

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFT JUNIOR SCHOOL

Nuneaton

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125605

Headteacher: Mrs Jo Scott

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson
25406

Dates of inspection: 7-10 October 2002

Inspection number: 248696

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Northumberland Avenue Nuneaton Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV10 8ER
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jenny Tedds
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Nicholson Registered inspector 25406	Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Janet Butler Lay inspector 9428		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Sangster Team inspector 20010	Science History Information and communication technology	How well are pupils taught?
Mike Dukes Team inspector 32197	Mathematics Geography Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Agnes Patterson Team inspector 25802	English Art and design Music Religious education	

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Croft School is a large junior school situated in western Nuneaton. It serves a large area with mixed social and economic backgrounds. Currently, there are 342 pupils on roll (179 boys and 163 girls) aged from 7 to 11 years. Ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is similar to the national average. Less than 2 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is a bit higher than in most schools. Four per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. The school has identified 35 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Three pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need. When children enter Year 3, their attainment varies, but overall it is well below that expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school gives an acceptable education to its pupils and has some good features. Overall standards by the age of 11 are well below average, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and often it is better. The school is soundly led and managed and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school successfully identifies the needs of individual pupils so that all make good progress in their personal development.
- It provides a caring and stimulating environment in which all pupils have access its good range of learning opportunities.
- The school cultivates pupils' enthusiasm for learning, a pride in their school and very good relationships.
- It actively promotes a very good partnership with parents, which helps them to effectively support their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards, particularly in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
- The leadership and management of the school, to provide a greater focus on raising standards.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning, by the sharing of the good practice already in evidence in the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in October 1997, the school has undergone staffing difficulties, a large turnover of staff and a large increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. It has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection. The school has improved the learning opportunities it offers by successfully introducing the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers have extended the range of books and text used in lessons. They make more effective use of assessment data in literacy and numeracy, which has improved their planning. However, the identification of exactly what they want pupils to learn in each lesson is still inconsistent and activities do not always meet the needs of all pupils. The role of the subject managers has improved but requires further development. The school has successfully improved its support for pupils with special educational needs. The range of resources for information and communication technology has improved.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils enter the school with very low standards in literacy and numeracy. They work hard to overcome these weaknesses and make satisfactory progress in these key subjects but, by the end of Year 6, standards are still well below those normally expected. Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are two terms behind those of a typical 11-year-old. In national tests, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard, Level 4, is well below average. The proportion who go on to gain the higher standard, Level 5, is also well below average. Pupils do better in science and, in 2002, test results were close to the average, though current standards are below average because pupils do not fully develop their experimental and investigative skills.

Pupils' standards in information and communication technology are below average because pupils have not fully developed their skills in all aspects of this subject. Pupils' low standards in literacy slow their progress in other subjects, particularly in recording their work. However, they reach the expected standard for their age in art and design, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. It was not possible to make a judgement on standards in design and technology.

All groups of pupils, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make satisfactory progress in their learning. Most pupils reach satisfactory levels of personal achievement in their learning given their low attainment on entry to the school. However, the targets the school has set for improving standards in English and mathematics have not been sufficiently high to ensure that more pupils reach average or above average results.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their school. They show very high levels of enthusiasm and good levels of interest in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Those who have difficulties in this area respond well to the staff's care and support and work hard at managing their own behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good personal development. They are polite, considerate and show respect to others. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good.
Attendance	Attendance, which is just above the national average, is satisfactory. Punctuality is good and lessons begin on time.

The pupils' very positive attitudes, values and relationships make a positive contribution to their learning and the caring and supportive atmosphere within the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Not applicable	Not applicable	Satisfactory

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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and often it is better. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. During the inspection it ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent. Half of the lessons seen were good or better, including 10 per cent that were very good and an example of excellent teaching. Almost all of the lessons in the remaining half were satisfactory apart from a very small number of unsatisfactory lessons. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the main, teachers manage the pupils well and teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily. Teachers and support staff, who work well as a team, provide good levels of help for all pupils, especially the large number of pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, pupils make good progress in their personal development. In the best lessons, teachers plan interesting and challenging activities, ensure a brisk pace and make the small steps in learning very clear to the pupils. In other lessons, teachers are not always clear in what they want the pupils to learn and the activities do not closely match the needs of all pupils. The examples of excellent and very good practice could be shared more widely among all teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides pupils with a good range of learning opportunities, which is very relevant to their needs. It very successfully promotes the inclusion of all its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for those pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. They have high-quality individual learning plans and good levels of help from learning support staff. Consequently, they make sound progress towards their individual learning targets and good progress in improving their behaviour.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of these pupils is at an early stage of acquiring English. They are as fluent in English as are the other pupils and so the school currently makes no specific provision for them. They make satisfactory progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the provision is good. The school places great importance on pupils' personal development and is very successful in raising pupils' self-esteem because it provides very good social and moral development. Cultural development is good and spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring and welcoming environment for its pupils. There are very good procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare, and satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	The school has a very effective partnership with its parents. It encourages them, through good systems of communication, to support their children's learning at school and at home. This has a positive impact on their learning.

The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating bullying. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are in place for most but not all subjects but teachers do not make full use of this information when planning their lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, senior staff and subject managers provide sound leadership and management for the school. The role of all subject managers in the raising of standards and further improving the quality of teaching is not fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body satisfactorily carries out its statutory duties and is supportive of the school. It needs to further develop its understanding of the day-to-day work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is beginning to evaluate its performance and monitor its teaching and learning. However, it does not do this sufficiently well to support the sharing across the school of good practice. Its management plan does not provide a clear focus on whole-school priorities for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes sound use of its financial resources and good use of grants to support special educational needs. The school satisfactorily applies the principles of best value.

The headteacher's very committed leadership is particularly successful in achieving high standards in pupils' personal development. Governors and the hard working staff successfully support her in this aim. The school's aim for all pupils to reach their full academic potential is less well fulfilled but forms part of the school's current improvement plan.

The school has a good number of qualified teachers and support staff. The accommodation meets the needs of the pupils well and is bright and attractive. Learning resources are at least satisfactory in all subjects and good in English.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Nine parents attended a meeting with inspectors and 124 (36 per cent) completed questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • The school has high expectations and it helps children to become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed and the staff are approachable. • The teaching is good and children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about children's progress. • The amount of homework.

The inspection findings broadly support the very positive views of the parents. While the school provides satisfactory information on pupils' progress in the annual written reports teachers do not provide sufficient information on how children's standards compare with national expectations. The school has a clear homework policy that supports children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the time of the last inspection, half of the pupils entered the school with attainment below that expected for their age. They made satisfactory progress and, by the age of 11 years, standards in English and mathematics were below the national average. Attainment in all other subjects was broadly in line with national expectations, though in subjects where reading and writing formed an important part of the work undertaken, standards were low. Since then, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school has almost doubled. The school has accepted a number of pupils who have experienced both learning and behavioural difficulties in their previous schools and have entered the school with low standards and low self-esteem. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is now well below that expected of pupils at the age of seven. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory and often good teaching. However, some weaknesses in the teaching, especially in focusing on exactly what it is pupils are to learn, hamper more rapid progress. Overall standards by the age of 11 continue to be well below average.
2. Attainment on entry to Year 3 varies between individual pupils and between the groups of pupils who enter the school each year. Overall, pupils start Year 3 with low standards in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics in comparison to pupils of a similar age. For example, the current Year 6 entered the school, at the age of seven, with standards well below the national average in these core subjects. Consequently, pupils have low self-esteem. Their weaknesses in literacy and numeracy have a significant impact on their learning in these basic skills and in other subjects.
3. Over recent years, the school's results in national tests have shown a gradual improvement that reflects improvements in the quality of teaching. However, the overall improvement has only been in line with the improving national trend and so results have remained well below average. Pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are two terms behind those of a typical 11-year-old. In 2002, for example, standards were well below average. The proportion of pupils who gained Level 4, the expected standard for a typical 11-year-old, was well below average. While a small proportion of pupils gained the higher standard, Level 5, this was also well below the proportion found nationally. Pupils have achieved better results in science tests. After two years of well below average results, pupils gained results in 2002 similar to the national average. This was because, while the proportion achieving Level 4 was below average, the proportion achieving the higher standard was greater than in previous years.
4. The school's results in English and mathematics are well below those of similar schools¹. However, in science they compare favourably. An analysis of recent results from national tests shows that the boys have performed better than the girls. The school identified a weakness in girls' writing and is addressing this issue. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make equal progress to that of their classmates, and achieve similar results.
5. Inspection evidence confirms that overall standards in the current Year 6 are well below average, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Just under two-thirds of the pupils are on target to achieve the expected standard by the end of their final year at the school. This reflects the low standards on entry and the particularly high number of pupils with special educational needs. Overall standards in English are well below average because pupils' attainments in reading and writing are well below those expected of this age, and in speaking and listening they are below average. Evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are well below average in all areas of this subject. The school has maintained the improvement in science, though overall standards remain below average. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding for their age but their experimental and investigative skills are below average.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are also below average because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. While pupils have appropriate skills in using computers to communicate with others, for example, when using a word-processing program, their skills in monitoring and control are not well developed. Pupils do not make enough use of information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects.

