

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST ANN'S HEATH JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Virginia Water

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125073

Headteacher: Mr Graham Bollands

Lead inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

Dates of inspection: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 267737

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	285
School address:	St Ann's Heath Junior School Sandhills Lane VIRGINIA WATER Surrey
Postcode:	GU25 4DS
Telephone number:	01344 842900
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Stephen Sizer
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2003

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Situated in Virginia Water, Surrey, St Ann's Heath Junior School draws its pupils not only from the immediate area but also from parts of Egham, Chertsey, Staines and Lyne. With 285 boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 11, the school is larger than most primary schools. The socio-economic background of the pupils is generally above average. At around 8 per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Just over 10 per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, but very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Around 5 per cent of the pupils are from a travelling background. The numbers entering the school after Year 3, and leaving the school before Year 6, are above average. One fifth of the pupils, an average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. Thirty-two pupils receive help from outside specialists for a range of needs, including dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties. Six pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The attainment of each year group of pupils when they start school varies from average to above average. There has been an almost complete change of staff since the last inspection in February 2003, when the school was identified as having serious weaknesses.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Lead inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography History Music Physical education
31729	Mr B Harrington	Lay inspector	
18498	Mrs D Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Personal, social and health education and citizenship Special educational needs
21069	Mr P Edwards	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

St Ann's Heath Junior School is a **good** school. Very well behaved pupils achieve well, reaching above average standards by the time they leave the school. The overall quality of the teaching is good, and the school is led and managed well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- A new team of dedicated and hard-working teachers provides good, and at times very good, quality teaching which enables pupils of all capabilities to learn and achieve well.
- Standards of attainment, which are above average overall by the end of Year 6, are improving rapidly, especially in writing, but pupils' spelling skills are still weak.
- The good, happy and friendly ethos which pervades the school is reflected in the positive attitudes pupils have towards school and their very good standards of behaviour.
- The headteacher and his deputy have shown good leadership and a dogged determination to bring about improvement and have created a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff.
- The school provides a very good variety of activities outside the normal curriculum.
- The planning of the formal curriculum lacks flexibility and creativity and does not allow some subjects and key skills to be taught in sufficient depth.
- The school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills or to exercise personal responsibility.
- The school provides very good care for the pupils' personal welfare, health and safety.
- The school works well in partnership with other schools and the local community and very well with parents, who contribute much to pupils' learning through their support for the school.
- Cramped classroom accommodation has a negative impact on practical aspects of learning and hinders the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

The previous inspection two years ago found that the school had serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case, as the school has tackled the major elements of the key issues identified at that time with energy and determination. The overall improvement has been very good. The quality of pupils' writing has improved and there is better provision for religious education. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly, and a rigorous system has been introduced to keep a check on what happens within the classroom. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, with strong support from the governors, now provide the school with clear educational direction.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	B	B	A
mathematics	B	D	C	C
science	A	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.*

Overall, standards are above average, and pupils achieve **well**. The level of attainment shown by pupils when they start school varies considerably. In some year groups, including the current Year 3, the overall level is above average. In others, including the last group of pupils to take the national tests at the end of Year 6, it is average. In some classes, pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in the past, but better deployment of staff, and recent improvements and a more rigorous approach to teaching are helping pupils of all capabilities and irrespective of background to make good progress and to achieve well.

Since the last inspection in 2003, the school's national test results at the end of Year 6 have improved in English and mathematics. The results in 2004 were close to the national average in mathematics and science and above average in English. When compared with similar schools, the results were average overall, but well above average in English. Inspection findings indicate that standards are continuing to improve, particularly in English where the school's main efforts have been focused, although standards in spelling are weak. Standards are above average in English, science, information and communication technology and religious education and average in mathematics. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop independent learning skills.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**, but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to become independent learners or to exercise personal responsibility. Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to their work. Their participation in extra-curricular activities and their response to special occasions and practical activities is very good. The standard of behaviour throughout the school is very good. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are good. The level of attendance is average and punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is **good**. The teaching in half of the lessons seen during the inspection was good and in a quarter it was very good. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teachers manage their classes very well. They are conscientious and hard working and work together very well in year-group teams. This helps to ensure individual lessons are well planned and provides parity of learning experiences for all pupils.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides a very good variety of extremely well supported extra-curricular activities and very good additional enrichment of the curriculum through residential visits, special events and visitors to the school. However, the planning of the formal curriculum lacks flexibility and creativity. Because not enough time is allocated to them, some subjects, such as design and technology and geography, are not taught in sufficient depth, and the teaching of music is weak. Teachers do not fully explore possibilities of relating work in one subject to that in another, and not enough emphasis is given to teaching basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The range of learning resources is satisfactory, but the cramped classroom accommodation restricts the range of teaching methods and limits opportunities for practical work and the development of independent learning skills.

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides them with good support, advice and guidance, and has satisfactory systems for seeking the views of the pupils. The school has good links with other schools and the local community and very good links with parents, who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, both at home and at school.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The overall quality of leadership and management is **good**. The headteacher and his deputy have worked hard and effectively to bring substantial improvements since the last inspection and to create a very good sense of teamwork amongst the largely new staff team. The leadership provided by other staff in key areas is good. The school is managed well, and there are good systems for keeping a check on what is happening within the classroom and the progress pupils are making. Governance of the school is good. Some governors bring substantial expertise and have made a very good contribution to helping the school to move forward since the last inspection. Financial matters are managed very well. The governing body ensures that the school fulfils statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are generally pleased, and many are very pleased, with the education the school offers their children. Pupils are generally pleased with their school. They like coming to school, feel they are learning a lot and have confidence in their teachers.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Provide a more innovative and creative curriculum, which allows all subjects to be taught in sufficient depth, which seeks to develop better cross-curricular links between subjects and which ensures that basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught across the curriculum.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and for them to take on greater personal responsibility within the school.
- Improve the quality of pupils' spelling.
- Pursue avenues to improve the quality of the accommodation to provide sufficient space for pupils to carry out practical activities and pursue independent learning activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects**

Overall, standards are **above average** and pupils of all capabilities **achieve well** throughout the school.

