

INSPECTION REPORT

RIDGEWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116971

Head teacher: Mr A Burgess

Reporting inspector: Mr R Palmer
31198

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th March 2003

Inspection number: 249196

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Evesham Road
Ashwood Bank
Redditch

Postcode: B96 6BD

Telephone number: 01527892867

Fax number: 01527 893909

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Father P Harrison

Date of previous inspection: 3rd February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
31198	R Palmer	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13786	S Walsh	Lay inspector		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?
30690	G Allison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography	
3534	A Braithwaite	Team inspector	Physical education Educational inclusion	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19915	P Hooton	Team inspector	History	
23186	V Maunder	Team inspector	Science	
17868	E Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education	
19214	G Price	Team inspector	English Citizenship Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
1407	P Scott	Team inspector	Mathematics	
6327	J Thorp	Team inspector	Design and technology Music	
11720	P Winch	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)

3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	22
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	24
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	25
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	31
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	36

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ridgeway is a secondary middle school for pupils aged nine to 13 years situated on the outskirts of the town of Redditch. The school has 441 pupils (231 boys and 210 girls), compared with 384 pupils at the time of its previous inspection in 1997. It is about the same size as other middle schools in England. Pupils come from several feeder first schools. Almost half of the pupils travel to and from school by bus. The attainment of pupils on entry in Year 5 is similar to the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds that are above average overall. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, about one in every 16 pupils, is below the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and no pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. Few pupils are of non-white ethnic background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, one in every nine, is below average. Most of these pupils have learning or behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, about one in 50, is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. It has many good features. Pupils are happy at school and eager to learn within a supportive and caring environment. Standards are rising at the same rate as the national improvement in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6. Standards are above average at the end of Year 8 and indicate good achievement. Standards in mathematics and science have improved but are not high enough in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching is good overall. The good leadership of the head teacher, with effective support from governors and senior staff, is an important factor in the good improvements made very recently. The quality of management in subjects is satisfactory but varies from good to unsatisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well by Year 8.
- Very good behaviour and attitudes enable pupils to make good progress in most lessons.
- Good leadership and management are leading to good improvements.
- Provision for pupils' all-round and personal development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6, though improving, are unsatisfactory.
- Procedures for assessment and marking are unsatisfactory but improving.
- Links with first schools are satisfactory but do not ensure good continuity of learning for pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection in 1997. Many of the improvements have occurred in the year since the arrival of the current head teacher. Standards in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 have improved at the same rate as that nationally and are average overall. The quality of teaching remains good. With regard to the six key issues identified for action, improvement is satisfactory overall. However, there is room for further improvement in procedures for assessment. The school has the capacity and shared commitment to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In 2002, results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 matched the national average overall. Over the past three years, they have improved at the same rate as the national improvement. The attainment of boys and girls in the tests is similar. In 2002, results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, results were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with their prior attainment in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2, pupils' results in 2002 indicated satisfactory achievement in English, and unsatisfactory achievement in mathematics and science. In work seen in Years 5 and 6, standards are average overall. They are currently above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Standards are above average in most other subjects. Pupils' achievement by Year 6 is satisfactory overall though it is unsatisfactory in mathematics and science. Achievement is good in English and is satisfactory or better in all other subjects. Achievement in mathematics is not high enough by Year 6 mainly because teachers spend too much time teaching number skills and not enough time teaching the other mathematical skills. In science, pupils do not make enough progress because they have few opportunities to develop their practical and investigative skills.

By Year 8, standards are above average. They indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. In work seen, standards are above average in English and are average in mathematics and science. They are above average in all other subjects apart from design and technology, in which they are average. Pupils' achievement is good in all subjects apart from mathematics, in which it is satisfactory. Throughout Years 5 to 8, pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress and achieve well. The few pupils of ethnic minority background and the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils. Higher attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted or talented, generally make similar progress to that of other pupils in most subjects. In classes observed, there is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.

Good teaching, pupils' very positive attitudes and their improving and good skills in literacy contribute considerably to pupils' achievement in all years and in all subjects. An important hindrance to better achievement has been the ineffective use of assessment to show pupils how to improve and to set suitably challenging targets for improvement. The school was short of the challenging targets set for improvement in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils' very positive attitudes help them to achieve well. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. The level of exclusions is very low.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond readily to many very good opportunities to exercise initiative and responsibility. Very good relationships between

	pupils and staff create a very positive climate for learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly. Rates of unauthorised absence are above average as a result of unsatisfactory procedures for monitoring attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 – 8
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. A small amount of teaching observed was excellent, particularly in French. A small amount of teaching was unsatisfactory in a few subjects. Teaching meets the needs of boys and girls of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. In the three core subjects, teaching is good in English throughout Years 5 to 8. In mathematics, it is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. In science, it is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is good throughout the school in art and design, design and technology, French, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music, physical education and religious education. In geography, teaching is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. In citizenship, teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8.

The quality of learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 to 8. It is often very good. Boys and girls respond enthusiastically to complete the work set. They concentrate well and work at a good pace in most lessons. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including the very few for whom English is an additional language and those who have learning or behavioural difficulties, participate readily in all activities in class. They enjoy work that makes them think hard and enables them to work independently. Most pupils do not have a clear understanding of how well they should achieve in different subjects.

Teaching has many positive features. Teachers' good skills in class management, generally high expectations and effective planning of lessons promote good learning. Most teachers provide a good range of carefully timed, relevant and interesting activities that usually match the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment within the class. They make effective use of a good range of resources, sometimes including ICT, to enhance pupils' learning and to encourage practical activities that involve pupils in finding things out for themselves. Occasionally, in mathematics and science, the teacher's lack of expertise in the subject hinders learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support that helps them to achieve at least as well as other pupils. Most teachers, but not always in science, make suitable extension work available for higher attainers and gifted or talented pupils to achieve well. The main weakness in teaching has been the inadequate use of assessment and marking to help pupils to improve their work in many subjects. The teaching of literacy is good. The teaching of numeracy, though unplanned, is satisfactory across subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and satisfies statutory requirements. Pupils enrich their learning experiences by active participation in a wide range of activities during lunchtime and after school, particularly in sport and music. Links with first schools do not ensure good continuity of learning in all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to help these pupils to achieve at least as well as other pupils. Individual

	education plans do not show clearly how to measure pupils' progress towards their targets. Procedures for identifying pupils for placement on the list of special educational needs lack clarity.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Good. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language have good skills in English and achieve well by Year 8.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Very good provision for moral development and good provision for spiritual, social and cultural development contribute well to pupils' all-round personal development. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to exercise responsibility. They learn to tell right from wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Staff provide good pastoral care and support. They value all pupils equally. Suitable procedures for health and safety and child protection are in place. Procedures for monitoring attendance are inadequate. Procedures for assessment of pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory and are improving.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	Good. Parents have very positive views about the school. Procedures for consulting parents have improved recently and are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The good leadership of the head teacher, supported well by senior staff, is leading to good improvements. The quality of management in subjects is satisfactory and varies from good to unsatisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are supportive and carry out their duties well. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are involved much more actively in determining the school's policies than at the time of the previous inspection. The school meets statutory requirements apart from a few details in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school's systems for checking how well it is doing have improved and are satisfactory. Until recently, inadequate sharing of information about pupils' prior attainment and lack of an efficient system of assessment meant that the school could not evaluate accurately the quality of pupils' achievement or set meaningful targets for academic performance. The current development plan contains suitable priorities for raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial management is good. The school considers spending decisions carefully to seek best value. It makes effective use of the satisfactory staffing, accommodation and learning resources to support pupils' learning. In many subjects, ICT is used well to support teaching and learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• Pupils like school and make good progress. • Teaching is good. Expectations are high. • Parents feel welcome at the school. • Behaviour is good. • Leadership and management are good.	• The amount of homework is inappropriate. • Reports on progress are not informative enough. • Parents' links with school are not close.