¹ National Benchmark information bands together 'similar schools' based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

7. The pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills affect their learning in other subjects. However, their standards in art and design, geography, history, physical education and music are in line with national expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in design and technology. The pupils' weaknesses in literacy hinder their recording of information. Nonetheless, they achieve average standards in these foundation subjects. The broad curriculum and sound teaching ensures pupils have appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge and practical skills in these subjects. Pupils' standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject by the age of 11 years. They have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity and other world religions.
8. Pupils with special educational needs work well with learning support staff in lessons and in well-structured, short sessions outside the classroom. Those with a Statement of Special Educational Need also receive good levels of support within the classrooms. As a result, these pupils make sound progress towards their specific learning targets. However, in a small number of lessons, the management of pupils with behavioural difficulties takes up too much of the teachers' time and this prevents pupils from making the best possible progress. The provision for the higher-attaining pupils is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, the most able pupils reach levels of attainment comparable with high achievers nationally. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics is very much lower than in similar schools. In science, the school does much better at these levels and is in line with other similar schools nationally.
9. The use of reading and writing skills in subjects other than English does not consistently support the development of literacy skills. In some lessons, pupils use different forms of writing to record their findings, for example in religious education. However, pupils do not use in other lessons what they have learnt in literacy to develop their writing or knowledge of the subject. Similarly, pupils do not make full use of their numeracy or information and communication technology skills to support their learning in other subjects.
10. The low standards on entry and the growing number of pupils with special educational needs are reflected in the well below average standards achieved by the age of 11 years. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The satisfactory and often good teaching ensures that many pupils reach satisfactory levels of achievement. The school has worked hard to raise pupils' low self-esteem. Consequently, pupils' levels of motivation and concentration are improving and this is beginning to have a positive impact on their rate of progress. However, the school has not been successful in ensuring pupils always make the best possible progress. The targets the school has set for pupils have not been high enough to ensure that a greater proportion achieve both the expected and higher levels of attainment. The raising of standards is a key priority for the governors, headteacher and staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. This aspect remains a real strength of the school, and one of which it is most proud. Its stated aim includes 'the training of good human beings' and the staff meet this well. Despite the fact that in recent years the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of them behavioural, has increased significantly, standards of personal development have been maintained. For some pupils, the ability to concentrate and make real strides in learning is limited, but their enthusiasm for school remains very good. Interviews with pupils revealed a real sense of pride in their school, a desire to try hard and do their best and a keenness to succeed. The lessons to which pupils responded best were the ones in which they were given a challenge and plenty of opportunities to be actively involved. For example, in an art and design lesson in Year 3, all pupils were focussed on their own efforts, whilst helpfully fetching resources for classmates and ensuring that care was taken not to disturb other people.
12. Behaviour is good throughout the school, both in lessons and at play. Certain individuals have very real problems with managing their own behaviour, but these are very well handled by the teaching and support staff, and other pupils have learnt strategies of ignoring outbursts and getting on with their work. Classroom behaviour during the inspection was unsatisfactory in a very few lessons, but this was the result of inexperience in pupil management and inappropriate lesson planning. Overall, pupils are friendly and polite, helpful and considerate, with a well-developed sense of respect for other people, school rules, resources and the environment.
13. The school tries very hard to avoid the necessity to exclude pupils, but uses fixed term exclusion as a warning that anti-social aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated. The exclusion figures remain very low, and indicate the success of its behaviour-support procedures.
14. Relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils themselves, are very good. There is a very real sense that all members of the school community care about one another, and respect each other's differences. Pupils from different racial backgrounds, different ability groups, and different social groups work and play harmoniously. They understand and strive towards the goals of teamwork. Parents are kept well informed of the school's policy to prevent bullying, and the inspection found no evidence of any oppressive behaviour.
15. Throughout their time at Croft School, pupils make good personal development, and become increasingly mature and confident, responsible young citizens. Parents value the way the school helps their children to develop. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities provided through the personal and social education programme, especially when they can show their initiative, for example during Police Week in Year 6, or during the class charity events. Pupils have a good understanding of social need in the wider world, and are committed to helping where they can. They are keen on the opportunities to make a difference in school, through the work of the school council. For some pupils, low self-esteem remains a challenge for the staff, but through sensitive support including sessions in the 'Rainbow Room'², these pupils are helped to understand their own self-worth, and can be seen to grow in confidence and happiness. There are, however, sometimes too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. More pupils could be given a chance to be self-governing in meeting their academic targets.
16. Attendance is satisfactory and remains just above the national average for primary schools. Parents inform the school of reasons for absence, and unauthorised absence is very low. Punctuality is good, and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, resulting in satisfactory learning and achievement for all groups of pupils in the school. Almost half of the lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory but there was a very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, amounting to 4 per cent. Half of the lessons seen were good or better. There were examples of very good and excellent

² Small groups of pupils are withdrawn from some of their regular lessons to work specifically on activities aimed at developing their personal and social skills and increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. These activities take place in what the school refers to as its 'Rainbow Room'.

teaching. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when there were twice as many unsatisfactory lessons and the proportion of very good or excellent teaching was not as high.

18. When teaching was excellent, as in a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher shared her very good knowledge of English with the pupils, making good use of eye contact and her sense of humour to involve pupils fully in what they were learning. Their interest was captured immediately as they were given the task of becoming newspaper reporters, and they were able to show that they knew the difference between direct and reported speech and between present and past tenses. In other very good lessons in Year 6, in science as well as English, a brisk pace was maintained, which ensured that pupils were always challenged, although at the same time the teacher checked by careful questioning that all pupils were still following the steps of the argument. In other very good lessons, for instance in art and design in Year 3 and information and communication technology in Year 5, the individual steps in learning were made very clear, often with practical demonstrations. These examples of excellent and very good practice could be shared more widely among all teachers.
19. When teaching was unsatisfactory, and in some satisfactory lessons, the learning objectives had not been defined sufficiently well, and the steps needed to realise them had not been thought out carefully enough. This meant that a majority of pupils could not follow and did not have the necessary understanding to complete the tasks they were given, or else found the task they were given was too simple and did not result in real learning. There was also a weakness in that the teacher did not check in the course of the lesson that pupils had fully understood and were being challenged.
20. Overall, teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is satisfactory. Generally teachers are confident and able to impart their knowledge with ease. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily, not only in English and mathematics but also in other areas of the curriculum, although opportunities to write more extensively in history and geography or to use graphs to represent findings in science could be improved. Pupils are also given satisfactory opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for instance in a role-play in a history lesson about Victorian schools.
21. Teachers make very effective use of learning support assistants to help pupils with special educational needs. Those with both learning and behavioural difficulties are supported well in lessons and in small groups. Support staff are well briefed and ensure that these pupils make sound progress towards their individual targets. The quality of teaching of the more able pupils, whilst satisfactory overall, is sometimes inconsistent. Mathematics and English are taught in groups of pupils defined by ability and in these lessons teachers modify the work further to ensure it is matched to pupils' individual levels of need. Where the teachers succeed in achieving a close match, the pupils make good progress. Overall, the more able pupils make satisfactory progress. The school's very good systems for screening pupils to reveal any possible learning difficulties have shown that all of the pupils who speak English as an additional language are learning and progressing satisfactorily. The school receives regular contact from the local education authority's support service which monitors the presence and progress of these pupils. Currently the school has no need to use the additional support available from this source.
22. There are clear long-term plans for most subjects, and teachers' day-to-day planning of lessons is satisfactory, but they do not always identify clearly enough what it is pupils are to learn. For instance, saying only that they are going to look at something, such as a 'concrete poem' in literacy or 'the standards of Richard and Henry' in history without specifying what pupils will learn from this. Also, sometimes the stages in learning are not clearly enough identified. For instance, pupils in a science lesson did not have a clear understanding of the composition of different materials before they were asked to predict whether light would pass through them. Sometimes the same tasks are set for pupils of all abilities, for instance providing good challenge for the higher-attaining pupils but an inappropriate one for lower-attainers. The objective of a lesson is not always displayed clearly in the classroom and, when it is, teachers do not always return to it with pupils to see if it has been successfully accomplished.
23. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and in most lessons manage it well. There are clear systems of rewards, such as team points, which are understood by pupils and sanctions, such as 'cautions', which are also understood. In all lessons, teachers adopt a calm approach and relationships with pupils are very good. This leads to a good atmosphere for learning, in which pupils find it easy to maintain their interest and concentration. Generally, teachers use questions well to

check that pupils are following the lesson. On the few occasions that pupils are not clear what they are learning, or when the teacher talks too much and does not involve the pupils sufficiently in the lesson, the pupils become restless. Pupils also become restless in a very small number of lessons where teachers, due to a lack of experience, do not effectively and consistently follow the school's behaviour policy. These occasions result in too much time being spent on managing the pupils rather than on learning.

24. Teachers use resources well, including interactive whiteboards and videos, to make teaching lively and interesting. Pupils' learning about Victorian schools was made real as they tried to write in a copperplate style with nib pens, and they were surprised to learn that they might have been caned for their errors! Lessons are generally conducted at a good pace, although sometimes the teacher spends too long talking to the whole class before pupils are able to start on their individual learning tasks. Generally, teachers use support assistants well, although sometimes they are not sufficiently involved in the introductory part of a lesson.
25. Teachers make consistent use of homework, particularly for English and mathematics, and pupils are clear about what is expected of them. This contributes well to their learning, as it helps them to become more independent, and also involves their parents in what their children are learning.
26. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all the subjects that are taught. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is good in the lessons held in the computer suite. Here, teachers work well with the technical assistant, who sometimes shares the teaching while the teacher checks that pupils understand what they are learning. Although teachers use interactive whiteboards and laptop computers to help with the teaching of other subjects, there are not always sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills through other subjects.

