

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLE DONINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Castle Donington

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120254

Principal: Ken Bayliss

Reporting inspector: Terence Parish
15465

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th January

Inspection number: 252924

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Middle deemed secondary
Age range of pupils:	10 to 14
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Angela Kirk
Date of previous inspection:	27 th January 1997

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15465	T Parish	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
15181	M Hackney	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2928	W Baxendale	Team inspector	French	
27292	J W Calvert		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
23284	E de Middleear	Team inspector	Science	
21971	J Glennon	Team inspector	English Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
15940	N Godfrey	Team inspector	Art and design	
23324	S Greenland	Team inspector	Geography History	
31100	G Hunter	Team inspector	Mathematics	
20192	T McDermott	Team inspector	Citizenship Physical education	
30128	S Stanley	Team inspector	Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21806	P Swinnerton	Team inspector	Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The college is a community school for boys and girls. It is much bigger than typical middle-deemed secondary schools and has 515 pupils on roll, a third more than four years ago. Pupils start at the beginning of Year 6 and leave at the end of Year 9. Standards of attainment when pupils start in Year 6 are average and are lower than might be expected from their results in national tests at the end of Year 2. Almost all pupils are of white English descent; very few pupils possibly use a language other than English at home. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average whilst the proportion with statements of educational need is average. Pupils' socio-economic circumstances are good overall. The college provides education and facilities for many adults and for pre-school children; consequently the buildings and resources are used far more efficiently than in most schools and 'life-long' learning is given a real meaning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has significant strengths in the ways that it cares for pupils and ensures an orderly and harmonious community. Pupils are very good citizens; their behaviour is very good and attendance satisfactory. Teaching is good overall. Standards of work are broadly average, better in some subjects, particularly science, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, though the principal does clearly seek improvement and has improved the school since his appointment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are well above average when pupils leave; pupils achieve very well
- Humanities provision is good and very good assessment practice helps standards rise
- Very good behaviour is fostered
- Moral and social education are both very good
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The school provides very good pastoral care

What could be improved

- Standards in English and in mathematics are below those of similar schools in Year 9
- Standards in French are not good enough in Year 9
- Assessment needs to be used better to establish how well pupils are doing and to give pupils targets for improvement that can be monitored
- information and communication technology (ICT) needs further development so that standards and use are consistent across the school

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in January 1997. Standards overall have fluctuated since then; science standards have improved. Boys are doing better. Provision for modern languages and for ICT has improved, albeit very recently; further improvement in both is needed. Behaviour is better. Teaching is better, partly due to better monitoring and partly because there have been many staff changes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is better. The library is much better and well used by pupils. The managers of English and of mathematics still need to pay closer attention to assessment so that pupil attainment is as good as it should be. Improvement is satisfactory overall.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 9 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
End of Key Stage 3 tests	B	B	B	C

Key

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

Overall, the school is doing as well as might be expected by the end of Year 9. However, results in science tests are well above average whilst results in English and mathematics are average, and lower than they are in similar schools. Science does better for a variety of reasons including much better provision in Year 6 compared to a typical primary school and better teaching. Standards of work in other subjects in Year 9 are broadly average, above average in history, geography, physical education and citizenship. By the middle of Year 9 pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, satisfactorily in English, very well in science, well in mathematics, geography, history, music, physical education, religious education and citizenship. Achievement in French is unsatisfactory. There is no significant difference between the standards of girls' and boys' work.

Results in end of Year 6 national tests show English standards below and mathematics results well below those in similar schools. Science results are better than might be expected. Standards of work in Year 6 are broadly average, below average in mathematics, above average in science, design and technology and French. In Year 6, pupils are progressing satisfactorily overall and in English and mathematics, art and design, geography, history and in ICT. In most other subjects they make good progress; in French they make very good progress. Work in English and in mathematics is better than test results indicate probably because this school has only two terms to prepare pupils for end of Year 6 national tests and the change in schools unsettles pupils to an extent. Both end of Year 6 and end of Year 9 test results broadly follow national trends of improvement; over time results get a little better. There are no statutory targets for this school. Targets for end of Year 6 and end of Year 9, decided in collaboration with the Local Education Authority, need to be more challenging and based on rigorous assessment and analysis of what pupils should be capable of rather than a gradual nudge upwards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and take a pride in it. Their responses to good teaching are often excellent. Pupils want to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils' behaviour in almost all lessons and when out of lessons is often exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Relationships are very good. Personal development is good; more opportunities for taking initiative are needed.
Attendance	Average for a school of this type.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Year 6	Years 7 - 9
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

In English and mathematics teaching is satisfactory in all years whilst in science it is good in Year 6 and very good in Years 7-9. The most significant reasons for the differences in these core subjects are expectations and assessment. Science has very high expectations and uses assessment to make sure pupils reach them; English has too low expectations and mathematics modest ones and assessment is not rigorous enough in either. Teaching is good in all years in geography, history, music, physical education, religious education and citizenship. In design and technology, teaching is good in Years 6-8, satisfactory in Year 9. In ICT it is good in Year 6, very good in Years 7-9 and, in French, very good in Years 6 and 7, and satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. In art and design, teaching is satisfactory in all years.

There is very little difference between strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in Year 6 and in Years 7-9; not surprising as most often the same teachers teach in all years. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects are particularly strong in science, design and technology and music; also in French in Years 6 and 7. Teachers' expectations of pupils are also high in history and physical education, and in French in Years 6 and 7. Most subjects have a relative weakness in assessment and putting it to use to help raise standards. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory in art and design and in design and technology but very good in history and geography. Neither do pupils satisfactorily know how well they are doing in either art and design, or in mathematics, consequently it is harder for them to get any better. Aspects of teaching are unsatisfactory in French in Years 8 and 9 and that is why they do not do enough work or achieve well enough. Homework provision is unsatisfactory in art and design in all years and pupils are not exposed to fresh ideas through visiting artists.

The skills of literacy are satisfactorily taught. The skills of numeracy are not promoted well enough across the school and this contributes to below average standards in mathematics in Year 6. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are most often very well met, though some pupils with undefined needs do not always get support. The most able pupils need more consistent extra provision to help them excel.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good in Year 6; modern languages, science and design and technology resources are better than in a typical Year 6. Satisfactory in Years 7-9 as ICT and numeracy provision need further development. There is a very good range of clubs and other activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good overall, particularly for those with statements of need. Learning support assistants do a good job.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very few pupils have another language, other than English, that might be used more often in the home. None of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English; no special provision is currently needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Moral development and social development are both particularly strong and evident in the very polite and sensible way pupils conduct themselves. Cultural development is good. More could be done to reflect the diversity of cultures within the country. Spiritual development is good but opportunities to reflect on events are missed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very good; pupils are very well looked after. Academic care is more variable, still developing and could be better; assessment procedures in some subjects are unsatisfactory whilst in others they are good and lead to good achievement.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works well with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership has fostered improvements since the last inspection and gradual changes in staffing are showing signs of possibly more rapid improvement. Day to day management is very good. Work to raise academic standards in key areas needs to be more rigorous.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are fully involved with the college and visit it frequently. They meet statutory responsibilities. They ensure money is well spent. They do need to interpret data about the school more rigorously so that they understand fully, for example, standards of attainment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Both the school and the local education authority are too generous in their evaluation of performance. Although there are areas in which the school is doing very well, in English and mathematics, it could do better. Otherwise, evaluation of, for example, teaching is satisfactory and performance management has helped focus training.
The strategic use of resources	Staff are well deployed and given good facilities and resources to do their jobs. Overall, staffing accommodation and learning resources are good. The school, with the support of governors, always seeks best value both in purchases and when employing staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• Their children like school and make good progress • Pupils' behaviour is good • Teaching is good • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems • The school has high expectations • The school is well managed and led • The school helps students become mature and responsible • The range of activities outside lessons is good	• Pupils do not get the right amount of homework • Information in annual reports about the progress their child makes in the year

The inspection team agrees broadly with parents' and carers' views. However, the school needs to have higher expectations of standards in English and mathematics and to challenge gifted and talented pupils more. Homework provision appears to be at least satisfactory. Reports to parents about their children's progress are not sufficiently focused to inform parents of how their children can improve their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report and relevant paragraphs in the subject reports, as what is said there is not necessarily repeated here.

2. Standards are broadly average when pupils start school and broadly average when they leave, so achievement is satisfactory. However, standards appear not to be as high as they should be at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics. 'Value added' data indicates that pupils, in 2002, performed unsatisfactorily in English, poorly in mathematics and well in science between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Whilst this data is new for this stage of education, and may be insecure, it does support anecdotal evidence that there is a 'dip' in performance at the change of schools, from primary to middle. Also this school has just two terms to prepare pupils for tests whereas primary schools, which continue to the end of Year 6, may do much more work towards them and consequently get better test results. At the end of Year 9, test results are not as high as average results in similar schools in English and in mathematics, whereas they are very high in science. In other words, 'value added', this time more secure, says English and mathematics are not performing as well as might be expected. Compared to all schools: In science, standards of work improve from above average to well above average over Years 7-9; in mathematics standards rise from below average to average; in English standards are maintained at average. There is work to be done to raise standards further in both English and mathematics.

3. In this school pupils have four years of French by Year 9, compared to three years in a typical secondary school. Given broadly average attainment in most subjects at the beginning of Year 6 standards in French should err to at least above average by the end of Year 9. They do not; they are average and below relative standards at the end of Year 7. Pupils are achieving unsatisfactorily by the end of Year 9. The reason is that teaching is much better in Years 6 and 7 than in Years 8 and 9.

4. Standards of literacy are in line with the national average. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other. Most pupils are audible and articulate when speaking and there are good examples of them using a fairly wide vocabulary. They phrase quite complicated questions accurately. For example, in a textiles lesson a boy asked how he could perform a task on the computer diagonally in order to create a special colour effect. However, some pupils are reluctant to contribute orally in lessons such as religious education where discussion plays an important part in learning. Reading standards are generally sufficiently good to ensure that pupils are able to understand what they have to read in class. Writing standards are average and pupils benefit from being given opportunities for lengthy writing in many subjects. For example, in design and technology pupils produce sound written evaluations of products such as chocolate bar wrappers. In geography and history, where much writing is expected, there are only a few pupils limited by poor writing skills.