The inspection's findings support most of parents' positive views about the school. However, progress is not good in all subjects. Pupils have underachieved in national tests in mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 6 in recent years. Inspectors do not agree with the views of the minority of parents who have reservations about homework, reports and links. Although there is inconsistency in the setting of homework across subjects, the quality and amount of homework are satisfactory and assist pupils' learning. Reports are suitably informative about pupils' standards and progress and meet statutory requirements. The school's links with parents are better than those found in many schools and include a newly established 'parents' forum' in which parents and teachers discuss school policies and issues.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards observed in class and in scrutiny of work are above average and show good achievement by the end of pupils' four years at the school. Standards are average by Year 6 and above average by Year 8. They indicate satisfactory achievement overall by Year 6. However, pupils do not achieve as well by Year 6 as they should in mathematics and science, even though they achieve well in English and most other subjects. The achievement of pupils of all levels of attainment is good overall by Year 8.
2. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in the current Year 5 is average, based on the national tests completed two years earlier at the end of Year 3. The school has insufficiently reliable information from the first schools to indicate whether pupils' attainment improved or not in the two years between pupils' sitting these tests and entering the middle school. At the previous inspection, pupils' attainment on entry was reported as average.
3. In 2002, the school's overall results in the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 matched the national average. They were above the national average in English and were average in mathematics and science. Compared with the results attained by similar schools, they were well below average. However, compared with pupils' previous attainment in the national tests taken at the end of Year 3, the results indicated satisfactory achievement overall. They comfortably matched expectations in English. They were slightly below expectations in mathematics and science. Pupils of higher attainment achieved well, particularly in English, with a larger than expected proportion of pupils attaining level 5. Results in the national tests are improving at the same rate as the national improvement. Over the past three years, there has been little difference in the performance of boys and girls in these tests. Boys' results have been slightly above the national averages for boys. Girls' results have been slightly below the national averages for girls.
4. In work seen in Years 5 and 6, standards are average overall. They indicate satisfactory achievement although pupils do not make quite as much progress as they should in the two key subjects of mathematics and science. Standards are currently above average in English, art and design, citizenship, ICT and religious education. Standards are below average in science. They are average in mathematics and all other subjects. Pupils' achievement by Year 6 is good in English, art and design, citizenship, French, ICT, music and religious education. It is unsatisfactory in mathematics and science and satisfactory in all other subjects. In the subjects in which achievement is good, the main contributory factors are good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Achievement in mathematics and science is unsatisfactory because teachers do not have a good awareness of pupils' levels of prior attainment and do not make effective use of assessment to show pupils how well they are doing and how to improve. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is further hindered because teachers spend too much time on the teaching of number and give pupils insufficient work on the other aspects of the subject. In science, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their practical and investigative skills.

5. In work seen in Years 7 and 8, standards are above average overall. They indicate good achievement for boys and girls of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. Standards are currently above average in English, art and design, citizenship, French, geography, history, ICT, physical education and religious education. Standards are average in mathematics and science and all other subjects. Pupils' achievement by Year 8 is good in English and science. It is good in all other subjects, apart from mathematics in which it is satisfactory. Good teaching, pupils' very positive attitudes and their improving and good skills in literacy contribute considerably to pupils' good achievement by Year 8. In mathematics, achievement improves because teachers ensure that all aspects of the course are studied fully. In science, the main reason that achievement improves is that teachers' expectations are higher and the work is of more appropriate challenge and difficulty for most pupils. Throughout Years 5 to 8, there is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls
6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In Years 5 to 8, they make good progress in meeting the targets of their individual education plans. In mathematics and science, they make generally better progress than other pupils, because they receive good support from teaching assistants and the work is of appropriate difficulty. In Years 7 and 8, they achieve well because teachers know their needs well and provide them with work of suitable interest and difficulty. Pupils with statements of special educational needs achieve well throughout all years. They make good progress in most lessons and benefit from the effective support and encouragement of teaching assistants.
7. The few pupils of ethnic minority background integrate well and make similar progress to that of other pupils. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language are competent speakers and writers of English and achieve as well as other pupils.
8. The higher attaining pupils, including those identified as gifted or talented, generally make similar progress to that of most other pupils in the different subjects in Years 5 and 6 and in Years 7 and 8. However, in science, they do not always receive work of sufficient challenge and difficulty.
9. Standards of literacy are above average by Year 6 and by Year 8. Pupils read well and have sufficiently good skills to meet the demands for reading in all subjects. They present written work well. Levels of accuracy in writing, particularly in spelling, are above average. Pupils make good use of ICT to prepare and present written work. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive influence on standards. In many subjects, as seen in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and ICT, pupils improve their reading and writing skills through many good activities provided by teachers. Pupils respond well to many good opportunities to read aloud in class. They develop their reading through directed research. Teachers help pupils to develop their writing through advice on structuring work or through offering them a range of written tasks requiring different skills. Pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They use these well in discussions in many classes. They often give logical and suitably detailed oral responses to teachers' questions. They speak confidently in front of other pupils as observed in assemblies. In a few classes, even in English, pupils occasionally have insufficient opportunities to practise their speaking skills.
10. Pupils' skills in numeracy are not as good as their literacy and oracy skills. They are average. They are generally adequate to assist their work in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography, which depend on pupils being able to apply their mathematical skills. Opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills

in all subjects are haphazard. In all years, pupils recall and manipulate numbers well. The older pupils understand fractions, decimals and percentages and apply related ideas to new situations. They calculate, estimate and measure accurately in design and technology and judge the reasonableness of their methods. In most subjects, pupils collect, display and read information in the form of tables, charts, diagrams and graphs. They use these statistical skills frequently and successfully to support their work in geography, history and design and technology. However, in science pupils have few opportunities to carry out statistical work and their graphical skills are below average.