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

- Standards are improving and pupils of all capabilities are making much better progress now than they were at the time of the last inspection.
- Standards in writing have improved significantly and are now above average, although pupils' spelling skills are weak.
- Pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and also in information and communication technology, religious education and physical education.
- Pupils make good progress in individual lessons in other subjects, but achievement over time is adversely affected by the lack of time devoted to the foundation subjects.
- The school pays good attention to the needs of different groups of pupils, enabling pupils of all capabilities to achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. The previous inspection report was critical of the standards achieved by all pupils in English, particularly writing, religious education, geography and history. More able pupils were making insufficient progress in mathematics, science, information and communication technology and design and technology. The findings of the current inspection indicate that good progress has been made in addressing these issues. Even though pupils are now making good progress and achieving well overall, it is evident that low expectations and unsatisfactory progress in the past in some classes have affected the standards which pupils are currently attaining. A further factor which has a bearing on the standards observed in different year groups is the level of attainment shown by pupils when they start school, which varies considerably. In some year groups, including the current Year 3, the overall level of attainment on entry is above average. In others, including the last group of pupils to take the national tests at the end of Year 6, it is average. There have been good improvements in most subjects since the last inspection, and very good improvement in English, and standards are starting to rise again. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching, and greater thought has gone into the deployment of staff. Pupils in all year groups are making much better progress than before, and pupils in Year 3 are now making a very good start to their education in the school.
2. The school's national test results at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2004 improved on those obtained shortly after the school's last inspection in 2003. The results in science were marginally lower than the previous year. These results have halted the overall downward trend of the previous four years, and although they did not reach the heights of the school's best ever results in 2000, they indicate positive progress. In English, the results were above the national average. When compared with similar schools on the basis of pupils' prior attainment, the results were well above average. In mathematics and science, the results were average when compared with the national picture and with similar schools. Although the school did not meet all of its targets in 2004, it came very close to the challenging targets it set itself for English.

Targets for the coming year are realistic, but nevertheless represent a good degree of challenge.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (27.5)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.9 (26.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.8 (29.1)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 78 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Inspection findings reflect the continuing improvement which has been made this year and show that standards in the current Year 6 are above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. The measures taken to improve the quality of pupils' writing have been particularly successful, and the great majority of the pupils write well. However, pupils do not always transfer the skills they have learnt in English lessons to their writing in other subjects, and the quality of their spelling is not as good as it should be. In mathematics, pupils are rapidly making up for lost ground in previous years, and pupils of all capabilities are now achieving well. Pupils' investigative skills are a particular strength in science. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, religious education and physical education, and pupils achieve well in all three subjects. Other subjects were not inspected in detail, although examples of good work were observed in art and design, design and technology, geography and history. Whilst pupils may make good progress in individual lessons in most foundation subjects<sup>1</sup>, their overall achievement is affected by the fact that these subjects do not have sufficient time allocated to them to allow pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in depth.
  
4. The school has significantly improved the way it helps all pupils to make good progress. Although more could be done to help pupils develop independent learning skills, the work provided for more able pupils is much more challenging than that provided at the time of the last inspection. Pupils who are gifted or talented receive good levels of support and guidance, including extension tasks to challenge their skills, which help them to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their individual education targets. This is due to good support and to the inclusive nature of their learning. In lessons, they learn as well as other pupils because tasks are well matched to their needs. Pupils from travelling families are also supported well. They are fully included in all aspects of learning and benefit from good guidance from the local education authority's support services. Over the last three years, girls have achieved better results than boys in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The gap between results is wider than that found in most schools in English, and contrary to the national trend in mathematics. Nothing of concern was noted during the inspection to suggest that one group is more favoured than another, although unsatisfactory progress in the past, resulting from 'spoon-feeding' and unchallenging tasks, and insufficient opportunities for pupils to exercise their independence when approaching tasks may well account for the differences. The school now monitors the work of all

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<sup>1</sup> The foundation subjects are: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, and physical education.

pupils, and groups of pupils, very closely in the core subjects<sup>2</sup> and is aware if any particular group of pupils is under-performing.

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

The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Pupils' attitudes are **good** and their behaviour is **very good**. The level of attendance is **average** and punctuality is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils participate enthusiastically in the very good range of extra-curricular activities and special events which the school provides.
- The school generally provides good opportunities for personal development, but not enough opportunities for responsibility or for independent learning.
- Pupils' very good behaviour is a response to the very high expectations of their teachers.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and to the school. Their interest in school life, particularly the range of activities provided and special events and occasions, is very good and is reflected in the very high attendance at extra-curricular activities and the fact that many clubs are oversubscribed. In some lessons, pupils' attitudes are very good, although there is some room for improvement with a very small number of pupils who display disinterest in some lessons. Pupils are generally willing to be involved in the life and work of the school, although there is a lack of opportunity for pupils of all abilities to improve their learning skills through managing their own learning and by developing their research skills. Pupils relate well to each other and to their teachers. The very good induction procedures for pupils entering Year 3 help to establish good relationships and positive attitudes. Most pupils are keen to learn and much of this enthusiasm is derived from their teachers. Pupils are generally confident, although some are reluctant to speak in front of others and contribute to lessons. The school has very high expectations for pupils' conduct to which the pupils' response is very good behaviour. No pupils have been excluded for poor behaviour in the last year.
6. Pupils' personal development is good, and provision for their moral development is very good. Pupils are attentive and responsive in assemblies, learning through moral tales to distinguish between right and wrong and through the presentation of other cultures, developing respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils enjoy the mental challenges of problem solving and the thrill that accompanies successful attempts. They readily empathise with characters in stories and are adept at writing in character. Pupils respond very well to their teachers' expectations and co-operate well in pairs, although they do not always work together quite as successfully in small groups. Some pupils have established their own social and academic targets to augment the class codes. In the playground and in the dining hall, they present themselves as friendly individuals who have good understanding of the rules of living in a society. The vast majority of pupils enjoy lessons and feel that they learn a lot in school and readily declare how much they like the teachers. Pupils have visited the places of worship of several religions and this has provided them with a good introduction to multicultural understanding. Visits to art galleries and musical performances help pupils to define their sense of community and their place in the world.

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<sup>2</sup> The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

7. The rate of attendance for the previous year was just below the national average. This satisfactory rate of attendance has been maintained over a number of years. The administrative secretary, who follows up absence on the first day, monitors attendance closely. As a result, there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils are rewarded with certificates for good attendance and, for the most recent term, 70 pupils had achieved 100 per cent attendance. The school is aware that much authorised absence is related to family holidays being taken during term time. The incidence of lateness is very small.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	5.9	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The overall quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum, which is enriched by a **very good** variety of activities outside the normal curriculum. The staff provide a **very good** level of care for the pupils. The school's links with parents are **very good**, and links with the community and other schools are **good**.

#### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' work are **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection, and the team of committed teachers is working hard to make things even better.
- Good classroom management and the pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour create a good ethos for learning throughout the school.
- Interest in learning is generated through special events, but not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- The teachers plan their lessons collaboratively, but do not yet include enough cross-curricular work or focus sufficiently on developing key skills across the curriculum.
- The teachers cater well for the differing needs of pupils and, most of the time, provide much greater challenge for the more able pupils than before.
- There are good procedures to assess how well pupils are doing and to keep track of their progress in English, mathematics and science.

