to catch up with expectations. The substantial majority of pupils from Traveller families, most of them settled in the district, are attaining the nationally expected standards for their age in reading, mathematics, and science

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'achievement' refers to a measure of the progress made by pupils between two points in time; it is sometimes called the 'educational value added'.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'standards' refers to both the quality of pupils' work, as measured by National Curriculum levels, and to quantity, as measured by the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected National Curriculum level for their age.

and their progress is comparable to the other pupils. The few pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, mostly attain the standards expected for their age.

5. The school admits pupils from five different infant schools. The range of individual attainment on entry is very wide. The proportion of pupils admitted with high attainment is small in some years whereas the proportion with low attainment is regularly larger than the average school. The overall standard on entry varies but is generally below average. Attainment on entry in 2002 was well below average.
6. The achievement of the pupils has improved during the present school year because of the highly effective teaching developed over the past two years and the settled staffing situation. Achievement is currently good in mathematics and reading and satisfactory in writing and science. In writing, it is satisfactory in Year 6 over the course of the current year only and a relatively large number of pupils in that year group have not made enough progress in writing over the four years since joining the school in 1999. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were not attending the school during its difficult years and so their achievement in writing is at least satisfactory since admission. High attaining pupils are doing well throughout the school in reading, writing, and mathematics but could do better in science. Average and low attaining pupils do well in reading, mathematics, and science but their achievement in writing is mixed. In writing, many of the low attaining pupils are not making enough progress to catch up with national expectations by the age of eleven. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are mostly fluent in English, make similar academic progress to their peers, and overall achieve well. Where these pupils are learning English, they generally make good progress in becoming fluent in English.
7. Throughout the school, the pupils with special educational needs mostly make good progress in reading and numeracy though long-term progress in writing is not as good as it could be and not enough emphasis is placed in the teaching on improving speaking skills. Nevertheless, the pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall given the difficulties that they face. For example, one pupil with a statement of special educational need who previously had severe difficulties in socialising with other pupils and would previously not take part in lessons, co-operated well with the rest of her group during a lesson in personal, social and health education. She played a full part in her group, listening to others, offering suggestions and being supportive by thoughtfully passing a ruler to another pupil when she could see he needed to underline a title. This shows good improvement since the diagnosis of her difficulties and the success that is possible when appropriate opportunities for speaking are provided.
8. The extent of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the usual times of admission and transfer is above average and the overall impact on standards is a negative one. For example, school records relating to the current Year 6 cohort show that 80 per cent of those who left after the age of seven were attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level for their age at the time they left, including half who were exceeding expectations. The overall standard of this group, amounting to 15 per cent of the cohort, was well above average. A similar proportion of the cohort, 15 per cent, has joined since the age of seven. Of these, only a quarter are attaining or exceeding expectations; the remainder have significant special educational needs. The overall standard of those who joined is well below average.
9. There has been good improvement in standards in several of the non-core subjects. Standards are above average in information and communication technology; art and design; music; and religious education. The pupils' achievement in these subjects is good. Standards in music have improved significantly since the previous inspection, when they were below average. The improvement in music reflects effective staff appointment procedures, strong leadership by example, together with good investment in staff development. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, and religious education have also improved. These, too, have been a focus of school development, benefit from strong subject leadership and investment in staff development. Standards are average in geography; history; design and technology; and physical education. Here, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory and standards have been sustained since the previous inspection.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. The pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development are very good and contribute greatly to the positive learning environment that exists; they are a major strength of the school. The school's aims and values are the basis of the positive learning environment and permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils are keen to come to school and settle quickly into the daily routines without undue intervention from the teacher. During nearly all lessons, pupils concentrate well, work hard, and show enthusiasm.

11. Behaviour is very good. It is necessary for teachers to remind pupils of the rules only very occasionally. Starting in Year 3 and continuing throughout the school the teachers' and non-teaching staffs' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and the pupils live up to these expectations almost all of the time. Behaviour in lessons is very good. The quality of teaching makes the lessons interesting and stimulating and encourages a positive response from pupils. Behaviour around the school, in assemblies and at play is very good. During the reporting period, misbehaviour led to the exclusion of two pupils, each for a fixed period. The discipline procedures stated in the behaviour and discipline policy are appropriate. The headteacher carefully follows the procedures for each case of exclusion and pupils return successfully to school after their exclusion.
12. Respect for the feelings of others is high, and promoted very well through personal, social and health education lessons. Incidents of bullying and oppressive behaviour are very uncommon and neither parents nor pupils report this type of behaviour as a serious problem. The school is a very orderly community, there is no evidence of vandalism, and learning resources and property receive good respect. Pupils demonstrate a natural courtesy to adults. They demonstrate this well in all year groups, for example, as they walk about the school and during lunchtimes. Personal development and relationships are excellent. Pupils relate very well to each other and to all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. There are many examples of collaborative working during lessons. Pupils were at ease expressing their feelings to members of the inspection team; this was particularly evident during informal discussions with pupils when they talked about their likes and dislikes and about the behaviour of children around the school.
13. The school offers a very good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. These include the distribution of registers and assisting with operating CD players and projectors in assemblies. A school council includes pupils from all year groups and makes effective contributions to the life and work of the school; for example, it contributed to the final design of a recent building extension. Levels of inclusion are good, all activities being open to boys and girls of all abilities. During class led assemblies, all pupils have a role to play. The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities; both pupils and parents appreciate this. The pupils enjoy residential visits and they commented with particular enthusiasm about a World War 2 'sleep-over' held in the school for Year 3 pupils. The school supports two local charities and pupils are aware of those less fortunate than they are.
14. During the last reporting period, attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with national averages. Attendance is showing a further improvement in the current year. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The teaching is very good overall. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better; 75 per cent is good or better including 36 per cent that is high quality. This is much better than the national picture, particularly the amount of high quality teaching, and a significant improvement on the previous inspection. The teaching is very good in English and mathematics, with very effective teaching of phonics and basic number skills. Teaching is very good in music, art and design, and in physical education. It is good in information and communication technology, history, geography, and religious education and is satisfactory in science, and in design and technology. The teaching and support provided for pupils with special educational needs is generally good. This, too, is the case for the few pupils with English as an additional language. In music, the teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection; improvement here is excellent. Improvement is good in information and communication technology; art and design; and in physical education. In all of the other subjects, the school has sustained its quality of teaching since the last inspection.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In most lessons, the matching of tasks is appropriate to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well when withdrawn from lessons for individual and small group work. For example in a withdrawal session, a Year 6 pupil received good support with his reading from the teaching assistant. When the pupil struggled, the assistant used a variety of successful strategies to help him. These included encouraging him to sound out the letters, search for clues in illustrations and through asking intelligent questions about events and features in the context of the story. In a Year 4 physical education lesson a pupil with physical difficulties achieved well in performing a star jump following good support from the teaching assistant and was further encouraged following selection by the teacher to demonstrate his ability to the class.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils from minority ethnic and Traveller family backgrounds, including those few with English as an additional language, is very good overall. The range of teaching and learning styles adopted

effectively meets the needs of these different groups. A good balance of whole class teaching and individual group work provide good opportunities for pupils from minority ethnic and Traveller background to develop their knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils who learn at a slower rate or who have had extended or frequent absences. The use of talk-partners in most lessons is effective in developing confidence in exploring new learning. The widespread use of effective prompts and small stepping-stones in knowledge enable pupils to succeed and to gain in confidence. Marking is very effective in helping pupils improve their work and is clearly linked to pupils' own targets and the key learning objectives. In the very best lessons, each pupil has to make a response during the lesson; questions are challenging and pupils required to explain their answers in well structured and grammatically correct extended sentences.