11. Pupils make satisfactory use of their above average skills in ICT to support their work in many, but not all, subjects. In English, they use ICT well for project work and autobiographical writing as well as drafting and redrafting text. In art and design, pupils make effective use of digital cameras, particularly for work on portraits. In many subjects, pupils use the Internet responsibly and well to carry out research as observed when pupils in Year 8 researched topics on European Union countries for their geography project. However, pupils rarely have opportunities to use ICT to extend and enhance their work in mathematics, science, physical education and music.
12. Since the previous inspection, standards in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 have improved satisfactorily. The proportion of pupils now attaining Level 4 or above has increased in English from three out of every five pupils to four out of five. In mathematics, the proportion has increased from five out of 10 to seven out of 10 pupils. In science, the proportion has increased slightly and remains better than four out of every five pupils.
13. The school was short of the challenging targets set for improvement in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6. However, the lack of suitable information about pupils' attainment on entry to the school in Year 5 has resulted in the setting of targets that had little meaning. The new head teacher and new deputy head teacher are, appropriately, setting up a much more rigorous system for collecting and analysing information about pupils' attainment, capabilities and progress in order to set meaningful targets for improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They come to school each morning cheerful, alert and ready for work. Pupils are very keen to get involved with school activities. For example, many pupils represent their school in sport. Pupils are extremely interested and involved in their work. Their very positive attitudes help them to learn well. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics class, pupils were very keen to answer questions involving mental arithmetic. Questions required the pupils to use initiative and they responded very well.
15. Pupils complete their homework with enthusiasm. In a Year 5 English class, pupils had been asked to supply information about foxes, wolves or bears for the next day. They had searched the Internet or brought in books of high quality from home. Other pupils used books and information from the school's study centre. Pupils are learning important skills of independent research ready for their next stage of education.
16. Behaviour of pupils is very good both in lessons and around the school. Very good behaviour in lessons promotes good learning. Behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is very good. The large playground enables the more energetic pupils to run around but

there is a lack of seating areas. Pupils have good manners. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are trustworthy and show respect for property. Bullying is rare. There are occasional fallings out that are usually resolved quickly. Rates of exclusion are very low.

17. Assemblies are very special and dignified occasions. Pupils behave very well and listen very carefully and respectfully to the viewpoints of others. Pupils participate actively in class assemblies that often involve role-play and drama. Pupils as young as Year 5 plan the presentations for themselves. Young pupils empathise with others. They understand difficult concepts like forgiveness, disappointment and betrayal. A Year 8 display about the novel *Goodnight Mr Tom* showed very good understanding of the emotions involved in the relationship between Tom and his mother. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how their actions or the actions of others affect other people.
18. Pupils get good opportunities in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons to experience the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In religious education lessons in Year 5, pupils had formulated their own rules. They had a very clear understanding of right and wrong and condemned racism, bullying and murder.
19. Personal development is very good. Parents recognise that the school helps their children to become mature and sensible. Pupils have very good initiative and respond extremely well to responsibility. For example, a small group of pupils have established a recycling initiative. This has expanded to involve more pupils and an Eco-committee has been established. Pupils use their initiative to make phone calls, negotiate prices and learn to operate the scheme like a mini enterprise. A school council and year councils have been established recently. For the first time, pupils have made collective decisions about spending money. Pupils negotiate well and make some sensible decisions.
20. Relationships are very good. There are some very warm relationships between teachers and pupils. Empathy and understanding help pupils to grow in confidence and speak out. Pupils are mature in their response. They share intelligent humour with their teacher. Pupils are articulate and express themselves well. There are good relationships among pupils. Opportunities for group work and co-operation are limited in a few subjects. However, when they occurred, as seen in a dance lesson in which pupils developed movements based on swimming strokes, pupils shared ideas and collaborated very well to agree patterns. This promoted very good learning.
21. Rates of attendance are satisfactory. Attendance in the last reporting year was 92.8 per cent and was below the national average for similar schools. Rates of attendance during the current year are similar to the national average. However, rates of unauthorised absences are above those recorded nationally. This is because reasons for absence are not always effectively sought rather than as a result of truancy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Pupils learn well and make at least good progress in most lessons. Teaching meets the needs of boys and girls of all backgrounds and levels of attainment.
23. Teaching was satisfactory or better in all except six of the lessons observed. It was good or better in about three out of every four lessons seen. Teaching was very good

in one out of every five lessons observed. It was excellent in seven lessons across a range of subjects, and particularly in French. Teaching was unsatisfactory in three lessons observed in Years 5 and 6 and in three lessons in Years 7 and 8. The unsatisfactory teaching was observed in mathematics, science and history.

24. In the core subjects, teaching is currently good in English throughout Years 5 to 8. In mathematics, it is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. In science, it is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. In mathematics, pupils' achievement in Years 5 and 6 does not reflect the satisfactory teaching observed because the department has had insufficient information about pupils' levels of attainment on entry and has concentrated too much on the teaching of number at the expense of other aspects of the subject. In other subjects, teaching is good throughout the school in art and design, design and technology, French, history, ICT, music, physical education and religious education. In geography, teaching is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. In citizenship, teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8.
25. The quality of learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. It is often very good. Boys and girls of all backgrounds and levels of attainment behave very well and respond enthusiastically to complete the work set. Even when the teaching is rather dull, pupils concentrate well on the tasks set and complete the work at a good pace. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and do so willingly and with determination. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including the few for whom English is an additional language, are very keen to do their best and want to please the teacher. Very good relationships among pupils and with their teachers ensure that good progress occurs in most lessons. As a result, pupils acquire a generally good knowledge and understanding of the work in most subjects. Pupils participate readily in all activities in class, particularly in lessons in which teachers make them think hard and provide good opportunities to work independently. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of their short-term learning, because teachers usually indicate at the start of lessons what is to be learned and review progress made at the end of the lesson. However, because procedures for assessment have only been improved very recently, most pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of their potential achievement or have suitable targets for their individual improvement. Learning is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6 because the older pupils have acquired better basic skills in the different subjects. In science, pupils in Years 7 and 8 have all their lessons in the one specialist laboratory, whereas the younger pupils usually learn science in ordinary classrooms.
26. Teaching has many positive features. Teachers plan their lessons well to make good use of all the time available. They manage their classes very effectively to promote good learning for all pupils. Most lessons follow the patterns of working suggested in the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. As a result, teachers ensure that pupils gain a quick understanding of the work to be done and its relevance to past and future work. In the large majority of lessons, teachers provide a good range of carefully timed, interesting activities. These provide a good sequence for learning and usually match the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment within the class. Teachers use a good range of resources, sometimes including ICT, to enhance pupils' learning and to encourage practical activities that involve pupils in finding things out for themselves.
27. Most teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils' work and progress during lessons and for homework. However, because the school's systems for assessment have been unsatisfactory, teachers do not generally have a good enough

understanding of pupils' maximum possible achievement over time. The very effective work of the new deputy head in improving the procedures for assessment is helping to make all teachers more aware of how to set meaningful targets and to be accountable for pupils' achievement in their subjects.

28. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Most teachers match the work well to suit pupils' needs, because they know these pupils well, even though the guidance contained in the individual education plans is not of good quality. They provide appropriate equipment, as seen in physical education, to help pupils to make good progress. The teaching of small groups of pupils with weak literacy skills in Years 5 and 6 is good. It helps them to improve their skills in reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good individual attention from the class teacher. They often receive excellent support from teaching assistants, who relate very well to pupils and work in close partnership with subject teachers. The very good behaviour and attitudes of these pupils and their willingness to work hard help them to achieve well in most subjects. Occasionally, a few pupils in Year 8 show little interest in learning.
29. The school has begun to identify the learning needs of the higher attaining pupils and, particularly, those who are gifted and talented. As a result, teachers generally set work that is of suitable challenge and difficulty to enable these pupils to make good progress in most lessons. Usually, the further activities provided cause these pupils to think hard and to extend their learning, as observed in French lessons. Occasionally, the extension work is of the same standard as that already completed and does not deepen or broaden pupils' understanding, as observed in a few science lessons.
30. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive the same good teaching overall as other pupils. They integrate well and play a full part in all learning activities. They have sufficiently good skills in English to enable them to understand the work in all subjects.
31. Many of the features of lessons that were very good or better were present in an outstanding French lesson in Year 6. This class has clearly benefited from teaching of a high quality over a long period because pupils' standards are higher than those normally observed in Year 7 classes nationally. The teacher's very good rapport with the class, her very good knowledge of the subject and extremely high expectations ensured that all pupils were involved fully and actively throughout. Nearly the entire lesson was conducted in French and at an exhilarating pace so that all pupils, including those of ethnic minority background, made excellent progress. The teacher ensured that pupils of all levels of attainment concentrated very well throughout and worked at their own best pace. By sitting pupils with special educational needs at the front of the class and using them frequently in rapid-fire question and answer sessions, she ensured that these pupils enjoyed their learning. High attaining pupils were required to use more complex grammatical structures in their oral and written work. Throughout this lesson, pupils were bursting with enthusiasm and produced work of outstanding quality in individual and group assignments. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had enhanced considerably their speaking and pronunciation skills and learned new vocabulary.
32. In lessons in which teaching was satisfactory, several of the features of good teaching were present. However, a few shortcomings were also present. At times, the work provided was not suited well to the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment in the class. Sometimes the use of worksheets was too great and slowed pupils'

progress, as seen in a few mathematics lessons and in much of the work scrutinised in science. In a satisfactory mathematics lesson for a class of high attaining pupils in Year 8, the teacher planned the lesson well and based it on the pattern of learning activities suggested in the National Numeracy Strategy. However, there was insufficient provision of extension work for the gifted pupils and the lesson lacked pace. In a satisfactory geography lesson in Year 7, the teacher did not insist on all pupils listening carefully. In the plenary session at the end of this lesson, pupils were very willing to answer questions but less willing to listen to the answers of others. In a few satisfactory lessons observed in science, the planning did not ensure that sufficient work was covered or that the available time was used to good effect. In a satisfactory lesson in design and technology, the teacher tended to do the thinking rather than the pupils and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work were missed.

33. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, the teacher's lack of expertise in the subject, as observed in mathematics and history, contributed to unsatisfactory progress. In these lessons, the work was often too easy and the pace was slow. As a result, pupils were bored and lost concentration and interest in the work.
34. The teaching of literacy is good across the curriculum. It plays an important part in pupils' acquisition of good reading and writing skills. The school has made good progress in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. In English lessons, teachers focus increasingly on ways to improve basic skills. They start most lessons with short language-based activities to develop pupils' confidence and competence in using English. They help pupils to improve spelling through a good and planned programme of support. In many subjects, teachers encourage pupils to read aloud and encourage them to develop their reading through directed research. Teachers help pupils to develop their writing through advice on structuring work and in a range of written tasks that require different skills.
35. Overall the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. However, the use of numeracy within subjects of the curriculum is unplanned and inconsistently applied. This is because the school has no clear policy to use pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in numeracy. Most subjects, including science, design and technology, geography and history, offer opportunities for pupils to collect, display and read statistical information in the form of tables, charts, diagrams and graphs. In ICT, pupils have many good opportunities to use their skills in numeracy.
36. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory across subjects. It is good in a few subjects. In English, teachers encourage pupils to make good use of ICT to support project work and to assist in drafting and redrafting of written work. In most subjects, pupils enhance their learning and develop their research skills by appropriate use of the Internet. However, in subjects such as mathematics, science, physical education and music, teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
37. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to help pupils to reinforce their learning and to develop their skills in study and research. Most pupils complete their homework conscientiously.
38. The quality of teaching observed was good at the time of the previous inspection and remains so now. The head teacher and senior staff know the areas of current weakness in teaching well. They are introducing appropriate policies to eradicate the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. They are also working hard to improve the

procedures for assessment in order that teachers have a better understanding of pupils' full capabilities in each subject.

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

39. The quality and range of learning experiences for pupils are good. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. In the last 12 months, senior managers have tackled effectively the key issue relating to monitoring the curriculum. A review of each subject has identified strengths and weaknesses and set out a plan of action for improvement. Samples of pupils' written work and homework are checked. Senior managers hold regular meetings with subject co-ordinators to continue this monitoring. There remain inconsistencies in the rigour with which subject co-ordinators contribute to checking the quality of the curriculum. There is now a suitable homework timetable. This is kept under review by staff and governors and through the recently established parents' forum. Previously the requirements relating to the teaching of ICT were not met. This provision has improved and is satisfactory. All pupils now have separate ICT lessons. The use of computers to support learning is good in several subjects but is still inadequate in a few. The governing body keeps itself well informed about the curriculum through presentations from subject co-ordinators.
40. The curriculum in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory. It is a balance of strengths and areas for development. In Years 5 and 6 there is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. However, the mathematics curriculum focuses too much and narrowly on number work. This limits progress in the other topics of study in mathematics. Pupils start learning French in Year 5. This early start contributes to the above average standards achieved in French in Years 7 and 8. Adequate time is allowed for history and geography. However, the arrangements for teaching these subjects on an alternating basis hinder continuity of learning. The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 is good. The strong emphasis remains on English and mathematics and now applies equally to science. The time for other National Curriculum subjects is appropriate to ensure coverage of the work required. Planning for the curriculum is good across the school. Teachers have good outlines of the topics to be covered. They prepare suitably detailed lesson plans from these outlines.
41. Overall, provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are several good features. Teaching assistants are deployed well to assist the learning of pupils with statements of special educational needs. They have considerable expertise in breaking down learning in small steps so that pupils improve their work. Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties receive good support from teaching assistants, particularly as seen in lessons such as English, mathematics music and geography. The 'Base Camp' is a good provision for these pupils, centrally situated in part of the entrance hall. It has good resources of books and computers. Pupils receive very good individual support there, at lunchtimes or during lessons, from teaching assistants. Overall provision for special educational needs is no more than satisfactory, however, because individual education plans do not make clear how pupils' achievement will be measured. The criteria for placing pupils on 'school action' or 'school action plus', as outlined in the new Code of Practice, are not clear enough, so teachers are not always sufficiently aware of which pupils need special provision.
42. Pupils in all years benefit from the very good provision for their personal and social development. This is a strength of the school and is achieved in several ways: firstly, through the care paid by teachers to this in the daily life of the school and assemblies.

In addition, the specific programme of personal, social and health education lessons makes an important and very positive contribution to pupils' all-round development. A small amount of excellent teaching of personal, social and health education was observed. Suitable programmes for sex education and drugs awareness training are in place. The use of adults from the community with special skills in these areas strengthens the teaching of these courses. The school has incorporated work on citizenship into lessons effectively.