#### Commentary

8. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection, when it was said to be unsatisfactory. The current team of teachers, most of whom have joined the school in the last two years, and teaching assistants is enthusiastic, committed and hard-working. They have done much to rectify the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. They work well together and show a determination to bring even further improvement. The incidence of unsatisfactory

teaching has reduced dramatically and three-quarters of the lessons observed during the current inspection were good or better. There have been major improvements in the way writing is taught. Competence in the teaching of religious education has improved. There is increasing use of information and communication technology as a tool for teaching. Positive features noted in the last inspection, such as the successful teaching of different strategies in mathematics, the emphasis on practical investigation in science and the support for pupils with special educational needs and from the travelling community, continue to be strengths in the teaching.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0)	11 (23)	25 (52)	12 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	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.*

9. There is a good ethos for learning throughout the school. Teachers manage their classes very well, and the very good standard of pupils' behaviour enable teaching and learning to take place without unnecessary interruptions. With few exceptions, the pupils are interested in their work, and their positive attitudes make a major contribution to their learning. They listen well, and are generally cooperative. They work well with a partner, but not always as successfully when working with a larger group. There is little evidence now of the undemanding, sterile, gap-filling exercises and colouring-in that were criticised in the last inspection report. Teachers are becoming more adventurous in the methods they use and require pupils to complete more substantial pieces of work than before. However, because of constraints of the curriculum and timetabling, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to exercise and develop independent learning skills, for example, through research, deciding on different ways of completing or presenting a task, or determining their own way of carrying out a practical task.
10. A very good feature of the teaching is the way the school builds special events, visits and visitors into the teaching programme. Pupils remember these occasions vividly and talk enthusiastically about what they have learnt from them. A particularly good example was the Anglo-Saxon day for pupils in Year 4, which took place during the inspection and which kept pupils absorbed in a wide variety of interesting and creative activities throughout the day, helping them to gain a much greater insight into Anglo-Saxon life than through more traditional teaching methods. The teachers and assistants work hard to make their classrooms stimulating places to be, with attractive and interesting displays which provide good visual reminders of previous learning.
11. The arrangements for planning lessons are good. Teachers work together to produce lesson plans in year-group teams. This helps to ensure individual lessons are well planned and provides parity of learning experiences for all pupils. By working together, the teachers pool their expertise and discuss the effectiveness of their lessons together, leading to further improvement in subsequent lessons. Over the last 18 months, initiatives to improve pupils' writing skills have been successful, resulting in a marked improvement in the quality of pupils' writing. Pupils are also given more substantial pieces of writing to complete in subjects other than English, but they do not always apply what they have learnt in English lessons to their writing in these subjects, and teachers do not seize the opportunity such occasions offer to help pupils consolidate their learning.
12. The teachers are starting to explore opportunities for more cross-curricular work. In Year 4, for example, a design and technology project to create pop-up books provided an ideal medium for teaching English skills as well. However, teachers are not yet

imaginative enough in their planning to explore such possibilities of deepening pupils' understanding and developing key skills across the curriculum. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are developed well in their lessons in the computer suite, but pupils still do not have enough opportunity to use new technology themselves across the curriculum to help them to find things out or to communicate and present their recorded work. Arrangements to overcome the lack of expertise in music by using plans from a published scheme of work are effective, although not enough time is devoted to music lessons to enable all aspects of the scheme to be taught.

13. A major criticism of the previous inspection report was that work was not matched to pupils' needs, and the more able pupils, in particular, were not given sufficiently challenging work. This aspect has improved considerably as, in most lessons, teachers ensure that their planning reflects the different needs of their pupils and provide work of differing levels of difficulty. In mathematics, pupils are taught in classes which are set according to pupils' mathematical ability, and this is proving effective. Occasionally, the work is still not challenging enough. The teaching of pupils with additional needs is good. This encompasses pupils with special educational needs, the very small number of pupils whose mother tongue is not English and who may occasionally still have difficulty with aspects of the English language, and pupils from the travelling community who may have missed a significant amount of time at school. Tasks are carefully differentiated so that all pupils can be included and play a full part in lessons. Teaching assistants are well focused so that guidance is available when required. Good teaching consequently leads to good learning for the different groups of pupils at the school.
14. Assessment procedures have also improved since the last inspection. Good procedures are now in place in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievements in these subjects are tracked carefully as they move through the school, so that specific targets for improvement can be set. Results from standardised and optional tests are analysed carefully and used in the next stage of teaching. This is helping standards to rise, particularly in Year 6. There is still little assessment of pupils' work in the foundation subjects because the school's main priorities for development have, rightly, been elsewhere and there has not been enough time to implement action plans for assessment since the last inspection. These action plans indicate that this is an area for future development. The work in pupils' books is, on the whole, marked carefully. In many cases, teachers provide good diagnostic comments that help pupils to improve their skills and show them what they need to do next. However, teachers are not consistent in their approach to marking pupils' writing, particularly in the context of other subjects, and greater rigour is needed at times in pointing out where pupils have made mistakes and how they could improve.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum and a **very good** range of activities outside the formal curriculum. The overall quality of resources is **satisfactory**, but the accommodation is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A wide range of interesting and very well supported activities, clubs, visits and events enriches the curriculum and supports learning very well.
- The balance of the timetable does not allow for all subjects to be taught in sufficient depth and leads to a lack of creativity.
- Not enough attention is given to the development of cross-curricular links and the way key skills are taught across the curriculum.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and the needs of other groups is good.
- Apart from the lack of a music specialist, teachers are well matched to the curriculum and are assisted well by the support staff, who make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- The accommodation has a negative impact on many practical aspects of learning and the development of independent learning skills.

### **Commentary**

15. The curriculum provided by the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and includes religious education in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Although the curriculum has improved since the last inspection, particularly with regard to the way pupils' writing skills are developed, it is still not well enough balanced. Too much time is allocated to the study of English, to the detriment of other subjects, such as art and design, design and technology and music. This does not give enough scope for pupils to develop their creative skills. Timetables are often imbalanced, leading to almost every morning in many classes being entirely taken up by English and mathematics, with too little time allocated to the foundation subjects; consequently standards in these subjects are not as high as in English and science. The strong ethos of the school supports pupils' personal, social and health education well. Teachers plan a very effective programme including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness.
16. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are well met by good individual education plans that are known by their teachers and other adults who help them, as well as by their parents. Pupils are fully involved in setting their own targets and take on good levels of responsibility for achieving them. Teachers and learning support assistants know these pupils well and are effective in creating a supportive learning environment for them. The school also supports the needs of travelling pupils well, and there are good links with external support services wherever needed.
17. All pupils at the school have equal opportunity to access all the activities on offer. None are excluded from any activity, either during the day or after school. Inclusion, therefore, is a strength. The good support that both less and more able pupils receive in lessons means that pupils of all abilities enjoy school and make good progress.
18. Enrichment of the curriculum through a very wide range of clubs, visits, residentials and visitors is very good and is a major strength. There is very high attendance at clubs. Over 70 pupils were observed in the after-school choir, preparing for a performance. There was high attendance at sports clubs and the bridge club during the inspection. During the inspection, a very enriching experience for all pupils in Year 4 was observed in which they spent the day as Anglo-Saxons. Parents and governors give strong support to many of the extra-curricular activities and events by giving generously of their time and expertise.
19. A good team of teachers is well matched to the needs of the curriculum. The lack of a music specialist has a negative impact on the overall provision for this subject, but the staff work hard to overcome this, for example, in their contribution to the very successful after-school choir and annual musical production. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together and support each other well. Teachers' skills are well matched to the subjects they teach and to their levels of responsibility.
20. The school stands on a pleasant site and there is plenty of space for pupils to play outside. However, the teaching accommodation is cramped and poorly arranged and is