5. Pupils have average numerical skills. In design and technology, measuring and weighing skills are appropriate and pupils produce good scale drawings in their work in textiles and resistant materials. In music, pupils of a range of attainment were confident when describing the number patterns associated with different types of scale such as pentatonic, chromatic and major. Pupils have sufficient numerical skills to enable them to learn appropriately in all areas of the curriculum but the lack of an overall strategy to improve those skills further means they are less likely to reach higher standards.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is good in English, music, religious education and science. It is unsatisfactory in modern foreign languages. In all other subjects it is satisfactory. Records show that those pupils who receive special help with reading and spelling improve well; most reach a standard where they no longer require special attention. The most able pupils are not consistently well enough challenged, for example in English, art and design and in ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Most pupils work hard and enjoy being involved in learning activities. In all classes pupils work very co-operatively together in groups and share learning resources amicably. In most classes pupils concentrate well on tasks and try hard to plan and organise their work effectively. Most pupils listen attentively and respond well to teachers' questioning, but there are some who remain very passive and often need encouragement to answer questions and to share their ideas and opinions. Many pupils enthusiastically take part in a wide range of lunchtime and after school activities. Pupils of all ages and abilities respond very well to the positive behaviour policy and they are well aware of the school's expected code of conduct. When moving around the school and changing rooms between lessons, pupils demonstrate a high degree of self-discipline. They are polite, friendly and very helpful towards visitors and all adults.

8. Pupils are positive that bullying or harassment of any kind is not a problem, and they are confident that, if necessary, staff would deal with any incident appropriately. Through the good programme of personal and social education, pupils are aware of the importance of good relationships and the need to show care and support for each other. Since the last inspection the incidence of exclusion has declined; during the last academic year there have been just nine exclusions involving three boys, which is a low number.

9. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils from each tutor group are elected to represent their fellow pupils on the school council. Formal meetings are very well organised and managed by the pupils themselves with staff support. Representatives take their responsibilities seriously and value the opportunity to research ideas, make decisions, monitor a budget and have a voice in the organisation of the school. A large number of pupils take part in annual productions and drama presentations as well as a wide range of competitive sports, educational visits and extra-curricular activities. This makes a strong contribution to their personal development and progress. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their research study skills through their own initiative and responsibility for their learning.

10. Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is in line with similar schools nationally. During this academic year the level of attendance has improved. The majority of pupils arrive punctually for registration in tutor groups. Lessons start promptly and pupils respond well to the efficient and well-ordered start to the school day. This has a positive effect on their attitude and achievements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report and relevant paragraphs in the subject reports, as what is said there is not necessarily repeated here. The quality of teaching is not just judged on lessons seen but takes into account the quality of pupils' work, marking, and how much progress pupils make over time; their achievement. Eighty-eight lessons were seen, a quarter in Year 6, and three-quarters in Years 7-9. All but two lessons were satisfactory or better, one was excellent. Seven out of ten lessons were good or better, a quarter very good. This is a good teaching profile and reflects the quality of

learning pupils enjoy in lessons. However, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory because their learning is not sufficiently consolidated over time; assessment is not good enough to show teachers how to reinforce learning and the most able pupils, in particular, are often not well enough challenged, for example in English and in art and design.

12. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory. The national literacy strategy is led well by the English department and other subjects provide good contributions. In most subjects key words are prominently displayed and due emphasis is placed on their importance. In both geography and history there is particularly good practice: at the beginning of each unit of work pupils are given very well-produced pamphlets with a glossary of the terms they are going to have to understand and use. Although generally pupils are given the opportunity to express themselves orally, there are some missed opportunities. For example, in music pupils do not spend enough time discussing their work with others. In English, geography, history and religious education pupils write at some length and teachers pay due attention to literacy standards as well as subject content. In other subjects pupils do some writing but there is not enough in modern foreign languages.

13. Numerical skills are taught effectively in some subjects where the need arises. For example, graph drawing is well taught in science, and in physical education the teachers make good use of geometric terms as they encourage the pupils to dribble a hockey ball in different patterns using quick fire commands such as "Rhombus!" "Trapezium!" However, the teaching of numerical skills is not co-ordinated and consequently they do not develop in a planned way; standards are broadly average whereas they could be better. For example, in art and design numeracy strategies are not incorporated into departmental schemes of work; opportunities such as using correct terminology when showing pupils how to use and recognise perspective, and the difference between area and volume, are missed.

14. Teaching and learning using ICT in all subjects is dealt with in the subject section for ICT as is learning using ICT outside of lessons. Essentially there is mixed practice in subjects and this needs better evaluation and co-ordination so that all teachers use ICT well to help teaching and learning. Out of lesson use also needs better monitoring so that resources are more effectively used to promote learning. Teaching and learning in art and design is satisfactory but better learning would be fostered if pupils had opportunities to work with and learn from other artists.

15. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Departments all include provision for pupils with special educational needs in their documents and planning. Teachers are aware of the targets on pupils' individual education plans and take them into account in their teaching. Work is well matched to pupils' needs, very often with separate and suitable resources provided for them. The number of learning support assistants has increased significantly since the previous inspection; they provide effective support over the whole curriculum. The teaching of small groups for spelling and reading is very good; lessons are conducted systematically in an encouraging and entirely focused way.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS

16. Overall, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and provides equally for boys and girls and for pupils of different aptitudes. An appropriate amount of time is given to subjects and all statutory requirements are met. This broadly includes ICT as some features remain in the wings to be developed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Although the curriculum in design and technology is generally good, shortcomings exist in Year 9 owing to timetabling and accommodation constraints. Community use of the school, though advantageous and desirable in many ways also places constraints on when some

accommodation, for example ICT rooms, can be used, and the hall is used for lunch, physical education and drama, which does not help planning for these two subjects. In geography there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the school and home environment to improve their observation skills and field studies.

17. The provision for personal and social education is good and links with science to cover the requirements for education about health, sex and the dangers of drugs misuse. Other elements relating to personal and social development, citizenship and careers education are well organised. Tutor groups are allocated time on the timetable for personal and social education and this is linked closely to the school's aim to provide good pupil welfare and guidance. A range of organisations contributes to the programme such as representatives from various charities, the fire service, police, local clergy and careers service. Pupils take part in such activities as a team-building day in Year 6 and an industry day in Years 8 and 9 and these contribute well to their experiences. Although the school nurse supports the school's programme of sex education, some form tutors are insufficiently trained to deal with sensitive issues and to engage pupils in forthright discussion in which they feel uncomfortable.

18. There is good liaison with the Connexions Service, which advises on careers opportunities, that has a base in the college. A Year 9 parents' evening is held to discuss opportunities available to pupils when older and relate these to GCSE and other examination choices that they need to make before they leave at this school and start at the next. This is well managed and a popular evening.

19. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are totally included in all parts of school life; a lift will soon be provided for any future pupils using wheelchairs. Those who have the greatest problems with spelling or reading receive extra help in small groups with minimal interference to their learning in classes. These pupils also benefit from paired reading sessions with older pupils.

20. Provision for literacy is satisfactory. There is a whole-school literacy policy based on the national literacy strategy. All teachers have received suitable training. All subject departments have literacy written into their policies and pay due attention to it in their teaching.

21. Strategies to raise pupils' standards of numeracy further are unsatisfactory. There is no school-wide policy for the teaching of numerical skills so that very few departments, other than mathematics, have given much thought to how best pupils' numerical skills can be developed. All teachers have had two half-days of training on the National Numeracy Strategy, one from the Local Education Authority and one led by the mathematics department. As yet this has not provoked much response. A first attempt at identifying departmental needs and opportunities for teaching and learning numeracy has been carried out but not very effectively. Few departments have a stated policy for teaching numeracy, nor are opportunities for enhancing pupils' thinking in numerical terms commonly identified.

22. A very good selection of extra-curricular activities is available to enrich all pupils' learning experiences in, for example, sport and music. Around half of Year 8 were enjoying a week's residential in Matlock during the inspection. A very good programme of team building activities was in place and reports indicate that pupils very much impressed the residential centre staff, who are more than willing to welcome further groups from the college. There are many after-school and lunchtime activities. Good examples are found in music, design and technology, science, mathematics, English, and, in particular, physical education where participation is high. Activities are particularly well attended one night each week when a bus is provided to take pupils home. This is a good example of the school's inclusion policy,

which helps all pupils to take advantage of opportunities in the college. There is a good range of peripatetic instrumental lessons and, since the previous inspection; the annual production has proved popular with pupils, parents and the local community. Visitors such as theatre groups and musicians are invited regularly and special activity days are organised for pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

23. Overall the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and has been well maintained since the last inspection.

24. Spiritual development is good. The school encourages pupils of all abilities to reflect on a set of values, principles and beliefs on which to base their lives. Pupils' contributions are valued and recognised and this effectively raises their self-esteem and confidence. During assemblies pupils reflect on such issues as the effects of the Holocaust and its place in history (Holocaust Day occurred during the inspection) and the impact of social deprivation and relationships. However, insufficient opportunities are provided during assemblies and religious education for pupils to explore their own religious beliefs. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school promotes a very clear moral code for behaviour and respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. Pupils recognise the difference between right and wrong and have a clear understanding that living by rules is to the benefit of all. Pupils regularly support a range of local and national charities often by their own suggestion through the school council.

25. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school places importance on an inclusive community where every pupil is valued and rewarded for their achievements. During lessons pupils are given plenty of opportunity to work in groups and with partners and this develops their social and communication skills well. Within different areas of the curriculum pupils are given the opportunity to study literature and history topics that reflect a variety of social groups and their impact on society. A Year 7 drama lesson made a strong contribution to social development when pupils were dependent on each other and explored personal feelings in a situation. Many pupils take part in productions and drama workshops, learn to play musical instruments and join residential visits, which make a very positive contribution to their social and personal development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school has good links with the community and this helps pupils to develop an understanding of their own community and local cultural heritage. Pupils have regular opportunities to visit theatres, exhibitions and museums. As part of the world food project pupils prepare food from around the world, and they reflect on the work of designers and artists from other countries. During a music lesson pupils were observed thoughtfully composing and performing Indian music based on Indian Raga and appreciating its qualities. In religious education pupils study other faiths such as Islam, Buddhism and Judaism as well as Christianity. However, insufficient opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to recognise the diversity and richness of other cultures within their own country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. Very good procedures are followed to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. Parents feel that the school's pastoral system is very effective and like the fact that tutors stay with their group for four years. Staff know pupils well and provide very good support for their individual, physical and emotional needs. The study support tutor provides good additional support for pupils with particular difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and this enables them to take full advantage of all educational opportunities. The well-managed induction procedures ensure that pupils and their parents understand how the school is organised and this helps pupils to settle quickly into Year 6.

27. Procedures for monitoring child protection issues are very good. The school has a child protection policy that closely follows Local Education Authority guidelines. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are made fully aware of the procedures to follow in the event of concerns. All pupils have access to outside support agencies. Good up to date personal and medical records are kept for all pupils and these are used well to support their personal needs.

28. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Pupils are rewarded with certificates and prizes for good attendance. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to monitor and promptly follow up unauthorised absence. The procedures for monitoring behaviour and promoting good behaviour are very good and are implemented consistently throughout the school. There are very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating bullying or harassment and pupils feel confident that any problems will be handled well by staff. There is a good system of rewards which pupils value and these are used well to promote confidence and self-esteem. An appropriate system of sanctions for poor work or behaviour is followed.

29. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance is unsatisfactory. The last inspection noted that there was much room for improvement. Progress towards this improvement has been slow. This year, for the first time, all departments have been given substantial information on the pupils' performance, which is available on the school computer network. This information helps teachers assess better. Assessment is good in science and very good in history and in geography and is a significant reason why pupils' achievement in these subjects is at least good. In these departments the pupils are aware of their levels of attainment because they play a part in reviewing their own performance and are aware of what they have to do to match the levels of attainment described in National Curriculum requirements, consequently they also know what they have to do to get better. They have records of their achievement stuck into their exercise books so that they can identify their current standard and their targets for further improvement.

30. This good and very good practice is not shared with other departments. Elsewhere there is inconsistent practice that is tolerated because school policies do not require any degree of conformity or provide sufficient guidance to ensure that it exists. There is no common marking policy so that it is difficult for the pupils to be sure of how much progress they are making. In subjects such as music, for example, marks are given such as 35 out of 60 with a comment "very good". This does not make it clear whether the teacher is marking content, attitude or effort. Very few subjects use National Curriculum attainment descriptors as benchmarks. This was a weakness referred to in the last inspection report in 1997. Some departments, like mathematics, use test results and marking to improve their lesson planning, but not all. The quality of marking in subjects is inconsistent.

31. Prior to the beginning of January 2003 very little individual pupil data was used centrally to inform and support initiatives to raise standards. A useful series of meetings between senior management and the heads of department for English, mathematics and science establish targets for these departments but not for others. Some heads of department set targets both for individual teachers and for the department as a whole but most do not. The school has recently invested in computer assessment management programmes that may enable progress to be made in this area, though it will be essential to provide better guidelines and support for departments too.

32. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. All requirements on statements are fully met. Individual education plans are devised in accordance with the latest version of the Code of Practice. They are helpful to teachers but there are no numeracy targets. Targets are good but are confined to behaviour and literacy. The special needs co-

ordinator uses data to identify which pupils need extra help with reading and spelling, and tracks their progress carefully.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The school has a good partnership with parents and encourages them to be involved. Many parents regularly attend a range of courses run by the community side of the college. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them and they are interested and supportive. The school welcomes new parents through a well-organised and informative induction programme that starts in Year 5 at the primary schools. The school has responded very well to the advice in the Code of Practice that parents of pupils with special educational needs should be involved in the setting of targets. Parents and carers are always invited to reviews of individual education plans and there is a very good response. In the latest round of annual reviews of statements at least one parent or carer represented each pupil. In addition, there is constant contact between parents and the special needs co-ordinator as the need arises.

34. Overall the quality of information for parents is satisfactory. However, annual reports to parents about pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and a significant proportion of parents do not feel well informed about such progress. The school recognises that some improvements are needed to ensure reports are consistent and provide clear information. The inspection agrees with parents that insufficient information is provided about progress in all year groups. Reports cover all subjects of the National Curriculum, an outline of studies and reference to expected levels, but there are inconsistencies in pinpointing targets for improvement. At present there are also inconsistencies between year groups in the format and presentation of reports and the quality of information provided.

35. All pupils have personal planners and their use is well monitored by tutors. Parents are welcomed into school and a small number help regularly with paired reading alongside pupils in Year 6. Grandparents and elderly relatives have helped to enrich the history curriculum by visiting to share their past experiences with pupils. Regular open evenings are held for each year group and these are well attended by parents. The school has a good system of contacting those parents unable to attend. During the autumn term tutors organise an additional parents evening to invite specific parents where there are concerns about progress including underachievement by high attaining pupils. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide a good amount of useful information about organisation and the curriculum. Most parents have accepted and signed the home/school agreement.

36. The Friends of Castle Donington Community School is an active group of parents and friends from the community. The Friends provide good support for the school by organising regular fund-raising events that provide a range of additional resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Much has been done to improve the school since the last inspection, for example, teaching, behaviour, and curriculum areas such as music. Both accommodation and learning resources are generally good throughout the school and considerably improved on what was available at the previous inspection. Library provision has been significantly improved. Textbooks, which were in short supply at the time of the last inspection, are now sufficient to meet subject requirements. Access to ICT provision is generally good with the purchase of new computers. Staffing levels are now good and there is a low turnover of staff. There exists an appropriate balance of experienced and more recently qualified teachers. The number of learning support staff has increased and

now meets the requirements of pupils who have special educational needs. Two part time librarians have been appointed to provide library support throughout the week. The school provides staff development linked to priorities identified in the school and departmental development plans. The provision is good with a varied programme that extends from school based training to encompass wider agencies including the Local Education Authority, local universities, external consultants and collaborative training within the 'family' of schools. More training for those teachers who deliver the personal, social and health education content in the curriculum is needed so that it is taught well more often. The school has a range of strategies whereby the effectiveness of staff development is evaluated. Long-term evaluation is through regular assessment by the Investors in People organisation.

38. However, standards in significant areas have not yet improved enough and are too low in English, mathematics and French. This is not due to a lack of monitoring of teaching, which is done well; teaching is now good overall, when at the time of the last inspection there were many weak lessons. The area for development within management is to better understand and use assessment to help raise standards, particularly the analysis and use of data provided by the annual 'PANDA' report and the 'Autumn Package'.

39. Good management decisions are often taken at the right moment. For example, money saved between one music teacher leaving and another being appointed was handed to the new head of department so resources could be purchased. The enthusiasm and talent of the appointee can now quickly raise standards in music. The expertise of another new teacher in ICT was supported immediately with very good ICT provision in her laboratory; both pupils and the department benefited immediately. Less decisive action has been taken to move ICT on; much equipment has been purchased but the management position is unclear. Action has also been taken, through engaging external support, to secure further improvement in mathematics but this is related to teaching rather than better understanding underlying problems.

40. The school also has an annual self –review that is done jointly by the school and the local education authority. The most recent of these reviews is too generous relating to standards and clouds what needs to be done to raise them. Neither are targets set for national test results challenging enough; they currently indicate the school should make a small step forward from the previous year rather than the large step needed to bring it in line with similar schools.

41. Governors manage money and other matters well. They take a lot of interest in the school, regularly attend meetings and support events. They do need clearer understanding of data referring to standards so they can better support and challenge actions taken to improve them. They have helped introduce performance management successfully into the school and take proper interest in the role of the external adviser. Performance management has contributed to rising standards of teaching by identifying practical methods by which teachers can improve, for example by becoming appropriately proficient in the use of computers.

42. Money is spent well, as is indicated above, and best value is sought; for example the good purchase and maintenance deal which has been negotiated for computers. Money is also used to help raise standards, for example buying external advice and support. The finances of the college are complex and the funding for the school aspect interwoven, to a significant degree, with the community aspect. Though there is no suggestion that either funding stream is used incorrectly, it is unclear just how much of the total funding is specifically delegated to pupils and how much use of resources and rooms by the community actually costs the school, both directly, and by affecting timetabling arrangements. This complexity needs sorting out and is an issue the Local Education Authority is about to address. However, the joint use of accommodation and resources does

mean they are used far more efficiently than in a school operating 'normal' school hours. The presence of many other adults, of a wide age range, also contributes to the development of citizenship, supports history, and underlines the importance of 'education for life'.

43. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The system for disseminating information among teachers and learning support assistants is effective. All statutory requirements concerning statements of special need are met. Teaching and non-teaching staff are deployed to the maximum advantage. The co-ordinator has correctly diagnosed the provision of extra support for numeracy as a priority.