18. A major strength of the teaching is its consistency, though with a small number of reservations in relation to science and technology based subjects. The high quality teaching occurs in every year group and its distribution is even throughout the school. Senior management has established very clear, and very high, expectations of teaching and is very effectively supporting the development of teachers. The headteacher has created a climate within the school where the strategies and methods of teaching are regularly analysed and discussed. The teachers share good practice rapidly through their weekly planning meetings, feedback after observations by colleagues, and staff meetings, and readily improve those practices that are less effective. The expectation is that those in management positions lead by example and provide models of good teaching for others to follow. This management strategy is very effective. All teachers plan together in year group teams and implement common lesson plans. All lessons contain clear objectives, shared with pupils; a period of explanation; demonstrations and modelling of what they expect the pupils to do; practical activities where pupils engage in tasks they have seen modelled; concluding with a period of between five and 10 minutes during which all pupils work together to consolidate learning. This common structure is particularly effective in lessons in literacy, numeracy, humanities and arts based subjects.
19. The pace and quality of learning is broadly consistent throughout the school. There are no significant variations in teaching or learning between year groups. The challenge for high attaining pupils is considerable in the substantial majority of lessons and their learning in mathematics, reading and writing is particularly good. For example, at the beginning of Year 6, the writing of one boy was generally well organised and interesting to read but not reflecting the specific, intended style, such as fable or adventure story, was mixing tenses and making other grammatical errors, and used printed handwriting. His overall standard was broadly in line with the expectation for his age. About nine months later, he is writing effectively in a wide range of styles, using complex, well-constructed sentences and commas to separate clauses, paragraphs, and legible joined handwriting. His overall standard exceeds the expectation for his age. Learning is also good in mathematics, reading, and science for pupils with low attainment. However, in writing, pupils with low attainment are not learning quickly enough to catch up with national expectations by the age of eleven.
20. Excellent lessons occur in English, physical education and music. Teaching of this quality is inspirational and leads to pupils making rapid progress within the lesson. For example, in an excellent music lesson in Year 4, the teacher's very high expectations and extensive subject knowledge led to increasingly challenging work as the lesson progressed. Relationships with pupils were excellent and they gave of their best. During the lesson, the pupils rapidly extended their knowledge of how to combine sounds expressively, improvise repeated patterns, and compose using layers of sound. The standard of their work was considerably ahead of that expected nationally for their age. In an excellent dance lesson in Year 6, the teacher created an enthralling atmosphere that fired the pupils' imaginations and helped them explore Indian dance, music, and themes through the traditional story of Hanuman, the monkey-god. The depth and detail of the planning and the teaching were considerable. The pupils thoroughly explored and extended the skills expected within the National Curriculum programme of study. They learnt that dance, in this context, was a form of worship and meditation and the whole experience contributed excellently to spiritual and cultural awareness. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were using purposefully and imaginatively a wide range of movements to create and express different moods and feelings. All of the pupils were working within the nationally expected level for their age with about a quarter attaining highly; this is a higher overall standard than found in the average school.
21. Very good lessons occur in all subjects and year groups. Such teaching is characterised by the teachers' in-depth subject knowledge and expertise; rigorous planning; effective teaching methods and high expectations. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6 using line graphs to explore the relationship between distance, time, and speed, questioning and explanations were noticeably effective, reflecting the teacher's wide-ranging subject knowledge. Questions increased in difficulty as the lesson developed, and were directed towards specific pupils: very challenging questions at more able pupils and easier questions at less able pupils. This retained the interest and involvement of all pupils and extended them intellectually to meet the expectations of the lesson. Clear explanations by the teacher, together with careful modelling and demonstration, helped

communicate complex ideas. The use of correct terminology received high priority in the teaching and gradually increased the efficiency of the communication of ideas as pupils grasped their meaning and used them in their thinking and talking. The challenge of different tasks well matched the learning needs of pupils with different levels of attainment. The result was sustained effort from pupils and successful learning by the end of the lesson.

22. Detailed curriculum guidance together with the arrangements for planning in year-group teams is helping all teachers to increase their subject knowledge so that it is at least satisfactory in all subjects and for all teachers. For most teachers and subjects, subject knowledge is more extensive than found in the average school. This is why so many lessons are of good or better quality. Leadership within the school focuses primarily on teaching ability, with the core task of leaders being the improvement of teaching throughout the school. This is a major reason why teaching is consistent and of such a high overall quality throughout the school.
23. Satisfactory teaching enables the bulk of the pupils in a lesson to have worthwhile learning experiences but, for a few pupils, the experiences are less valuable. Satisfactory teaching occurs mainly in science, in information and communication technology, and in design and technology with very small amounts arising in English, mathematics, geography, and religious education. More teaching that is satisfactory happens in the science and technology based subjects because the predominant teaching method places too much emphasis on demonstrating the experiments and investigations before the pupils try for themselves. This reduces the potential for discovery, learning through trial and error, pupils basing conclusions on their own findings, and following their own investigation trails, all essential elements of the programmes of study for these subjects. The pupils still acquire knowledge and learn facts, which are the reasons why these lessons are satisfactory, but they could learn more in the same amount of time, particularly in respect of investigative skills, with only minor modifications to the lesson structure and teaching methods used. In satisfactory lessons in the other subjects, among many positive characteristics, a negative one arises when explanations and demonstrations leave pupils insufficiently active as learners for too long. This is particularly important where pupils' language skills are limited and they need more opportunities for talking and expressing their thoughts.
24. Overall, the teachers use their knowledge of the pupils well when planning lessons and when teaching. Tasks and activities are usually appropriate for the abilities of pupils and well matched to their learning needs. The teachers check pupils' understanding regularly throughout lessons and constantly provide good levels of help, support, and guidance. Marking is mostly positive and constructive, using praise and short term targets effectively for improvement. The use of curricular targets became widespread at the school about a year ago but development is only partially in place in some of the non-core subjects. Where it is implemented, it is leading to pupils having a good understanding of how well they are doing and how they can improve. In English in Year 6, for example, the pupils explained how their target to improve their knowledge of main and subordinate clauses linked to their target for a National Curriculum level in the national tests. Homework is set consistently in line with the school policy and appropriately extends the learning and teaching in class.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

25. The curriculum is very good and it has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school's Christian values and principles are very apparent throughout the school and have a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning. Overall, the curriculum very effectively meets the needs of its pupils, helping them to flourish through the provision of a range of high quality learning opportunities and preparing them very well for the next stage of their education. The stimulating and challenging curriculum places considerable emphasis on nurturing very high quality relationships and personal and social skills and this has a strong impact on pupils' achievement and their attitudes to learning. There are only a few minor exceptions to this very positive picture and none where provision is unsatisfactory. These exceptions arise in science, in design and technology, and in geography.
26. In all subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education, the teachers make the curriculum motivating and generally consistent. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects ensuring the effective development of skills, knowledge, and understanding across the school. A minor exception in geography arises because the line of enquiry followed by pupils in Years 5 and 6 sometimes lacks adequate focus, resulting in superficial rather than in-depth learning in some studies. Lesson plans are very detailed providing a very good framework for teaching and learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has considerable rigour and as a result, standards are rising in both subjects. The curriculum for science is less effective and standards are not as high as they could be.

27. Links with other subjects are a particular strength of the curriculum and add interest and enrichment to pupils' learning. For example, pupils use their literacy skills well as they create thoughtful prayers in religious education or write detailed evaluations of their compositions in music. A deeper understanding of the link between history and art and an understanding of how art influences the lives of ordinary people develops, for example, as pupils compare Roman pottery designs with those of Clarice Cliff.
28. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this commitment shows in the way all pupils are fully included in the teaching and learning. The special needs of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are recognised and all pupils' contributions are valued. Pupils with English as an additional language, those from minority ethnic groups, and from Traveller families, make similar progress to their peers and attain standards that are at least in line with those expected for their ages and they often achieve very high standards well above those expected nationally. Accelerated learning programmes, additional literacy and booster classes provide support for pupils who learn at a slower rate or have missed substantial parts of their schooling. This has a positive effect on the self-esteem of pupils and on the progress they all make. Those pupils who are particularly gifted or more able have very good opportunities to develop their creative, imaginative, and academic skills enabling them to work well at the higher levels. The school is very effective in developing a harmonious atmosphere in which the pupils' different backgrounds, home languages, cultures, and faiths are respected and valued.
29. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are well included in the work of the school and the curriculum they experience is broadly the same as that of other pupils. The implementation of the policy for special educational needs is effective in all its aspects, resulting in good support that enables those pupils with special educational needs to participate in all subjects. There is a particular emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and subjects where pupils have specific needs such as with sensory and physical difficulties. The use of literacy and numeracy support programmes is appropriate. In class, the matching of work to the needs of pupils on different stages of the Code of Practice is generally effective. Some pupils are withdrawn from some lessons for non-related focused learning. Such withdrawals rotate regularly to avoid a loss of learning in the same subjects each week.
30. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health and sex education are very good and underpinned by the school's ethos and values. Time is available within lessons to develop these areas in ways that are appropriate for the ages and needs of the pupils. The development of citizenship and the responsibilities of the individual and the group to their local, national, and international community arise through a wide range of activities and experiences, such as taking part in festivals and environmental initiatives and discussing past and present moral dilemmas in history and religious education. The school reward system recognises pupils' efforts and senior management presents certificates to pupils who show success in this aspect of their learning.
31. A very good range of clubs and sporting activities enriches the statutory curriculum and enhances personal and social skills. Clubs include netball, rugby, football, volleyball, cookery, chess, French, gardening, choir, drama, and anger management. Attendance at the clubs is high and parents and staff, including non-teaching and support staff, give very generously of their time to extend pupils' interests and skills.
32. The use of local visitors, and exceptionally well-planned visits to historical and geographical sites of interest, extends pupils' knowledge and understanding well. Links with the local church, emergency services, and health workers are effective in developing pupils' understanding of citizenship and commerce. A number of residential visits provide a very good vehicle to develop pupils' social skills. As well as pupils in Years 5 and 6 attending a traditional residential visit, younger pupils have a 'World War 2 evacuee sleep over', complete with 'Black Out wardens' and war time games. The school cook generously provides breakfast but only on receipt of the evacuee's ration books!
33. The school's strong links with the local infant and secondary schools are very effective in improving teacher expertise and enhancing the learning for pupils. Before pupils transfer to the high school, information on pupils' progress is exchanged and pupils are able to enjoy time at their new school to familiarise themselves with routines and staff to ensure a happy and secure transfer. The school has benefited from visits to Beacon schools and it is now itself becoming an example of good practice in a number of aspects.
34. The school's provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. There is very good provision for their spiritual development and this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. A clear mission statement seeks to create an environment that reflects the Christian ethos of the school. There are close links with a local church and clergy from different denominations regularly lead acts of collective worship

in school. During these acts of worship, the pupils have the opportunity to reflect on different themes. In one assembly observed during the inspection, the pupils thought about how time moves on and of people who help them through life's journey, particularly during times of change, such as moving on to secondary school. In another class assembly on a Roman theme, the pupils reflected on the gifts of past civilisations and on the need to use every precious minute of their lives. Religious education, music, art and dance all make a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. The teachers try to instil a sense of awe and wonder into learning. This was very apparent in a Year 5 history lesson on the ancient Egyptians, when the teacher played Arabic music and lit an incense burner to create the right mood. Pupils in Year 6 participate in a leavers' service at Guildford Cathedral.

35. Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. There are clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies. The teachers ensure that the pupils are well aware of what is right and what is wrong. The 'golden rules' are clearly displayed in classrooms. The teachers reward positive effort and behaviour, and achievements in and out of school, through a system of stickers and certificates. During a regular lunchtime 'cool club', the pupils have the opportunity to learn how to control their anger. The individual education plans of some pupils with special educational needs include clear targets for improving behaviour.
36. There is excellent provision for the pupils' social development. Almost all the parents think that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. The pupils help with everyday classroom tasks and older pupils have additional responsibilities as monitors around the school, for example in the library, in cloakrooms and answering the school telephone at lunchtimes. Some pupils have the opportunity to participate in decision making as elected members of the school council. There are opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills through participating in extra-curricular clubs, sports teams, class assemblies, Christmas productions, visits, and residential experiences. The pupils show their care for those people less fortunate than they are by supporting the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice and Emmaus House. There is road safety training and pupils in Year 6 visit the 'Keep Yourself Safe' event at Guildford Fire Station. In many lessons, there are opportunities for the pupils to learn how to work collaboratively.
37. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. In history, the pupils learn about the legacy of the past and they visit a number of castles and museums. They engage in role-play during special history days. In art and design the pupils learn about the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh, Gauguin, Matisse and Clarence Cliff. They also produce some 'canal art', of special significance in the culture of the Travellers' community. The pupils participate in the Ash music festival. The school ensures that the pupils prepare for life in a country and in a world of diverse faiths and cultures. In religious education, the pupils learn about the world's main religions and they visit a temple, mosque, and synagogue. In geography, they learn about aspects of life in India and the Caribbean. The pupils learn the elements of Indian dancing, in preparation for a school 'India Day'. During the school's latest 'multicultural week', the pupils participated in a steel band workshop and were visited by an Australian aborigine. They reflected African and aboriginal cultures through writing, music, art, and craft. The school has established some worthwhile links with an evangelical school in Lebanon.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The school cares very well for its pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and her excellent knowledge of the pupils and their backgrounds together with clear open communication between the teaching and non-teaching staff provides a very good level of protection. Record keeping and communication within the school are very good. The school maintains good contact with outside specialists and uses their services effectively when required. First aid provision is good and the children know what to do should the need arise. The arrangements for health and safety are adequate. A high level of cleanliness is expected and any aspect of maintenance attended to promptly. This helps create a safe learning environment and instils high values in the pupils, reflected in their respect for property and learning resources.
39. The school clearly displays and openly refers to the golden rules and pupils know the expectations of them. Excellent procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and there were no incidents of harassment or bullying during the inspection. The social and personal development of pupils is excellent. Pupils are encouraged to air any of their concerns knowing that members of staff will listen. The members of staff provide very good role models. This creates an atmosphere of mutual respect. The school provides a satisfactory level of supervision when the children are at play and a limited range of equipment including skipping ropes and hoops is available to occupy them. The caretaker, in his wider role, plays football with pupils for part of the lunchtime; this helps considerably to maintain a good atmosphere at midday free from oppressive behaviour. .

The supervisors at lunchtime interact very well with pupils and the standard of supervision provided maintains a consistent approach to behaviour management.

40. The maintenance of registers is accurate. The system used is a manual one. Attendance and punctuality is satisfactory and parents notify the school of any absence. The school contacts parents on the first day of absence if they fail to notify the school of the absence; this is good practice. Procedures for monitoring absence and improving attendance are good and are having a positive impact on pupils' attendance in the current school year.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Effective use is made of the assessment information to track the progress of individual pupils in English and mathematics. Senior management is introducing similar procedures for science and non-core subjects but these are not yet fully developed. The teachers rigorously use the information to identify pupils whose progress is slow or attainment below expectations and to inform curriculum planning and the organisation of teaching. For example, the introduction of team teaching for art and design followed the analysis of data on pupils' attainment. This was one of the first developments made by the school. Assessment information is used very effectively when planning work for pupils and in almost all lessons, there is a very good match between pupils' abilities and the level of challenge in the work they have to complete. The school has developed satisfactory target setting arrangements and has programmed the use of assessment data to identify the progress made by different groups of pupils such as by gender, absentees, and minority ethnic groups. External tests form part of the assessment of all pupils. The marking of pupils' work is very effective. Teachers maintain detailed mark books and the headteacher monitors them every half term. The teachers clearly understand the procedures for marking and implement them effectively. Currently, however, National Curriculum levels are not used to record attainment in all subjects and this makes the measurement of progress in some subjects difficult. Pupils undertake self-evaluation, particularly in Year 6, to identify areas in which they feel insecure; this is good practice. The school is engaged in a cross-phase study project with its feeder infant school to monitor the performance of pupils at the end of the infant years against their levels of attainment when they start their junior school placement to identify areas of underachievement; this, too, is good practice.
42. The school's individual tracking procedure shows that pupils from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds are making good progress when compared to their prior attainment. Assessment, however, is cumbersome and not tightly related to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Teachers use the assessments to devise individual learning programmes for pupils; this is good practice. Members of staff do not monitor the progress of settled Travellers and other ethnic groups in order to highlight any differences in attainment between the different groups to refine support further.
43. Care for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of good quality with targets that are short term, specific and measurable. Teaching assistants keep written daily notes of pupils' achievements and pass these to the teacher who records pupils' progress and adjusts planning as necessary. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans, reviewed each term or more frequently if necessary. Teachers are responsible for the review of plans for pupils at the early stages of assessment for special educational needs, in consultation with teaching assistants and the special educational needs coordinator if required. For pupils with statements of special educational need and those at the later stages of assessment, reviews involve the coordinator, teacher, teaching assistants, special agency personnel as required, and parents; this is good practice. The school monitors the progress of pupils closely and maintains detailed records. Each year a significant number of pupils make sufficient progress to leave the special educational needs list. There are good relationships with support and medical agencies. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils with social and emotional difficulties and make special provision for these pupils with group sessions.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

44. The overall effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. Parents' views as expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting were very positive. Parents particularly appreciated that behaviour is good and that there is an expectation of hard work. Parents also thought the school is well led and managed and that there is a good range of activities outside lessons. A small number of parents expressed concern about the inconsistency of homework.
45. Parents are satisfied with the opportunities to meet teacher and discuss the progress of their children. Each term the teachers hold a 'sharing day' when parents can spend time with their child in the school. The quality of

written information provided for parents is good. A school newsletter informs parents of general events and additional letters detail work for each class. Letters detailing curriculum content contain too much detail and technical language making them difficult to read and understand. The annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are good; they are comprehensive and contain details of progress in English, mathematics, and science. Progress in other curriculum subjects is also separately detailed and reports contain a section on personal development and behaviour but there is no section for pupils to make their own comment on progress. Reports identify targets for improvement and this is good practice. The governors' annual report meets requirements and the school prospectus is a factual document, comprising all the necessary information.

46. The contribution of parents to the learning of their children at school and at home is good and the impact of parents on the life of the school is very good. A home / school agreement and Internet agreement is in place. Most parents confirm work undertaken at home and the inspection found that the amount of homework is appropriate to the age of the pupil and teachers manage the arrangements well. The parent, teacher, and friends' association organises social events for both parents and children and organises events that raise valuable funds for the school. Parents feel valued and are welcome to assist in school during the teaching day but only a few do so although some help with after school clubs and on school trips. Attendance at assemblies to which parents are invited is good with over 30 parents attending a Year 4 class assembly during the inspection. Parents of pupils in Year 6 have attended sessions provided by teachers to explain the national test procedures and to tell them how they can help their children at home.
47. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Parents of pupils with statements together with those at earlier assessment stages receive invitations to reviews of the progress of their children. Teachers and the coordinator are always available for discussion and they give good guidance on ways of helping the pupils at home. For example, guidance for one parent helped her support her child with a laptop computer both at school and at home for extra learning activities as well as homework. Teachers invite parents to formal evening meetings every term for reports on the pupils.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. The leadership of the headteacher and key members of staff is excellent. The management of the school, together with the involvement of the governors in helping shape the vision and direction of the school is very good overall. The arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance, particularly the effectiveness of the curriculum, and for improving the teaching are very well developed. The governors' involvement in the school is very good. They know its strengths and weaknesses very well and are active in shaping its direction.
49. The headteacher is providing a very clear vision and educational direction to the work of the school. She has created a strong sense of purpose and high expectations, fully shared by teachers and governors alike. Within the past three years, she has successfully shaped a high quality teaching team. The impact of the headteacher's leadership shows in the rising standards and good achievement of the pupils; their very good attitudes and behaviour; the excellent relationships; very good teaching; well developed curriculum; the high level of pupil care; and very effective links with parents. The deputy headteacher and all members of staff, with or without management responsibility, strongly support the headteacher. All of those with management responsibility lead very effectively through the excellent example of their own teaching and willingness to take responsibility and make the shared vision work.
50. Raising standards is the prime focus of the vision for the school with all energies appropriately directed towards this goal. To raise standards, the priorities in 2000 were to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and the curriculum and to provide a very positive climate for learning. The arrangements to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching are rigorous and very effective. Regular observation of all of the teachers leads to the sharing of good practice and to targets for improvement. The documentation of expectations for teaching and learning is extensive, with opportunities for new teachers and others to see the expectations modelled and demonstrated within the school or through visits to other establishments with good practice. Very detailed written guidelines and plans support the teaching, promoting efficient progression of knowledge and skills from term to term and year to year. The checking of pupils' work and teachers' planning add to the knowledge management has of teaching effectiveness and informs decisions about the development of the school. The first subjects tackled in 2000 were art and design, and music, with the above average standards currently found in both subjects together with the very good improvement in music testifying to success.