unsatisfactory overall. There is too little room in some classes, particularly Year 6, for pupils to undertake practical aspects of learning. This has a negative impact on their learning, especially on their personal skills, as they are unable to move freely around the classrooms to organise and collect their own resources. In Years 4 and 5, learning is disrupted by pupils having to walk through classrooms to reach other rooms. The information and communication technology room can only be accessed from another classroom, and its awkward shape makes it a difficult room in which to teach. Pupils in Year 3 are taught in temporary accommodation, and do not have easy access to the school's main facilities.

21. Resources are satisfactory. The library and classrooms have benefited recently from large expenditure and this has contributed to the development of pupils' reading skills. The interactive whiteboards are used well but are not yet in all classrooms and this causes some inconsistency in the way lessons are taught. Pupils with special educational needs have a dedicated room that is attractively presented and effective in enhancing the pupils' learning. Good quality displays are evident throughout the school and contribute well to its overall warmth and purposeful atmosphere.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Pupils are **very well** cared for and are provided with **good** support and guidance. They are **satisfactorily** involved in the work of the school from an early age.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff provide a very high level of pastoral care for all pupils.
- Child protection procedures are well established.
- Induction arrangements are very good.

### **Commentary**

22. The school continues to provide very good levels of pastoral care and good support for the pupils. The headteacher has been named to deal with any issues of child protection that may arise. He is supported in this role by the deputy headteacher and they have both received recent relevant training. Child protection procedures are reviewed at the beginning of each year with all the staff and they are detailed within the staff handbook. Very good provision has been made for pupils with specific medical needs. A worry box provides each year group with the opportunity to express any concerns that may arise, and pupils receive good informal support from their teachers who are prepared to listen and offer support.
23. The health and safety committee of the governing body monitors the actions identified in the workplace inspection. Most pupils, however, complain that although the toilets are clean they are unpleasant to enter. The vast majority of pupils acknowledge that there is an adult in school that they would consult if they were worried. A small number do not agree but, when questioned, older pupils stated that there are some topics that they did not think were appropriate for sharing in school and were best discussed at home. The incident diary shows that there has been a very small number of incidents relating to racial abuse and poor behaviour. The diary details the steps taken to alleviate the problems and these appear to have been effective.
24. Staff keep careful track of pupils' progress and provide pupils with good support and guidance. This is particularly true for pupils with additional educational needs, where the school's support helps these pupils to benefit from all that the school has to offer. Induction arrangements are very good. They are extensive and encourage friendships. Group work in Year 3 reinforces induction initiatives and is supported by the efforts of pupils in Year 6 in befriending new pupils at playtime.

25. The way in which the school seeks and acts upon the views of the pupils is satisfactory. The School Council meets regularly and has two representatives from each class. This is a new initiative that has been introduced by the headteacher, and pupils appreciate the fact that their views are being taken seriously. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to take on major responsibilities and little encouragement of independent initiatives.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has **very good** links with parents. There are **good** links with other schools and with the community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents receive good formal and informal information about the school and its work.
- Parents make a significant contribution to pupils' learning through the help they provide at special events and through the contributions of the parent-teacher association.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education.
- The local community is used well for visits to enrich pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

26. Parents receive good-quality information about the school through formal documentation and the regular newsletters and the end-of-term newspaper. Introductory meetings for each year group at the beginning of the year provide parents with an overview of their children's studies. Parents are kept well informed during the year through meetings prior to educational visits, national tests and sensitive topics such as drugs education. The format of pupils' progress reports has not been addressed, as was advised in the previous inspection report, but remains satisfactory.
27. A significant number of parents regularly help in school, making a good contribution to pupils' learning. During special events, such as arts week, as many as seventy parents support the visiting artists by sharing their skills with pupils and providing extensive opportunities for teaching and learning. The parent-teacher association organises a range of social and fundraising events during the year through which efforts they are able to provide additional learning resources such as the interactive whiteboards.
28. The headteacher and staff make themselves available to parents at the beginning and end of each day, and parents are very comfortable in approaching the school with questions or concerns. New parents are canvassed after their child's first half term in school to verify the effectiveness of the induction procedures. Parents are particularly pleased about the way that their views are sought and their views are taken into consideration by the school. Homework is set regularly and the prospectus clearly details the school's expectations of parents, teachers and pupils in this area of their work.
29. The school has good links with the local and wider communities. Pupils enjoy a wide range of learning experiences through educational visits and visitors to school. Visits to the Hindu Temple, the Synagogue, the Mosque and Church have provided pupils with an insight into the complexity of our multicultural society. Visits to the Royal Albert Hall for the Children's Promenade, the school choir's contribution to the Woking District Music Festival, and visits to galleries and museums allow pupils to share creative experiences with their peers.
30. The vicar is a regular visitor in school and pupils visit the church for celebrations and for musical performances. The administrative secretary has assumed responsibility for the

performance of musicals each year, which enable all pupils to celebrate the success of the school. These events have proved very successful and several performances are undertaken to satisfy the demand of the local community.

31. Older pupils are prepared well for the next stage of education. Most pupils transfer to the local high school and there are good arrangements in place to make pupils' transfer as pleasant as possible. Good links with this school have resulted in joint initiatives for pupils in Years 5, 6 and 7. This has helped pupils to make a smooth transition into secondary school and leaves them feeling confident about the move. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 talked excitedly about their transfer to secondary school and all were looking forward to the challenge.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership and management of the headteacher and of other key staff are **good**. Governance of the school is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has provided good leadership since the last inspection, has instigated many improvements and has a clear vision of how to take the school forward.
- Standards are rising because of the strong leadership of subject co-ordinators and the deputy headteacher.
- The governing body's role in managing the school is supportive, helpful and effective.
- The school is effective in managing its budget and obtaining additional funds.