44. Though the school is large by middle school standards it is small by secondary standards. All the jobs done in a typical secondary school, except preparation and entry of pupils to diverse public examinations, have to be done with a much reduced staff. Consequently multiple roles are quite common; assistant principals have subject management, pastoral management, and/or whole school assessment responsibilities for example. Some subjects, like art and design, have effectively only one teacher. Consequently the nature of the school can change quickly with the loss or gain of a handful of teachers. The governors and the principal have taken every advantage to ensure good appointments are made so that pupils benefit. There are also very good relationships with local universities and trainee teachers often seek appointments in the school. The school responds very well to advice and all concerned with it want it to get better. It is well placed to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. In order to raise standards and the quality of education further, the principal and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
 - Focusing much more closely on pupils' targets for improvement and relating them to marking and the use of appropriate data
 - insisting on higher standards of written work from pupils
 - identifying more able pupils clearly and ensuring their work appropriately challenges themRaise standards in mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils are provided with better targets for improvement based on good assessment and the use of appropriate data
 - monitoring pupils' work better so good standards are encouraged(Paragraphs: 2, 40, 47, 52, 56)
- (2) Raise standards in French by the end of Year 9 by:
 - Raising teachers' expectations of pupils' work in Years 8 and 9
 - Organising and planning work better so that it challenges the more able and can be understood by the less able
 - Raising the standards of written and oral work in Years 8 and 9(Paragraphs: 3, 6, 40, 109, 111, 114)
- (3) Use assessment better to establish how well pupils are doing and give pupils targets for improvement that can be monitored.
(Paragraphs: 29-31, 40, 52, 61, 75, 89, 101, 102, 109, 122, 128)
- (4) Develop the use of ICT by teachers and pupils further and better by:
 - Assessing pupils' capabilities in the use of computers better, right from when they start at the school, and use the information particularly to stretch the more able and talented.
 - Monitoring the use of computers at lunchtime so that best and equitable use is made of them.
 - Ensuring all teachers are adequately trained and understand that the use of ICT to help teaching and learning within their subjects is not a choice.(Paragraphs: 14, 16, 40, 101, 102, 104-106)

In addition to the more significant areas for improvement above, the governors may wish to include the following areas in their action plan:

- The most able pupils need more consistent extra provision to help them excel.
(Paragraphs: 6, 11, 50, 65, 72, 101)
- Improving the provision made to raise standards of numeracy.
(Paragraphs: 5, 13, 21)
- Improving the quality of the annual reports to parents about pupils' progress.
(Paragraphs: 34)
- Providing further training and support for teachers of personal, social and health education.
(Paragraphs: 17)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	22	40	24	2	0	0
Percentage	1	25	45	27	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y6 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	515
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	43

Special educational needs	Y6– Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	6.1
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National comparative data	0.3
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	66	59	125

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	43	59
	Girls	45	42	54
	Total	88	85	113
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (74)	68 (65)	90 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	47	60
	Girls	50	40	56
	Total	93	87	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (63)	69 (64)	93 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	46	58	104

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	28	29	40
	Girls	47	43	53
	Total	75	72	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (69)	69 (72)	89 (89)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66(66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	26 (23)	40 (49)	51 (56)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33(34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	26	33	42
	Girls	40	40	54
	Total	66	73	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (67)	70 (62)	92 (90)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	23 (35)	34 (36)	41 (50)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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

Ethnic background of pupils***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	499	9	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y6 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	26.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Education support staff: Y6 – Y9

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	255.24

Deployment of teachers: Y6 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76
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Average teaching group size: Y6 – Y9

Key Stage 2	24.7
Key Stage 3	24.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	1 226 206
Total expenditure	1 162 053
Expenditure per pupil	2 336
Balance brought forward from previous year	(7 343)
Balance carried forward to next year	56 810

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	515
Number of questionnaires returned	197

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	54	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	56	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	61	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	62	14	3	1
The teaching is good.	34	59	1	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	53	15	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	42	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	46	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	58	12	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	50	2	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	59	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	50	4	1	3

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lessons are currently well taught.
- Pupils behave very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- The subject provides well for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not insist enough on high standards of written work.
- Standards by the end of Year 9 are not high enough.
- The use of data and target-setting to help raise standards are insufficiently developed.
- There is not enough emphasis on raising the horizons of the most able pupils.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Average
National test results	Average	Average
Similar schools comparison	Below average	Below average
Teacher assessments	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

46. National test results in English at the end of Year 6 are consistently in line with the national average. These results agree with the standard of work seen and with the teacher assessments. Girls perform better than boys but the difference is less than in most schools.

47. National test results at the end of Year 9 are inconsistent but are generally in line with the national average. These results agree with the standard of work seen and with the teacher assessments. The difference in performance between girls and boys is about the same as the national picture. However, results are below those in similar schools. They are not good enough.

48. In Year 6 most pupils speak confidently and at extended length. They use a fairly wide vocabulary when speaking, using such words as "forensic" and "investigate". When they read aloud most do so with understanding although they hesitate over less familiar words and the lowest attainers have to read one word at a time. They are able to make sensible forecasts over what is likely to happen later in a story, for example when predicting the likely end of a detective story. Standards of writing range from some pupils who are technically competent to others whose spelling and expression is so weak that it is difficult to grasp what they mean. Most pupils make errors, but of a less serious nature. There is too much untidy work and some teachers do not insist sufficiently on good presentation.

49. In Year 9 the highest attainers speak engagingly about "Macbeth". The lowest attainers are much more hesitant in their speech but they use appropriate words such as "rebel" and "treason" when talking about the same play. Most pupils read with understanding.

The lowest attainers stumble on unfamiliar words like “sieve” whilst the highest attainers have reading skills of a much higher order and understand Shakespeare’s use of dramatic irony. The best written work shows pupils writing with flair, using well-controlled complex sentences and an adventurous vocabulary. Some pupils show pride in their work by drafting carefully and often making good use of word-processing to produce a pleasing final version. Too many pupils, however, produce untidy work, do not take notice of teachers’ comments on their work and do not achieve as well as they should. Thus the very good attitudes generally seen in the classroom are not so apparent in pupils’ written work and teachers do not challenge this enough.

50. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers are fully aware of the details on their individual education plans and provide work that is suitable for them. When extra support is available from learning support assistants it is always effective. Those pupils who receive specific reading and spelling lessons make substantial gains and many of the weaker readers benefit from the well-organised paired reading sessions. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress but teachers do not include in their lesson plans activities designed to extend them fully.

51. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and most of the lessons seen were good. Teaching, overall, is satisfactory because of a lack of challenge over time; not enough notice is taken of pupils’ targets for improvement. Consequently, learning over time is satisfactory. Teachers have very good management skills based on good relationships with pupils. Consequently pupils very largely concentrate on their work. Lessons are planned in good detail and most have good pace and a good variety of activities. For example, a Year 7 lesson on constructing a writing frame involved whole class discussion, question and answer activity, working in pairs and individual writing. In addition the challenge was good, the pace was brisk and therefore pupils made good progress. A Year 6 lesson on “The Red Headed League” was very successful because every pupil was challenged through discussion and a question and answer session. The teacher’s good subject knowledge and enthusiasm created interest and enjoyment in the pupils. The substantial number of pupils with special educational needs received effective help from the learning support assistant in a segregated group for part of the lesson.

52. Teachers mark pupils’ books regularly and conscientiously. The comments that they write sometimes show pupils how to improve but are often too bland to be helpful. Furthermore, although pupils have suitable personal targets written inside their books, teachers do not relate their comments to these targets. Consequently some pupils forget entirely about them. The department has a good amount of data about pupils’ abilities but teachers do not make use of it in order to check whether pupils are performing to expectations. Consequently some pupils are allowed to under-perform without being adequately challenged.

53. All teachers work as a team and there is a harmonious atmosphere, helped by the good accommodation. There is a clear unity of purpose. Schemes of work based on the national literacy strategy are of good quality. They make good provision for pupils’ social, moral and cultural development. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out regularly but is not sufficiently focused on raising standards. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Standards of reading have improved. Teachers do not now divide their time between different departments and, as a result, teaching has improved.

54. Drama is taught as a separate subject in most years. In the only lesson seen teaching was very good and pupils made very good progress. Their performance skills are well above average and they support each other very well in group work. The subject is a major contributor to pupils’ personal development.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers work well together and know what further steps need to be taken to secure further improvement
- Boys and girls work hard and behave well in their mathematics lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are still not good enough by the end of Year 9 despite pupils making good progress from the end of Year 6.
- The use of assessment needs to be better.
- The quality of pupils' work needs to be better monitored.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Below average	Average
National test results	Below average	Average
Similar schools comparison	Well below average	Below average
Teacher assessments	Below average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

55. Mathematics national test results at the end of Year 6 have been rising in recent years slightly faster than the national trend. The standard of work seen in the inspection reflects this trend. The difference in performance between girls and boys is similar to that found nationally. Mathematics national test results at the end of Year 9 in the school have been relatively static and hence declining when compared with national results, which have been improving.

56. Standards of work when pupils start in Year 6 are below average and probably lower than they should be. Standards improve over the year but are still below average at the time when pupils are entered for national tests. Almost all pupils show sound basic computational skills. They can add three digit numbers and multiply them by single digit numbers although multiplication tables above five have not always been securely memorised. More able students show good reasoning and thinking skills, as when carrying out an investigation of sequences arising from joining shapes together. In Year 9, the most capable mathematicians are beginning to understand the use of Pythagoras's theorem and trigonometry to solve triangles. Some of those who find mathematics more difficult have progressed enough to be able to put numbers to three places of decimals in order. Good achievement over their time in the school results in standards being average by the time pupils leave in Year 9, but these standards are below those found in similar schools. They are not yet good enough. Standards rise because pupils settle down to work hard, behave well, and get specialist teaching.

57. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Effective support is provided by a well-qualified learning assistant who spends most of her time helping pupils with their work in class. Teachers ensure that she knows what topics are to be covered so that she can prepare sufficiently. Teachers are also aware of which pupils have special needs and what they must do to help. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress.

Setting classes by ability is a help in this respect and many benefit from extra work aimed at preparing them for the National Mathematics Challenge. Substantial numbers of the more able have been successful in gaining awards in this competition in recent years.

58. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. This was a Year 9 lesson, which began effectively with a well-chosen exercise involving linking shapes with different areas and involved fractions, decimals, percentages and ratios. This challenged the pupils to think and discuss the work. However, the teacher talked too much during the main body of the lesson and a significant proportion of pupils lost interest and learning became unsatisfactory. In contrast a very good lesson for pupils in Year 6 challenged the pupils to find the connection between joining different shapes together to form a snake and the consequent number sequences arising from the number of sides of the snakes perimeter. This was taken at a very good pace with additional tasks and materials for the more able and worksheets available to help those with more limited writing skills to record their thoughts systematically. It finished with a very good discussion of how to work out the rules in which the pupils were encouraged to explain their own thoughts and present their own arguments. Consequently, independent learning was well supported.

59. Almost all lessons are well prepared and follow the three-part pattern recommended in the national strategy for numeracy. Pupils are given sound support in developing their literacy skills with the use of 'word walls', with important vocabulary posted on them, featuring in all lessons. Pupils are well managed and relationships are good.