43. The good programme of extra-curricular activities contributes well to pupils' personal development. It is particularly effective in sport and music. Other activities include theatre trips and artists visiting the school. In history, the well-planned programme of visits in each year complements work in lessons. Fieldwork in geography makes good links between the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Pupils gain valuable social experiences through visits to outdoor centres as well as developing their skills in outdoor education.
44. The school has productive relationships with partner middle and upper schools. There is good agreement with the local upper schools to ensure the required curriculum for Years 7 to 9 is covered. Links with feeder first schools are not as effective in ensuring the continuity of pupils' learning. The limited transfer of information on pupils' experiences and attainment between the two phases hinders pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6.
45. The school does not, as yet, have an equal opportunities policy established. However, the head teacher has a statement of intent regarding equal opportunities ready for presentation to the governing body. This statement covers all the relevant aspects of equal opportunities. It has all the attributes that constitute a good policy for equal opportunities. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities. In practice, the school meets the requirements of the Race Relations Act and the Sex Discrimination Act. There is a good awareness of equal opportunities in all subjects. Teachers ensure that all pupils get equal attention and support. There are no issues about equal opportunities that need rectifying in any subject. Displays around the school indicate a good awareness of an ethnically diverse society and all groups are presented in non-stereotypical ways. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others within the school. There is wheelchair access at one fire exit. Plans are underway for installing another ramp.
46. The atmosphere created in the school ensures that pupils of all capabilities, gender and race are treated equally. All pupils work well together and receive plenty of opportunities to do so in many lessons. The school is successful in being an inclusive school. However, the school is only just beginning to analyse the information it has to determine how well individuals and particular groups of pupils are doing.
47. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for developing spiritual awareness in pupils is good. Assemblies are of a high quality and include prayers and time for reflection. Themes such as 'forgiveness' help pupils to consider important spiritual aspects of life. Uplifting background music during pupils' entry and exit enhances the occasion. Elsewhere, there is a strong spiritual strand in pupils' very good work for charity, as exemplified by the donation made in aid of a local hospice from the proceeds of the Christmas production and other donations made to Comic Relief and Children in Need. The work of the 'Eco group' in considering global issues has further spiritual elements. In many lessons, particularly those in religious education, English, history and geography, pupils see the spiritual dimension of life. In a Year 6 English lesson, pupils saw clearly, through

their work on short stories of different types, the power of language to uplift or depress human emotions. In history, the emphasis upon writing from the point of view of others furthers this spiritual awareness, as seen in the words of a Year 8 pupil writing as a Roman soldier: "...it's a gruelling chore... we have to make trenches in the snow". Work in lessons in personal, social and health education often focuses on spiritual topics surrounding pupils' feelings, values and beliefs. In religious education, pupils consider spiritual aspects of Christianity and other religions such as Islam and Sikhism.

48. Provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. A merit system demonstrates effectively, particularly to pupils in Years 5 and 6, the value of good work and behaviour. Assemblies offer pupils a strong moral lead, as seen in that for the whole school on the theme of forgiveness. This was followed up by further work in morning tutorial sessions. Year 5 work included good role-plays that pupils organised themselves. They indicated clearly how well pupils had grasped the central moral message. In their consistently polite and considerate behaviour, pupils show that they have a very strong sense of right and wrong. They appreciate fully the effect that their actions have on others. They are very supportive when they feel that someone needs help. In their work on such topics as bear baiting, pupils in a history lesson indicated clearly their distaste for cruelty. Work in religious education provides opportunities for pupils to devise appropriate rules for different groups in society. The work of higher attaining pupils is particularly sophisticated and includes references to racism, terrorism and war.
49. The provision for developing pupils' social awareness is good. Pupils relate very well to one another and to their teachers. Year 8 pupils are very helpful as prefects in assisting class teachers of pupils in Years 5 and 6. The newly formed councils for pupils in each year and for the whole school are having an important say in determining such issues as how the merit system might be modified to have greater appeal for pupils in Years 7 and 8. Voting for representatives, meetings and feedbacks are all helping to strengthen the social cohesion of the school. Activities outside the classroom, especially sporting and musical events, make a valuable contribution in the development of pupils' social awareness. In many lessons, collaborative work helps pupils to develop their social skills. The good social atmosphere during breaks and lunchtimes in the dining hall and the study centre shows very clearly how well the school is developing pupils' social skills.
50. Provision for developing pupils' cultural awareness is good. In religious education, pupils study the origins of symbols and cultural practices in various faiths over the centuries. In art and design, pupils learn about different artistic cultures in European and African art. A link has been established with a multi-cultural group at a feeder first school. Plans are being made to celebrate further the diverse cultural background provided by the small group of pupils who share a number of different national backgrounds among them. Good cultural richness is provided by the variety of pupils' reading in English lessons. In music, pupils are introduced to the music from other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The overall quality of care is satisfactory. The quality of pastoral care is good overall and contains some very good features. The quality of assessment and its use to improve standards are unsatisfactory but are improving quickly.

52. The school provides a very welcoming and supportive environment for pupils. Teachers, support staff and year co-ordinators provide a high quality of personal care for pupils of all backgrounds. The very good programme for personal, social and health education, religious education lessons and assemblies supports pupils' personal development very well. The generally very good relationships between staff and pupils also help to promote pupils' very good personal development. Although the monitoring of personal development is informal the school is small enough for staff to know pupils very well. Pupils have someone to turn to if they have a problem. The good induction programme for Year 5 pupils helps new pupils to settle in quickly.
53. Although the school is very good at providing individual care it is not as good at implementing well thought out policies and procedures to ensure that care remains consistent. The role of the year co-ordinator does not ensure consistency or sufficient rigour in academic monitoring or in the monitoring of attendance.
54. The school provides very good welfare and guidance for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils' academic and personal development well. They help pupils to improve social skills and gain in self-esteem. Teaching assistants give generously of their time outside lessons to give additional support to pupils, for example in the 'Base Camp' learning centre.
55. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Although all pupils receive very good help from staff, the school pays insufficient attention to the extra responsibility that schools have regarding the needs of children in the care of the local authority. This includes ensuring that there is an appropriately trained member of staff with responsibility for monitoring the progress of these children.
56. The school uses good procedures effectively to monitor and promote good behaviour. Most pupils enter the school with good attitudes and behaviour. Staff have very high expectations of behaviour and most have very good relationships with pupils. An atmosphere of mutual respect promotes very good behaviour and does not require rigorous or frequent use of the school's policy for behaviour. The way the school promotes good behaviour works well for these pupils. The very few incidents of bullying are usually restricted to name-calling. The majority of parents feel that cases of bullying are dealt with appropriately. However, the school does not have an anti-bullying policy and does not communicate effectively the steps the school takes to try to eliminate bullying.
57. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory. This results in above average levels of unauthorised absence. Pupils with poor records of attendance are identified and referred to the education welfare officer. This usually results in improved patterns of attendance. However, procedures to make sure that a legitimate reason is provided for each absence are not rigorous enough. Patterns of attendance are not examined closely enough. Form tutors and year co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in ensuring that levels of unauthorised absence are reduced.
58. The school provides a safe environment. Procedures for dealing with illness and accident are appropriate. Sick children are treated with compassion. Staff have a high regard for children's welfare. Health education is particularly good. It provides pupils with good information about diet, sex education and issues about the use and misuse of drugs. The school strives to provide children with a healthy diet. Senior staff recognise that procedures regarding health and safety need to be updated. A few minor health and safety issues were reported to the school.