### **Commentary**

32. During the last two years, the headteacher has shown a determination to raise standards and has been successful in achieving this goal because of the effective support from colleagues, governors and parents. Staff have taken on new responsibilities willingly, and the positive ethos at the school helps to provide a stimulating learning environment. The action plan, drawn up after the time of the previous inspection, has been addressed very effectively. Very effective measures have been put in place to deal with the key issues concerning raising standards in writing and improving provision in information and communication technology and religious education. The action plan and current school improvement plan have very clear agendas as to how the improvements will be implemented, and the tight monitoring of the progress towards the goals has resulted in significant success. Through the example of her own very good teaching practice and the support and advice she provides for colleagues, the deputy headteacher has played a significant role in helping to improve standards of teaching and learning.
33. The subject leaders in the core subjects have provided a clear direction for raising standards. Good monitoring of the pupils' work and the effective use of assessment information have enabled them to identify areas of weaknesses in the pupils' learning. The co-ordinators have then looked carefully at how they can address these shortfalls. Good use has been made of advisory staff from the local education authority for staff training. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching, and the unsatisfactory teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has been eliminated, and much more good and very good teaching is now observed. Many of the foundation subject co-ordinators are either new to the school or new to their roles, but they are already showing a clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and how to take the subject forward. Leadership of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has benefited from recent training which has led to good quality skills and

clear awareness of the needs of this group of pupils. Requirements are fully met and governors are well aware of their responsibilities and meet them well.

34. The governing body plays a significant role in the strategic development of the school. Since the previous inspection, it has become much more proactive in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides. A number of governors are regular visitors to the school and have a very clear knowledge of what is happening in the school. Regular meetings with, and presentations by, subject co-ordinators enhance the governors' awareness and their understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. There is no complacency and although governors are very supportive of the school, they fulfil their obligations to act as 'critical friends'. Relationships between the governing body and the staff are very good, and this helps to maintain an open climate, whereby all are aware of what is taking place in the school. The governors undertake regular training sessions, providing them with a clear understanding of how their school is performing in relation to other schools. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory obligations.
35. Financial planning and monitoring of the school budget are very good. The governors make themselves aware of trends in expenditure through comparing the school's finances with those of other schools using data on the government's web sites. Governors are looking carefully at options to enable them to implement the workforce remodelling initiative, although the school's very limited budget limits the strategies available to them. A careful analysis of the budget has resulted in the decision to reduce the planned admission number as the governors have identified the optimum class size for financial efficiency. The governors monitor very carefully the impact of any major spending decisions and evaluate the impact on the quality of education. For example, with the large number of staff new to the school and the new roles and responsibilities, they are now evaluating the impact that staff training sessions are having on performance.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	798 273
Total expenditure	760 867
Expenditure per pupil	2 462

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	(1 237)
Balance carried forward to the next	36 169

36. The school's administrative staff play a key role in the day-to-day and long-term financial management of the school and are very effective. The office runs smoothly and the staff are an important and efficient initial contact for parents and visitors. Taking account of the quality of education provided, the leadership and management and the standards achieved by the pupils, the school is providing good value for money.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Provision in English has improved significantly since the last inspection and pupils are now achieving well.
- The skills of reading and writing are taught well.
- The pupils' spelling skills are weak.
- Assessment and procedures for tracking the pupils' progress are good.
- The subject is led and managed very well.

#### **Commentary**

37. The results of the 2004 national tests in English at the end of Year 6 were above the national average and were also above average when compared with similar schools. Based on their prior attainment in the Year 2 national tests, the results were well above average. Inspection findings show that the pupils' attainment in reading and writing is above average, although their spelling skills are weak and not as good as they should be. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are also above average. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved significantly, particularly in writing, as a result of improved teaching and the very effective leadership provided by the subject co-ordinator. Pupils are now achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants.
38. Writing skills are above average by the end of Year 6 because this aspect is taught well. As a result of the previous inspection, the school looked at its approach to the teaching of writing and recognised that there were too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different styles. The teachers use a variety of interesting and stimulating strategies to teach pupils how to write. For example, in some of the best lessons, the teachers make very effective use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate how the pupils might make their writing more interesting. The pupils write in a very good range of styles and for different audiences. Play scripts, reports, letters, biographies and creative writing are all used successfully to improve the pupils' writing skills. Writing skills have also improved because the teachers mark the pupils' work very well and provide them with a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve.
39. The pupils' reading skills are good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy reading and are provided with a good range of opportunities. Pupils read regularly at school and at home and, by the end of Year 6, most are fluent, expressive readers. Most have a very good range of strategies for helping them to decode unfamiliar words. The pupils enjoy reading both fiction and factual books, although the stock of books in the school library, despite recent additions, is only satisfactory.
40. The pupils' spelling skills are weak, and the school has identified this as an issue for further development. It has implemented a number of strategies in order to improve this

situation. A significant minority of the pupils enter the school with poor phonic<sup>3</sup> skills and the school has introduced extended spelling sessions during the day for all pupils. However, these sessions have not been successful in raising the standard of spelling. There is no consistent approach to the correction of incorrectly spelt words.

41. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are above average, although many pupils lack confidence in speaking to an audience. In lessons, there are many opportunities for pupils to exchange ideas in pairs and small groups, but they are less forthcoming in whole-class situations, and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to develop confidence and independence in these situations. Informally, pupils respond readily to questions and express themselves clearly.
42. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Examples of very good teaching and learning were observed in most year groups. A particularly strong feature of the best teaching is the way in which teachers make lessons interesting. Most do this by preparing captivating introductions to lessons, for example, through the very effective use of the interactive whiteboards, developing specific themes and keeping up a good pace to the lessons. The teachers are very good at questioning the pupils, identifying what they know and understand, and encouraging them to respond in extended sentences, thus improving their spoken vocabulary. Although in most lessons the teachers match the work very closely to the pupils' ability, particularly that of those with special educational needs, there are a small number of occasions when the more able pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge. The positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils contribute significantly to their good learning.
43. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management for the subject. Her very good classroom practice and expertise have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The introduction of very clear assessment procedures and regular monitoring of the pupils' progress has ensured that staff and governors have a good awareness of how well pupils are progressing and what needs to be done to improve standards further.

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

44. There are satisfactory opportunities to use and develop literacy skills across the curriculum. There are good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills through regular classroom discussions. Although the pupils' writing skills have developed very well since the previous inspection, teachers do not make full use of opportunities to promote writing in other subjects, such as history and geography. The writing skills that are taught in literacy lessons are not transferred to writing activities in these other subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well across the school due to good teaching.
- The setting of pupils in Years 4 to 6 has had a positive impact on the learning of all pupils.