60. Departmental meetings are beginning to focus more on improving teaching and learning. Monitoring has been thorough with regard to classroom observation but insufficiently rigorous as regards the marking of pupils' work. Almost all work is corrected and some, but not all, teachers mark carefully, set specific targets for improvement and give their pupils advice as to how to improve. Others are less thorough and scarcely use target setting at all. Teachers are also inconsistent in respect of written work; it varies in quality both for content and for presentation. Substantial and much valued support is given to teachers new to the profession and to those who need to improve their classroom performance. Schemes of work contain few references to spiritual moral social and cultural development although there are some good wall displays reflecting elements of this. Citizenship does not yet feature as a part of lesson planning in mathematics.

61. Improvement since the last report has been satisfactory. The areas identified for improvement were the use of assessment and of ICT. Assessment is still in need in of further development. Good arrangements for assessing pupils' work and gathering the results of tests exist and are put to good use when the teachers consider improvements to the curriculum and to lesson plans. They are not yet effectively used for target setting for either pupils or for teachers. Hence pupils are not sufficiently aware of their own standards of work or of what precisely they need to do to improve. The use of ICT is now satisfactory. Schemes of work identify areas where computer skills are taught and used. Good project work for Year 8 pupils using databases is one example and useful employment of spreadsheets to investigate solving equations by trial and improvement is another.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning, which is good in Year 6 and very good in Years 7-9.
- Pupils' high standards of achievement.
- Very effective leadership and management of the subject.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching.
- Assessment procedures are very good in Years 7-9

Areas for improvement

- There is not a wide enough range of teaching strategies to challenge the most able pupils.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Above average	Well above average
Test results	Above average	Well above average
Similar schools comparison	Above average	Very high
Teacher Assessments	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching	Good	Very good
Learning	Good	Very good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good	Very good

62. Science national test results at the end of Year 6 are improving and consistently above average. The achievement and attainment of boys and girls are similar to each other.

63. Science national test results at the end of Year 9 are consistently well above national averages and expectations; they are very high in comparison to results in similar schools. The achievement and attainment of boys and girls are similar.

64. In Year 6 pupils can readily understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence and apply this knowledge to identify patterns and draw conclusions. They use scientific language to describe these conclusions and show good understanding and application of knowledge gained. In Year 9 they use their scientific knowledge to identify appropriate methods for their investigations. They suggest and make suggestions about improvements and base these on reasoned evidence. Good teaching in Year 6, and very good teaching in Years 7-9 support this learning through skilled questioning and good planning of lessons. This is further helped by the very good attitudes of pupils throughout the subject. They are keen to learn and do well and behave accordingly, with very good relationships in all lessons.

65. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by teaching assistants, and work to clear targets. Differentiation of work for these students is also good, and actively supports their learning and encourages the application of knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 6. This group of pupils make good progress in Years 7-9, where they benefit from setting and more opportunities for challenge, especially in terms of making hypotheses and predictions. The progress of the most able pupils could be made better if there were formal identification of this group and a greater range of teaching strategies for this purpose; the very good practice of some teachers needs to be shared with others.

66. There were no unsatisfactory lessons; all were at least good, with a third being very good. Teaching is very good in Years 7-9, compared to good in Year 6 because teachers, in Years 7-9, build better on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding; they know what they already know because they taught it.

67. In Year 6, a very good lesson about separation techniques extended pupils to not only apply this knowledge, but also to identify ways to speed up evaporation. Pupils made valid predictions, using good scientific language and concepts. In another Year 6 lesson, high expectations from the teacher and good planning enabled pupils to investigate the concept of solids dissolving in liquids. Good questioning encouraged pupils to mention the variables of particle size and temperature. In a Year 7 lesson about neutralisation, literacy was very well incorporated, with good emphasis of key words and use of writing frames that encouraged writing in sentences. In Year 9, a very good lesson used skilled questioning to recap on key points already learned about electricity and circuits, and extended this to get pupils to explore the effect of resistance on the flow of a current. Pupils were then able to investigate this and consolidate their predictions. They were able to use ICT to record results and produce graphs to analyse and reach conclusions. Numeracy was well included in another Year 9 lesson about circuits where the teacher used an interactive whiteboard to teach number rules using decimals and graphs.

68. Leadership and management in science are very good and very effective. The head of department provides a clear direction, monitors teaching, learning and standards of work well and has put in place very effective assessment and target setting procedures, particularly in Years 7-9, that improve achievement. He leads a team of teachers that are committed to improvement and share practice well. Improvement since the last inspection has been good; standards have risen and accommodation is very much better.

69. Accommodation is very good, with a modern suite of laboratories, which are well equipped and contribute well learning. Resources are good and effectively used, though further ICT equipment to fully meet requirements for data capture is required. The department contributes well to moral, social and cultural education in the school. It also contributes satisfactorily to spiritual education, though further opportunities could be developed. There is good evidence of contribution to citizenship in pupils' work and the department's scheme of work.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The attitude of the pupils in all year groups is good.
- The management of the pupils is effective, there is a clear code of conduct which fosters good relationships.

Areas for improvement

- The quality and use of assessment to inform pupils and raise attainment.
- To develop improved opportunities for pupils to use computer applications in lessons.
- To increase the references to the work of significant artists and cultures in lesson planning.
- More able pupils are not well enough challenged.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

70. Art and design is offered throughout the school as a part of the department of art, design and technology. Art and design is offered as part of a rotating programme with lessons in design and technology, each class having an annual programme lasting approximately ten weeks.

71. By the end of Year 6 a majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress and are producing work of average quality. There is no significant variation in the standard of work produced by boys or girls. Some basic pattern work is being produced and pupils are developing basic skills in drawing and the use of colour. Progress for the most able is unsatisfactory because the planned activities in lessons fail to offer these pupils sufficient challenge. This is having a considerable effect upon overall standards in Year 6. Activities within the scheme of work are not sufficiently well planned to develop the true potential of the majority of pupils; the slow pace of lessons and limited creative opportunities are affecting standards. Most of the work seen is small-scale using drawing materials and some paint.

72. Within Year 9 standards are average and achievement generally satisfactory. The most able pupils are still not being challenged by the activities on offer; most pupils would benefit from improvements in the pace of lessons and exposure to a wider range of activities and materials. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There are no significant variations in the achievement of boys or girls. The attitudes of pupils in all classes range from good to very good but independent learning is not good because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to show initiative, take risks and develop original thought. Discussion is an integral part of all lessons and therefore pupils in all classes are reasonably articulate, many capable of discussing their work and using technical language. Work seen indicates that written work is generally free of obvious mistakes and presentation skills improve from Year 6 to Year 9.

73. In Year 6 pupils' are creating imaginative designs based upon their names, increasing their awareness of symmetry and shape. In Year 8 pupils are designing packages for a range of products. They are increasing their awareness of marketing strategies and improving their skills in drawing. Year 9 pupils are learning life-drawing techniques. Some improvements are being made in their powers of observation and an understanding of shape and proportion.

74. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory and the management of pupils is good. Teaching strategies need to accommodate the needs of pupils of all levels of ability, particularly the most able. The pace of lessons is often slow; too much time being spent on introductions to work rather than working. The use of resources is good. The promotion of literacy is good. The range of activities is limited; there is very little evidence of modelling, sculpture or printing, most lessons are devoted to drawing and the use of coloured pencils and paint. There is insufficient use of computers, except for some Internet research carried out by a small number of pupils. Lessons would also benefit from a greater use of the influence of significant artists and cultures in order to raise awareness and generate interest.

75. Leadership and management of the overall department are good. The head of art and design and technology has only been in post for a short time and has yet to address issues within art and design. Within art and design the systems in place for the assessment of work are in the process of being changed. At present they are unsatisfactory. Pupils have a very limited awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses. Effective target setting does not exist and assessment is not used effectively as an influence on future planning. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were inaccurate; they were too generous at awarding higher National Curriculum levels of attainment. Consequently standards in art and design have not been questioned. Improvement since the last inspection is hard to establish; standards then appear to have been higher at the end of Year 6 but no comment is made on standards when pupils started.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision for citizenship is **good**.

Strengths

- The practical involvement of pupils in citizenship activities
- All pupils follow a course of personal social and health education which includes most aspects of the citizenship programme of study.
- Subject areas contribute to delivering different aspects of the citizenship programme.

Areas for Improvement

- Sufficient time to explore and develop complex moral and ethical concepts is needed.
- Staff skills and confidence to deliver the programme effectively need to be raised.

76. Citizenship only became part of the National Curriculum in September 2002. Consequently it is still being developed and is differently provided for in all schools. The report is consequently laid out differently than that of other subjects.

77. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Citizenship is delivered as an integral component of the school's existing programme for personal, social and health education. The citizenship programme is based on a whole school audit of existing provision. The audit has recognised aspects already being delivered systematically, and successfully identified the additional work needed to meet statutory requirements. The course in citizenship is spread over all four years at Castle Donington. It is part of a collaborative venture involving the Castle Donington family of schools, which ensures no unnecessary duplication of work. Arrangements for reporting the subject to parents are in place. The few aspects requiring specific development have had teaching modules created. The pupils in this school are already good citizens, as demonstrated by their behaviour, manners and work in the school council.

78. There is a very active and properly constituted school council that is elected by all the pupils of the school. The school council has control of significant funds and can disburse either charitably or for the benefit of the whole school. External links with elected representatives at both local and national level have been made to demonstrate democracy in action. Teaching about the functioning of the economy, both local and national, is integrated within history and geography.

79. The whole school is involved in planned personal, social and health education activities during one period per week. The team of form teachers assigned to the programme within the whole school personal, social and health education carousel have received some training under the guidance of senior staff, though many feel insecure in their delivery. There is insufficient time available to both moderate and systematically monitor the quality of learning. The school draws well on the local community, particularly the local constabulary and volunteer bureau, to raise awareness of the rights and responsibilities of living in a democratic society.

80. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Schemes of work are in place, the course is well planned, and has been prepared on the firm basis of evidence derived during the audit of provision. There are strong links with partner institutions, particularly in terms of healthy living and to support and enhance opportunities for learning.