59. Arrangements for assessing pupils' academic performance are unsatisfactory and are improving rapidly. The good procedures currently being developed have yet to have the desired effect of raising standards further. The use of assessment to promote learning varies in effectiveness among subjects and class teachers. A commercial scheme for managing assessment has been modified suitably following the training of a senior member of staff. The school has suitable plans for the appropriate training of all staff in how to make the most effective use of assessment to help pupils to achieve their best. All teaching staff have participated recently in an assessment exercise as part of the 'learning' training day. The marking of pupils' work lacks consistency. In a few subjects, such as art and design, French and ICT, teachers make good use of marking and assessment to show pupils how to improve and to set suitable targets. In most subjects, including English, mathematics and science, systems for marking and assessment are inconsistent. In music, there are no formal procedures for assessing pupils and measuring their progress. Work on assessment is restricted because the information about pupils' prior attainment and relative achievement when they join the school in Year 5 is insufficient to establish a reliable base line to measure pupils' academic progress.
60. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. The school uses information to group pupils by levels of attainment in classes in a few subjects such as mathematics and French. In many classes they ensure that work matches the needs of all pupils. Individual teachers record marks and amend their daily planning to meet the needs of individual pupils. A few subjects do not pay enough attention to using assessment about pupils' progress to modify the curriculum. For example, in mathematics, useful information provided by the local authority as a result of analysing pupils' answers to questions in the national tests at the end of Year 6 was not used fully to modify the curriculum to ensure that Year 5 and 6 pupils had increased experiences of data handling and problem solving so that standards could be raised.
61. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. Many different methods are in use, some of which constitute good practice. The good practice is not shared across subjects. It includes pupils' self-evaluation of their speaking and listening in English, the use of ICT to prepare exemplars of pupils' work to inform the receiving high school about pupils' work in art and design, and oral feedback to help pupils to improve in French. However, present procedures rarely include using assessment to identify under-achievement, to provide mentoring or to gauge progress in teaching and learning. Teachers' academic records of pupils are satisfactory. They provide a suitable basis for reporting to parents. The quality of pupils' reports to parents is good and meets statutory requirements.
62. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in that pupils are tested regularly and targets reviewed. However, individual education plans do not identify how pupils' achievement will be measured. Accordingly, it is difficult to track progress accurately and to help pupils to learn more rapidly. Pupils with learning difficulties are not sufficiently involved in setting their own targets, so they do not remember what these targets are. Links with outside agencies are good. For example, the educational psychology service makes a good contribution to pupils' assessment.
63. Assessment, as reported at the time of the previous inspection, is unsatisfactory. The school has good plans to develop a culture of setting precise targets with which to raise standards. Much work remains to be done.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents have very positive views of the school. They regard it as a very good school in which pupils make good progress. They recognise that the new head teacher is making improvements and is providing strong and effective leadership. Parents are aware that teaching is good overall. They appreciate the commitment and hard work of teachers. They feel that pupils behave well and that they are expected to work hard and do their best. Parents regard the programme of personal, social and health education as good and consider that the school helps their children to become mature and sensible. Parents state that their children are happy at school and that they develop confidence. They find staff easy to approach if they have problems or questions. The inspection's findings generally agree with the positive views of parents. The school was found to be an improving school with many good features. Pupils generally make good progress but achievement in mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 is not as good as it should be. Pupils behave very well and develop very mature attitudes. This is partly due to good provision by the school that includes a very good quality of personal, social and health education.
65. A small minority of parents were concerned about arrangements for setting homework. Provision for homework has improved since the previous inspection. There is now a suitable homework timetable. Most pupils record their homework tasks in their planners. However, there is no provision for parents to sign planners and tutors do not monitor the completion of homework closely. The amount and quality of homework are similar to that in other middle schools. The setting of homework is inconsistent across subjects.
66. The school provides satisfactory information for parents. Several parents were concerned about the quality of information they receive about their children's progress. These concerns are partly justified and have been acknowledged and acted upon by the school. Written reports are of satisfactory quality and have improved since the previous inspection. They now include suitable references to levels of the National Curriculum. Reports about English are of good quality and include information about how to improve. Targets and strategies for improvement are less frequent in other subject reports. The school is changing the system of consultation evenings in response to parents' views. The intention is to enable parents to meet subject teachers as well as form tutors at parents' evenings.
67. Parents receive good information of good quality about the life of the school through frequent, regular, informative and cheerful newsletters. The school is aware that the governors' report to parents does not meet statutory requirements fully. The omissions especially relate to the admission of disabled pupils and provision for pupils with special educational needs. The prospectus is informative but information relating to pupils with special educational needs is out of date. A very detailed booklet about the curriculum gives parents thorough information about the subjects that are taught.
68. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. They support homework and many pupils have access to computers, the Internet and books of high quality. Parents are very willing to support the school. A small minority of parents feel that the school does not have a close enough partnership with parents. However, the new head teacher is seeking actively to develop good relationships between home and school. A newly established 'Parents' Forum' provides parents and teachers with good opportunities to discuss topical educational issues such as bullying, behaviour

and homework. The school has a more active partnership with parents than that found in many schools.

69. The Friends Association has a new constitution, which gives parents a greater say in the day-to-day running of the organisation and more responsibility for decisions about spending. The organisation has raised substantial amounts of money to support the work of the school through well-supported events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The quality of leadership and management has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall. The current head teacher has been in post for one year and has initiated many good improvements. The senior management team, consisting of the head teacher and two deputy heads, one newly appointed, was set up in September 2002. It is proving effective in identifying and acting quickly upon such priorities as raising standards by Year 6 and making further improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. When the current head teacher arrived, the school development plan lacked clarity. According to governors and many staff interviewed, many of the criticisms about ineffective aspects of management and leadership made in the previous report applied until the new head took up post. The governing body had been largely unaware of much that was happening in the school. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning were inadequate. Procedures for assessment were inadequate.
71. The work of the governing body has improved considerably and is good. The governing body is led well and has a reasonable awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. It now plays an active and full part in the decision-making processes of the school. The committees of the governing body work well in partnership with staff. Governors value the open and consultative style of the head teacher and have taken on willingly the accountabilities and responsibilities of which they had been previously unaware. Governors are very supportive of the school's work and act increasingly effectively as 'critical friends'. One governor indicated that he felt comfortable about making constructive criticisms, such as improving provision for gifted and talented pupils, because he knew that the head teacher and senior staff would listen carefully and interpret the comments as helpful in trying to move the school forward. Governors carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily. The recent audit of the school's policies, conducted soon after the head teacher's arrival, revealed a few omissions in the policies for aspects such as special educational needs and racial equality. A few omissions were also evident in the governors' annual report to parents and in the school prospectus. All omissions identified have either been corrected or are under active development.
72. The leadership of the head teacher is good. He has realistically high expectations of staff and pupils and sets a very clear direction for the school's future improvement. On arrival, he conducted a thorough appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses that led him to challenge the tone of complacency. He realised that many staff and governors were content with the standards that pupils were attaining, without asking themselves the question as to whether these standards were high enough. It is only since his arrival, and the very effective work of the new deputy head to set about improving assessment, that staff and governors have become aware that pupils should aspire to higher standards.
73. Procedures for monitoring the school's performance and taking effective action for improvement are satisfactory and improving. Through careful listening and meaningful

and participative consultation, the head teacher ensures that the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are taken fully into account before decisions are proposed or made. The clear and appropriate priorities and targets of the new school development plan, understood well by staff and governors, are a good example of the effectiveness of the head teacher's leadership. The strong and effective focus on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and the increasing emphasis on the use of assessment to promote achievement are leading to good improvements in the quality of learning. However, senior staff know that the school needs to develop further and effective procedures for analysing assessment and using appropriate comparative information to set meaningful and suitably challenging targets for improving academic performance further.

