

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SQUIRRELS HEATH JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Squirrels Heath, Romford

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102303

Headteacher: Mr K Burgess

Lead inspector: Hazel Callaghan

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 257539

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	352
School address:	Salisbury Road Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM2 5TP
Telephone number:	01708 446472
Fax number:	01708 479472
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bob Louth
Date of previous inspection:	March 23 <sup>rd</sup> 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Squirrels Heath is a large junior school having 352 boys and girls on roll. Most pupils transfer to the junior school from the adjacent infant school at the end of Year 2 when they are seven years of age. Pupils are mostly from a White British background but there are a small proportion of pupils from a mixture of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils that speak other languages than English at home is similar to that found nationally. Two pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Currently 11.6 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs through the school. This is below the national average. The range of special educational needs includes moderate learning difficulties, speech and language difficulty, specific learning difficulties, physical disabilities and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. An average proportion of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has grown this year and is now similar to that found nationally. The school population is very stable and the number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than in Year 3 and in Year 6 is small. The attainment of pupils on entry to the junior school is broadly average.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22254	Hazel Callaghan	Lead inspector	Science Physical education Art and design Design and technology Music
9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector	
23026	Monica Mullan	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs Religious education History Geography
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory**, but it is better in some areas than in others. The school has gone through a period of declining standards and of pupils' under-achievement in English since the previous inspection. This process has been halted and standards and teaching are improving. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and determination to raise standards. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and attain above average standards.
- Pupils' standards in writing are below average and their achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils achieve well.
- Potentially higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in elements of English and science.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and they build very good relationships with other pupils and adults in the school.
- Procedures to assess what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics have improved but this is not the case in any of the other subjects.
- Subject co-ordinators are not directly involved in monitoring teaching in their subjects

**Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.** It has been better in the last two years. After a significant decline in standards in English, the National Literacy Strategy was introduced later than in other schools and is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and pupils are making better progress in their learning than before. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and curricular planning is consistent throughout the school. Effective systems for tracking pupils' attainment in English and mathematics have been introduced but there are insufficient whole school procedures for assessing pupils' learning in other subjects. The accommodation has been improved and it is used well to support pupils' learning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	C	D	D
Mathematics	B	B	B	A
Science	D	C	C	C

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

**Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.** Standards during the inspection match those attained in the 2003 national tests shown above. Standards in mathematics continue to be strong and pupils achieve well. Compared with similar schools, pupils' progress in mathematics since they were in Year 2 has been well above average. Standards in English are below average overall, but standards in reading are improving and during the inspection were judged as above average. Standards in writing are below average. Pupils' achievement in this aspect is unsatisfactory. The potentially higher attaining pupils are not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable. Average standards in science are being maintained but again many of the potentially higher attaining pupils are not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they make good progress towards their individual targets. Standards in ICT

are in line with those expected in Year 6 and standards in religious education are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. The other subjects were not a focus of this inspection and so no judgements are made on standards or achievement.

Pupils' attitudes to school are **very good**. Their behaviour is **good**. Pupils' moral development is **very good**, their spiritual and social development are **good** and cultural development is **satisfactory**. Attendance has declined since the previous inspection and is **satisfactory**.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. There is evidence of good and very good teaching but because of the inconsistent use of assessment the impact on pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. A **good** range of other activities enhances the curriculum. The pastoral care of pupils is **good**. Their support and guidance are **satisfactory**. The provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language is not sufficiently developed. Pupils develop very trusting relationships with adults in the school. Partnerships with parents are **satisfactory**. There are **good** links with other schools and colleges that extend pupils' learning opportunities.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** When the headteacher took up post two years ago standards in English had already declined significantly. His priority was to raise standards in English and to set up systems to track pupils' attainment so that underachievement could be identified. The National Literacy Strategy was introduced and a strong focus was placed on developing teachers' knowledge and skills. These improvements have started to have an impact on raising standards. Leadership of mathematics is good and the management of the provision of special educational needs is very good. Most co-ordinators are not, however, sufficiently involved in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching in their subjects. Other than in English and mathematics there are insufficient procedures by which pupils' work is assessed and the effectiveness of the provision monitored. Not all staff feel they are part of the general consultation process. The governors are becoming more evaluative of their work and are more involved in monitoring the work of the school. **Governance is satisfactory.**

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

**Parents** are supportive of the school and are very pleased with the pastoral care provided for pupils. They are concerned about the dip in standards, especially in English, but appreciate how pupils' personal targets in English and mathematics are shared with them. Parents are comfortable approaching the school, but say that their views are not sufficiently sought by the school. **Pupils** enjoy school and most think highly of their teachers. The school council is used as an effective forum for seeking their views and ideas. However, the reasons for changes made in school routines have not been fully explained to pupils.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in pupils' writing.
- Find ways to extend the learning of potentially higher attaining pupils in English and science.
- Implement procedures to assess pupils' attainment and monitor the progress they make in all subjects.
- Further develop the roles of co-ordinators so they have secure knowledge of the standards and teaching in their subjects.
- Develop systems to regularly seek the views of all members of the school community, pupils, staff, parents and governors.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and attain standards that are above the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is unsatisfactory and standards in English are below average.
- Potentially higher attaining pupils are not making sufficient progress in English or science.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT are improving quickly.