81. Eight lessons of personal, social and health education were seen, two in each year. Teaching was satisfactory. A consistent weakness in these lessons was the lack of time to explore ideas and develop concepts. Pupils made some progress in developing their negotiating skills in arriving at a balanced conclusion, improved their listening and speaking skills when reporting back, and raised their own awareness of their social responsibilities in regard to sexual matters. Behaviour was generally satisfactory and most pupils had a mature attitude to their work. There were no variations in the rates of progress of different groups of pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- New leadership in the subject is improving standards rapidly.
- Good teaching enables pupils to make quality products.
- Pupils have a very good attitude to the subject and behave very well.
- Pupils acquire good drawing skills that facilitate above average designing skills.

Areas for improvement

- Current assessment procedures are not effective enough.
- The use of computer-assisted design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) needs developing.
- The work in Year 9 to needs to provide more challenge and build on Year 8 better.
- Boys are not doing as well as girls.

82. The picture of provision is clearer if Years 6 - 8 are treated together as the curriculum is better for those three years.

Aspect	Years 6-8	Year 9
Standard of work seen	Above average	Average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Above average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching	Good	Satisfactory
Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Very Good	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Good	Good

83. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 show the number pupils attaining level 5 and above to be above average. Girls out-perform boys by a wider margin than is seen nationally. These assessments do not agree with the standard of work seen during the inspection, which is average. Girls continue to achieve higher than boys do. Staffing, timetabling and resourcing difficulties adversely affect standards in the current Year 9.

84. Year 6 pupils started school with average standards. They are making rapid progress in learning to work with a good range of tools and materials to design and make quality products. For example, pupils can use electronic components and equipment to design and make an electronic bedroom sign. The final products are very good; pupils display very good design skills for their age when producing the backboard and demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding when they plan a circuit and above average practical skills when soldering. Written work to support the designing and making is at least satisfactory, a good proportion is better but there is little to distinguish between the work of high and middle ability pupils. Literacy skills are below expectations for a few pupils, particularly with regard to spelling.

85. In Year 9 the above average standards seen in the three previous years are not maintained and standards are average. The recently appointed head of department has already improved the curriculum content of Years 6-8 which accounts for the above average standards seen there, but has not yet had time to revise the Year 9 programme. The work in Year 9 is not sufficiently challenging to ensure good progression from the previous years and to maintain the production of high quality products. The CAD/CAM element of the curriculum is not being taught. Better provision, in place but not yet up and running, should address this. Complications with timetable arrangements, together with teaching that is shared between two part time teachers, has resulted in Year 9 pupils experiencing some very short modules of work. These factors combine to adversely affect standards.

86. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a very good understanding of how to design, which is well taught. Pupils use ICT effectively for a range of purposes to improve the standard of their work. There is a need to further develop the ICT skills of some teachers in order to move the work forward. In Year 9 there is some variation in the quality of work seen in different material areas. Standards are generally higher in electronic products, and lower in textiles where teachers insufficiently focus on making skills. It was not possible to observe any lessons in food technology because they did not occur during the inspection. Pupils have numeracy and literacy skills adequate for the needs of the subject and teachers have identified in their planning where they can develop these skills.

87. Pupils respond very well to the good teaching by being interested in the work and asking searching questions. Pupils are creative and enthusiastic when working, and classroom relationships are good. Pupils behave very well because they are well managed by teachers and there is a good working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs make good progress (except in Year 9) because the work is appropriate and they are well supported by teachers and others. The more able pupils and those identified as gifted and talented have extra work provided for them.

88. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Just under half the lessons were very good. The best teaching was seen in Year 8. Pupils in textiles, graphics and resistant materials make very rapid progress gaining subject knowledge, understanding and practical skills and achieve above average standards. In textiles, pupils produce a landscape collage based on the work of a famous artist. The finished products are colourful, well designed and show skill in the use of a sewing machine. In graphics, pupils work independently to search websites for examples of chocolate bar wrappers. These images are downloaded to form an attractive page layout. Pupils analyse in some depth the appeal of the wrappers for different users.

They are good at explaining different features in a text box. They go on to designing their own wrapper for a chosen group of people, for example, teenagers. Pupils work in groups in resistant materials to design a pneumatic crane capable of lifting the combined weight of individual storage boxes, which the group has made. The collaborative working is a good feature of the project. In contrast a lesson in Year 9 where pupils achieve only satisfactory standards centres on the need to design a mobile phone for particular users, for example, the blind, deaf, or arthritic. The teacher provides only examples of old mobile phones and does not tap into the pupils' extensive knowledge and experience of the subject or make use of the existing products that they bring to the lesson. The final designs made in polystyrene are not very well made. The opportunity to use CAD/CAM is not utilised. Some inappropriate use of materials is also obvious in the clock project in Year 9.

89. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has been recently appointed. He has monitored subject performance. He has correctly identified targets for improvement and is taking effective action including a revision of the curriculum. Plans have been devised to improve assessment, currently unsatisfactory, and these will be implemented when new software is delivered. Although all the work of pupils is marked there is a need to standardise between teachers and also to improve the quality of written feedback to pupils. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Departmental documentation shows the way in which the department can contribute to the development of citizenship skills. A number of health and safety issues have been identified to the department. Class sizes are already more than large enough for the space available and should not be increased further. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Above average standards at the end of Year 9.
- Very good assessment of pupils' work.
- Very good pupil behaviour and attitudes which lead to good learning.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for more out-of-school enquiries.
- The development of numeracy within the subject teaching.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Above average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

90. Standards at the end of Year 6 are average and achievement is satisfactory. Assessments indicate that when pupils come into the school their attainment in geography is average. Good teaching in Year 6 consolidates pupils' knowledge and extends their skills. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average and achievement is good. Girls generally attain higher grades than boys. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 agree with the standards of work seen.

91. Year 6 pupils can compare aspects of the environment and draw their own conclusions about processes of development. They can write letters supporting or opposing local issues such as the construction of a second runway at East Midlands Airport. However, they do not always ask the “why” questions that would extend their thinking skills. The work of some lower-attaining pupils is limited by weaker literacy skills which make extended writing more difficult and hinder progress. Year 7 pupils have good mapping skills which were being developed by good lessons on four-figure grid references. Year 9 pupils of all abilities have very good note taking and essay-writing skills, shown in their work on Brazil and the rainforest environment. In their work on industrial development in Japan they could discuss the relevant issues about size of companies and the diversity of their products.

92. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the specialised work that is provided for them and the extra help they receive from their teachers. For example, enlarged resource sheets were produced for a visually impaired pupil. No support assistants were seen in geography. The most able pupils make good progress because the work is made interesting to them and they are usually given additional work to extend their abilities. No pupils were identified whose home language is not English.

93. Teaching and learning are good overall. All lessons were good or better. Teaching was always well planned, well organised and challenging. Through thorough assessment teachers ensure that all pupils learn in line with expectations; for example, by the end of the Year 7 lessons on Ordnance Survey grid references, teachers knew that every pupil in the class had grasped the principles of the co-ordinate system. Pupils and classes are always well managed to achieve a good atmosphere for learning. Literacy skills are well taught through use of key vocabulary, reading and extended writing. However, numeracy is not so well promoted, though pupils’ existing skills enable them to complete the graphs and charts necessary for their studies. ICT is built into the schemes of work but not frequently used for class work. Opportunities are well used to promote citizenship as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; for example learning about the loyalty of Japanese workers to their employers.

94. Good leadership and management provide a strong framework for learning. The subject is taught in separate geography modules within a humanities cycle that also includes history and religious education. This necessitates the close monitoring, by the head of department, of teaching by non-specialists within the cycle. Consequently there appears to be no adverse effect on standards. Assessment of pupils’ work is very good: every pupil is assessed after every unit of work and new targets for improvement are set. Comprehensive pupil records are kept and these are soon to be transferred to an electronic system that will enable more detailed analyses of progress. Through assessing their own work pupils are well aware of their own standard. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good with all the points that were identified for attention dealt with effectively. The department has a very good working ethos and the capacity for further development is very good.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Above average standards by the end of Year 9
- Assessment of pupils' progress
- The very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils which lead to good learning

Areas for improvement

- Development of numeracy within the subject teaching

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Above average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

95. By the end of Year 6 standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Assessments indicate that when pupils come into the school their attainment in history is average. Good teaching ensures much new knowledge is learnt. By the end of Year 9 standards are above average and achievement is good in Years 7 to 9. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 agree with the standards of work seen. Although girls' teacher assessment results are better than boys' results, the gap has been steadily narrowing due to strategies adopted by the department to encourage boys to attain higher levels.

96. Year 6 pupils have completed a variety of work about Ancient Egypt and Britain since 1930, which is presented in well-organised folders. Higher-attaining pupils can explain clearly why various changes have taken place over time. Lower-attaining pupils are limited by poor writing skills and some unfinished homework indicates poor understanding of what they have had to do.

97. Year 7 pupils have completed a very good unit of work on the history of the Inuit people, representing information through essays, drawings and diagrams. Year 8 pupils have a very good understanding of the principles and the main events of the French revolution and are currently engaged in research about the life of Napoleon Bonaparte. Year 9 pupils have begun a study of early twentieth century Europe which has given them additional insight into the significance of such events as men volunteering for the forces in World War 1. Pupils of all abilities can write extended essay answers of a high standard. The higher attaining pupils make very few mistakes in spelling or grammar and use historical sources well as a basis for their work. Lower attaining pupils work in shorter paragraphs and present more limited accounts but the standard of their work is good nonetheless.

98. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are always provided with work that suits their levels of need and with additional help from the teacher. Group and pair work enables them to learn from their classmates. On two occasions, during the inspection, learning support assistants accompanied pupils with statements and enabled these pupils to make good progress. The most able pupils make good progress when lessons are well-paced but if work is allowed to move slowly their

progress flags. No pupils were identified who did not use English as their first language at home.