74. The two deputy heads provide strong and effective support to the head teacher and other staff in seeking to raise standards and to improve the overall quality of education further. They have clear job descriptions and accountabilities that enable them to carry out their work effectively and efficiently. Staff at all levels now have clear job descriptions and accompanying accountabilities. It is taking a small number of staff a little while to realise that they are accountable for pupils' achievement in their classes because they were never previously called to account sufficiently for their work. The meetings of the extended management team, which includes the senior managers and year co-ordinators, ensure good communication and consultation, particularly about pastoral and curricular matters. A new structure of meetings enables subject leaders to discuss curricular ideas and to share good practice.
75. The quality of leadership and management in subjects is satisfactory overall. It is good in English and most other subjects. It is satisfactory in mathematics and unsatisfactory in science. Subject leaders are now accountable for all aspects of their department's work and activities, including pupils' achievement. They receive good support and guidance from the senior management team. The monitoring and promoting of teaching and learning by senior staff are good. This is shown in the proportion of good and very good teaching observed. The year co-ordinators work hard, effectively and with commitment to ensure a good quality of pastoral care.
76. Leadership and management of the learning support department are adequate but have some shortcomings. Staff in all subjects receive satisfactory information about pupils through the individual education plans. The deployment of teaching assistants is effective and younger pupils are grouped appropriately to receive good support in literacy. Much thought has been given to improving accessibility to pupils with physical needs, in line with the new Disabilities Act. However, individual education plans lack sufficient guidance about how to measure pupils' progress towards meeting their individual targets. The systems relating to how pupils are placed on the special needs database are not clear enough. Teaching assistants meet frequently with a deputy head teacher to discuss and plan their work. The co-ordinator for special educational needs does not meet often enough with the teaching assistants to discuss matters relating to pupils' needs and to provide support to their work. The school has implemented the Code of Practice for special educational needs and the list of students with special educational needs is up to date. Funds for special educational needs are used for their intended purposes.
77. The school meets its aims well. In particular, it shows pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment that they are valued equally. It provides them with good opportunities to exercise responsibility and to develop very positive attitudes to work. It is also successful in encouraging pupils to develop self-discipline and to practise the

appropriate and very good behaviour that they bring with them from home. The purposeful atmosphere places good emphasis on values of honesty and respect.

78. The school's financial planning is good. It relates suitably to educational priorities. Governors manage the school's finances well. Specific funds coming into the school are used for the appropriate purpose. The senior management team is now making suitable use of local and national comparative data to check how well the school and its departments are performing. The school makes good efforts to ensure best value, and spends its money carefully.
79. The school manages its adequate provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources well to support pupils' learning. The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers satisfactorily match the demands of the curriculum. The school has occasional difficulties in recruiting staff of suitable qualifications and experience and currently covers a couple of posts with temporary appointments. There is, unavoidably in a small school, a little teaching by non-specialist teachers in a few subjects. Occasionally, this has a slightly adverse effect on pupils' progress, most noticeably in mathematics and science. The system of performance management has been implemented well and, together with a separate system of tracking the quality of teaching and learning that is part of the school's new process of self-review, is helping to raise standards. Across the curriculum, the monitoring of teaching is satisfactory but does not always result in the effective sharing of best practice within departments. In mathematics, for example, the quality of teaching ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. A suitable programme of induction for teachers new to the school helps them to settle quickly into the school's routines. The administrative and clerical staff provide efficient service to help the smooth day-to-day running of the school and to support pupils' learning.
80. The accommodation is adequate to meet the requirements of the curriculum, overall. However, the school was built for 250 pupils and, with its current roll of around 450 pupils, is very short of space. The school lacks sufficient cloakroom space and general storage facilities. Many of the classrooms, and particularly those in the Year 5 block, are very small for the size of class using them. This restricts the range of learning activities that can be undertaken in a few subjects and hinders progress slightly. Progress is hindered in science in Years 5 and 6 because of a lack of sufficient, specialist laboratory accommodation. A few of the classrooms that are used for science are too small to allow safe practical activity in groups. Teachers make effective use of pupils' work that is displayed in classrooms and around the school to assist learning. A programme of internal decorating has helped to create improved areas for learning in many parts of the school. In music, the accommodation is very good and makes a very positive contribution to the quality of learning. The outdoor swimming pool can be used for only six weeks of the year, during the summer term, because of the weather.
81. Learning resources are of adequate amount and generally good quality. Teachers make effective use of these resources to support pupils' learning. The supply of books and equipment is satisfactory. In many subjects pupils use the school's good computing facilities to enrich and extend their learning.
82. The school library is a very light and pleasant working area that is used well to support pupils' learning. It is open for pupils before morning school starts and at lunch and break times. After school, pupils use the library's facilities in homework clubs. The library caters well for pupils' needs and is popular. It contains a good range of resources, including 14 computers and facilities for recording and playing audio and

video tapes. Pupils develop their reading, research and investigative skills well through effective use of the good collection of books. Focused displays such as those for 'A good read' and 'This week's author' motivate pupils to read books. The head of English oversees the work of the library well and receives good support from a library assistant. Good labelling of shelves in the library makes it easy for pupils to find what they are looking for. Staff take good care to make the library interesting for pupils, as seen in the history reference section that contains such 'fun' books as 'Horrible History'.

83. Improvement on the six key issues for action identified in the previous report is satisfactory overall. Firstly, management is much more effective, with the result that suitably rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum have already led to improvements. Secondly, the school's development planning has improved well. It now involves appropriate consultations with staff and governors and places suitable emphasis on raising achievement and improving further the quality of teaching and learning. Thirdly, improvement on implementing effective procedures for assessment has been unsatisfactory. However, developments over the past few months have been very good. They indicate that staff are now becoming increasingly aware of how to use information about pupils' attainment to help them to achieve their potential in different subjects. Fourthly, the programme of staff development is now good. It is linked suitably to the needs of the school and departmental development plans. Fifthly, the provision of homework has improved and is now satisfactory. Finally, the school now meets statutory requirements for recording attendance.
84. Taking into account the academic achievement of pupils, the quality of education provided, the social and economic context of the school and the generally low funding it receives, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. To improve further the quality of education provided and to raise pupils' standards of attainment further, the school should include the following issues in its action plan.