#### Commentary

1. Standards in mathematics have been maintained over the past four years and in the 2003 national tests they were above those found nationally. These standards were also evident during the inspection and are the result of pupils' good achievement. Pupils' mathematical understanding and the ability to use what they know to solve problems are well taught by teachers. Throughout most of the school, pupils of higher ability are given work designed to increase their understanding and performance. In Year 6 classes particularly, good challenges are constantly provided which are very effective in stimulating pupils' thinking skills and fostering their mathematical development to a higher level.
2. Standards in English have fallen steadily since the previous inspection because the school did not keep abreast of national initiatives. In the 2003 national tests, standards were below the national average and the school failed to meet its targets. This represents unsatisfactory achievement for this group of pupils as most pupils entered the junior school with broadly average standards in reading and writing. A strong emphasis has been placed on improving standards in English over the last two years, which is beginning to have an impact. In reading, standards are on the rise and during the inspection standards in Year 6 were above that found nationally. Standards in writing are improving but not at the same rate as in reading and are still below average. The positive strategies now being employed to promote pupils' writing skills, are not yet raising standards in writing throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are not achieving the standards in writing they are capable of because they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.
3. Standards in science both in the 2003 national tests and during the inspection are in line with those found nationally. These standards are the result of pupils' satisfactory achievement overall, but the potentially higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Pupils' scientific knowledge is taught well, but pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their own investigations and so develop the higher levels of understanding of which they are capable. Because higher attaining pupils in both English and science are not sufficiently and consistently challenged through the school, this is reducing the school's overall standards.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (27.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.1 (27.7)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.8 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 83 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

4. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, and achieve well. They are mostly successful in achieving standards that generally match their individual capabilities. There are particular strengths in the gains made in literacy and numeracy. It is on these areas of pupils' learning that the school chooses to purposefully focus. Pupils often make significant strides in these subjects in all year groups. Considerable emphasis is placed on improving standards in reading. Consequently, pupils are more confident and sometimes achieve satisfactorily in their work in other subjects. The few pupils with English as an additional language do not achieve as highly as they should because they are not consistently targeted and their needs are not systematically identified in teachers' planning. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection.
5. Significant improvement has been made in the provision for ICT in the last two years and this is having a positive impact. Pupils are now making better progress in their learning than in the past. In Year 6 pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age and they use their knowledge and skills satisfactorily to support their learning in other subjects.
6. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. The other subjects were not a focus of the inspection and so insufficient evidence is available to judge standards.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is **very good**. Pupils' moral development is **very good**, their spiritual and social development and cultural development are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Most pupils show a very keen interest in their lessons and all the activities the school provides.
- Relationships between pupils are very good.
- Pupils are very confident and very keen to take responsibility because they are given opportunities from the moment they join the school.
- The school sets very good principles to enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong.
- Provision for spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection.
- The efforts of some parents to ensure the regular attendance of their child are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils are very keen to come to school and clearly express what they enjoy. The great majority shows very good attitudes to learning in most lessons. Nearly all listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. Some often do not want to stop working at the end of lessons. Most show a very keen interest in all the activities the school provides during and after school hours. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their activities and consequently they have high self-esteem and want to do well.
8. Standards of behaviour are good in the classrooms, in assembly, the dining room and the playground. Pupils work and play harmoniously together and relationships between each other are very strong. Pupils with English as an additional language are socially well integrated into the school. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. Most parents and pupils confirmed that bullying does not occur. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
9. Pupils are actively encouraged to become independent and most parents agree that the school is helping their child to become mature. Pupils willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. These range from being a register monitor to becoming a House

Captain and Prefect. These opportunities contribute very well to most pupils' confidence and high self-esteem.

10. The good ethos of the school helps to promote spiritual development. Subjects such as art and design, music and personal, social and health education make a valuable contribution to this aspect. Assemblies and hymn singing in particular, give good opportunities to marvel at the wonder of living things and to reflect on issues of truth, justice and love.
11. The families of almost a third of the pupils take holidays during term time. This has a negative impact on the authorised attendance rate, which is above that of similar schools nationally. It is also has an adverse affect on the attainment and progress of those children concerned.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	5.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. The curriculum is enhanced by a **good** range of other activities, and support and guidance for pupils are **satisfactory**.

**Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching in mathematics is good and leads to pupils' good learning.
- The teaching of English has improved and it is beginning to raise standards.
- Teachers do not sufficiently ensure potentially higher attaining pupils are challenged in writing and science.
- Teacher's knowledge and expertise in teaching ICT have improved.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Assessment in English and mathematics is good, but insufficient in other subjects.