99. Teaching and learning are good overall across all year groups. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and one was excellent, when pupils listened with rapt attention to the account of one family's experiences of the rapid changes that were taking place in the twentieth century. All lessons were characterised by good planning, use of interesting resources to engage pupils' interest, and a high level of productivity. Literacy skills were very well taught with no opportunity lost to extend vocabulary and reading skills, and a specialised glossary issued to pupils for every unit of work. However, the same attention was not given to the teaching of numeracy which is not well developed in the department. Opportunities for the teaching of citizenship, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, have been identified and exploited; for example learning about the causes of the French Revolution included both moral and social aspects. Use of ICT is built into departmental schemes of work and pupils use the Internet for research. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and pupils almost always work to the best of their ability. This ensures high standards.

100. The high standards are also a result of the good leadership and management that provides a strong framework for learning. The subject is taught in separate history modules within a humanities cycle that also includes geography and religious education. There is no evidence that this affects standards, but it does necessitate the close monitoring, by the head of department, of teaching by non-specialists within the cycle. Assessment of pupils' work is a real strength of the department; every pupil is assessed after every unit of work and new targets for improvement are set. Pupils' records will soon be transferred to an electronic system which will enable more detailed analysis of progress. Pupils also have the opportunity to assess their own work which means that they are well aware of the progress they are making. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good and all the points that were identified for attention have been dealt with. Members of the department work very well together and the capacity for further development is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Very good teaching now means pupils are making very good progress in ICT lessons
- Good provision in a range of subjects means learning is consolidated.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment of pupils' capability, starting when pupils enter the school so that work is better matched to pupils' abilities and the most talented pupils, in particular are stretched
- Monitoring of the use of computers at lunchtime so that best and equitable use is made of them
- Further development of the use of ICT by teachers and pupils so that all subjects use it appropriately and well

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Above average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Good	Very good
Learning	Good	Very good
Attitudes and behaviour	Satisfactory	Very good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

101. Limited evidence was available during the inspection as much of the formal teaching was after the inspection had finished and scrutiny of work could not take fully into account the positive effect of much new equipment. ICT has also been slow to develop in this school in the approximately twelve years it has been part of the National Curriculum. It was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Improvements in the equipment available, some very recent, have improved the position significantly. The senior manager nominally in charge of ICT is also moving things along well and the curriculum provided to pupils will meet national requirements as they experience it. ICT experiences are also good in, for example, science, design and technology and in physical education. Mathematics contributes satisfactorily, whilst other areas foster at least research using the Internet. Music is poised to contribute significantly; equipment has been purchased and will soon be operating. Overall, improvement in provision has been satisfactory since the last inspection but assessment of pupils' capabilities when they start in Year 6, and building on the wide range of ability they have still need to be much better. The most skilled pupils in ICT need challenging in all years.

102. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 do not agree with the standard of work seen because there is no rigorous system of assessment and moderation and teachers across subject areas undoubtedly err towards a more favourable assessment.

103. In Year 6 pupils can create spreadsheets to calculate perimeters and areas of regular shapes and other spreadsheets to multiply numbers in the fashion of a 'times table' and the most able can address the teachers' good challenge of making a spreadsheet representing many 'times tables and can present it neatly on a computer screen. This work improves pupils' skills of numeracy and the teacher linked it to work in mathematics. Most pupils understand 'cell' and the advantages of copying and pasting contents to them. A few have little idea of what they are doing and some of these have special educational needs. Whilst pupils with statements get support and can do the tasks given, pupils with special educational needs do not necessarily get support, struggle and make little progress. Good teaching ably supports most pupils in the class but cannot reach all quickly enough as class sizes of 27 are a little large. Though management of pupils, including working pairs, is very good, pupils of widely differing abilities are not well enough managed. Sitting them in ability groups and providing written material to guide and challenge might help. Pupils in Year 7 have much better attitudes than those in Year 6, excellent rather than satisfactory. This extra maturity and very determined approach to work helps teaching become very good; pupils are more able and willing to take the initiative, freeing up the teacher to provide support where it is really needed and to engage faster, more able pupils, so that they acquire or hone skills better. A Year 7 lesson consolidating work on computer presentations led off with an excellent projected presentation by the teacher highlighting all the points that make a good presentation, such as colour, fonts, limiting special effects and so on. It was obvious that many pupils understood and remembered key ideas from work they had done. One group of girls was keen to demonstrate their presentation, including sound. It was very good and showed they had thought carefully about words and phrases as well as the way to put them across to interest the audience. All members of the class thought carefully about how to 'sell

the school' in the consolidation project, and could select images to use, and scan other information into a computer.

104. Work in Year 7 religious education on Islam shows a better use of research followed by interpretation than a similar exercise about suffragettes in Year 8 citizenship; some of this work is just a download and print exercise which is not challenging or very meaningful. Year 7 mathematics work, using spreadsheets to convert centimetres to metres and so on makes good use of graphs for presentation but, like the work in religious education, there is some careless spelling; graphs are printed out labelled "center meters" and no correction made by the teacher. Some machines are set to use an American English spell checker rather than UK English and this cannot help pupils spell correctly. Data handling, creating databases about likes and dislikes, for example, is satisfactorily tackled in mathematics. Most science teachers teach very well using ICT and in at least some Year 7 and Year 8 classes there is good research work by pupils, for example about rocks and about Brown, of Brownian motion fame. The use of ICT to record experimental results, for example about heat and light, is done well with the equipment available; more equipment would allow further development in this area.

105. The two computer suites are available at lunchtime and after school and are heavily used by pupils. However, sometimes at least, the significant use is accessing film and games sites on the Internet and, in one lunchtime, all computers were in use by boys. A ticket or reserve system is not used; pupils cannot reserve machines for work for example. Neither does the free access system allow individual pupils use of machines to be easily monitored. One computer suite is also available for community use. Whilst the nature of the school makes this understandable, it does mean all machines are not available to teachers and pupils all the time, consequently access is made a little harder and the ratio of the number of computers to the number of pupils is not as good as a simple calculation indicates.

106. Leadership and management are satisfactory at present as there has been insufficient time for the ideas and planning of the teacher in charge to work through and good assessment of ICT capability has yet to be established. Assessment procedures at the end of Year 9 are satisfactory and do take account of ICT experiences in different subjects, but assessment is over generous and requires moderation. The curriculum is just being established and good use is being made of national guidelines. Year 8 and Year 9 pupils have not had the better experiences of ICT now included in Year 6 and Year 7. These older pupils need a 'catch-up' programme so that they can make best use of new equipment.

107. ICT makes a very good contribution to both moral and social development through paired work, group presentations, and communicating messages and ideas. Citizenship is enhanced through work on how presentation influences people and the implications of electronic communications and the availability of information.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- The pupils' achievement in Years 6 and 7 is very good.
- The quality of teaching and of learning is very good in Years 6 and 7.
- There is a very good, shared commitment and capacity to improve.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils' achievement in Years 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils in Years 8 and 9 are unsatisfactory: the work set does not stretch high attainers enough and low attainers are often lost.
- Written work in Years 8 and 9 does not match the quality of that in earlier years and oral work is not well enough corrected.

108. The picture of provision is clearer if Years 6 and 7 are treated together as they are taught very much better. Only a day of inspection was possible and judgements reflect the evidence available in that time.

Aspect	Years 6-7	Years 8-9
Standard of work seen	Above average	Average
Teacher assessments	N/a	Well above average
Achievement	Very Good	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Very good	Satisfactory
Learning	Very good	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

French

109. Good improvements have eliminated the unsatisfactory provision found in the last inspection. Attainment is now higher and teaching is satisfactory, but there is some way to go before all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable.

110. All pupils study French for four years. With very little difference between boys and girls, they achieve very well in Years 6 and 7, because they are highly motivated by very good teaching. As a result, by the end of Year 7, pupils are able to engage in quite demanding exchanges orally, both with the teacher and, in paired or group work, between themselves. They are able; for example, to offer simple opinions about the places in which they live, to pose questions of each other, making cases agree and forming negatives correctly. They read simple French with generally good accents, fluency and understanding. A scrutiny of written work demonstrates some good early attempts at writing short pieces of continuous prose that are of higher standards than those typically found among pupils of this age.

111. Achievement in Years 8 and 9 is unsatisfactory, as the pupils do not sustain the rate of progress they make in the first two years of study, so, although attainment shown by teacher assessments was well above average in 2002, inspection evidence suggests this is not the case at present. Girls appear to do slightly better than do the boys in lessons and in written work. Overall, the written work of pupils at the end of Year 9 is average, although a few are able to produce some very good lengthy writing on personal interests, sports and pastimes. Most writing is at about the expected level for 14 year-olds, using only simple sentences in the present tense. Achievement slows because the quality of teaching and learning does not match that found in Years 6 and 7, so motivation to learn, whilst

satisfactory, diminishes. In oral work, the pupils are more hesitant; their fluency is often impeded because they read new work before they have mastered it orally. Teaching sometimes fails to pick up on mis-pronunciations or speaking that shows a clear lack of understanding, so errors are re-enforced in the pupils' minds. On the other hand, because they hear a lot of French in class, the pupils' understanding is good in all years.

112. The quality of learning and of teaching is satisfactory. All lessons are very thoroughly prepared and what pupils are to learn is brought to their attention before the lesson starts. A good, brief round up at the end helps the pupils to appreciate their achievement.

113. The features of the very good teaching in Years 6 and 7 are high pace and well-conceived learning activities that tie together very well, building up pupils' understanding and raising standards. Rapid warm-ups, for example, practising on wipeable white cards things such as weather-related vocabulary make sure that all pupils are involved and give the teacher clear indications of how well homework has been done and who needs extra help. Similarly, during the lessons, regular assessments, for example using mock traffic lights to check if it is safe to proceed, help to sustain interest. Very clear, yet demanding use of French, with an insistence on high standards of work and attentiveness led to rapid development among Year 7 pupils of vocabulary and structure that let them talk engagingly about their homes. This best, very energetic teaching has real sympathy with the pupils as learners; lower attainers' understanding is very carefully checked and questions of varying difficulty are used well to stretch all. Genuine praise from the teacher makes the pupils feel really good when they have been working consistently hard or because they have achieved a tour de force by reading a passage aloud very convincingly.