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

27. The statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met. This is similar to the situation at the previous inspection. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities to meet the intellectual, social, physical and personal needs of the pupils. The amount of teaching time devoted to each subject is adequate overall but only barely so in the case of religious education and music. Particular strengths in the support for pupils with special educational needs, for extra-curricular activities, for personal, social and health education and for equality of access and opportunity enhance what is provided for pupils.
28. Since the last inspection, the school has worked successfully to improve the learning opportunities it provides. The support for pupils with special educational needs has been enhanced; the range of resources for information and communication technology has been extended and extra-curricular activity has increased. Subject managers have succeeded in ensuring that their subject policies and schemes of work are of good quality and cover all aspects of the National Curriculum. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are fully in place. The literacy and numeracy hours are mostly taught satisfactorily. Teachers and pupils are familiar with their routines and expectations. Good quality training and local education authority support encourage teachers to tailor their input to improve standards. For example, the school has recognised the need for teachers to observe and learn from the good practice in other schools and to modify their own planning. 'Booster' teaching groups operate for a full academic year, using funding from the school's budget to support government grants. These groups are in place in order to raise standards in literacy and numeracy for specific pupils.
29. The provision for special educational needs is very good and is a strength of the school. There is an umbrella of high quality support, both from within and outside the school, managed and led by a highly experienced and committed co-ordinator, from which the pupils gain enormous benefit. There is a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs at the school, including some who display challenging behaviour. Teachers take full account of the targets in pupils' high quality individual education plans and regularly review them. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need are supported very well. They receive their full entitlement of additional support and their progress is carefully monitored. The good support provided by the learning support assistants is a significant factor in the progress pupils make. A range of visiting professionals from outside agencies make a valuable contribution to the school's special educational needs work. In particular, the pupils benefit greatly from the good work of a pastoral support worker who works with 30 per cent of the pupils from the school's register for special educational needs, and is funded by a charity.
30. Pupils with special educational needs are included in most whole-class activities. When pupils are taken out of class it is to focus in depth on an aspect of the work, which the whole class is working on, such as reading or mathematics. This pattern of support is very successful as it results in pupils making good progress. Good arrangements are in place to help pupils catch up on any missed learning. The pattern of withdrawals is reviewed regularly to prevent pupils missing too much of any particular subject.
31. A 'nurture group' that meets in the 'Rainbow Room' has been established to cater for the needs of a small group of pupils who are unable to benefit fully from the normal curriculum, due to emotional and behavioural difficulties. This is an excellent resource, run very effectively by well-trained and committed staff. Pupils' response, both in terms of work and behaviour, is very good. It provides appropriate activities based on the Foundation Stage curriculum in a safe and caring environment and succeeds in including vulnerable pupils into main stream school.
32. In its provision for special educational needs, the school is bringing its practices into line with the most recent national advice. This is contained in the school's new draft policy on additional and special educational needs. Planning and classroom practice clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to inclusion, making sure that all pupils, including the small number who speak English as an additional language, receive their full entitlement.
33. Educational visits are made to local places of interest, such as the library, galleries, museums and places of worship for the Christian, Sikh, Hindu and Islamic religions. Pupils have a wider view of their subjects when they participate in field trips around the Nuneaton area. Musicians and theatre groups visit the school, thus enhancing the curriculum further.

34. The school has very good links with the community. Local police work extensively in the school on a 'Police Language in Evidence' project, which successfully encourages pupils to develop and use their language to solve simulated crimes. Health workers make a valuable contribution on their visits to the school. The school encourages community use of the premises for play-schemes, football, martial arts and meetings. Pupils receive coaching from a local football club and they participate in community indoor sports events. The school's satisfactory links with its neighbouring schools include regular meetings of headteachers; mutual visits by teachers to observe good practice, and pupils visiting secondary schools for science lessons. There is currently limited contact between the subject co-ordinators of partner schools.
35. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs that meets after school, attended by 30 per cent of the pupils. The clubs include boys' and girls' football, cricket, athletics, cross-country, basketball and choir. Also, there are clubs for cross-stitching, quilting, mathematics, computers, art and reading. Many of these are organised and directed by members of staff.
36. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and adds an important dimension to pupils' whole personal development. The school's work in this area now covers all recommended areas, including sex education and drugs awareness education. Teachers' planning shows this breadth of work being covered well. A 'Health Week' is held every year for all pupils, with specialist speakers and a 'lifestyle caravan' visiting. There is a school council, where pupil representatives learn about citizenship and develop further their personal and social skills. They make decisions, for example, over fund-raising for a neo-natal unit and for benches in the playground. Following recent training sessions, teachers are confident in their teaching about sensitive issues such as sex education and drug awareness.
37. Pupils' personal development was one of the school's strengths at the last inspection. This whole area continues to be good, with relative strengths and some areas for improvement. The range and quality of opportunities designed to increase pupils' understanding of moral issues, and to develop their social skills remain very good. The consistently good and fair role models provided by all adults working in the school, together with appropriate and interesting teachings in assemblies and in class times, reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong. All pupils know and respect the school rules and the system of rewards and sanctions. The Friday awards of 'Got its' are a popular means of encouraging good moral and social behaviour. On occasions when pupils have serious problems modifying their behaviour, sensitive and gentle intervention by senior staff demonstrates very clearly what is expected and helps pupils to move towards their personal goals.
38. The personal and social education programme is supplemented by exciting and enriching events in which pupils participate to the benefit of their social skills. A prime example is the Police Week activities on citizenship that involve all the Year 6 pupils. There are other special events for all year groups, often involving specialists from the community. Health weeks and charity fundraising weeks provide opportunities for pupils to plan and work together, as well as informing them and allowing them the chance to empathise with the social needs of the wider world.
39. In order to help the increasing number of pupils whose social skills are limited, and who suffer low self-esteem, the individually tailored activities provided by the pastoral care worker and by sessions in the calm of the 'Rainbow Room' are a real bonus. In this area, the school does well in its efforts to improve pupils' self-worth and spiritual development. Overall though, the provision for spiritual awareness is satisfactory. There is, as yet, no planned approach to ensuring that the moments of wonder, reflection, or emotional response, which are the features of the very best lessons, are regularly and frequently planned into lessons throughout the school. Daily acts of collective worship are well planned and offer clear guidance to pupils, although the promotion of spirituality through silence, reflection and mystery is often under-developed.
40. A good range of experiences is offered to pupils to promote their cultural development. This includes first hand involvement in multi-ethnic activities, like sampling food, art and music from Asia. Drama and singing are used well to inform about cultural differences, and to improve pupils' confidence. The programme of visits to places of worship promotes respect for the traditions and beliefs of most of the main world religions. The school is making a good start in its approach to preparing pupils for life in a multicultural, multiracial society, although there is still a need to overcome racial stereotyping by highlighting more positive role models.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The most striking feature of this school, and one which is highly valued by parents, is the caring, supportive and friendly environment in which the needs of each individual are assessed and provided for. The welfare of all pupils, but especially those with special educational needs, continues to be the highest priority for all teaching and support staff. Procedures for ensuring child protection and the welfare of pupils are very good, and follow the comprehensive guidelines of the health and safety policy and the local child protection committee. Although most staff in the school have undertaken some first aid training, there is an urgent need for a fully trained first aider.
42. The school has very good strategies for promoting good behaviour, and encouraging pupils to give of their best. Classes have their own weekly awards for attitudes and behaviour, and some teachers supplement these with daily honours. The award of star pupil status in a lesson has a marked positive effect on attitudes and on self-esteem. On the rare occasions when disruption occurs in a lesson, it is usually because the teacher is not yet sufficiently experienced in successfully employing the discipline policy.
43. Pupils' absences are carefully monitored and the procedures to record and promote attendance are good. Full attendance is celebrated and, when necessary, the education welfare service is involved if a pupil's absence is giving concern. Overall, the monitoring of pupils' personal development, including their attendance, attitudes and behaviour, is good. Class records are supplemented, as needs arise, with detailed personal logs for a large proportion of the pupils.
44. The school has satisfactory systems in place to check on the academic progress pupils are making. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, targets are set for all pupils at the beginning of the year, and these are monitored at the end of each term. Pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve in literacy and numeracy, and they are also involved in writing their own targets for their reports at the end of the school year. Their progress is checked by tests at the end of units of work. Teachers use this information in planning the next stage of pupils' learning, as well as to review the arrangements for teaching groups. The results of end-of-year tests in English, mathematics and science are passed on to the pupil's next teacher.
45. In the other subjects of the curriculum, assessment of pupils' progress has not yet been formalised. Teachers keep their records and know their pupils and their achievements well. A more formal approach is now being introduced in design and technology and in information and communication technology, but they are only just being developed in other subjects.
46. Teachers review the work that they have done after each lesson and, in the best examples, the information from these is used to modify their plans for subsequent days, even if it means planning an additional lesson. The school now makes satisfactory use of the information it gathers from test results, to identify areas of weakness in teaching. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when the use of assessment information was a key issue for the school. However, there is still a need for further development, for instance in using this information to ensure that the objectives of a lesson and the work set are closely matched to the needs of all individuals and groups within a class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The strong, very effective partnership with parents found at the last inspection has been maintained and underpins all that the school seeks to achieve with its pupils. There is a genuine desire to involve parents and carers in all areas of the pupils' development, and parents feel that the school is very approachable. They think very highly of the school, and particularly welcome the flow of information through the daily home-school link books and the weekly newsletters. Parents have expressed very few concerns, which are mostly suggestions about making the partnership even better.
48. The foundation of this very good partnership is the way the headteacher and staff try to inform and involve parents. This includes the regular support for homework, and the individual interviews held to review and promote pupils' personal development wherever there are problems. Governors also canvas parental opinions in regular questionnaires and there is a variety of information evenings. In response, the parents support the school well in its policies, make themselves available for meetings, and provide generously for pupils when they are involved in charitable, or in-school fund raising.