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<sup>3</sup> Phonics is a teaching programme aimed at developing an awareness of sounds in the spoken and written word. Pupils learn to read and pronounce words by linking the sounds they hear spoken with the letters, letter groups and syllables they see written.

- Assessment is good and there is a clear view of how well pupils achieve over time.
- Leadership is good and is helping to raise standards.
- Numeracy is not planned for or taught well enough in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

45. The results of the national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were very close to the national average and the average for schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. They marked an improvement on the previous year, when the results were below the national average and very low in comparison to pupils' prior attainment. Inspection evidence concurs with the most recent results and shows that standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6. Long-term evidence suggests that pupils have not achieved as well as they should have in the past. However, as a consequence of good teaching, pupils are now learning and achieving well in lessons and the improvement in standards, which began last year, is continuing.
46. In almost all lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching was good. High-quality planning, combined with good teaching skills and knowledge, has a positive impact on the quality of learning in each lesson. Examples of this were seen in Year 6, where pupils were learning about the rotation and reflection of shapes. Well-planned lessons provide different activities for each ability group in the classes and make very effective use of the additional support to encourage learning by different groups. This leads to positive attitudes so that pupils enjoy the challenges set.
47. Setting for mathematics in Years 4 to 6 is having a positive impact on the provision. It enables very specific learning tasks to be identified for pupils of the different ability groups in each year. Consequently, all pupils feel fully included and achieve well. Equally good teaching is seen in all the ability groups.
48. Assessment procedures in mathematics are good. There is good evidence that pupils' achievements are being carefully tracked as they move through the school. This allows targets for future successes to be set and monitored. Tracking documents show that progress has speeded up in Years 5 and 6 and that standards are beginning to rise. They also show any areas that require further development, and this information is being used well to identify weaknesses in pupils' achievements, which can then be targeted for improvement.
49. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. There is a clear overview of the provision and good analysis of standards. Monitoring of teaching has ensured that mathematics is taught well and has highlighted areas for future development, such as the need to develop numeracy skills through other subjects. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

50. Pupils' competence in mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects when they have the opportunity to do so. Overall, however, the opportunities for pupils to develop and use numeracy skills across the curriculum are not as good as they should be. Numeracy skills are only used incidentally and there is a lack of planned opportunities in most subjects to develop or consolidate these skills.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by Year 6 and pupils achieve well in all aspects of science.
- Lessons are well planned to include many practical investigations.
- Leadership is good and has a positive impact on provision.
- The accommodation inhibits pupils' independent learning and personal responsibility skills.

### **Commentary**

51. The results of the national tests in science at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were very close to the national average and the average for schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. These results were slightly lower than those achieved in 2003, but inspection evidence shows that standards have risen this year and that the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is now above national expectations. Pupils of all ages and abilities are making good progress and learning well.
52. The pupils' good achievement is due to the good quality of teaching that pupils receive across the school and to the very well planned lessons which ensure that all aspects of science are taught thoroughly. The good use of scientific investigations to help pupils learn is a key feature of the subject, and a strength of the provision. Lesson plans carefully identify a wide range of experiments for each aspect of science studied. Consequently, pupils enjoy the subject and work hard to succeed. This was exemplified in Year 6, where pupils attained above average standards as they undertook experiments to separate mixtures by sieving, filtering and evaporating in order to obtain the original ingredients of their particular mixture. Pupils successfully developed their own flow charts so that they could organise the experiments for themselves. This resulted in very good thinking and organisational skills and good understanding of the scientific concepts involved in the tasks.
53. Leadership and management of science are good and are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Good progress has been made in dealing with the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Pupils' achievements are being tracked carefully as they move through the school. This is a key feature in the rising standards evident in the subject. The emphasis on investigative science is also helping to raise standards and improve interest and enjoyment. However, the accommodation is unsatisfactory and restricts aspects of practical science. Some classrooms are too small to enable pupils to access resources for themselves or to move around safely during their experiments. At these times, teachers have to hand out all resources and organise them for the pupils. This prevents pupils from taking on personal responsibility and ultimately has a negative impact on the development of independent learning skills, and is a weakness of the provision.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The key skills are taught well.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.
- The teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively.
- Not enough opportunities for the use of information and communication technology are identified in other subjects.

### **Commentary**

54. Pupils attain standards that are above average overall by the end of Year 6, and they are now achieving well. There has been good improvement in the school's provision in information and communication technology since the previous inspection, resulting in better standards and improved achievement.
55. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are confident in using computers for a wide range of purposes. They demonstrate good word-processing skills, producing 'newspapers' and fact sheets, and inserting pictures to add interest to their work. They have a good awareness of how computers are used for spreadsheets and use formulae for working out simple computations. For example, they planned an end-of-term party, accurately identifying relevant costs. They make effective use of multimedia programs to present information about themselves, and they are very adept at using the Internet to undertake research, for example, when looking for information on the water cycle.
56. Teaching and learning are good because of the teachers' strong subject knowledge that enables them to demonstrate programs and respond to pupils' questions with confidence. In all year groups, teachers make good use of the available interactive whiteboards for demonstration purposes and this helps to keep the pupils on task and maintain their interest. The curriculum is well planned, and all aspects of the curriculum are covered in good depth, although the use of computers and sensors for controlling and modelling is not as well developed as other aspects. Lessons focus on the teaching of key skills and build systematically on what the pupils have previously learned enabling them to develop good skills.
57. Improvements in information and communication technology have been made because of the good leadership in the subject. The recently appointed co-ordinator has established areas for development based on the good work undertaken by the previous co-ordinator. Her strong subject knowledge enables her to offer advice and support to colleagues. She is aware of the shortcomings of the computer suite, and plans are being considered as to how the accommodation might be improved.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

58. The use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum is satisfactory, but has been identified by the school as an area for improvement. Although there are occasional good links in subjects such as English and mathematics, with the writing of stories and poems and the compilation of graphs and charts, a consistent approach has not yet been implemented. For example, in subjects such as history and geography, teachers are not identifying opportunities to develop those subjects through the use of information and communication technology.