**Commentary**

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7(17)	16 (39)	17 (42)	1(2)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

12. Although many of the lessons observed during the inspection were good, the overall impact on pupils' learning over time, especially in English and science, has been only satisfactory. Teachers are not consistently using their assessment of pupils' progress to ensure activities meet their learning needs from lesson to lesson and this is slowing pupils' achievement. Teaching and learning are good in Year 6 but the quality of teaching across other year groups

is inconsistent and pupils' learning is consequently erratic from year to year. Teaching and learning are judged as satisfactory overall.

13. The teaching of mathematics is good through the school and stimulates pupils' learning. As a consequence, standards attained are above average. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they use every-day examples to make the pupils' learning relevant. Most teachers are committed to improving pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for mathematics.
14. Teaching in English is improving. It is now satisfactory and pupils' learning is more successful than in the past. Standards in English dropped steadily over the last six years. This was because teachers' expectations of what pupils could do were not high enough. Teachers' skills in assessing pupils' attainment and progress were not effective and they had no knowledge of how the school's standards were falling in comparison to those being attained nationally. When the current headteacher took up post he introduced the National Literacy Strategy and a strong focus has been placed on developing teachers' knowledge and skills. This is already having a positive impact on improving teaching and raising standards in reading. The teaching of writing is improving. Where teaching is less effective, however, it is due to insufficient input from the teacher to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, and as a result potentially higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. The school has recognised this and the more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now taught separately so that their learning is further extended. There are no such strategies in place in Years 3 and 4 and the progress of the potentially higher attaining pupils is not ensured.
15. In science, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils' interest is well promoted through simple investigations but teachers do not sufficiently use challenging questions to extend the understanding of the potentially higher attaining pupils. The teaching of scientific knowledge is good, but insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to pose their own questions and to create their own experiments and so develop their investigative skills to higher levels.
16. The teaching of ICT in the few lessons observed in the computer suite was good and pupils were seen to be making good progress in their learning. Teachers' knowledge and expertise have improved. One teaching assistant is permanently deployed to work in the computer suite and very effective collaboration has been established with teachers. However, pupils' knowledge and skills are not sufficiently extended in other lessons. Opportunities are not systematically planned in all classes and so pupils' learning overall is satisfactory.
17. The quality of support provided for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language is satisfactory, but teachers are not sufficiently knowledgeable of their learning needs. Pupils' learning needs are not identified in the planning and activities suitably adapted to promote their learning. This is a weakness that has been recognised by the school and staff training is planned for the coming term.
18. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teachers are very alert to the particular and diverse requirements of these pupils. Careful planning and very good assessment procedures ensure that pupils' needs are very quickly identified and satisfactory learning programmes provided. The main focus is in fostering developments in literacy and numeracy. This is very effective as many pupils are observed to make noticeable progress in these areas. Pupils benefit from the often very patient, and skilled help they receive. They work remarkably hard in small-group lessons and enjoy succeeding in what they have set out to achieve. Very good teamwork between teachers and support staff, is a notable strength in helping these pupils move on successfully.
19. Assessment procedures for English and mathematics are successful in identifying what pupils know and can do. Pupils' attainment and progress are effectively recorded and monitored so that underachievement is identified and strategies for additional support are now being initiated. Assessment of pupils' written work is effectively carried out and gives pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. This is beginning to raise

standards. Regular assessments in mathematics provide teachers with data from which they adapt lesson plans so that pupils' needs are effectively met. Targets for improvement are set in English and mathematics, which are discussed with pupils so they understand the next stages of their development. Many pupils are eager to improve and use the information to support their learning. Targets are still fairly new and are not as yet having a significant impact on standards.

20. Assessment in science has not sufficiently improved. Teachers make regular judgements on pupils' knowledge but this information is not used to track pupils' attainment and progress through the school so that teachers adapt their planning to ensure good progress is made. No formal whole-school assessments are used in any of the other subjects. Plans for assessment are in the final stages of being implemented but insufficient progress has been made in this aspect since the previous inspection when it was identified as a key issue for improvement

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **satisfactory** and pupils' learning is extended by the many additional activities provided.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A good range of activities enhance pupils' learning outside lessons
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

### **Commentary**

21. The curriculum is well planned, and meets statutory requirements including religious education. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the teaching and coverage of geography and design and technology were of concern. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities to extend learning, including sporting activities. The rate of participation is good and many of these opportunities are used well to develop pupils' personal and social skills.
22. The majority of pupils, whatever their background, have satisfactory access to the full curriculum, including activities organised outside the school day. Boys and girls participate on an equal footing in most activities on offer. However, the few pupils with English as an additional language do not achieve as highly as they should because they are not consistently targeted and their needs are not systematically identified in teachers' planning.
23. All pupils identified as having special educational needs are suitably included and have an equal chance to benefit from the curricular opportunities provided. The pupils have very well organised opportunities to share work similar to the rest of the school. Pupils are commonly withdrawn from their classes and taught in the well-equipped room designated for special educational needs. Here they benefit from working in the very secure and supportive environment created. Sufficient staff are available to provide good quality attention and to enable special needs pupils to reach their personal learning targets. Work is very successfully adapted to meet individual requirements.
24. The school has a satisfactory number of qualified teachers and support staff. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to provide support in literacy lessons. The assistant used in the ICT suite has developed valuable skills and a collaborative partnership with teachers, which have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The accommodation has been improved in several ways since the previous inspection. The computer suite with improved equipment and other resources has had a significant impact on improving the provision for ICT.

## Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. The school provides **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance for its pupils. Procedures for gathering pupils' views are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy very good and trusting relationships with most adults in the school.
- Teachers and support staff provide good levels of care for the pupils and procedures for the induction of new pupils are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given very good levels of support and guidance.
- Pupils are well involved in the work of the school.
- Pupils' social needs are well supported by a healthy and safe environment.

### Commentary

25. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. Pupils indicated in their completed questionnaires that they have someone to talk to if they are worried and that most teachers are approachable and helpful, and prepared to listen and give advice. As pupils progress through the school they receive well targeted pastoral support. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are helped to recognise and understand their difficulties and are given strategies to support them. Provision for the few pupils who speak English as an additional language, however, is not sufficiently developed, because it is not closely monitored, especially with respect to the quality of teaching and learning. The school recognises this weakness and training for staff is planned so that pupils are given good levels of support. Good procedures are used for the induction of new pupils to the school and they settle quickly into new routines.
26. Pupils are given good levels of information about the quality of their work and shown how they can improve their standards in English and mathematics. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing personal targets. However, systematic arrangements to let pupils know what they need to do to improve academically are not in place for all subjects.
27. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils' views on school improvement to be heard. They present their ideas, which are acted upon where appropriate. Most pupils feel valued by staff and consider that they are listened to. However, the reasons for the changes in school routines, such as the removal of the afternoon playtime, have not been clearly explained to pupils and there is a significant amount of disgruntled feelings amongst the older pupils.
28. All statutory requirements relating to child protection and health and safety are in place and adhered to. Child protection procedures are secure. The policy is implemented effectively and is in line with that of local child care procedures. Proper checks are carried out on staff prior to their appointment. The arrangements for health and safety and risk assessments are regularly checked. Suitable arrangements are in place and used to ensure that pupils use the Internet safely.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **satisfactory** partnership with parents and **good** links with other schools and colleges. Links with the community are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of information given to parents, including end-of-year academic reports, is good.
- Parents' views are not sought on a regular basis.
- The educational links maintained with both the infants and secondary school in the area contribute well to pupils' progress and development.

## Commentary

29. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school and what it provides. They say their children like school. However, a significant number of parents are concerned about the decline in standards being attained, particularly in English. A small number of parents are of the opinion that the school could develop more regular and formal consultation methods with parents on matters such as the curriculum and school improvement generally. This is a weakness in the school's partnership with parents as there are no procedures for seeking parents' views.
30. The information provided for parents is good. A regular informative newsletter provides news about forthcoming school events. The end-of-year academic reports are of a good standard and clearly identify areas where pupils need to improve. The annual governors' report to parents meets statutory requirements. These are improvements since the previous inspection.
31. The school encourages parents to support pupils' work at home. Targets for pupils' future development in both mathematics and English are shared with parents at the consultative evenings. Opportunities are provided, through the school prospectus, to share with parents the way their children are taught, for example, in mathematics. However, there is not a regular pattern of curricular meetings or information on what is to be taught to support parents' understanding. A very active group of voluntary parents work to raise money for school resources but generally few parents are actively involved in the work of the school.
32. The links with the neighbouring infants' school, particularly about curriculum matters are good and an improvement since the previous inspection. Links with local secondary schools are good. Opportunities for pupils to develop physical education skills are enhanced by the links within the pyramid of schools that exist to share good practice. Pupils in Year 10 visit the school to help develop playground games with Year 6 pupils. The school receives a limited number of visitors to the school to enrich the curriculum. Older pupils have an extended residential visit to Suffolk. Links with local businesses, however, remain underdeveloped since the previous inspection. Members of the community support the school through fundraising events but rarely use its facilities. The school does not do enough to encourage community partners to be critical friends.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. Leadership provided by the senior management team is **satisfactory** as is the management of the school. Governance is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and determination to raise standards.
- Good progress has been made in developing systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics, but insufficient focus has been given to developing assessment in other subjects.
- The deputy headteacher and subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in directly monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- The leadership provided for special educational needs is very good.
- New staff are well supported and the workload of all teachers is effectively managed.
- School finances are well managed.