114. Satisfactory teaching and learning in Years 8 and 9 lack something of the dynamism found earlier and inexperience led, in one lesson, to an imbalance in the range of learning activities: written work was introduced before the pupils were ready. As a result, the work did not help learning by reinforcing well-practised oral work. The use in Year 9 of real facial protection and beauty products lacked some impact because work devised around them did not push the pupils hard enough. By the end of the lesson they knew the words well, but couldn't use them to say, for instance, for what and how they were used; the work was not sufficiently tailored to the wide range of attainment in the class. Individual pupils learned one thing and managed to make it seem they were doing well by showing they knew it every time it arose, but they did little else. Much improved since the previous inspection, work is marked very helpfully and homework plays an important part in learning, as a result, standards are higher. The contribution to pupils' personal development is good as they learn about other French speaking countries and their customs. The potential to broaden this is immense, particularly through first-hand perspectives of life in North African French speaking countries brought by a keen very recently appointed teacher. The capacity for further improvement is very good.

German

115. No German was taught at any time during the inspection. Identified as a weakness at the previous inspection, provision for German is now satisfactory. With a reduced allocation of time, the language is now taught only to selected pupils in Years 8 and 9; it provides a satisfactory basis for them to start GCSE courses in their next school.

116. Careful scrutiny of a sample of written work shows the pupils obtain a relevant grounding in the language and that they are able to produce simple sentences accurately on personal and school-related themes. The level of work attempted falls well within the competence of the teachers involved: their enthusiasm compensates amply their lack of formal qualification to teach the language.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching with good and very good features
- Resources including the recently acquired computers
- Achievement of pupils in lessons and work seen is good

Areas for improvement

- Assessment and the introduction of levels and targets for improvement
- All pupils do not have access to computers because most of the equipment has recently arrived and is not yet installed.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work	Below average	Average
Teacher assessments	N/A	Not provided
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

117. Year 6 pupils are working towards standards expected for their age and experience in music. This represents good achievement because most enter the school with very little knowledge or experience in playing instruments. A small minority of pupils are working at higher levels in playing and performing. These pupils are supported in their learning by instrumental lessons. In Year 9, standards are overall in line with national expectations; a significant minority attain higher levels in playing and performing. Standards in instrumental lessons seen are overall above average.

118. In Year 6 most pupils are aware of how to use the elements of music. A few pupils are less successful in describing their work and are reluctant to write about it. Work seen in folders is well presented. In Year 9, more able pupils show an understanding of what is needed to compose a melody. They are beginning to produce their own compositions using structure, chords and cadences. In one lesson, most pupils made good progress in improvisation, using keyboards and xylophones. Keyboard skills are weak amongst a significant minority of pupils who are unable to improve phrasing because they can only play with one or two fingers.

119. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. Strengths in teaching are very good planning and preparation of lessons, which increases the pace at which pupils work. Pupils are well managed and seating plans have a positive effect on learning and sustaining pupils' concentration. Attention is made to the use of subject vocabulary, which is clearly displayed in the teaching room and in the corridors. However, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to use technical words when speaking. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work are positive and help to raise pupils' self esteem. However, marking is inconsistent and not all pupils understand their grades for effort and attainment. The department has recently acquired 12 computers which, when they are installed, will enable all pupils to have access to composition software during lessons; ICT use at present is very limited.

120. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because tasks are planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. More able pupils make good progress because of good teaching, additional support in lessons and a wide range of extra curricular opportunities. The department recognises talented pupils and provides planned work in lessons and opportunities for the development of skills at other times. There is no significant difference in the attainment and progress of boys and girls.

121. In a very good Year 8 lesson, pupils knew what to do, what they were expected to achieve and how to do so. Less able pupils were able to play a written Indian raga and a few, in pairs, were able to add a drone. All pupils clapped complex rhythms enabling them to introduce them into their raga. Most pupils performed with confidence and listened to others' work. In a good Year 9 lesson, pupils made good progress because the teacher's expectations were high and pupils, who were unsure what to do, were taken to one side and the teacher explained the work again in a clear and calm way.

122. The department is well managed by the recently appointed head of department. There is very good use of newly acquired good quality resources. There is a shared commitment to improvement by the school's senior management and the departmental staff. Consequently standards are quickly rising in all years. ICT use is still to be developed. There are no individual academic targets for pupils, to help them achieve better. Progress since September 2002 has been good.

123. The department makes a valuable contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Year 8 pupils study world music. The majority of pupils work very well in groups composing and performing. Opportunities are given for pupils to think about moods and how to use musical elements effectively to create 'atmosphere'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good.

Strengths

- Good quality teaching by specialists ensures good learning.
- Pupils' very good attitudes in lessons.
- Pupils' good achievement.

Areas for improvement

- Better links are needed between assessment results and curriculum development.
- Department development planning needs more precision and clarity.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Above average
End of year teacher assessments	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

124. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is low, due to limited prior experience and knowledge. Good quality teaching is rapidly addressing this situation, and pupils learn quickly and effectively, helped by their very good attitudes to the subject. In Year 6, pupils have good levels of knowledge and understanding, but their performance skills, though improving, remain average. Pupils can work accurately and safely in gymnastics. They can build

sequences which include working at different levels, balancing, rolling, and which have a clear start and finish. They cannot yet successfully mirror movements made by partners.

125. Towards the end of Year 9, pupils can apply high level skills and tactical awareness to engage very effectively in a range of sports and games. Many pupils compete successfully at local, district and regional level. There are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Good quality teaching leads to good learning.

126. In all years, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work set is thoughtfully planned and meets their particular needs well. The most able pupils make good progress because they are persistently challenged to improve the quality and precision of execution of their passes, strokes, sequences, movements and evaluations. Pupils who may not use English as the first language at home make the same overall progress as their peers.

127. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. In a very good Year 6 mixed dance lesson, all pupils developed and displayed a movement motif to music involving gesture, travel, balance, rotation and weight transfer. In a very good Year 7 mixed basketball lesson, all pupils understood how to develop space using the move and check technique in all directions, though their application of the skill in competition remains nascent. Among the strengths of a very good Year 8 mixed basketball lesson were the appropriate execution of skills under competitive pressure, and the taking of every opportunity to improve pupils literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. A very good mixed Year 9 gymnastics lesson was built upon very clear learning objectives which gave pupils a secure picture of what they were required to learn, and challenging work which inspired them to extend their creative horizons. A common strand throughout all of these lessons was the very good behaviour and attitudes to learning which all pupils brought to the working space.

128. Improvement since last inspection is satisfactory. Unsatisfactory progress has been made in the development of assessment procedures, and in using the information to secure improvements in standards. Other areas noted for development in the last inspection report have been addressed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- The overall good quality teaching and learning.
- The good attitudes and behaviour of pupils
- The wide range of resources including artefacts.

Areas for improvement

- The evaluation of teaching and learning.
- The use of ICT in all years.

Aspect	Year 6	Years 7-9
Standard of work seen	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

129. Standards when pupils start at the school vary. The majority of pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of world religions. A small minority enter the school with a good knowledge of the Bible and Old Testament stories.

130. Pupils' enthusiasm and the good relationships in lessons most often help them to speak out and join in class discussions. There is no significant difference in the overall attainment of boys and girls.

131. In Year 6, pupils can identify pictures of eight famous people who have helped people less fortunate than themselves, for example Mother Teresa and Nelson Mandela. They understand the role that these people have played in making the world a better place and are able to use words like kindness, bravery, genius and leadership. They are encouraged to bring their own experiences into the lesson, for example, describing their personal and family heroes. However, there is not always enough learning about how famous people used their talents in the service of God, for example, the artist Michael Angelo and Mohammed Ali.

132. In Year 9, pupils can argue reasons why God might or might not exist. They are familiar with world religions and have identified them on a world map. In a lesson about Hinduism, pupils showed respect and listened carefully to new vocabulary and the meanings of related words. They keep a glossary of terms that is built upon, as they get older. This makes a valuable contribution towards the development of pupils' literacy skills. They know that Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu are the three main gods of Hinduism and are called, collectively, Trimurti, but were unable to recall enough information to compare Trimurti with the Christian Trinity. Pupils are given some opportunities to use ICT. For example, Year 9 pupils have designed stained glass windows using Christian symbols and have produced folded booklets on Judaism and Year 7 pupils have produced a printed project about Islam.

133. Strengths of teaching lie in well-planned lessons, good use of artefacts and good classroom management; pupils were able to see and touch a good collection of artefacts used to support work about Hinduism in Year 9. No lessons were seen in Years 7 and 8 because they were timetabled after the inspection. Year 7 work folders were tidy and carefully labelled. Pupils had been given the opportunity to write their own ideas on 'What do I believe in'. A good range of teaching strategies had been used that enabled pupils to learn well in a variety of ways, for example, surveys, spidergrams, an essay on Islam and a summary on the life of Jesus. In Year 8 work, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of both religious and other festivals, for example, Independence Day. Good planning enables pupils to build on their knowledge of places of worship gained in Year 7 by learning to identify parts of the inside of a Mosque and Temple and Church. Pupils with special educational needs and most able pupils make good progress because of well-planned tasks that meet their needs.

134. The subject is well managed within the humanities department. The teacher who teaches most lessons is working with the Local Education Authority to develop a new Locally Agreed Syllabus and this shows in the planning of schemes of work and the shared commitment to improvement of the subject by staff and the senior management of the school. Marking of work is thorough and written comments help pupils to improve their work. There are no teachers with relevant qualifications but those who teach religious education are improving their subject knowledge and this has helped to maintain standards in all years. However, lessons are much better when taught by teachers who have a better understanding of how to use pupils' knowledge of religion to further develop their understanding. The monitoring of teaching and learning across the subject has not yet taken place. Attempts have been made to introduce attainment levels in preparation for the new syllabus. Since the previous report teaching has improved.

135. The department makes a good contribution towards the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Year 9 pupils study Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. In work seen, pupils are encouraged to recognise the spiritual dimensions of life making use of a variety of questions and experiences for example mysteries, dreams and superstitions in Year 6 and questioning the existence of God in Year 9.