## HUMANITIES

59. This curriculum area comprises, **religious education, geography and history**. Geography and history are taught alternately. At the time of the inspection, history was being taught in Year 4 and geography in Years 3, 5 and 6. Two lessons in each of Years 3, 5 and 6 were observed in geography, and one lesson in each of these years in religious education. Observations were also made of the activities which took place during an Anglo-Saxon day for pupils in Year 4. Discussions were held with pupils and the co-ordinators of all three subjects. Because no direct teaching of history was observed, no overall judgements are made with regard to this subject.
60. The school's provision in **history** has improved significantly since the last inspection, which reported on unsatisfactory teaching, low expectations and too much use of unchallenging worksheets. These weaknesses are no longer in evidence as, in each year group, there is interesting work being undertaken on a broad range of topics. In Years 5 and 6, for example, well-presented work on Tudor life and Britain since 1930 is more detailed than that found in many schools. There are many more opportunities for pupils to write at length in history than before, although teachers do not yet make enough use of these opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills by providing them with critical feedback on how they could improve their writing. There is still room for further improvement in the way the curriculum is organised. Over a term, pupils' collected work lacks coherence in the way it is drawn together and presented, and opportunities are missed to develop skills in other subjects through work related to history. There is still not enough use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning, nor enough opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills through research or carrying out individual assignments. An exception to this is a project carried out by pupils in Year 6, largely for homework, on life in the Blitz. The finished projects show varying degrees of detail and insight, but the best are lively, interesting and detailed and indicate standards which are well above those normally found in pupils of the same age. One pupil commented that she had found the completion of her project to be the most enjoyable and interesting experience she had had in history, reinforcing the value and importance of giving pupils the opportunity to branch out on their own. The teaching of history is enriched by a very good range of visits to places of historical interest, such as Lullingstone Roman Villa, Buckland Abbey, Ironbridge and local museums, and of visitors to the school, such as a Greek theatre company, and local historians. Special themed days, such as Greek and Roman days, also add an additional element of interest which contributes much to pupils' learning. During the inspection, pupils in Year 4 enjoyed an Anglo-Saxon day, during which they took part in dramatic re-enactments of life in an Anglo-Saxon settlement under the direction of a visiting drama company, and took part in a variety of art and craft activities which reinforced their understanding of different aspects of life in Anglo-Saxon times.

### Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There have been significant improvements in the school's provision for geography since the last inspection.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons, but progress over the course of a year is hampered by the lack of time devoted to teaching the subject.
- Teachers are trying more imaginative approaches to teaching geography than before, but are not yet fully successful in promoting independent and collaborative learning skills.

- Links with other subjects are not exploited as fully as they could be.
- Visits to places of geographical interest enrich pupils' learning.

### **Commentary**

61. At the previous inspection, the school's provision in geography was heavily criticised because pupils were making unsatisfactory progress as a result of unsatisfactory teaching and lack of challenge. Although there are still things the school could do in order to make the provision better, there has been good improvement over the last two years. By providing a clearer focus on how location affects the way people live and how human activity can affect the environment, pupils' geographical skills have improved. There are examples of interesting work being undertaken in geography in all year groups, and pupils are reaching standards which are close to those expected for their age. Pupils' work is generally completed carefully and neatly, and many obviously take a pride in what they are doing. In individual lessons, pupils learn well and make good progress, but their overall achievement is satisfactory. This is because their progress over the course of a year is affected by the lack of time dedicated to the teaching of geography and the fact that, in some years, geography is only taught for one term.
62. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, although the quality of teaching in individual lessons ranges from satisfactory to very good. Pupils now receive a very good start to their study of geography in Year 3, a significant improvement since the last inspection. During this inspection, two very good lessons were observed in which pupils were fascinated by two aerial photographs of the school, taken 26 years apart. Very good questioning by the teachers, stimulating resources, a variety of teaching strategies and fast pace helped pupils to develop their powers of observation and to use these secondary sources of evidence to draw conclusions about changes in land use. The teachers expected much of the pupils who rose, animatedly, to the challenge. Two very well prepared lessons in Year 5 were not as successful because the teachers had provided too many answers and made the exploratory tasks too simple for the pupils, with the result that the pupils were nowhere near as engaged or attentive during their group discussions. An interesting approach in Year 6 to develop pupils' understanding of the mountain environment motivated many, although here, too, some pupils found it hard to work in a fully collaborative group, preferring to work either on their own or with one other person. That the school is trying different techniques and promoting greater involvement of the pupils is good, although the response of older pupils to such activities indicates that they have not been used to working collaboratively and independently in the past or of presenting their ideas and defending their arguments to the rest of the class. Pupils' written work also shows that they have had little opportunity in the past to conduct independent research. The development of independent learning skills through work in geography is an important priority for the future. The teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, but do not pay enough attention to incorrect use of English or provide pupils with enough time to review the mistakes they have made and make improvements.
63. Although there have been improvements in provision since the last inspection, the subject has still not been a major focus for development. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, but the school lacks an innovative approach to planning the curriculum, which could afford more time to the teaching of geography and enable pupils to develop their geographical understanding in greater depth. Links with other subjects are not exploited as fully as they could be. There is still, for example, little use of information and communication technology. Pupils write much more in geography than before, but teachers do not use these occasions sufficiently to develop pupils' literacy skills. As in some other subjects, the best work results from special occasions, such as the residential visit to Bridestowe for pupils in Year 5, where

they compare the village of Bridestowe with Virginia Water. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about such occasions and learn much from them.

### **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership has helped staff to improve their understanding of the syllabus and the quality of teaching.
- Teachers use good teaching strategies to engage pupils' interest.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance learning.

### **Commentary**

64. By the end of Year 6, standards are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement throughout the school is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and the more able pupils are provided with work that is sufficiently challenging. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that they have a good recall of the different faiths they have studied, even those that were taught in previous years.
65. Good leadership has been provided for religious education since the last inspection, and the subject is currently managed satisfactorily. There is a temporary co-ordinator in post, but evidence shows the staff have a very good understanding of the subject and that the locally agreed syllabus is implemented effectively. Clear planning by teachers ensures that all aspects of the subject are taught in depth. The co-ordinator is effective in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and, as a result, the unsatisfactory progress and teaching seen at the time of the previous inspection has been eliminated. Teaching and learning are good overall because the teachers' subject knowledge is good and they try to make lessons interesting. They teach using a good range of strategies, for example, through drama and by 'hot seating', where a pupil is encouraged to take the seat and respond to questions put by other pupils.
66. A good number of visits helps raise the pupils' interest and awareness of the subject. For example, they visit a Sikh temple, and a synagogue. Discussions with the pupils and an analysis of their writing show that the visits help to provide them with a greater understanding of the differences and similarities between religions and faiths. Visitors to school enhance the pupils' knowledge. For example, representatives from the local churches attend on a regular basis and this helps to improve the pupils' knowledge of the Anglican faith. The subject makes a good contribution to the provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

### **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

67. This area of the curriculum comprises **art and design, design and technology, music and physical education**. A full report is provided for physical education. Not enough was seen of the work in the other subjects to make overall judgements on teaching and learning and pupils' achievements. Parts of lessons were observed in Year 3 in art and design, in Year 4 in games and music, in Year 5 in music and dance and in Year 6 in gymnastics. No lessons were observed in design and technology. Discussions were held with pupils and with the co-ordinators for design and technology and physical education. There is currently no co-ordinator for music.