## Commentary

33. When the headteacher took up post two years ago standards in English had already declined significantly. Teachers' skills in assessing pupils' attainment and progress were not sufficiently effective and they had no knowledge of how the school's standards were falling in comparison to those being attained nationally. The headteacher decided that his immediate task was to raise standards in English and to set up systems to track pupils' attainment so that underachievement could be identified. He introduced the National Literacy Strategy and a strong focus was placed on developing teachers' knowledge and skills. The headteacher took direct control of the monitoring of teaching in English so that there was a clear overview of the provision. Teachers' skills in assessing standards in English have been developed and their expectations of what pupils are capable of have risen.
34. The development of procedures for assessment in all subjects was a key issue at the previous inspection but it has not been seen as a priority and insufficient focus has been given to addressing the concern. Plans for such procedures have been made but not implemented as yet and this is slowing improvement in other subjects.
35. At the previous inspection subject co-ordinators' roles and responsibilities were limited. They are being developed but need to be further extended. In the last two years all co-ordinators have revised their subject planning providing a consistent format that ensures progression of pupils' learning through the school. Co-ordinators have audited their subjects, monitored pupils' work and drawn up action plans that set targets for improvement in the coming year. This represents satisfactory improvement in their management of the curriculum. Co-ordinators, however, are not involved in monitoring teaching and, because there are few whole school procedures for assessment, most co-ordinators do not have a secure hold on standards or the quality of teaching in their subjects. The deputy headteacher provides the essential pastoral care for pupils' staff, and parents, builds effective teams amongst the staff and ensures regular day-to day routines run smoothly. She is not involved in directly monitoring the effectiveness of the school or the quality of education provided.
36. The leadership provided for special educational needs is very good. A highly experienced special needs co-ordinator very competently plans and manages the system. Planning and organisation is effective in ensuring that the very diverse needs of the pupils identified are properly met. There is no direct management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
37. The school successfully inducts new staff to the school and the deputy headteacher provides good levels of support for new teachers. The workload of all teachers is very well managed with time for preparation and marking provided each week. Performance management procedures for all teachers are in place but other staff are not yet included. Procedures for consulting all staff and regularly involving them in school development planning have not been initiated.
38. Governors are more involved in the work of the school than at the previous inspection. With the guidance of the local education authority governors support agency, governors have evaluated their work. They recognise that they need to be more involved in monitoring the school improvement plan and in the development of strategic planning than in the past. Plans have been made to facilitate these intentions. Financial planning and the management of the school budget are good. The school benefits from the expertise of a governor, who is also an accountant, in helping to monitor and control the school's finances and ensure secure plans are made for the future financial health of the school. The school has made effective use of an extensive carry-forward left by the previous headteacher and the funds still remaining have been prioritised to support curricular development and the ongoing refurbishment of the school building. The principles of best value are understood and most aspects are satisfactorily promoted. The governors do not yet ensure that the views of parents and all staff members are sought as part of the consultation process.

39. The school has been through a period of under-achievement in English and in some aspects of the work of higher attaining pupils. Strategies to improve the weaknesses in English are being satisfactorily employed and this is having a positive impact on improving the effectiveness of the school. The school now provides satisfactory value for money.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	976,052
Total expenditure	986,792
Expenditure per pupil	2,764

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	118,725
Balance carried forward to the next	107,985

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

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is good and has led to improved provision
- The teaching of reading has improved and is now good
- Pupils' standards and achievement in writing are not as high as they should be.
- The potentially higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged.

#### Commentary

40. Since the previous inspection standards in English have steadily declined. Standards in the 2003 national tests were below average. Pupils' overall achievement in English in the national tests is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in the aspect of writing. Evidence from the inspection also shows that standards are below average. However, this mainly applies to writing, whereas the majority of pupils attain above average standards in reading and average standards in speaking and listening. The school has made a concerted effort to raise standards and pupils' achievement. Improvements introduced by the headteacher with the support of the deputy headteacher and the subject co-ordinator are beginning to have an impact on raising pupils' level of attainment. The school has recently chosen to implement the National Literacy Strategy and a range of strategies to improve teaching and learning have been introduced. These strategies are already having a positive impact on raising standards in reading but not yet in writing.
41. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. The great majority of pupils listen well in lessons and participate actively when responding to the shared text. Pupils achieve best when teachers' questioning sensitively draws on their previous learning and opportunities are provided for them to talk to each other. However, whilst opportunities for speaking might arise in a number of subjects, these are not systematically planned to enable pupils to speak at length, argue a point of view or make presentations to an audience.
42. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading with the development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books going hand in hand with the development of their reading skills. The majority of pupils are confident and read a variety of books. They cope well with demanding material, read independently and use non-fiction material for research purposes. Teachers' records contain useful information on pupils' progress and pupils are aware of what they need to improve as a result of the use of clear targets. The teaching of reading has been a focus of staff training and has improved as a result.
43. Many pupils are underachieving in writing with few attaining the higher levels. This is partly because of weak teaching in the past and low expectations of pupils' attainment. The school has identified the need to further raise standards in its development plan and provided training for teachers. The quality of teaching in this aspect has improved but is not yet impacting sufficiently on current standards. Whilst pupils write successfully in a variety of forms and at length, their writing lacks organisation, a rich and varied vocabulary and fluent punctuation. Assessment of pupils' written work is satisfactory. Teachers' comments give pupils a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

44. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory but in the past teaching was ineffective and pupils made insufficient progress in their learning through the school. This is evident from the falling standards. The focus on raising teachers' expectations for pupils' work and improving their expertise is having an impact and the teaching observed during the inspections was satisfactory overall. In the best teaching new skills are rehearsed and used effectively to guide pupils' independent work, for instance, when pupils analyse instructional texts in Year 3. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and work is carefully matched to different abilities. Pupils with English as an additional language, however, do not have the same levels of support unless their difficulties have also been identified as special educational needs. Where teaching is less effective, it is due to insufficient input from the teacher to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Sometimes the end of lessons are not fully exploited to assess pupils' learning. Teachers do not refer back to what has been learnt, and sometimes there is not enough challenge for higher attaining pupils. The more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now taught separately so that their learning is further extended and this is having a positive impact on improving their work. There are no such strategies in place in Years 3 and 4. In these classes, teachers do not always plan activities that will further challenge the potentially higher attaining pupils and so they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
45. The subject is now well led by an enthusiastic and very committed co-ordinator. The support of the headteacher has enabled her to grow in confidence and develop her leadership skills. However, management of the subject is only satisfactory because she is not as yet directly involved in monitoring the quality of teaching across all aspects of the English curriculum.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

46. Pupils' literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in a number of subjects such as geography and ICT but because these skills are not systematically identified across the curriculum, many opportunities are missed. There is no clearly planned focus on how pupils' speaking and listening skills or their writing skills are to be further extended and improved.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well.
- There is plenty of challenge for higher attaining pupils in the Year 6 classes.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is used effectively.
- There is good assessment of pupils' progress.
- ICT is not sufficiently used in mathematics.

#### **Commentary**

47. As a result of the serious approach adopted towards the subject, pupils achieve well. Results of national tests for 11-year-olds in 2003 show that a higher than average number of pupils reached at least the expected level. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level is well above average. Pupils' current performance and achievement at this higher level are above average. By the time they are ready to leave Year 6, standards in mathematics are above those found nationally.
48. Teaching and pupils' learning are good. Most teachers are committed to presenting the subject as well as they can and to improving pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for mathematics. Work is generally well planned to promote learning at all levels. Some teachers try hard to make pupils' mathematical work particularly relevant to them, or to provide a practical approach. For example, when introducing ideas of symmetry, pupils' understanding is further promoted by the use of mirrors.

49. Throughout most of the school, pupils of higher ability are given work designed to increase their understanding and performance. In the Year 6 classes particularly, good challenges are constantly provided which are very effective in stimulating thinking skills and fostering mathematical development to a higher level. Pupils of all abilities work hard and are keen to succeed. They appear to enjoy mathematics and sometimes express their pleasure in what they are achieving.
50. Good care is taken to properly test and monitor pupils' progress. In all classes standards are regularly measured and pupils' developing skills evaluated to establish areas for further improvement. This results in teachers being able to set increasingly demanding work. It also has the effect of motivating pupils to learn with greater confidence. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good and constructive attention that allows them to continue to move forward. Any difficulties experienced in a topic are quickly identified. Relevant support is then provided in a small group, and this enables some pupils to succeed at a similar level to their peers.
51. In many of the numeracy lessons observed, teachers regularly encourage the further maturing in pupils' mathematical language and vocabulary. This is effective in helping to provide essential support for new ideas, such as when developing work on area and perimeter. However, at present there are insufficient opportunities made available for pupils to extend their numeracy skills with efficient use of ICT. Although computers and the relevant software are available, they are not routinely used to support learning in the subject.
52. Mathematics is well managed by a knowledgeable and capable co-ordinator. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively implemented for some time and the system is securely in place. It is proving particularly useful in providing teachers with a firm, clear structure for moving pupils on reasonably quickly. Most of the staff are appreciative of this and are comfortable working within its framework. The co-ordinator does not monitor the quality of teaching. As a result, any inequalities in teaching and learning in differing year groups are less easily identified and addressed. Mathematics remains in the same strong position found at the previous inspection and is a strength of the school in terms of standards, teaching and learning.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. The basic skills of numeracy are developed satisfactorily in subjects, such as science and design technology. Pupils make satisfactory use of their developing mathematical skills in other learning areas, such as in Year 6 when bar charts are used in geography. Whilst ICT is used satisfactorily for work on data handling, it is not used routinely to enhance other work in mathematics

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy science and are well motivated to learn because they have many interesting opportunities to explore scientific ideas.
- Most teachers have secure subject knowledge.
- The potentially higher attaining pupils make insufficient progress.
- There are insufficient whole school procedures to assess pupils' attainment and monitor their progress.
- The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work but does not have a clear view of the quality of teaching or of pupils' standards and achievement.