51. The headteacher very effectively manages the provision for pupils' from Traveller families. She is a member of a central government project to develop relationships with different childcare agencies to improve the level of support available to vulnerable pupils and increase the educational inclusiveness of the school. The school is very effective in highlighting significant causes of low attainment of pupils from Traveller backgrounds, such as high rate of absenteeism, poor writing skills, and lack of success in completing homework, and is effectively taking action to raise standards for these pupils. A range of strategies have been put in place to improve the performance of pupils from settled Traveller families, including closer working with the educational welfare officer, a whole school programme to improve writing skills, and developing a range of teaching and learning styles
52. The coordinator of the provision for special educational needs provides good leadership and management. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has produced a good policy with targets for the year ahead based upon a clear awareness of areas for improvement. The coordinator undertakes the monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school makes a good contribution from its own funds to support the pupils with special educational needs. Resources are good including information and technology programs with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy. Most teaching assistants hold qualifications in working with pupils with special educational needs and together with teachers take part in training through a syndicate of nine schools including one secondary school.
53. The past three years have seen a very high turnover of teachers. The school is in a region experiencing recruitment difficulties. All members of staff now have permanent contracts. The strategies for retaining teachers are effective. The appointment of one teacher at the start of the school year meant that the school now has a full complement of teachers. No teacher has left during the current year. Morale is high and teachers say that they appreciate the support provided by senior management and the strong feeling of success. This is a major factor in their staying at the school. The high turnover of teachers and difficulties with recruitment affected the leadership and management of subjects between 1999 and 2002. For example, an appointment of a coordinator in mathematics in 2000 enabled the leadership to develop the subject effectively whereas leadership in English remained unsettled until 2002, with the impact showing in the variation in standards between the two subjects.
54. Strategic planning is very good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, coordinators, and governors have formed an effective partnership in planning and reviewing the school's work. The school improvement plan is a very useful tool for guiding the school's direction. The overall priorities for development, and how priority, implementation, funding, monitoring, and evaluation are determined, are very clear and appropriate.
55. The control of finances is very efficient. Office management is very competent, enabling the school to plan and monitor its finances very effectively. A recent financial audit was favourable, with appropriate action taken in response to its few recommendations. The headteacher and governors apply the principles of best value well. For example, they are well aware of how the school's performance compares with others and consult parents on policies such as race and behaviour. They carefully review the options open to them for improving the school's accommodation. The school has a strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and there have been allocations of monies, time, and staff to special projects to improve the performance of particular groups of pupils, such as those learning English as an additional language, pupils from Traveller backgrounds, and those with special educational needs. This, together with high quality teaching assistants, is very effective in helping these groups of pupils make better progress.
56. The accommodation is satisfactory in size and there is sufficient teaching space for the number of pupils. Governors and senior management have made good efforts in the last two years to improve the decorative order and maintenance of the school but the hall remains in need of refurbishment. Resources are broadly satisfactory in all subjects. The computer suite only has sufficient computers for half-classes to work at any one time and this is reducing efficiency. The library has good quality books but the quantity and range are insufficient to meet all pupil needs.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. The school has successfully raised standards to at least average levels in the core subjects of reading and mathematics, and in all of the non-core subjects. To improve the school further, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:

- raise standards in writing to at least the national average (discussed in paragraphs 1-9 and 58-66);\*
- improve the range, quality, frequency and effectiveness of opportunities in lessons for pupils to speak and to extend their oral communication skills, particularly the low attaining and reticent pupils (discussed in paragraphs 58, 63, and 76);
- increase the proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level in science to at least the proportion found in the average school (discussed in paragraphs 1-9 and 74-77).\*

NB Items marked with an asterix (\*) are already included in the school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
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	5	20	27	17	0	0	0
Percentage	7	29	39	25	0	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 percentage 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)	291
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	112

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	47	34	81

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	34	39
	Girls	28	26	31
	Total	62	60	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (58)	74 (45)	86 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	34	35
	Girls	27	28	29
	Total	61	62	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (66)	77 (52)	79 (72)
	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	277	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	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	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	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: Y2-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	26

### **Education support staff: Y2-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

## **Financial information**

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	784,925
Total expenditure	784,925
Expenditure per pupil (301 pupils on roll)	2,608
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,486
Balance carried forward to next year	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

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	291
Number of questionnaires returned	187

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	49	6	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	5	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	61	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	52	17	3	1
The teaching is good.	48	45	3	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	48	9	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	5	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	48	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	44	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	45	3	1	1

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised no other issues.

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

### **ENGLISH**

58. Standards are broadly average overall in Year 6 and this is a significant improvement on the general level of attainment in the subject as shown in test results since the previous inspection. The achievement of the Year 6 pupils is good in reading compared to their attainment on entry. Achievement is satisfactory in writing during the current year but is not good enough over the four years since entry in 1999; senior management acknowledges this and is bringing about improvement. Achievement in the subject overall is better than in 2002. However, standards in reading are significantly higher than in writing. In reading, around 85 per cent of the pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected level for their age, with about a third exceeding expectations; this is better than the average school. Almost all of the pupils in reading are making or exceeding the progress expected of them; this, too, is better than the average school. In writing, only just over half the pupils are attaining or exceeding expectations, including one in seven with higher than expected attainment; this is not as good as the average school. At least a quarter of those with low attainment in writing joined the school after the usual age of entry. Achievement in writing is mixed. The more able pupils generally do well but almost half of those having nationally expected levels of attainment in writing when aged seven together with most of those with low attainment at that age have not made as much progress over the four junior years as they should. Their progress over the current year is good, reflecting the very good quality teaching they receive, but insufficient for them to catch up ground lost in earlier years. Standards in speaking and listening are below average. About a third of the pupils are reticent speakers and struggle to express their thoughts in lessons.
59. Progress over the course of the present school year is good for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in reading. In Year 6, about three-quarters of those with special educational needs are attaining the nationally expected level in reading including a small number who have made so much progress that they are exceeding national expectations. The quarter remaining are two or more years behind their peers, including a small number who are about four years behind, only one of whom has a statement of special educational needs. These pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to the difficulties they face. In writing in Year 6, a third of the pupils with special educational needs are attaining the nationally expected level for their age; the remainder are one or more years behind, including a significant number of pupils who are behind by two or more years. Most of these pupils have difficulty sustaining their writing at length and are often inaccurate in their grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those from Traveller families mostly attain the nationally expected level for their age though more pupils from Traveller families have difficulty with writing. The few pupils with English as an additional language are generally very fluent in English and mostly make good progress. Three year ago, girls underachieved more than the boys did; this picture has changed each year since then and currently the girls marginally outperform the boys; this is consistent with the national picture.
60. In reading, current standards in Year 3 are below average, reflecting low standards on entry. Around 80 per cent of the pupils in Year 3 are reading at the expected level for their age and they have increased their attainment by at least the nationally expected amount since admission to the school. The higher attaining pupils in Year 3, about a quarter of the year group, are generally independent in their reading. They are fluent and accurate, having the phonic skills to predict the pronunciation and meaning of most unfamiliar words. The typical pupil in Year 3 is methodical when reading, tackles the pronunciation of shorter unfamiliar words successfully but sometimes struggles with words containing more than two syllables, and is beginning to predict meanings from clues in the text. These skills are slightly late in developing compared to the average school. Pupils' knowledge and skills in reading increase by at least the nationally expected amounts in Years 4 and 5. Eighty per cent or more of the pupils in these year groups attain or exceed the expected level for their age. In Year 6, more pupils are attaining or exceeding the nationally expected levels for their age than in Year 3, confirming the good achievement. The higher attaining pupils can read confidently and fluently books of adult difficulty and have well developed preferences for author and types of story. The average attaining pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading. They read fluently, with good expression and understanding of the main themes and characters' motives. They tackle unfamiliar words efficiently and accurately. Low attaining pupils in Year 6 read accurately though slowly and, at times, with limited comprehension; they are, nevertheless, well motivated.
61. In writing, current standards in Year 3 are well below average. Just over three-quarters of these pupils are attaining the expected level for their age and none exceeds expectations; these proportions are considerably smaller than the average for this year group nationally. The typical pupil in Year 3 organises writing logically and sustains length and ideas satisfactorily. Work since the beginning of the school year shows considerable improvement in vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and handwriting. Low attaining pupils in Year 3 are

significantly behind national expectations; they write short sentences but most cannot easily sustain ideas or write at length and their spelling is weak. Standards increase by the expected amounts in Years 4 and 5. In Year 6, the average attaining pupils have made good progress since the start of the school year. Their writing appropriately reflects the characteristics expected of different types and styles, such as persuasive letters, poems, drama scripts, argument, fable, and narrative. Satisfactory writing opportunities occur in other subjects. Higher attaining pupils have made particularly good progress during the current year. They write using complex, well-constructed sentences, a wide vocabulary, and accurate punctuation including commas to separate clauses; they use paragraphing effectively. The work of the typical pupil shows many of these same features, though sentences are less complex with occasional lapses in accuracy in spelling and punctuation. The progress of low attaining pupils in Year 6 is mixed and, for many, is not quick enough to catch up with expectations. Many of the low attaining pupils cannot always sustain their writing at length and they often have considerable difficulty with spelling, punctuation, and handwriting.