68. As in many other subjects, pupils in Year 3 are making very good progress as they acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in **art and design**. Colourful displays of work in the style of Picasso and Kandinsky indicate attention to detail, a very good understanding of the characteristic styles of these painters and a good deal of interest from the pupils. Their study of Picasso has taken in different periods of Picasso's life, so that pupils gain some understanding of how the artist's work developed and why. In a very good lesson observed during the inspection, a very good range of resources, clear explanations, good exemplars of work produced by older pupils and plenty of opportunity for pupils to contribute their views set the scene well for a creative afternoon, during which pupils worked hard and enthusiastically to complete attractive and imaginative picture collages. Pupils in other years broaden their knowledge of famous artists through studying the work of people, such as Monet, Van Gogh and William Morris. It was not possible to gain a full picture of the breadth of pupils' work during the inspection, although older pupils commented that they did not spend a great deal of time on art and design and could not recall an occasion when they produced three-dimensional work. As in other foundation subjects, the time allocated to art and design limits the scope of the curriculum, which has, nevertheless, been enriched in the past by an arts week, which was much enjoyed by the pupils.
69. The evidence available for **design and technology** during the inspection indicates that pupils have a satisfactory, but fairly limited, range of learning experiences in this subject. This is because the time allocated to the teaching of design and technology is quite restricted. The quality of pupils' work varies in proportion to the time allocated to the teaching of the subject. In Year 4, for example, a project to design and produce pop-up books, run in conjunction with pupils' English lessons, developed pupils' writing skills as well as teaching them different techniques of making moving parts and pop-up characters. Much care and effort went into the design and production of the books which were of good quality. Less time is devoted to other projects, and the written recording of pupils' work lacks detail and indicates that teachers' expectations in this regard are not always high enough. For example, some projects do not appear to have design briefs or written evaluations, and not enough attention is given to the quality of pupils' writing. In some cases, such as the making of Christmas slippers by pupils in Year 6, methods of working are too rigidly prescribed. In this case, all pupils were given the same template to cut out, which prevented them from developing their original designs and limited the opportunity for them to develop their own independent skills. Nevertheless, pupils talk with enthusiasm about the various projects they have undertaken, recalling how they have designed and made cam toys, maracas and torches, and describing some of the skills they have learnt. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has not yet been given much scope for developing the subject as the school's priorities for development have lain elsewhere. Teachers take a sensible approach to the organisation of the subject, choosing to devote a short, but concentrated span of lessons to design and technology, thus allowing pupils to maintain momentum once a project has been started.
70. **Music** is the school's weakest subject. This stems from the fact that many staff lack confidence in teaching the subject, no teacher has particular expertise in music and there is currently no co-ordinator for the subject. Provision is weakest in Year 6, and the school's assessment is that standards are below those expected because these pupils have had little past experience of music. Nevertheless, sensible measures have been taken to improve provision in music, by adopting a music scheme designed specifically for non-specialist teachers. In the full lesson observed in Year 5, in which the teacher used the published scheme as the basis for her planning, the teaching was of an acceptable standard and pupils were clearly making progress. They showed good recall of a rhythmic song they had learnt the previous week and made satisfactory progress in learning and performing a new song. Whilst they enjoyed practising as a small group,

many pupils lacked confidence in performing in front of the rest of the class. Progress is hampered, however, because the time allocated to lessons is shorter than that envisaged by the scheme which the school uses, with the result that teachers do not have the time to teach everything that is suggested and thereby deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. In contrast to the relatively weak classroom provision, the school has an enthusiastic choir run by the administrative secretary, occasionally assisted by the deputy headteacher, with up to 90 pupils participating after school. Musical productions, the last being *Bugsy Malone*, also provide a major enhancement of the music curriculum, are well supported by the pupils and enthusiastically received by parents. A music week is planned for later in the school year, when pupils will have the opportunity to participate in drumming workshops led by an African music group. The school is not complacent about the situation in music, and is endeavouring to improve the situation.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **good**.

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

- Pupils make good progress in physical education and achieve standards which are above average.
- Pupils' enthusiasm and very good, and at times excellent, behaviour contribute strongly to their learning.
- Confident teachers provide good-quality learning experiences for the pupils.
- Good leadership and management ensure that the school provides a good curriculum for physical education.
- The school provides a very good range of extremely well attended extra-curricular sporting activities.

#### **Commentary**

71. The school has successfully maintained all of the positive features of its provision for physical education noted at the time of the last inspection and continues to provide a very strong programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils make good progress in physical education and achieve well. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 6, every single pupil tried hard to improve their sequence of movements and balances on different items of apparatus. Standards in this aspect of physical education are above average by the end of Year 6. A notable feature was the pupils' excellent behaviour which contributed in no small measure to their very good progress during the lesson. Their faces were a picture of studied concentration as they practised and performed. Pupils watched with interest and attention as others performed and provided supportive and critical feedback to help improve their performance. Observation of a dance lesson in Year 5 and a brief visit to a games session for all pupils in Year 4 indicate that standards are likely to be above average in these disciplines by the end of Year 6. In swimming, most pupils reach the standards expected of eleven-year-olds by the end of Year 4.
72. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The lessons observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good. Teachers provide good examples for the pupils by changing into appropriate kit for their lessons. They manage their classes very well, ensuring very good standards of behaviour and securing very good commitment and participation from the pupils. Pupils who are unable to participate actively in their physical education lessons are given tasks to observe and make notes on the performance of others, thus ensuring their involvement in the lesson, an

improvement since the last inspection. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and, across the school, there is a good range of expertise in different aspects of the subject.

73. The subject is led and managed well. The school provides a good curriculum for physical education, with each class receiving a full programme of dance, games, gymnastics and athletics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also go swimming. A particular strength is the wide range of opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities outside lessons. These activities are very popular and have large numbers of pupils attending. A newly instituted gymnastics club after school, for example, was so over-subscribed that pupils had to be divided into three groups of 30, attending on a half-termly basis. During the inspection, large numbers of pupils took part in football and basketball activities after school and cross-country at lunchtime. Competitive fixtures are played against other schools in rugby, football, netball and athletics. There is very good involvement of outside organisations, with professionals from local clubs offering coaching in basketball, football and rugby. Good attention is paid to health and safety. Training is provided for staff in different aspects of physical education, and good support is provided for newly qualified teachers and those who are new to the school. The school's good facilities, which include a large grassed playing field, hard surface areas and a well-proportioned hall, help to make the good provision in this subject possible.

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

74. No judgement is being made about provision in this subject as too few lessons were observed during the inspection. Discussions and scrutiny of pupils' work show that a broad range of appropriate activities is taught to promote pupils' understanding of personal issues. Pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including diet and exercise. However, many lack confidence, particularly in speaking and presentation. The planned programme meets requirements.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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