## Commentary

54. In the 2003 national tests standards were average. Pupils' attainment in science has been maintained at this level over the last four years and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. Pupils enjoy science and are well motivated to learn because they have many opportunities to explore scientific knowledge through teacher led investigations and experiments. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain the standards expected of them by the end of Year 6. Pupils are developing a satisfactory ability to use their knowledge to solve problems. By the end of Year 6, most pupils recognise the need to make their tests and experiments fair so that their results are reliable. They use their mathematical skills effectively to make a variety of measurements to secure accurate results in their experiments. These results are recorded satisfactorily using diagrams, tables and graphs but rarely using a computer. Pupils' learning is not sufficiently promoted using ICT
55. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is sometimes good, especially in Year 6. Here pupils have good opportunities to explore previous learning through a range of interesting activities that enable them to understand the impact of scientific principles on everyday things. Most teachers have satisfactory levels of subject knowledge. Pupils who have difficulties in literacy are well supported. They are given writing frames to support their recording and to structure their answers so they feel confident to express their ideas. Too often, however, activities are not adapted to cater for the learning needs of the more able pupils. The potentially higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and their ideas extended through probing questions from the teacher or through problem solving activities that require them to use the knowledge just gained. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions and to develop their own tests. These skills are required if pupils are to attain the higher than expected standard of Level 5. The achievement of the potentially higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory, as they do not attain standards of which they are capable.
56. Pupils' attainment is assessed by the teachers using their own tests and observations, but this information is not collated to provide an overview across the year groups. There are insufficient whole school procedures for monitoring pupils' progress and the school does not have a secure mechanism for tracking their achievement. Teachers in Year 6 quickly assess the potential of pupils in their class and additional booster lessons are provided to enable pupils to attain the expected standards. For some, however, there is too much ground to cover and they do not attain the higher levels they are capable of. The co-ordinator is exploring a number of strategies to support the process of assessing pupils' attainment and progress but this is an aspect that has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection.
57. The management of science is satisfactory but there has been insufficient clear leadership to ensure standards in science rise. The co-ordinator has drawn up a scheme of work that effectively supports teachers' planning. He reviews pupils' work looking for potential strengths and weaknesses. As a result he has identified that there is insufficient use of ICT in science and has tried to address the problem through the purchase of suitable programs. The co-ordinator is not involved in analysing national curriculum tests results and has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching through the school. Consequently he does not have a secure hold on the quality of teaching or of standards.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Direct teaching of ICT skills is good.
- There have been marked improvements in resources and staff expertise.
- Class computers are not used enough to extend learning in other subjects

## Commentary

58. The majority of pupils across the school reach standards in information and communication technology that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. All pupils including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily against their prior attainment.
59. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the direct teaching seen during the week of inspection, teaching was good and enabled pupils to make rapid progress in the lesson and to achieve well. In the majority of lessons observed, effective demonstrations were made of new skills. This enabled pupils to make good gains in the lessons. Teachers build well on pupils' previous learning, use questioning well and intervene effectively to support pairs and individuals. A teaching assistant is permanently deployed to work in the suite and very effective collaboration has been established with teachers. This has impacted positively on pupils' achievement so that better progress than in the past is now being made. The use of a detailed scheme of work from a neighbouring specialist school supports teaching and learning and includes a useful element enabling pupils to identify and evaluate what they have been learning. An effective and well-established system of pairing pupils has created a positive ethos where pupils collaborate spontaneously with those who are more able, and always willing to help others. The use of pupils' skills outside lessons in the computer suite, however, are not fully developed and pupils' learning is not regularly revisited in other contexts. This reduces pupils' overall progress and achievement is satisfactory overall.
60. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. It is well planned and covers all strands appropriately except for the use of electronic mail, which will be developed later this year. Whilst elements of self-assessment are useful within lessons, this is still underdeveloped and does not include any reference to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. The headteacher is acting as the subject leader. He has been into classes but has not carried out any formal monitoring of teaching and learning and has not secure knowledge of the areas of strength and which aspects require improvement. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made in resources and accommodation for the subject and staff confidence and expertise have been developed through training. However, the ICT development plan is not sufficiently focussed on raising standards.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. ICT is used satisfactorily in a number of subjects with some good examples in history and geography where pupils in Year 6 have used the Internet to research information on the Victorians and on rivers. Some of the activities in the suite are linked to work in other subjects, but these opportunities are not identified systematically in teachers' planning or regularly provided. The use of ICT is not sufficiently planned in mathematics and science to contribute to the development of pupils' skills.

## HUMANITIES

### History and geography

62. **History and geography** were not areas of focus for the inspection and evidence of these subjects was only sampled, consequently no overall judgements can be made about the provision, standards or teaching within these subjects. No lessons were observed in **history**, however, from examination of planning files and displays of pupils' work, the school meets curriculum requirements for history.
63. Two lessons were observed in **geography** and in these lessons pupils' learning was satisfactorily promoted through sound teaching. Evidence gained from examining teachers'

planning and pupils' work, as well as talking with the co-ordinator, shows that the weaknesses in the curriculum identified at the previous inspection have been addressed.