62. There is a considerable discrepancy between the pupils' Year 2 test results in writing and the standard of work produced in Year 3 during the autumn term, particularly among the low attaining pupils, and standards are not as good in Year 3 as the test results at the end of Year 2 suggest. Senior management, subject management and the local authority are working closely with the infant schools to explore the problem and implement strategies to remedy it. They have identified the long gap between the time pupils are assessed in Year 2, about May time, and the pupils starting in the junior school in September, and particularly the long summer holiday, as a time when the seven-year-old pupils do little writing. They believe this long gap leads to more than a third of the pupils losing many of their writing skills. A project involving both the infant and the junior schools starts this year and aims to remedy the loss of skills.
63. Standards in speaking and listening vary widely and the proportion of pupils with typical or better attainment for their age is smaller than in the average school. In Year 6, those with typical attainment can talk and listen confidently in a range of situations including large groups, in front of the class, and with adults. High attaining pupils vary their expression and vocabulary to engage the interest of the listener and, at times, use Standard English. In all year groups, relatively large proportions of pupils are reticent speakers who cannot always express themselves when asked direct questions and do not always listen carefully enough to understand new ideas at the first time of telling. The current teaching methods are helping to improve listening skills and, through careful modelling, are extending pupils' understanding of the ideas taught to them. However, these methods do not always involve the pupils talking enough and this is preventing some of the reticent speakers from gaining confidence and increasing their skills quickly enough.
64. The teaching is very good overall. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection and since the local authority audit in 1999. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better; most of it is good or better including a third that is very good or excellent. A major strength of the teaching is its consistency, reflecting rigorous systems for planning, monitoring, and improving its quality. The teachers plan together in year group teams; this arrangement results in a common core of learning for all pupils in each year group. All of the planning is effective and the management of lessons is very good.
65. The excellent and very good teaching is inspirational in quality. Pupils are highly motivated and put maximum effort into their work. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, the teacher's extensive subject knowledge and expertise, together with her very high expectations of the pupils, resulted in rapid and very worthwhile learning experiences. In response to high quality questioning and explanations, the pupils explored the thoughts and feelings of the traveller in Walter de la Mare's poem 'The Listeners', searching for evidence in the text. The teacher captured the pupils' attention through her clever use of resources, including a taped recording of a horse walking on cobbles, a darkened room, candles, and her atmospheric reading of the poem. The pupils were able to share their thoughts before answering using talk partners, and composed short answers in writing using individual white boards, methods that ensured the continuous involvement of each pupil. Extended writing formed part of the excellent lesson in Year 6 and, in shared work beforehand, the pupils discussed how authors vary sentence length deliberately to create specific effects. This was very challenging. For example, the teacher asked pupils to compose a sentence that had a "subordinate clause at the beginning," which all of them were able to do. They then entered into a discussion that showed they had full understanding of subordinate and main clauses, together with knowledge of adjectives, adverbs and connectives, and how these can be combined to form very complex sentences. Much of the knowledge of language that the pupils exhibited was considerably in advance of the expectations for their age.
66. Subject management is very good following the appointment of a curriculum manager at the start of the present school year. Curricular planning, together with the teaching and learning policy, provides teachers with very clear guidance on what to teach and on the methods to use. Subject monitoring aims to develop the teachers'

skills and to improve the effectiveness of their work. The coordinator works closely and regularly with particular teachers, providing demonstration lessons, observing their teaching, and giving them the opportunity to discuss at length both the strengths and aspects for improvement of their own teaching and that of the coordinators; these methods are very successful. These arrangements have functioned now for more than a year and their impact is evident in the standards of the pupils' current work. Assessment arrangements are good overall and well used when planning extra provision for pupils, such as booster groups, and when setting termly curricular targets. However, the arrangements have not yet developed to the stage when they provide a clear overview for the subject manager or can measure achievement of pupils from year to year; senior management recognises this. Resources are only just satisfactory. There are sufficient multiple texts to support guided reading strategies but the number of both fiction and non-fiction books in classes and the main school library is relatively low. A thorough audit of the library led to the disposal of many out of date and worn books. What remains is very relevant to pupils' needs but is limited in quantity and range.

## MATHEMATICS

67. In Year 6, standards are average. This reflects both the findings of the previous inspection and pupils' attainment in the 2002 national tests for eleven year olds. The pupils achieve well during their four years in the school. Boys and girls attain equally. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making good progress. Pupils from Traveller families, most of whom are now settled in the local community, attain average standards and their achievement is good. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards work. They are keen to learn and they work hard both on their own and in groups.
68. The pupils make quick mental calculations of number facts and of facts related to the 12 and 24-hour clock. They round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100 and high attaining pupils do this confidently to the nearest 1000. Low attaining pupils often find it difficult to solve word problems, as relatively weak literacy skills mean that they find it difficult to see the necessary information and what exactly they have to find out. High attaining pupils, however, use the four rules of number confidently to solve real life problems, such as costing holidays and calculating ratio and proportion. They can reduce fractions to their simplest form and convert them to decimal fractions, but other pupils find this much more difficult. Low attaining pupils often find it difficult to explain how they have worked out their answers, so their understanding is not fully developed. The vast majority of pupils calculate the perimeter and area of simple and compound shapes. They know the language of angles and they measure them accurately. They plot coordinates in all four quadrants and high attaining pupils confidently visualise the effects of reflection, rotation, and translation of a shape's position on a grid. The pupils represent data by means of different sorts of graphs and they accurately interpret the information provided in graphs.
69. The pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate line graphs showing the length of shadows relative to the distance of the object from the light source and pupils in Year 5 draw accurate bar graphs of pulse rates before and after exercise. In geography, pupils in Year 6 draw accurate bar graphs comparing temperatures in London and St. Lucia.
70. The quality of teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and of other areas of mathematics is very good and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The teachers plan their lessons in detail and they ensure that the pupils are aware of what it is they are expected to have learnt by the end of the lesson. Lessons start with brisk mental mathematics sessions, with the teachers matching questions very well to the pupils' varying needs and previous learning. The teachers use various strategies and resources to help the pupils speed up their mental recall. These include counting sticks, 'spider diagrams', interactive whiteboards, and games such as bingo and 'around the world'. The teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in learning and encourage all of them to contribute.
71. Lessons move smoothly into the main activity. Explanations are usually clear and help the pupils to understand the tasks that they have to undertake. The teachers provide plenty of opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve real life problems. They encourage the pupils to look for the key words in the problem. In a Year 5 lesson, this helped the pupils to differentiate between capacity and volume. The teachers organise group work very effectively and they match work very well to the pupils' differing needs. They have high expectations of all the pupils and they ensure that the challenge for high attaining pupils is appropriate. They use questioning very well to make the pupils think carefully. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher asked *'How could we find the number exactly half way between 625 and 750?'* and this impacted well on the pupils' understanding of numbers up to 1000. The teachers use pupils' mistakes as effective teaching points. This helped pupils in a Year 6 lesson as they learnt how to interpret data from a conversion graph. The teachers deploy learning support assistants effectively, in order to help individual pupils or groups. They ensure that

resources are in place for lessons. There is very good use of information and communication technology by both teachers and pupils. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct mathematical terms and to be accurate in responses. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher said *'Don't say the bottom side of an isosceles triangle is shorter than the other two; say one side is shorter'*. This helped the pupils to appreciate that the triangle could be orientated in a different way. Teachers use the closing few minutes of lessons very well to assess what the pupils have learnt and to reinforce understanding. The teachers set regular homework tasks, increasing in amount in Years 5 and 6.

72. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly. The quality of this marking is very good and is helpful in enabling the pupils to see how they might improve. Examples include *'Pick out the key words in each problem'* (Year 3), *'Remember to show clearly when you have rounded the numbers to a specific number of decimal places'* (Year 6).
73. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and this is leading to rising standards. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Numeracy Strategy provides a satisfactory base for the planning and the implementation of the strategy is effective. The subject manager regularly checks the quality of planning and teaching and she has developed a clear action plan to raise standards further. A lunchtime mathematics club, originally created to offer further challenges for high attaining pupils, now attracts pupils of all abilities. There are good systems for checking the pupils' progress. The teachers use the information gained both from these systems and from a careful analysis of test results very well to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning and to set targets for improvement. There are plenty of resources to support teaching and learning and these are impacting well on rising standards.