49. The quality of information provided by the school is good overall and has some real strengths. Parents now feel that they do receive plenty of notice about forthcoming events, as well as forthcoming topics of study. The school brochure is a very well produced and reader-friendly pack but the governors' annual report to parents is not compliant with all legal requirements. Although the majority of parents say they are well informed about pupils' progress, around 10 per cent would like to know more. The inspection team found that the pupils' annual progress reports are not sufficiently clear about how well pupils are doing in comparison with national expectations for children of that age.
50. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is good. Most make a good contribution to learning at home, by supporting reading, spellings and mathematics tasks. Some parents feel that they would like more help in understanding the new approaches to teaching mathematics. Several parents help in school and others accompany school trips and visits. The parents of the many pupils who have special educational needs are generally very supportive of the individual programmes drawn up for each child, which aims to provide a consistency of approach at home and at school, particularly for behaviour management.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. At the time of the last inspection the school was well led and managed but there was insufficient focus on improvements to learning and standards. Data that was collected on pupils' performance was not used effectively to identify areas for development. Since then the school has undergone several significant changes. There have been staffing difficulties and a large turnover in the staff, which has resulted in seven new teachers being appointed in the past two years. There have also been a large number of changes to the governing body. The school has satisfactorily addressed some, but not all, of the issues raised at the last inspection. Currently, the school is soundly led and managed.
52. The school has a clear mission statement – 'Together we will succeed'. It aims to promote pupils' confidence while preparing them for a successful life. Governors, headteacher and staff have a shared commitment to providing a caring community in which pupils can develop. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on raising pupils' self-esteem. Through her very committed leadership, a very positive, caring ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Adults establish trust through care and commitment, which successfully promotes very good relationships and supports the inclusion of all pupils. The headteacher shows great commitment to the personal and social development of pupils. The school's aim for all pupils to succeed in their academic development is less well fulfilled.
53. Since the last inspection the school has satisfactorily introduced the National Literacy Strategy and teachers make better use of texts to develop pupils' understanding of language. Procedures for assessment have improved in literacy and numeracy but are not yet fully developed in other subjects. The school is beginning to make better use of assessment data to develop its curriculum and to set group and class targets. However, the use of learning objectives to help identify clearly what it is pupils are to learn remains inconsistent. Subject managers satisfactorily develop policies and ensure adequate resources are available. Their involvement, other than the managers for literacy and numeracy, has not developed sufficiently to ensure they have a positive impact on monitoring and raising of standards.
54. The governing body is supportive of the school. It satisfactorily fulfils its statutory responsibilities by ensuring that all legal documents are in place, including a school prospectus and a policy for special educational needs. There are, however, a few minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents. The Chair of Governors ably carries out her various duties, including liaison with the headteacher. She is very supportive and highly effective in her role as governor for special educational needs. The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate structure that includes committees for curriculum and premises, and personnel and communications.
55. Governors play a satisfactory role in shaping the direction of the school. They receive useful information from the headteacher and from regular reports from the subject managers. Some gain further knowledge of the school through informal visits. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, their visits do not have a clear focus that would provide more effective information to support their decision making and monitoring of the work of the school. Consequently, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is limited. Governors see questioning policy and practice as an important part of their role. They satisfactorily monitor the spending, which has supported the school's priority of increasing staffing in order to support the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The school has carried forward some of its funding to ensure that staffing levels can be maintained in the coming year. The school makes effective use of specific grants, particularly those available to support the 'Rainbow Room'. It makes very effective use of modern technology, including the use of computers in the library and to store pupil data and financial information. These initiatives are having a positive impact on supporting the work of the school.
56. The headteacher has developed a good team spirit amongst the staff. There is a shared commitment between headteacher, staff and governors to further school improvement. Governors ensure the school's policy on monitoring teaching and learning is carried out. With the support of the school's link inspector, the headteacher and senior management team monitor teaching satisfactorily. While this is currently satisfactory, it does not ensure the better sharing of effective practice amongst the teachers. Procedures for performance management are satisfactorily in place. The school's management and improvement plan is a detailed document that covers the period 2001 to 2004. The supplementary plan for 2002 to 2003 satisfactorily identifies appropriate priorities,

including improving the quality of education provided and developing the subject managers' role. The headteacher and governors regularly monitor progress towards its targets. However, the plan does not clearly identify whole-school priorities to give a strong lead to school improvement. The targets do not always clearly focus on improving standards, and their success criteria are not always specific enough to measure progress towards the targets.

57. Since the last inspection the school has experienced some severe problems with long-term absence by some senior members of staff. There have also been several changes to the teaching body, with more than half of the teachers having joined the school in the last two years. This lack of continuity has contributed to the rather slow progress the school has made towards higher academic standards.
58. Induction procedures for new staff are generally satisfactory, assisted by a very useful staff handbook and a very open policy on sharing advice between the teachers, who work very much as a team. However, the lack of a more formal mentoring system for new staff can occasionally mean that new teachers may not be aware of the best approach in classroom management when confronted with some of the most challenging behaviour.
59. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a high adult to pupil ratio, which means that many are taught in small groups, either to provide support for the less able, or to give a boost to the standards achieved by pupils considered to be borderline.
60. The accommodation is good overall, and benefits from a wide range of small teaching areas to supplement classroom space. It is clean, well maintained, bright and attractive. Display boards are used well to celebrate pupils' achievements and to inspire high standards. The 'Rainbow Room' is a very positive feature, beautifully designed and used creatively for the benefit of pupils' personal development.
61. Learning resources are at least satisfactory in all subject areas. There are strengths in English, in which the range of books for younger readers has been improved, and in art. Parents feel that, since the last inspection, the resources for information and communication technology have improved. Indeed the development of a computer suite and computers available in the library is good, affording good access for pupils. There is now the added bonus of interactive white boards for teachers to use to as a teaching tool.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To further improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- (1) raise the overall standards achieved by pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

(paragraphs: 3-6, 63-64, 75-77, 113)

This will involve:

- (2) providing a stronger educational direction to guide and focus the work of the school, by:

- agreeing clearly identified, whole-school priorities for school improvement and setting challenging but achievable targets, against which the school can measure progress towards securing higher standards;

(paragraph 56)

- developing the role of the subject managers in monitoring, evaluating and improving the standards of teaching and learning within their subjects;

(paragraphs 53, 97, 102, 112, 123, 130)

- developing the role of the governing body so that governors play a more effective role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and to understand the challenge it faces in raising standards;

(paragraph 55)

- (3) continuing to develop the overall quality of teaching and learning, by:

- clearly identifying, from first-hand observation of lessons, those strategies of teaching that are most effective in raising standards, and regularly sharing them amongst all teachers;

(paragraph 18)

- ensuring teachers more carefully identify exactly what it is pupils are to learn in lessons;

(paragraphs: 1, 19, 22, 23, 80, 90, 111, 129)

- improve the effectiveness of teaching methods to ensure activities clearly match the needs of all groups of pupils within a class or set by building on what pupils already know and can do;

(paragraphs: 19, 21, 22, 73, 79)

- further developing and using pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication skills in their learning in other subjects.

(paragraphs: 9, 20, 71, 82, 115)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs:

Area for development	Paragraph/s
The procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the non-core subjects so that teachers' planning can more closely match the needs of pupils.	45-46, 108
Information for parents, by ensuring that the governors' annual report to parents includes all required information and by improving the information to parents on children's standards.	49

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	5	19	23	2	0	0
Percentage	2	10	38	46	4	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 two percentage points.

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)	342
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	35

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	118

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.2
National comparative data	93.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	49	41	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	29	41
	Girls	29	24	36
	Total	54	53	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (61)	59 (53)	85 (82)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	29	37
	Girls	22	29	33
	Total	47	58	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (47)	64 (50)	78 (74)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
324	3	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	228

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
	£
Total income	675,761
Total expenditure	696,052
Expenditure per pupil	2,060
Balance brought forward from previous year	79,854
Balance carried forward to next year	59,563

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.2
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 36.3%

Number of questionnaires sent out	342
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	44	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	41	2	1	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	50	6	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	11	0	7
The teaching is good.	44	47	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	51	10	1	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	35	2	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	39	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	59	7	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	39	2	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	41	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	47	2	2	8

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

ENGLISH

63. Standards of attainment at the time of the last inspection were below national expectations. Inspection evidence indicates that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English is now well below national expectations. This is because of an increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school and because of staffing difficulties over the last few years. In the national tests in 2002, pupils' attainment in English was well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the results were also well below average.
64. Nevertheless, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make steady progress in their learning. This is because of satisfactory, and at times better, teaching, very good levels of help from learning support staff and pupils' positive attitudes to their work. The school has clearly identified the needs of all its pupils. It strives to raise standards, for example by grouping pupils in each year group into three sets according to their ability. It also makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils through the very good work of the special needs co-ordinator and other learning support staff. They provide additional levels of support to those pupils, such as booster and extension groups in order to improve their rate of progress. All teachers have satisfactorily introduced the National Literacy Strategy. This means that they plan tasks that build soundly on what pupils already know. The trend in standards over the last five years shows some improvement although it has not been sufficient to raise standards to those expected by the end of Year 6. The school has identified a weakness in the performance of girls in writing and is addressing this issue by carefully monitoring their progress.
65. Standards in speaking and listening are below expectations throughout the school because pupils enter the school with low standards in this area. However, standards are better than those attained in reading and writing because teachers have placed a strong emphasis on providing interesting and challenging speaking and listening opportunities for pupils to gain in self-confidence and esteem. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills because teachers value their spoken contributions and give them time to complete answers. Teachers provide appropriate questions to support pupils when they struggle to express their thoughts in words. They provide regular opportunities for pupils to work in pairs to complete tasks that require negotiation and insist that pupils listen carefully to each other's contributions. Learning support staff are used very successfully in classes, small groups or individual interaction to discuss the work carried out.
66. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in developing their speaking and listening skills is below the level expected for their age, although a small percentage of pupils have speaking and listening skills that match or are above the level expected. The match of texts to pupils' interest develops their confidence to offer personal responses and to discuss key features from the texts. However, these responses are often in short sentences and require much encouragement from their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make steady progress within the targets set for them because learning support staff provide additional valuable contributions. The personal, health and social education programme provides good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills outside of literacy lessons because they are well organised and use topics that interest the pupils.
67. Throughout the school there are very good relationships between pupils and their teachers who work hard to develop pupils' thinking. Teachers ask challenging questions to encourage their pupils to respond. There are regular opportunities for pupils to listen to music, poetry and extracts from books, and to share conversations between themselves and their teachers. These experiences make a positive impact on their learning. For example, in one Year 3 lower-ability group, one pupil who had listened carefully to the teacher about the role of characters in a play commented, 'You need a narrator so you know what's going on'. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Year 4 because they listen attentively to their teacher and to each other, answer readily and make satisfactory gains in their learning. In one Year 5 class, whilst the teacher read the poem *Down in the Cellar*, pupils sensibly took turns to listen and speak about their task. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils listen carefully and so make satisfactory progress. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. They provide exciting opportunities for pupils to use their speaking and