64. Teachers' planning in **history and geography** are now underpinned by comprehensive schemes of work. Pupils' knowledge and skills are satisfactorily promoted but there are no whole school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The development of pupils' skills is not monitored and so progress is not ensured. This is an aspect that has not improved since the previous inspection. Co-ordinators have had no opportunity to monitor standards or teaching through the school so strengths and areas for development can be identified.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationship between religious belief and moral behaviour are well developed.
- Elements of drama are used well to promote learning.
- There is no assessment of pupils' work or monitoring of teaching.

### Commentary

65. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards of attainment meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities and groups make the same progress and achievement is satisfactory.
66. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of knowledge about some of the world's main religions and are beginning to understand how religious belief impacts on people's lives. In Years 3 and 4, teachers ensure pupils gain suitable experience and understanding of Christianity and other religions, such as Sikhism. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, work productively on, for example, stories from the Gospels. They sometimes learn very well when studying particular aspects of the Easter story and the profound meaning for Christians of the events of that time because teachers take time to develop pupils' good understanding. There are strengths across the school in the good use of drama. For example, this is used effectively to bring elements of the Old and New Testaments alive for pupils and to re-enforce knowledge.
67. Teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall but with some examples of better practice observed in Years 3 and 6. Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and good in these effective lessons. It is strongest in those lessons where a teacher's good subject knowledge is firmly in place. This is particularly noticeable when a teacher is able to extend an explanation sufficiently well to satisfy pupils' natural curiosities and desire for information. In many classes, pupils are increasingly led to appreciate that religions traditionally promote a moral code of conduct that effects personal choices and behaviour.
68. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject satisfactorily. The locally agreed syllabus is appropriately followed. Work is suitably planned and organised to enable staff to meet requirements in all age groups. There is no assessment of pupils' work currently taking place. The lack of monitoring of teaching, identified at the previous inspection has still not been addressed.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. **Art and design, physical education, music and design technology** were not areas of focus for the inspection and evidence of these subjects was only sampled, consequently no judgements can be made about the provision, standards or teaching within these subjects.

70. One lesson of **music** was seen and several observations were made of pupils engaged in composition and singing. Standards in these brief observations were generally in line with those expected and the teachers promoted pupils' learning well through their own good levels of expertise. Pupils' learning is enhanced through extra curricular activities, such as the choir and recorder clubs. Teachers from outside the school teach a large number of pupils to play brass instruments, violins, woodwind instruments and the cello. There are plans for these pupils to be drawn together as a school orchestra. The quality of singing through the school is of a good standard and the large choir, made up of boys and girls in Year 6, is competent at singing two and three part songs with enthusiasm and a good sense of rhythm. Their diction is clear and the tone sweet.
71. One lesson was observed of **physical education** that covered gymnastics. The teacher in this lesson has good subject knowledge and expertise. Pupils were well motivated and enabled to improve the quality and range of gymnastic movements that they performed as part of a short sequence. A comprehensive range of other physical education activities are provided including swimming for pupils in Year 5. Most pupils attain the expected standard of 25 metres and many are able to swim a significantly greater distance by the time they leave school in Year 6. There is a good range of after school sporting activities that are well attended by both boys and girls. The school's football and netball teams regularly compete with other local primary schools. The school football team has benefited from the support of a professional coach and has been particularly successful. Those pupils who are identified as being talented footballers are encouraged to join the local five a-side team so that their skills are further developed.
72. No lessons in art and design or design and technology were observed but brief observations of lessons were made. Pupils were engaged in discussing their work and many displays of pupils' work around the school were examined. In **art and design** pupils are given opportunities to work in many different mediums, but there were few examples of three-dimensional artwork. Pupils' learning in history is well supported through art activities. A splendid display of pupils' portraits of people in the Tudor period gave good evidence of their knowledge of costume and fashion of the time. Different fabrics, jewels and trimmings were used to good effect. A good range of pupils' work in **design and technology** is also on display giving evidence of a satisfactory range of skills being developed. Pupils work in a range of mouldable, flexible and rigid materials. They examine commercially made artefacts effectively and make their own designs to fit a design specification.
73. Teachers' planning in **design and technology, physical education, art and design, and music** is underpinned by comprehensive schemes of work. Pupils' knowledge and skills are suitably promoted but there are no whole school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils' skills are not monitored and so progress is not ensured. This is an aspect that has not improved since the previous inspection. The co-ordinators for these subjects have provided comprehensive planning for their subjects and so teaching meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement in the provision for design and technology since the previous inspection. Co-ordinators in design and technology, physical education and music are enthusiastic and have worked with individual teachers to encourage their own subject knowledge and expertise, but they has been no opportunity to monitor standards or teaching through the school so that provision is further improved. Currently, there is no co-ordinator for art and design.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

74. The school does not specifically timetable lessons on citizenship or personal, social and health education, although many of these elements have been reviewed recently and specific objectives are linked to and planned within different curriculum subjects. The subject is adequately resourced and the deputy headteacher who leads on the subject has attended training. To this extent provision is **satisfactory**. The programme is enhanced through visits by the school nurse to support the school in teaching sex education and by the police to contribute to the teaching of drug awareness. The involvement of all classes in the school council is developing pupils' understanding of elements of citizenship effectively.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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