## SCIENCE

74. Overall standards are below the national average because of insufficient development of the pupils' investigative skills. However, their achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and standards are rising. More than nine out of ten pupils are on course to attain or exceed the level expected nationally by the end of the school year. This is broadly the same as that found in all schools nationally, although the percentage likely to exceed expectations is below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected national level, however, has doubled since 1997 and this is a good increase. Furthermore, standards are rising despite an unusually large proportion of low attaining pupils in the current Year 6 cohort. This improvement is due to the effective leadership and management of the subject and to the rigorous analysis of the results of internal and national tests used to inform planning and support the teaching. The time allocated to the subject, however, is relatively low and opportunities for high attaining pupils in particular to excel through appropriate investigative work are too limited. Although the school has worked to raise the quality of scientific enquiry, its use and development in lessons is still an area for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, but higher attaining pupils do not receive sufficient challenge because of the nature of the tasks set in all lessons.
75. Pupils undertake their scientific studies with interest and take care of equipment and specimens. In Year 6, pupils with typical attainment conduct scientific enquiries, studying life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. For example in Year 6, pupils plan and undertake an investigation into the lengths of shadows cast when light strikes objects at different angles. They predict a result, plan a fair test, describe the equipment and method used, tabulate and graph the results and propose ways the conclusion might be extended. Higher attaining pupils present their work well, give full descriptions, and write their own conclusions making good use of scientific vocabulary. In earlier years, pupils explore the habitat preferences of woodlice, drawing conclusions from observations of where they find most within a specified period. Pupils know about the properties of solids, liquids and gases and how materials change from one state to another, using terms such as 'dissolve', 'solution' and 'soluble'. The analysis of pupils' work indicates, however, that pupils undertake too few enquiries based upon observations involving measurement with quantified results that encourage them to practise the handling and analysis of numerical data. There was also insufficient evidence of pupils working upon tasks well matched to their needs. This sometimes makes it difficult for lower attaining pupils to complete work meaningfully, while work for higher attaining pupils sometimes lacks challenge.
76. Teaching is satisfactory overall; only a small proportion is good or very good. Very detailed plans always support the lessons and teachers prepare good practical activities. Marking is satisfactory with some good guidance points made. Teachers make good use of whiteboards on which pupils write their own responses to questions, helping to keep them focused on their tasks in questioning sessions. Support staff work well with

the pupils. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the teacher posed the question for investigation at the outset and rapidly involved the pupils in activities requiring them to develop and share ideas about how they could investigate the differences between the skeletons of Year 3 and Year 6 pupils. This engaged the pupils in exercising their reasoning, speaking and listening skills from the beginning of the lesson and encouraged an eagerness for discovery. In most lessons, however, explanations and demonstrations provide pupils with answers to the questions at too early a stage, removing the opportunity for them to make discoveries for themselves and to confirm or reject hypotheses based on the outcomes of experiments. Although pupils gain satisfactory factual knowledge from the demonstrations, they insufficiently extend their investigative skills.

77. Management of the subject is good. The subject is now part of the school development plan and the coordinator is engaged in a number of steps to improve standards. She has recently revised medium term plans. National guidelines provide a broad base for planning, modified to foster cross-curricular links within the school. The coordinator uses external guidance to help check standards of planning and teaching. She monitors teachers' planning together with the work of pupils and supports teaching through giving exemplar lessons and lesson observations. The subject is well resourced. Teachers assess the work of pupils regularly; however, there is currently no overall system for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The school is aware of this and, together with the further development of the teaching of scientific enquiry, it is a area targeted for improvement.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

78. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory. Provision is good and all areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection have been remedied effectively. Because of this, standards of work in all year groups are consistently of a high quality. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, children from Traveller families and those learning English as an additional language achieve very well during their time in school. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Improvements are due to good teaching and a varied and interesting programme of art and design activities that supports the development of skills and techniques very successfully. There are very good links with other subjects and this deepens pupils' knowledge and adds interest and cohesion to their learning of new skills and techniques.
79. There is a very good balance between developing pupils' skills and techniques and the provision of opportunities for pupils to experiment and work in a wide variety of media. A scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the school provides pupils with a full range of experiences. Teachers use visits, artefacts, nature, and literature very effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject and to provide a focus for their work. Links with other subjects also stimulate pupils' interest and help pupils understand art in the context of an historical period, a geographical location or a deeper understanding of characters. Pupils use their artistic skills well to add interest and quality to their work in other subjects.
80. Pupils become very skilled in using line, form, colours, shade, texture, and a variety of materials and tools to produce images and pictures. Year 4 pupils use batik, collage and yarn rap to produce high quality designs to represent the colour, shapes and patterns of the sea. In Year 6, pupils researched Canal Art and produced their own detailed designs using similar colours, techniques, and patterns.
81. Throughout the school, pupils study a wide range of artists such as William Morris, Renoir, and Matisse. Pupils compare and contrast different styles and are encouraged to express a preference. In Year 6, pupils considered the work of impressionist and abstract artists, producing high quality work of their own which showed a good understanding of how the use of colour, line, and form reflects different styles. In other lessons, pupils learnt how art influences people's everyday life as they considered how the industrial revolution changed the designs of women's dresses. Such well-planned links with other subjects add considerable depth to pupils' learning and they can see the wider relevance of subjects and topics to their own lives.
82. Three-dimensional work receives high priority. Pupils use clay to produce their own Roman pots and they study in depth the work of Clarice Cliff. Weaving and tapestry involve pupils using a range of textiles, textures, and colour to produce interesting designs. The teachers develop in pupils an awareness of art in different cultures very effectively. High quality examples of pupils' work in the style of Mexican, Aboriginal, and African art are evident throughout the school. Older pupils explore the intricate patterns of Islamic art, deepening their understanding and respect of its influence on the world. The use of sketchbooks is very effective in developing pupils' skills. They use them to practise new skills; as a reference for past designs; to locate information on colour or techniques; and to evaluate their work. Pupils use information and communication technology skills well to research the work of different artists and to create their own computer generated designs.

83. Teaching is very good overall; it is never less than good and in two out of five lessons seen it was very good. Teachers are very proficient at providing pupils with the skills they need to become confident artists and designers. They provide very clear and precise explanations and demonstrations to enable all pupils to build well on what they already know and can do. The very well planned curriculum helps foster pupils' natural creativity well. Teachers effectively encourage pupils to bring their own flair and response to their work and are given time to reflect and improve the finished product. Pupils have well-planned opportunities to work co-operatively, share ideas and appreciate the work of others. Teachers provide a wide range of resources and use a variety of exciting stimuli to catch pupils' imagination and interest. They work keenly and successfully target their enthusiasm at creating high quality work that also enhances the general environment of the school. In consequence, all pupils work with high levels of interest and produce quality pieces of art. Pupils who work at a slower rate receive very good support and this enables them to produce work of a good standard. Those pupils who are particularly talented in art have challenging tasks provided to extend their skills and knowledge; this is good practice.
84. The management of the subject is very effective. The curriculum coordinator is very experienced, skilled and enthusiastic. She works closely with staff to raise their confidence in the teaching of art and design. This has a very positive effect on the standards and progress pupils make. There are good procedures in place to assess the level of pupils' learning and to improve standards further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. Standards are average in Year 6 as they were at the time of the last inspection. The design, make and test process is developed strongly and good use is made of links with other subjects to reinforce learning and to enrich knowledge. Nationally agreed guidelines form the basis of the scheme of work and this has been adapted appropriately to relate to the school's cross-curricular programme. The recently appointed coordinator is aware that some aspects of this revised scheme are insufficiently well developed and he is working to improve them. The teaching effectively develops the learning of boys and girls equally. Pupils with special educational needs, together with pupils from minority ethnic groups and from Traveller families make satisfactory progress.
86. The achievement of the pupils during their four years at the school is satisfactory. The pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the design, make, and test process of the subject applied to a range of familiar products. For example, in Year 6 the pupils make a fairground ride for which they sketch ideas for making moving parts, including springs, cranks, and air pneumatics. They can review and select materials and make evaluations of their products, including ideas for improvements. In earlier years, pupils apply the same process to making products such as torches incorporating learning on electrical circuits to link with science, musical instruments, and biscuits for which they considered the aesthetics of their packaging designs. Analysis of pupils' work, however, shows insufficient recorded evidence of disassembly activities and while teachers are careful to ensure safety procedures in class, recorded work does not contain reinforcement of this aspect. In addition, the scrutiny of pupils' work shows insufficient matching of task to the different abilities in the class, leading to a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with a few very good lessons. Planning is detailed, good use is made of resources, and learning related to other subjects is developed well both to reinforce and to extend knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and follow the whole school arrangements for identifying pupils' success at three levels. In some lessons, however, the pupils are engaged in long, whole class question and answer sessions that lead to pupils knowing answers to problems before they investigate for themselves. This limits the opportunities for the excitement and challenge of firsthand exploration and does not meet the expectation that all pupils should engage in reasoning.
88. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has already acted effectively to improve standards. These include the monitoring of lessons and lesson plans, discussion with pupils, and the initiation of a photographic record of products made. There is a rolling programme to develop the study units in the scheme of work and to remedy areas of identified need through staff development sessions. For example, the local education authority provides guidance to support the teaching of pneumatics. The coordinator has identified the use of control technology with information and communication technology programs as an area for development. Resources are satisfactory although little use is currently made of links with the local community and businesses.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