listening skills. For example, in one lesson, pupils with special educational needs were observed listening intently to their teacher explaining how to write a draft of a newspaper article. When asked if they knew the difference between the present and past tense, one pupil replied very clearly and confidently, 'It's present when the newspaper reporter is there, but it's past tense when he gets back to his office'. In another lesson, pupils understood that direct speech has words like, 'I – the first person'. Most pupils answer in complete sentences but often use phrases such as, 'I went, like, to the shops and, like, spent some money'. Pupils develop their confidence and enthusiasm because teachers also provide many opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills during the summing-up time at the end of lessons.

68. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is well below the level expected for their age, although a few pupils attain a higher level. However, all pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning because teachers provide interesting and stimulating activities. This encourages pupils to acquire an interest in reading for themselves. In Year 3, pupils' attainment is just below the level expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress. Most pupils read with hesitancy and they do not yet have the ability to read with expression, understanding or fluency. However, they know how to use phonics to build up words such as 'disaster' and 'heals'. The small number of higher attaining pupils read fluently and with good expression. They understand the meaning of 'contents' and are vaguely aware of the meaning of 'index'. All pupils are interested in reading and take books home regularly. In Year 4, pupils' reading skills are well below what is expected for their age. This is because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are given individual support to develop their skills systematically, although they still do not read expressively and lack enthusiasm in their reading.
69. Pupils in Year 5 display a lack of confidence and expression in their reading and have little knowledge of authors. They are able to find a book in the library by using a colour code. Pupils in Year 6 discuss a limited range of different authors such as J K Rowling and Roald Dahl but not at the expected level of competence. Average-attaining pupils read reasonably confidently. They recognise words such as, 'bushes', 'buried' and 'disappeared', and use letter sounds to build the words 'mysteriously' and 'successful'. They talk confidently about the plot and characters in their books and predict sensibly what could happen next. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and expressively. They enjoy talking about their books and refer to the text as they recall particular events. There is a large proportion of lower-attaining pupils who read hesitantly and with little expression. However, they try hard and self-correct their errors by building up the words letter by letter or by referring to the picture to provide clues. Pupils who are members of the public library are enthusiastic about reading and are attracted to the books they choose either by the cover or by the brief description. The school has worked hard to organise the school's reading books in the attractive library in order to provide a carefully structured resource to support pupils' development of skills. Pupils enjoy using this facility and use it regularly. This has a very positive impact on their confidence in seeking books that they enjoy reading.
70. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in writing is well below the level expected for their age for the same reason as attainment in reading. Handwriting, spelling and grammar are all well below average. However, pupils are proud of what they achieve and share their work confidently with others because their teachers value their work and praise their pupils for their achievements. Average-attaining pupils in Year 3 know that that speech marks indicate the spoken word and that, in a play, no speech marks are used. In one lesson observed, for example, higher-attaining pupils confidently completed a worksheet based on a piece of writing called *The Sandcastle*. They knew how to extract the direct speech and write it in the form of a play. This is because the teacher had matched work very carefully to the needs of individual pupils in her class. However, they have little idea when to use full stops or capital letters in their writing, and their spelling is poor. For example, average-attaining pupils misspell words such as 'down (dwon)', and 'knocked (knoked)'. Learning support staff provide very good support for pupils to think and check their errors. This has a positive effect on their learning. Handwriting is mainly printing rather than a joined script. In Year 4, pupils receive regular work to extend their grammar and spelling. For example, they were observed completing a comprehension exercise to consolidate their understanding of poetry, which they had read in a shared reading activity.
71. Most pupils produce well-formed handwriting when they practise to improve their presentation. However, this is not emphasised enough at the beginning of independent writing tasks, so that their writing is often badly formed and lacks a fluent style and accurate punctuation. Most Year 5 pupils, however, punctuate their work accurately. They write in a variety of styles and their handwriting is

usually neat and legible. They understand the meaning of idioms such as, 'Let's not beat about the bush', and use effective, descriptive sentences in their report writing, such as 'There was a storm brewing in the north of the Farne Islands'. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experience of writing in various forms, including poetry, posters and other examples of factual and descriptive writing. They use similes and metaphors well to describe their feelings. For example, a higher-attaining pupil has written, 'Like a dog listening to fireworks' and another, 'The snow is dancing like a ballerina pirouetting'. There is some evidence of the development of independent writing in other subjects such as religious education. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to improve their writing in subjects such as history and geography and much of pupils' writing is copied from texts. Spelling is often inaccurate, for example, 'quiet' for 'quite' and 'ear' for 'hear'. Inaccurate grammar and lack of use of paragraphs inhibits pupils' progress in developing their writing skills.

72. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with a few good, very good and one excellent lesson observed. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of standards and place a strong emphasis on accurate spelling, punctuation and handwriting. For example, in one excellent Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked the whole class to find and share with each other all the errors she had made in her newspaper report. They worked hard and enjoyed the task because the teacher supported them well with praise and enthusiasm. As a result, they confidently used their knowledge to write an example for themselves. It is in exciting lessons such as these that pupils learn best. All teachers bring pupils together at the end of each lesson for a worthwhile recall of what individual and groups of pupils have achieved. Teachers use these opportunities well to praise pupils' efforts and to boost their confidence.
73. Where teachers' learning objectives for a lesson are complex and contain too many tasks, pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher and have too little time for independent work, so that many tasks are brief or unfinished. Tasks are not always accurately planned to match the needs of the different abilities within each set. As a result, lower-attaining pupils have tasks that are often too demanding and which do not give priority to their needs to have regular practice in spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Teachers keep a range of records for monitoring pupils' progress. These systems relate closely to the National Curriculum levels in order to identify progress in relation to national tests. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and always identify the strengths of the work. They identify whether learning objectives have been met and regularly praise good work.
74. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The two subject managers have worked hard to improve the school's provision for the subject. For example, they have made a good start in monitoring the quality of teaching, planning and pupils' work in books to assess the progress that is being made throughout the school. Teachers' medium term plans now focus more closely on raising pupils' standards, particularly in further developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school makes good use of external advice to enhance its effectiveness. Visits to places of educational interest, such as the theatre, the British Museum and the Civic Hall, provide further opportunities to enhance pupils' literacy skills. Two drama groups meet regularly to boost pupils' confidence in speaking and listening. Parents and other adults provide valuable support to teachers in classes as they listen to readers to further develop their drama and speaking and listening skills. These experiences have a positive effect on improving pupils' confidence and provide an added dimension to their personal, social, moral and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

75. By the age of 11, pupils reach standards that are well below the national average. This is a similar position to that found at the previous inspection in 1997. However, in recent years, pupils have been making satisfactory progress in mathematics, which is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was inconsistent.
76. In the 2002 national tests for pupils aged 11, their results were well below average overall when compared both to the national average and to similar schools, although these results were affected by the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs taking the tests. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils reaching the higher than expected standard, Level 5, in these tests was also well below average. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls. Similarly, the results of minority ethnic pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are in line with the other pupils. This is a reflection of the very good practices seen in the school in promoting equal opportunities and inclusion. Taking the pupils' results overall, since the last inspection, they have not succeeded in matching the improvements made nationally during that time.

77. Inspection findings show that pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are continuing to achieve standards in mathematics that are as low as those found in the school over recent years. By contrast, the standards achieved by pupils in Years 3 and 4 are higher than previous years. This is because more pupils are now joining the school who have reached standards close to the national average for seven-year-olds. If this trend continues then standards in the school will be likely to rise substantially. Higher-attaining pupils reach sound standards and quality in their work. In Year 6, these pupils know how to divide by the denominator and multiply by the numerator when multiplying fractions. They can also use fractions to calculate 30 per cent of 50 by using $(\frac{3}{10} \times 50)$.
78. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, which is similar to that for other pupils in the school. This is good achievement, given the barriers to learning that many pupils work hard to overcome. It is also a reflection of the high quality of support that these pupils enjoy from learning support assistants, who encourage them and help them to sustain concentration. These pupils have their learning needs carefully assessed by the staff, who then translate the needs into learning targets. Teachers take these into account when planning lessons. The good quality mathematics teaching that follows normally takes place within a smaller teaching group, with the help of a learning support assistant.
79. Inspectors agree with the view of parents that the teaching of mathematics in ability sets is working well. This form of grouping is helping the teachers to focus their teaching on the different levels of understanding among the pupils. Where the teaching is most successful, the teachers use a range of approaches to ensure that their teaching is finely matched to the learning needs of all their pupils. For example, when a teacher was observed teaching fractions to pupils who already knew about halves and quarters, she set work of differing levels of difficulty for the three ability groups she had identified in her mathematics set. Where the teaching is satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory, teachers provide the same work for large groups of pupils, leading to the work being too easy for some and too difficult for others.
80. The school's plans for teaching National Curriculum mathematics and the National Numeracy Strategy across the school are of good quality and they provide effective guidance to staff in their teaching. However, when individual teachers plan and teach their lessons, there is less consistency of quality. In the best teaching seen, the teachers were very clear about the learning that they expected the pupils to achieve in the lessons. They were able to make the pupils understand this and use the lesson objective to check what had been actually learned by the end of the lesson. This has a positive effect on the progress made by the pupils.
81. Overall, the teaching of mathematics in the school is satisfactory, although there are variations in the quality. In Years 5 and 6 the teaching is mainly good, while in the lower years it is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the mathematics they are teaching; they use mathematical terminology correctly and present topics in interesting ways. They use a broad range of teaching styles but, in a minority of lessons, there is too much talking from the teacher, with the pupils being insufficiently active. When this happens, the pupils do not learn as well as they could.
82. Teachers use a range of practical apparatus and equipment to help pupils to gain clear insights into their mathematics and to help them gain confidence. There are good examples of lessons where the pupils used individual white boards or number cards to display their answers to mental arithmetic problems. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher asked, 'What is a sixth of 12, a third of 21, and half of 34?' and pupils displayed their answers. This ensured that all pupils were working hard and showed the teacher when a pupil had not understood and needed extra help. Teachers use information and communication technology imaginatively and effectively with some pupils but, in general, there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to work with this equipment in their learning of mathematics.
83. The pupils have a good interest in mathematics and they often show enthusiasm. In lessons where they are given challenging tasks, at a brisk pace and with a touch of humour, they progress particularly well. When given the opportunity to do so, pupils work together in pairs and in groups. Relationships between pupils, their peers and teachers are very good. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good overall and the staff manage them well, although there are some isolated incidents of poor behaviour, notably in Year 4. The best behaviour in mathematics lessons was seen in Years 5 and 6, where the teachers were more effective in managing the pupils.

84. Teachers mark the pupils' work regularly, with most marking only for correctness and to give praise and encouragement. Some teachers go beyond this to give pupils clear information about how they could improve and what their next steps should be. This is rare, however, and pupils generally are not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing. This means that they are not consistently able to focus on those aspects of their work that they need to concentrate on in order to improve. A good start has been made in assisting pupils develop targets to help them to think about what they need to do to improve. This is being done in some classes, but not all groups of pupils are yet doing this effectively. Teachers consistently follow the school's guidelines for setting homework, which normally relates to the pupils' classroom work. Pupils are generally positive about completing their homework. Parents are supportive of homework and they make good use of the school's arrangements for helping with the pupils' learning. This means that homework is making an effective contribution to learning in mathematics.
85. The mathematics subject manager is leading the subject effectively. He has a wide range of mathematical knowledge and is enthusiastic. Improvements in the assessment of pupils point to what they need to learn next in order to make good progress. The quality of records of the pupils' learning has improved and teachers pass them up to the next teacher at the end of the year. This allows the rate of progress being made in the summer term to be quickly kept up by the next teacher in September.
86. A good start has been made on tracking pupil progress and the school has plans to develop this further. However, the school does not yet have ways of knowing, in sufficient detail, the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils from the time they arrive at the school. There are adequate resources for the teaching of mathematics in the school. These are distributed around the classrooms and some are housed in a centralised area. The mathematics co-ordinator has only been able to see other teachers' mathematics lessons very infrequently. This means that there has been little opportunity for him to know where the teaching is good and where teachers need help or guidance. Consequently, he has not been able to help teachers to raise standards in mathematics as much as he could.

SCIENCE

87. At the time of the last inspection, results in national tests for 11 year olds were close to the national average. The results for 2002 show a similar pattern. Currently, overall standards are slightly below those expected. Nevertheless, the school is maintaining its relative strength in the subject and test results are better in science than in English or mathematics. This is partly because the school gives more time to science than most primary schools, but also because of the very thorough planning, which ensures that all areas of the subject are covered and revisited. What is lacking are more opportunities for pupils to devise and plan their own investigations, and to work out for themselves the best way to record them.
88. The work of pupils in the current Year 6 shows that they have a sound knowledge of the different aspects of the subject and make satisfactory progress in their understanding as they move through the school. They know, for instance, about the function of the human heart. They can explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases, and they understand the effect of friction on an object. However, the opportunities for them to develop their skills of enquiry and investigation are inconsistent, and so this aspect of their work is less well developed.
89. In Year 3, pupils begin to understand the nature of scientific enquiry, for instance predicting how light would travel through different materials, but higher attaining pupils are not given any opportunity to decide how they might carry out an experiment. In Year 4, pupils carry out an investigation into what might happen to their teeth if they did not clean them, but they do not have sufficient opportunity to decide whether the test is fair. In Year 5, pupils carry out investigations into the strength of plastic bags or the permeability of rocks. However, there is no clear prediction in the work of most pupils, as there is in the work of above average pupils on whether different kinds of switches would work in an electrical circuit. In Year 6, in an investigation into force, to see whether the distance you pull back an elastic band affects the distance travelled by a paper pellet, the majority of pupils do show that they understand how to make the test fair. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to devise their own investigations and to decide for themselves how they will record their findings. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 6 the pupils discussed how they might separate sand from salt but, in the subsequent investigation, they all followed an agreed procedure and recorded their findings in a similar way.

90. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and an example of very good teaching was seen in Year 6. This was characterised by the good pace that the teacher maintained as she challenged pupils to think about how the investigation might be conducted. At the same time she checked by sensible questioning that all pupils were following what was going on. Generally, teachers manage pupils well and make good use of resources, such as a video on healthy eating or a range of different materials to test through which ones light would pass. Where there is a weakness in teaching, it is when the pace slackens. Teachers go over again what pupils already know, but do not ensure that pupils really have the knowledge they need before proceeding to the next stage of the work. Sometimes the teacher does not check that pupils have clearly understood the words they use to describe the materials they are working with; this would also contribute more fully to the development of pupils' literacy. There are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to use graphs to measure the results of an investigation. When they do, for instance to measure how far an object travels when propelled by a force, the graph is produced by the teacher and photocopied for all the pupils.
91. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. They are interested in what they are doing, enjoy experiments and work well with each other, either in pairs or small groups, when they carry out an investigation. In this way the subject also makes a good contribution to their social development.
92. The subject is managed well. The subject manager has worked hard to ensure that her colleagues have detailed plans and assessments for each unit of work. This has been significant in maintaining standards in the subject, and the subject manager has also given good feedback to colleagues on the work they are doing. However, teachers do not always ensure that plans are reviewed and modified to meet the needs of their particular pupils. Only limited use is made of computers either in the measurement or recording of pupils' findings.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Standards in art and design are at the expected level for pupils in Year 6 and all pupils make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the standards observed at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively encouraged and supported by their teachers and learning support staff and so make progress in line with others in their class.
94. There was little evidence of pupils' art in Year 3 as they have only recently joined the school. However, they have produced, for example, in coloured pencil, satisfactory drawings of yachts by the shore with good use of perspective, line and tone to give a pleasing effect. Their three-dimensional work is of a satisfactory standard. This is because their teachers have sound subject knowledge, which they successfully share with their pupils to encourage and motivate them. For example, masks and Greek urns have been carefully modelled and painted in appropriate shades. Their sketchbooks provide clear evidence of work appropriately planned to practise their art skills before they attempt their final task. Years 4 and 5 pupils continue to build on their previous skills. For example, in one Year 4 lesson, pupils were observed studying a picture of a famous painter. Because of the teacher's good use of questioning, they explored their feelings, using words such as 'murky', 'gloomy' and 'dark' to describe the mood, and made perceptive comments about the style and lighting of the background. They test various techniques in their sketchbooks. They confidently use charcoal to draw, for example, fruit and vegetables and great care is taken to detail because they are praised and encouraged by their teacher. Year 5 pupils' work done over a period of time illustrates the developing breadth of their experiences in art and design. For example, pupils have carefully chosen a variety of fabrics and textures to create colourful collages of large flowers. Satisfactory use has been made of information and communication technology as an alternative medium to create these collage pictures.
95. By the end of Year 6, pupils' understanding of the different styles of artists is further developed. They have very positive attitudes to their work because teachers provide regular opportunities for them to explore ideas and visual information on the work of famous artists, such as Monet, Picasso, Warhol and Cezanne. For example, pupils' display of colourful, eye-catching paintings of large flowers, with petals boldly outlined in black, illustrates the attention paid to detail and their development of close observational skills. They are given a wide range of experiences, for example, in the use of paint, pastels, charcoal, collage and batik. There are satisfactory links with other subjects, such as history and religious education. For example, in an observed lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically on designing and painting Islamic prayer mats. They know why all prayer

mats have a crescent moon and stars because their teachers have provided valuable opportunities to discuss the symbols used in other religions. 'They are to show light and guide the way', explained one pupil with confidence. They know that Islamic prayer mats have an error in the design because, 'Nothing can be perfect for nothing is as perfect as God. So can we make an error too?' They use their sketch books well to practise a variety of designs and are given responsibility to make sensible choices before they attempt to create the final design. They work confidently and with enthusiasm because their work is valued and shared with others. They use their computer skills well, for example, to research and copy Islamic designs to use in their own work, and this has a positive impact on their learning.

96. Evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall and at times better. In the two lessons observed during the inspection the quality of teaching was good in one and very good in the other. Pupils achieve satisfactorily because teachers plan effectively overall and informally assess their pupils' work so that they are well supported. Classroom assistants provide valuable support to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as additional language. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils to succeed and use their time profitably. They are enthusiastic in their teaching so that pupils have positive attitudes to their work. As a result, they take great pride in what they do and this has a positive effect on their learning. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, which they share with their pupils to encourage them to do their best. However, teachers' learning objectives are not always written in short, simple sentences that pupils can readily understand and so more clearly recognise what they have learned.
97. There are satisfactory links with other subjects such as design and technology, religious education, history and information and communication technology. There are educational visits to places of interest such as the local museum, churches and a mosque. Pupils in Year 4 and in Year 6 regularly attend the art club. School productions provide valuable opportunities for pupils to further develop their printing and painting skills, for example the scenery and backdrops for performances such as *Cinderabba* and *Bugsy Malone*. The experienced and enthusiastic subject manager has adapted the scheme of work to accommodate some elements of the nationally approved subject guidance. This is a useful document to support staff in their planning. She has identified three-dimensional work as an area for development in order to raise standards. She regularly monitors resources and has supported some staff in the past year. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching or the quality and range of pupils' work. Resources are good and well used to support pupils in their learning and this has a positive impact on their progress. These experiences provide an added dimension to pupils' progress and to their social, cultural and personal development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. At the time of the last inspection standards were in line with national expectations. During this inspection it was not possible to make a judgement on standards by the age of 11, as there was insufficient evidence, particularly of the work of older pupils. Not all classes have undertaken design and technology activities this term because they alternate them with topics from art and design. However, from discussions with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work, it can be seen that the school provides satisfactory learning opportunities in design and technology for its pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teaching in three of the lessons observed was satisfactory and, in one, it was very good.
99. Pupils in Year 3 successfully use pipe cleaners to experiment with making stable structures as part of their investigations into making a picture frame. They make good use of their sketchbooks to record their ideas. In two of the lessons observed pupils demonstrated satisfactory making skills when gluing card strips together to make the front of their frame and when decorating using string, art-straws and wooden lollipop sticks. An analysis of Year 3 work from last year shows that they complete appropriate activities for their age. For example, pupils investigated different food groups, such as proteins and carbohydrates, and evaluated different types of bread. They used this knowledge to design their own healthy sandwich. They used a simple template to cut felt fish shapes to make a soft toy, which they decorated with felt pieces and sequins. Last year, pupils in Year 4 completed investigations into 'pop-ups' used in books and made stick puppets. They satisfactorily recorded their designs in their sketchbooks, using simple drawings and lists of the materials required. They evaluated their work, but this was not always very thoughtfully done. For example, an average-attaining pupil wrote, 'I think we could improve the puppets because they don't look right'. No detail of what was not right or how it could be corrected was noted.
100. Currently, pupils in Year 5 are designing a model of a Tudor house in a project that links with their work in history. They use art straws and tape to satisfactorily investigate how to make a basic cube shape more stable by adding additional straws to represent the beams of a Tudor home. Photographic evidence showed that pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of structures to design and build model bridges from art-straws, and their knowledge of mechanisms to build model fairground rides.
101. As a result of the subject manager introducing last year the use of sketchbooks, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing a useful record of their investigations, designs and evaluations. They add measurements to their drawings but these are not often done to scale. Pupils' written work and the use of measurements are held back by their weak literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils present their work neatly, adding samples of materials to some of their designs. These books show good levels of care and interest. Younger pupils are making satisfactory progress in the development of their designing skills. The recording of older pupils' work is more limited and it is not therefore possible to judge their progress in this aspect.
102. The subject is soundly managed. The school has a clear scheme of work based on activities taken from the national guidelines for the subject and others developed by the staff. The subject manager has very recently introduced a comprehensive system for assessing pupils' progress in each activity, but this is not yet fully in use. The subject manager has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching or the quality and range of pupils' work. Resources are satisfactory and well used to support pupils in their learning, though the subject manager has correctly identified the need to develop the use of construction kits. Very little use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning or in recording their work.

GEOGRAPHY

103. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age. The pattern of teaching geography at the school is such that very little took place during the week of the inspection and no lessons were observed directly. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the standard of teaching. However, from discussions with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work, it is judged that the school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities in geography. These are accessible to all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and they make satisfactory progress.

104. By the end of Year 6, the pupils reach levels that are typical of their age, which is similar to the findings of the last inspection. In Year 3 they can identify features of land use in the locality and use appropriate geographical vocabulary. They know about areas used for leisure, farming, commerce, industry, and for residence. They know the location of Nuneaton within Britain and about contrasts with Greece and the Indian village of Chembakolli.
105. Some exciting and imaginative work was seen on 'change and the environment'. Pupils explored possible uses of an old quarry and argued the pros and cons of the options. For example, pupils discussed the extent to which building a factory or a motorcycle track or a nature reserve would create jobs, benefit local people, protect plants and wildlife or give pleasure. Some very thoughtful and well-presented work was produced as a result.
106. In Year 6, pupils have retained a great deal from their geography learning from last year, when they studied the island of St Lucia. They could recall detailed information about the island's location, neighbouring islands, exports, industry and weather. They are able to hold simulated interviews with the imaginary victims of flooding. Work in the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of numeracy and literacy skills through pupils' recording and use of maps and measurements.
107. The pupils generally show good attitudes towards geography by showing pride in the presentation of their work. Teachers regularly mark the work for correctness, but rarely include comments to develop pupils' learning further. Teachers plan well for the subject across the four years. This has had a positive impact on the satisfactory progress that the pupils make. There was evidence of one group of pupils, comprising all abilities, whose work consisted largely of copying text into their books. This was a weakness in teaching in a subject where there are many strengths.
108. The school having an up-to-date policy and good planning for the subject that embraces fully the requirements of the National Curriculum helps the co-ordinator. She is very new to the school, but has the advantage of having a good knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm and clearly defined responsibilities. Systems for the assessment of pupils' learning in geography are not yet in place, but these are planned for the future. Resources for geography are housed centrally. They include a good range of atlases and represent good provision.

HISTORY

109. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
110. From the time they enter the school in Year 3, pupils develop a sense of chronology through the use of time lines, starting with the Ancient Greeks. By the time they reach Year 6, this extends as far as the Victorians. In Year 3, they have been able to compare life in Ancient Greece with the present day through their study of Greek clothes and houses. In Year 4, higher attaining pupils write quite extensively about the Romans, but the writing of lower attaining pupils is much more limited. In Year 5, pupils learn to combine information from different sources, for instance when finding out about the Princes in the Tower. They realise that pictures, such as a portrait of Henry VIII, can also be a source of historical information. Pupils in Year 6 develop a good understanding, for instance of the Victorian era, by combining information from a variety of sources, such as censuses as well as video reconstructions. They are then able to compare Victorian schools with those of the present day. Most pupils write extensively but lower attaining pupils still find this difficult.
111. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In a good lesson in Year 6, the teacher used her own good subject knowledge, combined with a good range of resources to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Victorians. In a lesson in Year 5, the teacher provided a good challenge to pupils' development of English, as well as their social development, as they worked together in groups to find out about the different wives of Henry VIII. However, sometimes the history learning objectives of the lesson are not as clear, and sometimes an activity is not clearly linked to the learning objective and does not challenge the pupils sufficiently. Nevertheless, these lessons are the exception rather than the rule and, overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. When teachers involve pupils they work with great interest, for instance in role-play as Victorian schoolchildren. Pupils have had some opportunities to use the Internet as a source of historical information. Overall, their attitudes to learning are good.

112. The subject manager has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject and has had no opportunity to look at what is happening in other classes; but he has a clear view of how the subject can be developed. The school uses national guidelines to assist in its planning, although this has not yet been developed into an overall scheme that will guide teaching throughout the school. Teachers use visits to places of interest well to widen pupils' experience, such as Bosworth battlefield.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. The standards achieved by pupils in information and communication technology are below those expected for their age. This is because they have only limited opportunities to undertake aspects of control technology and using equipment to sense and measure data. Also, they do not regularly compare the use of information and communication technology with other methods in everyday situations. In all other aspects, their understanding and skills are as expected for their age and they make good progress, as many of them come to the school with few skills. At the time of the last inspection, standards in Years 5 and 6 were judged to be in line with expectations. Since then, expectations in the subject have risen rapidly, and standards in the school have at least been maintained, with satisfactory improvement being made since the last inspection.
114. In Year 3, pupils know how to select a font and change its size. They can also change the size of a graphic, save and print their work. By the end of the year, higher attaining pupils can write a story using a word-processing program. They consolidate these skills in Year 4, and are also able to import digital photographs or graphic images into their text, for instance when writing a 'thank you' letter after a visit to the Gurdwara. In Year 5 they use a template to compile a newspaper, and develop this further in Year 6, when they write their own murder stories in the *Beastly Times*. Pupils make good progress in developing their word-processing skills and, in Years 5 and 6, they can devise a multimedia presentation on their history topics. Pupils have used e-mail to send messages to each other but not yet to others outside the school. There have been some opportunities for pupils to develop ideas and make things happen using a computer program, but these have been limited and so this skill has not been developed well.
115. Some use is made by pupils of computers to support their learning in other subjects. In Year 3, pupils have matched their text about different kinds of houses with digital photographs taken on a walk in the area. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 used the Internet to download designs for Islamic prayer mats, which they used as a basis for their own designs in an art lesson. Some use has also been made of the Internet for research in history, for instance into Ancient Egyptian gods, and in geography for pupils' work on St Lucia. There is still room, however, for teachers to use information and communication technology more fully to promote pupils' learning in other subjects.
116. The overall quality of teaching is good, and this is an important factor in the good progress that pupils make. A knowledgeable and competent technical assistant provides very good support. Teachers make good use of this and often involve her in the direct teaching of skills. Teachers check carefully that pupils have understood the terms that are used, such as 'graphics' in a Year 3 lesson. In a very good lesson with pupils in Year 5, the teacher used her own necklace as a good image of the links made between different pages as pupils prepared a presentation on the Tudors. Pupils were then able to practise the skill on dummy pages before using it to link the pages of their presentation. By making each step clear to the pupils, the teacher ensured that their learning was secure.
117. The school has an adequate number of computers, both in the central suite where lessons are held and in different parts of the school, including the library, where pupils can use them in small groups and independently, for instance at lunch time. These computers are used particularly well to support pupils who have special educational needs with programs specifically designed for them. Pupils with permission also use them to access Internet sites. The after-school computer club provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop their skills in a relaxed atmosphere. Although the school has a number of laptop computers, pupils do not yet use these. The recently appointed subject manager has a clear vision for the development of the subject, and the potential for further improvement is good.