89. The attainment of the substantial majority of pupils in Year 6 is in line with the national expectation for their age. Standards are the same as at the time of the last inspection. The coordinator and the teachers are enthusiastic and they are working towards developing a number of good features through the teaching of the subject to raise standards further. Not all of these developments, however, are sufficiently consistent to have the intended impact. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, including pupils from Traveller families and with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
90. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and their knowledge and understanding of selected places and themes over their four years in the juniors. The pupils practise and develop mapping skills progressively through the school and apply their enquiry skills satisfactorily when studying places. For example, Year 4 pupils visit Bosham, a rural and waterside settlement that they compare and contrast with Ash. They collect information, present it, analyse it and draw their conclusions. They know how people can harm the environment and of ways that it can be sustained, for example through water conservation methods. Pupils talk of sensory experiences they have enjoyed such as making drinks and tasting fruits when studying developing countries and that give them an awareness of life there. Such good learning is not always developed to its full potential. For example, individual investigations carried out in Year 6 engaged the pupils in finding and presenting information about their chosen countries but were too wide ranging to allow the pupils to pursue focused enquiries in the manner of some studies in Years 3 and 4. Analysis of pupils' work showed a lack of consistency in the rigour of recorded work and, in a number of topics, there was no clear match of tasks to the abilities of higher attaining pupils.
91. Teaching is good overall, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and some in Year 4 is very good. Lessons follow detailed plans and they are well resourced. Teachers display good subject knowledge and generally invoke an enthusiastic response from the pupils. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to study and analyse the photographs taken on their field visit by sorting them into human and physical features. This gave them a solid foundation to their work. She then displayed high expectations through questions and challenges such as, "How do you know it is a human feature? Prove it to me!" This made the pupils practise and articulate their reasoning skills. She reinforced her high standards by reminding the pupils very firmly towards the end of the lesson what exactly she expected from each of them by its close. This very challenging teaching resulted in pupils focusing sharply on their tasks and in their very good learning during the lesson. Assessment is satisfactory and the teachers use the findings from assessment effectively when planning.
92. Management of the subject is good. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and has clear ideas about what the school is trying to achieve. He has designed the long and medium term plans and monitors and assists with lesson plans as needed. Resources are good including a range of CD-ROMS. The co-ordinator has provided staff development in carrying out first hand enquiries. Although there is no system in place for tracking the progress of individual pupils one is under development.

## **HISTORY**

93. In Year 6, standards are average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The pupils achieve well during their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Boys and girls attain equally. The pupils have positive attitudes to work. They enjoy history and they are keen to learn.
94. The pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of chronology. They accurately place various periods of British history on time lines. Research skills are satisfactory. Pupils in Year 6, for example, researched information about aspects of life in Tudor England and found evidence of the character of Henry V111 from contemporary portraits. Higher attaining pupils used their literacy skills satisfactorily to write a contemporary newspaper account of the sinking of the Mary Rose, but the weak writing skills of many pupils hindered their ability to record what they knew. The pupils understand the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. Pupils in Year 5 know how the ancient Egyptians prepared the dead for the afterlife. Again, weak writing skills hinder the recording skills of many pupils, including even the higher attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 4 understand why the Roman army was able to defeat the Celts. They use reference books to find out about Hadrian's Wall. Pupils in Year 3 know how people lived during the Second World War. This knowledge is consistent with the expectations for their respective ages.

95. An analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers emphasise the importance of using evidence to find out about the past and they give the pupils opportunities to research information themselves from artefacts, books, and CD-ROM. They enable the pupils to empathise with people from the past by using strategies such as 'hot seating', where pupils take on the role of a famous historical figure and answer questions from others. This helped pupils in Year 4 to learn about the character of Boudicca, and to consider what her own people, and the Romans, thought of her. Once a year, pupils in Year 3 participate in a 'sleepover', in which they spend a night in school in the role of evacuees. This makes learning very real for the pupils and helps them to experience the feelings of children caught up in wartime.
96. It was possible to observe lessons only in Year 5. Teaching here is good. In one lesson, the teachers used burning incense very effectively to create the right mood, as the pupils learnt about the ancient Egyptians' art of mummification. They focused on relevant vocabulary, such as *embalming*, *canopic jars*, *sarcophagus*, and this had a good impact on the pupils' learning. They made very good use of a number of artefacts as visual stimuli and this succeeded in holding the pupils' attention throughout the lessons.
97. Leadership and management of the subject are good. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is satisfactorily based on national guidelines, which have been adapted to meet the school's needs and resources. There are good systems for checking the pupils' progress. The teachers make good use of information gained from these checks to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. The subject manager has ensured that resources are easily accessible for use by colleagues. There are plenty of resources to support learning, with lots of historical artefacts to provide visual stimuli. Learning is enriched by visits to a number of places of historical interest, including Portsmouth, Carisbrooke Castle, Hever Castle, Butser Ancient Farm, Fishbourne Roman Palace, the Ure Museum at Reading University and museums in Farnham and Guildford.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level for their age, about 80 per cent, including about 20 per cent exceeding expectations, is above average. This represents good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Achievement by Year 6, compared to attainment on entry, is good. There are no significant variations in attainment or achievement between pupils of different gender or background. A few pupils with special educational needs use information and communication technology effectively to support learning in other subjects. In general, teachers create good opportunities for the pupils to apply information and communication technology skills in other subjects, including English, mathematics, science, and geography.
99. In Year 3, pupils understand how to write and send e-mails well for their age. In a good lesson, for example, the Year 3 pupils quickly learnt how to check and receive incoming messages and to write and send messages of their own, including inserting and attaching files. They are familiar with the technical vocabulary used, such as 'browse' and used this effectively when searching for files. In Year 4, pupils in lessons demonstrated good knowledge of using data to produce graphs and charts. Pupils in Year 5 can use light and heat sensors to take readings. They can enter and amend appropriately the data they obtain and use the information to draw conclusions. The pupils in Year 6 can enter, retrieve, and amend data appropriately for their age using a wordprocessing database, and spreadsheet programs. Keyboard skills are generally good. In a very good lesson in Year 6, the pupils showed a wide knowledge of the application of information and communication technology to every day life. For example, during discussions about input/output models, they knew that heat, light, sound and touch sensors often enable systems such as burglar alarms, thermostats, microphones, buzzers to work. The breadth of their knowledge was considerable. During this lesson, the pupils quickly learnt how to write a series of instructions to program models to work. The higher attaining pupils fully appreciated the need for precision in sequencing and framing their instructions. Much of the knowledge shown by these pupils was significantly in advance of the national expectation for their age. They were very well motivated, willingly exploring the task and learning through trial and error.
100. The teaching is good overall. All of it is satisfactory or better, including much that is good or very good. Joint planning and common agreement about methods are leading to considerable consistency. All lessons are well managed and organised and make use of the computer suite effectively. However, there are only sufficient computers for half of each class to use at any one time. In the main, good use is made of paper and pencil activities to supplement the hands-on experiences, ensuring continued learning for those not using computers. In all lessons, good use of computer projection equipment enables the sharing of basic knowledge about programs and the modelling of basic skills before pupils apply these through independent work. Where teaching

is very good, the teachers' extensive subject knowledge and expertise enables efficient and effective handling of pre-task discussions, engaging pupils intellectually and motivating them highly. In some lessons, the division of the teachers' time between pupils using computers and those engaged in paper and pencil activity led to a slowing of learning during the lesson, particularly in lessons in Years 4 and 5. In such lessons, the teachers could not be in two places at once and yet to maximise their learning, whether using computers or paper and pencil, the pupils needed to talk through what they were doing with an adult and sometimes had to wait too long for this to happen.

101. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject manager has been in post for three years during which time she has reorganised the resources, led the training of the teachers, and introduced consistent methods of teaching throughout the school. Curricular guidance for teachers is clear and very helpful. The assessment arrangements are satisfactory and use nationally prepared materials effectively to monitor and promote the academic progress of individual pupils. However, a few pupils have very high attainment gained from experiences at home; this is not always recognised and developed sufficiently in lessons. In addition, annual summary assessment remains only tentatively linked to National Curriculum assessment levels, preventing senior management having a measurable overview of standards and progress between year groups. Resources are broadly satisfactory. The ratio of computers to pupils is in line with the average school, with sufficient programs and additional hardware to support the teaching of the National Curriculum programme of study in full. However, the number of computers at times constrains the teaching.

## **MUSIC**

102. Standards in Year 6 are above average. Achievement is good overall. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, children from Traveller families and those learning English as an additional language achieve well during their time in school. Boys and girls achieve equally well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average and there were considerable weaknesses in the teaching and learning. Provision is now very good and all the areas of weakness have been tackled with considerable rigour and enthusiasm by senior management and the teachers.
103. Teaching is now very good, enabling pupils to make good progress in all aspects of the subject. The curricular planning is good. It included all strands of the subject. The pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding increase at least in line with national expectations throughout the school. For many, they increase at a faster rate. Music is very effectively coordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims and values of the school. The coordinator has specialist skills, which he uses well to develop a full range of activities to improve staff confidence and promote the effective teaching and learning of the subject. There are good procedures in place to assess the level of pupils' learning and to improve standards further.
104. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies and worship. The playing of an appropriate piece of music creates a quiet and reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship and has a calming effect on pupils. Songs and hymns are challenging and reflective and pupils sing with accuracy, expression, and good articulation.
105. The teaching is very good; it is never less than good, in the substantial majority of lessons it is very good and in a few lessons it is excellent. Because of the considerable expertise and enthusiasm of the music coordinator, members of staff are very confident in teaching music. They use the innovative scheme well to build systematically on pupils' knowledge, understanding, and skills. A considerable strength of the teaching of music is the very well planned links with other subjects, which deepen pupils' understanding and bring cohesion and meaning to their learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, effective links between history and music arose when pupils composed evocative music for an Egyptian ceremony.
106. Music lessons are very well structured and tasks are imaginative and challenging. In Year 3, pupils' imagination takes flight as they use their knowledge of tempo, dynamics and texture to compose a piece of music to tell the story of a 'beautiful pair of magic shoes'. Teachers give pupils very clear strategies to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as musicians and to use correct musical terms. Pupils in Year 6 use musical vocabulary with confidence and accuracy when talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teachers. They use their knowledge of rhythm structure and voice production to compose African music. Stimulating resources such as pictures, paintings, commercial CDs, and instruments very effectively engage pupils' interest. Pupils make good progress in playing a wide variety of instruments, including keyboards and tuned and untuned percussion. All Year 5 pupils learn to play the recorder, which considerably improves their knowledge and understanding of complex musical ideas and skills. In an outstanding lesson, highly skilled

teaching enabled pupils to make rapid gains in their understanding of 'ostinato'. Pupils responded with considerable effort and interest to the challenge and produced interesting and innovative compositions, showing maturity and a very good understanding of pattern, rhythm and layering of sounds. High quality teaching ensured pupils were able to reflect on their work and to evaluate how to make improvements. Members of the class thoroughly enjoyed performing their activities in front of their friends and teachers.

107. A commitment to involving all pupils is very evident as teachers sensitively include pupils who learn at a slower speed and use pupils' own experiences and cultural heritages well. For example, in an effective Year 6 lesson one pupil was delighted to share her experiences of seeing elephants 'for real' in her home country. Pupils who learn at a much faster rate and show particular musical talents receive challenging tasks to promote their skills and extra support is available to extend their learning.
108. In lessons and through well-planned special events, pupils learn to evaluate and compare music styles from a wide range of cultures, countries, and centuries. They are familiar with a wide range of classical and modern composers and explore music through the ages as they study Tudor, Victorian and twentieth century music made popular during the Second World War. An appreciation of music from India, Australia, Mexico, and the Caribbean is developed in the school's multicultural week. Pupils confidently explore Chinese pentatonic music and the place of music in different religions.
109. The well-supported school choir is involved in school and community performances. Singing is of a very high quality as illustrated by a performance of 'The Ugly Bug Ball' in which members of staff and pupils donned headdresses, and appropriate expressions, to add interest and amusement to their song. These activities make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and provide pupils with very good opportunities to extend their creative skills. The Annual Christmas production is a very popular event, which provides an exciting vehicle for a large number of pupils to demonstrate their musical talents. The use of information and communication technology further enhances pupils' musical skills of appraising, composition, and performing. A significant number of pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of brass and string instruments. Pupils work very hard in these lessons and are very well supported by parents and encouraged to improve their talents through rigorous practise.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. In Year 6, standards overall are average, with above average attainment in gymnastics and dance. The overall standard reflects the findings of the previous inspection but the higher standards in gymnastics and dance are good improvements and reflect the high quality teaching in these aspects of the subject. The pupils achieve well over their four years in the school. Standards in swimming are average. Swimming is offered to pupils in Year 3 and by the end of that year, over half of the pupils can swim at least 25 metres unaided and with good technique. This represents good achievement in swimming for the pupils in Year 3. Older pupils do not go swimming because they have reached the required standard. Boys and girls attain equally. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. The pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They dress appropriately and participate very enthusiastically, listening carefully and responding quickly to instructions.
111. In athletics, the pupils throw balls underarm and overarm with reasonable accuracy, but their catching skills are very variable. They are learning the techniques of the triple jump. High attaining pupils perform this quite well, but others get confused by the three elements of the jump. The pupils are beginning to understand the importance of a sprint start to a short race, and to know how to pass and receive the baton in a relay race. In gymnastics, the pupils develop good movement sequences on small and large apparatus, incorporating different body shapes, balances, and turns. They perform an Indian dance, making good use of body movements and facial expressions to create the right mood.
112. The quality of teaching is very good. There are examples of excellent teaching. The teachers plan their lessons very well. They manage the pupils very well and class control, both in the hall and outside, is very good. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they ensure that the pupils know why it is important to warm up before exercise. There is good teaching of specific skills. In a games lesson for pupils in Year 6, for example, the pupils improved their ability to throw a ball accurately, and to jump further by gaining height. In a gymnastics lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher emphasised the need for control and this had a very positive effect on the pupils' ability to develop movement sequences on apparatus. He explained the need to set up apparatus and to handle equipment correctly and this is leading to the establishment of good routines by the pupils. Due care is paid to safety. The teachers ensure that the pupils have the opportunity to observe and

evaluate the performance of others, so that they pick up ideas and improve their own performance. *'What are we going to be looking for? How might they improve?'* asked a teacher in a Year 4 lesson. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher asked *'How does throwing the bean bags help us with our bowling?'* and this focused the pupils' attention on the need to pitch the ball just in front of the batsman. In most lessons, the teachers make the tasks increasingly more demanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher made the pupils walk a relay race before they began to run and this gave the pupils the chance to learn the basic skills first. The teachers participate actively in lessons. In a dance lesson for pupils in Year 6, for example, the teacher gave effective demonstrations and this helped the pupils to use hand and facial expressions and body movements to create an imaginative Indian dance.

113. Leadership and management are very good. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. A scheme of work devised by the school satisfactorily supports the planning. There are good systems for checking the pupils' progress. The teachers make satisfactory use of information gained from these systems to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning. The subject manager checks the quality of colleagues' planning and teaching. He has taught model lessons to give colleagues ideas on how they might improve their teaching; this is good practice. A clear action plan seeks to raise standards further. A wide variety of sports clubs enriches the curriculum. Football and netball teams participate in local leagues and tournaments, often with considerable success. Last year, the football team was runner up in a tournament and this year, the netball team came second in their league. There are opportunities for the pupils to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities during residential visits and activity weeks in school. There is plenty of good quality apparatus and equipment. There is a good-sized hall for gymnastics and dance and a very large field, currently marked out for athletics and rounders.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

114. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now above average. Improvements are due to strong leadership and management of the subject, better teaching, a well-planned curriculum, and very effective links with other subjects. The subject reflects the school's ethos well and makes a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, and social development.
115. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, those from Traveller families and those learning English as additional language, make good progress and achieve well in relation to what they know and understand when they first enter the school. Boys and girls show much interest in the subject and achieve equally well.
116. The curriculum is lively and challenging and is carefully planned to be relevant to pupils' own experiences. Teaching is good overall; it is never less than satisfactory and in two out of three lessons, it is good. Planning is very clear and places considerable emphasis on developing not only pupils' knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths but also their insight into how religion can effect their own and other people's lives. Links with other subjects are particularly strong and add interest and meaning to pupils' learning. For example, pupils study how art through the ages has helped to interpret people's ideas of the character and image of Jesus. The teachers make good links between skills learned in literacy lessons and work done in religious education and this enables the pupils to explore religious ideas in their writing using sensitive phrases and vocabulary. One Year 4 pupil wrote a very moving letter from the mother of Moses, expressing a range of emotions and displaying considerable ability to get under the skin of a character and to understand why people have to make very difficult choices and decisions because of their beliefs and the threat of religious persecution. There is a strong expectation that pupils will ask questions and provide reasons for events and actions. Difficult ideas, such as religious wars, are handled sensitively and pupils are challenged to consider how beliefs and faiths profoundly alter the way people conduct themselves.
117. Pupils show a mature respect for different religions as demonstrated in a Year 6 lesson about Hindu worship. In this lesson, they understood the significance of incense, candles, and the need to remove shoes. All pupils are fully involved in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support and work well matched to their levels of understanding. Pupils who learn at a faster rate have very challenging tasks, such as exploring the betrayal of Jesus and the concept of forgiveness. The experiences of pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds inform lessons well and pupils are encouraged to share their religious customs and traditions with their peers. However, the school does not make as much use as it could in inviting those parents with different faiths to share their beliefs and customs with the school to enhance the pupils' learning.

118. Across the school, pupils develop a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity and other major world religions. Knowledge and understanding increase well as pupils get older. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about the significance of water in Christian baptism and in Year 6, they extend this knowledge by studying how, in many religions, water becomes a symbol of purification. An understanding of the importance of celebrations, homes and family, friendship to themselves and in different faiths and cultures develops well. Pupils' own experiences accumulate effectively and they develop a deeper understanding of religious ideas. In Year 3, for example, pupils in one lesson brought their own photographs, candles and gifts, which the teacher used to deepen their understanding of baptism, while in Year 5 pupils made links between religious rules, the school's 'Golden Rules', the desirability of appropriate behaviour, and the need to feel valued.
119. By the age of eleven pupils' understanding of other religions and faiths is good. They know about the customs, symbols, festivals, holy books, and buildings of major religions. Important festivals and customs, such as The Hajj, Divali, Hanukkah, and Christmas all play an important part in helping pupils to develop their understanding of different traditions and religions. Visits, visitors, and relevant artefacts bring the subject alive for pupils and develop a mature respect for major faiths. Pupils that are more able make comparisons between aspects of different faiths and traditions. Pupils use information and communication technology skills well to research information about major world faiths.
120. Links with the local Church provide pupils with very good opportunities to understand what it means to belong to a particular faith and community and the support and involvement of the local clergy is invaluable in developing the work of the school and enhancing pupils' religious education. The co-ordinator's expertise in the subject is helping to raise standards and make the subject one that members of staff enjoy teaching and pupils enjoy learning. There are good procedures in place to assess the level of pupils' learning and to improve standards even further.