MUSIC

118. There was very little direct evidence of music lessons available during the inspection period. However, a focused interview was held with a group of pupils from Year 6 and further evidence was

gained from looking at pupils' work and teachers' plans. Based on this evidence, pupils' standards are judged to be satisfactory. This is similar to the standards in the previous inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. This is because teachers and learning support assistants support them very well.

119. In one lesson observed in a Year 3 class, sound was used descriptively to represent animal characteristics and movements. Pupils were used to demonstrate the steady beat in the movement, for example, of an elephant. Others offered sensible ideas to represent the movements of other animals, such as rabbits or frogs, by using tambourines or chime-bars. Most pupils know the names of these instruments and use them to practise a sequence of three sounds or movements. In Year 4, evidence from work over time indicates that pupils learn to perform a variety of songs. For example, they have learned the song *Standby for Countdown*. They have used the names of the planets - Mars, Venus and Mercury - to illustrate the number of syllables in each name and write these in musical notation form. They further develop their musical skills in Year 5 so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired a broad experience of listening to and appraising music. They have learned simple musical notation by writing short compositions and improvising. For example, in one lesson observed, they learned about word chants, repeated the rhythm as a whole class and then in groups, before attempting to arrange their own compositions.
120. In a discussion with a group of pupils in Year 6, they illustrated their knowledge of a variety of instruments that they had played. They have listened to and appraised a wide range of famous composers, such as Mozart and Beethoven, and listened to music from other continents, such as Africa. They know the differences between minims, crotchets and quavers and know about such terms as 'ostinato' and 'dynamics'.
121. In assemblies, pupils are introduced to a range of recorded music and are told about the composer. In whole-school singing practice, pupils show that they have a repertoire of songs that they know well. They sing well together, with accurate pitch and clear diction. They sing in two parts, as echoes, and listen to each part so that they are aware of keeping in time with each group. They vary the volume of their singing, paying suitable attention to elements such as staccato notes or a faster tempo. They enjoy their singing and this has a positive affect on their learning.
122. The quality of teaching in the three lessons observed was satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress because teachers have a positive relationship with pupils and they use careful questioning to encourage pupils to listen to music. Teachers plan clearly, building on pupils' previous skills. They provide clear explanations and good use of encouragement and praise so pupils want to learn. Where learning objectives are crisp and concise, pupils understand more clearly what is expected of them and what they are to achieve in the lesson. Classroom assistants are a valuable support in classes and foster pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
123. The subject manager is relatively new to her role. However, she uses her expertise well by teaching in the Year 3 and Year 6 classes to improve standards, particularly in singing. Formal assessment of pupils' performance has been recently introduced to illustrate pupils' progress as they move through the school, though this is not yet having a significant impact. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to visit classes to assess the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. The existing scheme now incorporates elements of nationally approved guidance so that planned activities for all age groups clearly show how pupils' skills will be developed. The school regularly produces musical events, such as those at Christmas. The school choir practises regularly and is a valuable support in assemblies. Visitors to the school include, for example, a member of the local education authority's music service, who provides a valuable contribution to pupils' standards of singing. Visiting music specialists, instrumental ensembles and a multicultural specialist bring a variety of resources for pupils to share and to develop their enthusiasm for music. These experiences enhance pupils' progress and provide an added dimension to their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Overall, the standards achieved by pupils by Year 6 are as expected for their age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. However, the school's programme for swimming does not ensure that pupils reached the expected standard in this activity.

125. Pupils throughout the school make steady progress in developing their practical skills in games lessons. Teachers progressively develop the pupils' hand-eye co-ordination by practising throwing and catching skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 satisfactorily throw and catch beanbags during a simple game of piggy-in-the-middle. Pupils in Year 5 learn to accurately pass netballs using chest and shoulder passes. By Year 6, pupils show appropriate ball skills for their age when playing small-sided games of netball. Pupils also learn the positional names for players, such as centre and goal shooter, and satisfactorily develop their marking and dodging skills.
126. Teachers plan lessons that ensure pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in other activities. Consequently, they make satisfactory progress overall and achieve appropriate standards for their age in gymnastics and dance. In Year 4, for example, pupils use different methods of travelling and produce sequences of movements on the floor and using apparatus. The teacher's good subject knowledge helps pupils to perform forward rolls, cartwheels and safe landings when jumping from a high table. In dance, pupils in Year 6 show sound levels of control as they produce smooth swinging movements at different levels and in different directions to the theme music from *The Clothes Show*.
127. The school operates a swimming programme for pupils in Year 3 only. They have swimming lessons at a local pool once a week for one term during the year. Pupils develop confidence in water and begin to use recognised arm and leg actions on their front and back. By the end of the programme only a few pupils swim unaided a distance of five metres. There are no other opportunities for pupils to develop their swimming strokes to achieve a standard of at least 25 by the age of 11 years.
128. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning. Teachers begin lessons with an appropriate warm-up, which helps pupils to understand how exercise affects the body in the short term. In the better lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and manage the pupils very well and so are able to concentrate on developing pupils' skills. Little time is lost in dealing with disruptions and there is a brisk pace to the activities. Pupils respond well to the teachers' clear expectations of behaviour and their very effective use of praise. Consequently, they are attentive and work hard at improving their performance. For example, pupils sensibly discussed and then demonstrated swinging movements from different sports before carefully developing a sequence with their partner. The teachers' very effective use of demonstrations and the careful development of activities during a lesson result in pupils making good progress.
129. In lessons where the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, too much time is spent on managing the pupils' behaviour. This often leads to too many stoppages, which spoil the flow of the lesson and cut down the time pupils are involved in practical activities. The teachers' choice of activity, at times, does not help to create a calm and sensible atmosphere. As a result, pupils become too boisterous and noisy. Teachers' planning identifies the activity, such as throwing and catching, but does not show how these skills are to be improved. Consequently, teachers do not sufficiently highlight how pupils can improve their performance.
130. The very newly appointed subject manager is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge. She has not had time to monitor the range of activities taught or the standard of teaching but is aware of the need to do so. Resources are generally adequate, though there is a shortage of some small equipment, such as tennis balls. The subject, including the extra-curricular activities that take place, makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on these, on talking to pupils and analysing their work done over a period of time. This confirms that standards in religious education are consistent with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and are similar to the standards observed at the time of the last inspection. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support, so that they participate confidently and also make satisfactory progress within their targets. All pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop their understanding that all people are of value and that there are several faiths other than Christianity.
132. No lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' earlier work confirms that they have had a variety of opportunities to learn about religious beliefs,

life's journey as a pilgrimage and the qualities required. They make satisfactory gains in their learning because their teachers have planned a variety of tasks that are both interesting and stimulating. They plan lessons that provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own experiences. For example, one Year 4 pupil has written, 'In my journey to the North Pole, I would take with me a picture of my family because I shall be lonely'. Pupils learn about the Creation through stories about the seven days in which God created the world and of Adam and Eve. They make satisfactory use of their literacy skills as they write clearly about their feelings of what they dislike about things created by God. For example, one pupil has written, 'I dislike thunder, lightning and the dark'. There is clear evidence in their writing of their understanding of the parables, such as *The Good Samaritan*. A piece of writing entitled, *What makes a Good Friend?* contains the sensitive statement, 'Caring, there for you, special, honest'. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of Buddhism and Hinduism and of celebrations, such as Diwali.

133. In Year 5, pupils further develop their experiences of religious beliefs. They know how Christians celebrate Pentecost. They learn about heroes and heroines, such as Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King, and they relate their special qualities to their own lives. For example, one pupil's heroine is not famous at all. 'Someone I admire is my great-grandma and grandad and their photo is the only contact I have with them.' By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a wide range of religious experiences. They recognise that different religions share features, such as beliefs and places of worship. They have learned about Jewish special events and customs, such as the Jewish New Year, the Passover and a Jewish birthday. In their study of Islam and Hinduism, they compare, for example, different beliefs about death and reincarnation. In the two lessons observed, pupils had good attitudes to their work. They have established good relationships with each other and their teachers. As a result, pupils value the experience of being able to share their thoughts with each other.
134. The experienced subject manager has monitored teachers' plans and work in pupils' books. However, formal assessment of pupils' standards and progress is still in its infancy and there has been no opportunity yet to monitor the quality of teaching. The school makes appropriate use of visitors, for example, to enhance assemblies on a range of religious topics. Pupils have shared different religious beliefs and, as a result, can discuss the significance of a range of religious artefacts, for example, Muslim prayer mats. In a discussion, a group of Year 6 pupils clearly explained how they are developing a greater awareness of themselves and how they are learning to respect others' feelings and practices. They have valuable opportunities to visit places of educational interest such as Abbey Church, Hindu and Sikh temples and a mosque. As a result, pupils develop their writing and speaking and listening skills as they describe the internal and external features of different places of worship. These experiences provide an added dimension to pupils' personal, spiritual and cultural development.