(1) Raise achievement in mathematics by the end of Year 6 by:

- ensuring that results in mathematics in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 match or exceed expectations based on pupils' prior attainment;
- ensuring that teaching covers all parts of the mathematics syllabus in appropriate detail in Years 5 and 6;
- ensuring that non-specialist teachers have appropriate training to ensure consistency of provision across all classes.

(Paragraphs: 4, 92, 93)

(2) Raise achievement in science by the end of Year 6 by:

- ensuring that results in science in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 match or exceed expectations based on pupils' prior attainment;
- improving the quality of teaching in science in Years 5 and 6 and providing pupils with more effective work to develop their practical and investigative skills;
- improving the quality of leadership and management in science;
- ensuring that non-specialist teachers have appropriate training to ensure consistency of provision across all classes.

(Paragraphs: 4, 100-103, 106, 108, 118)

(3) Improve the procedures for marking and assessment and their use in helping to raise standards in all subjects by:

- sharing information about pupils' attainment, progress and potential more effectively so that pupils and departments have suitably challenging targets for improvement;
- ensuring that teachers take full account of information from assessment and marking in planning pupils' work;
- ensuring that marking is of a suitable and consistent quality in all subjects;
- introducing more reliable procedures for the placement of pupils on the list for special educational needs, particularly at the levels of 'school action' and 'school action plus';
- improving the quality of information and guidance contained in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

(Paragraphs: 2, 4, 13, 25, 27, 28, 41, 51, 53, 55, 59, 60, 73, 89, 98, 99, 107, 113, 125, 133, 139, 158, 163, 167, 172)

(4) Improve the links with feeder first schools to enable good continuity of pupils' learning in all subjects and to provide appropriate information about pupils' prior attainment and achievement in all subjects. (Paragraphs: 44, 59, 93).

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus meet all the statutory requirements. (Paragraphs: 67, 71).
- Improve the monitoring of attendance. (Paragraphs: 21, 53).
- Encourage the further use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum. (Paragraphs: 11, 103, 105, 125, 133, 145, 166).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	21	45	21	6	0	0
Percentage	7	21	45	21	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	441
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	6.1
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.3
---------------------------	-----

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	62	58	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	48	44	53
	Girls	49	39	51
	Total	97	83	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (82]	69 (62)	87 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	45	48	52
	Girls	44	41	45
	Total	89	89	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (85)	74 (78)	82 (73)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
423	7	0
0	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	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: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	143

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	84
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	25.9
Key Stage 3	25.0

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	931 790
Total expenditure	901 069
Expenditure per pupil	1989
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30 398
Balance carried forward to next year	323

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	443
Number of questionnaires returned	302

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	54	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	55	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	62	5	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	58	17	4	0
The teaching is good.	37	58	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	53	18	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	41	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	43	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	50	16	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	38	55	1	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	55	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	51	10	2	2

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 **good**.

Strengths

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve above average standards of work.
- Results in National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 are above the national average.
- Good management helps teachers to organise their lessons effectively.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' marking does not allow them to measure pupils' progress accurately over time.
- Teachers occasionally provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills

86. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment in English. From Year 5 onwards they make rapid progress in lessons so that their standards of work improve to above average levels. Results in the National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 have been above average for the last two years. They indicate good achievement. In the national tests in 2002, pupils' results in English were higher than their results in mathematics and science. They were the same as results attained by similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving level 5 and above was higher than expected based on pupils' prior attainment. The fact that boys performed better than girls, in contrast to the national picture, helps to explain the above average results overall. Results in recent years have improved at the same rate as the national trend. In Years 7 and 8 pupils continue to make good progress, as shown in tests taken at the end of Year 8.
87. Throughout Years 5 to 8, work of pupils in the classroom and in their books and folders is above average overall. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including pupils with learning difficulties and the gifted or talented, achieve well by Year 6 and by Year 8. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language have good skills in English and achieve well. All pupils listen intently in class and demonstrate a good range of vocabulary and expression when talking. In a small number of lessons, in which they speak only to give short answers to the teachers' questions, pupils do not develop fully their potential for very good oral work. Pupils in all years, whatever their levels of attainment, are keen to read aloud. They have a good understanding of texts and read with expression. When writing about stories, poems and other texts they are confident and competent in expressing their views on characters and incidents. They structure longer pieces of writing well. Pupils show good appreciation of language and produce sensitive poems and vivid prose. Most higher attaining pupils write with a good sense of style as seen in the lively work on the topic 'The skateboarders were quality all right, pulling dangerous stunts.' In Year 8, pupils' work on 'School Under Siege' indicated good use of imaginative writing. Lower attaining pupils produced well-planned narratives in their mystery stories. Standards of spelling are generally good. The writing of boys and girls of all levels of attainment shows good accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. All pupils show good use of drafting and editing techniques. They make effective use of ICT when researching topics and in the presentation of their writing.

88. Pupils' very good behaviour assists their learning. They invariably work enthusiastically in English lessons. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment are friendly and helpful when working together. They learn from each other very well when working in small groups or pairs. They enjoy it when teachers make them responsible for planning or organising aspects of their learning. They work hard on their homework and enhance their work by researching topics in detail.
89. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers plan lessons carefully and manage classes very well. They have clear objectives that they share with the class so that all pupils know what is expected of them. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are fully involved and challenged in all activities so that they learn quickly. In a very good Year 6 lesson on styles of literature pupils were occupied fully, first with understanding what the term meant and then in small groups, identifying the literary style used in selected passages. Finally they chose their own style to write in an appropriate way. This was very good teaching because all pupils were very clear about their task and teaching assistants ensured that all groups made very good progress. The learning materials matched the particular needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. In a few lessons, learning, though satisfactory, is not as rapid because pupils have few opportunities to participate fully by reading aloud or by talking about their ideas in small groups and feeding back their conclusions to the rest of the class. Pupils contribute well to their own learning by concentrating well in class and completing the set work with enthusiasm. Teachers usually mark work conscientiously. The quality of their comments varies so that pupils are not told consistently how to improve their work. The absence of levels indicating attainment makes it difficult for pupils and teachers to gauge progress over time.
90. Pupils' above average standards of literacy enable them to cope competently with the demands for reading and writing in all subjects. Across the curriculum, the school's literacy policy has a positive influence on standards, because teachers in all subjects provide good opportunities for all pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from additional support in small groups to help them to improve their skills in reading and writing. In English lessons, teachers are increasingly focusing on ways to improve basic skills. Notable examples of good support for pupils' reading and writing are found in history, geography, art and design, ICT and design and technology. In these areas, teachers encourage pupils to read aloud and give them opportunities to develop their reading through directed research. Teachers help pupils to develop their writing through advice on structuring work or through offering them a range of written tasks requiring different skills.
91. Good leadership and management help all teachers to plan good lessons. The good revision of programmes for teaching has taken full account of National Strategies for Literacy. Initiatives outside the classroom, such as work based in the study centre, are having a positive impact on standards. Close liaison between teachers has led to a strong team spirit in the teaching of English. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, in particular in the very successful focus on improving pupils' standards of reading.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- In national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002, boys' results were above average.

- Good teaching leads to average standards of attainment and satisfactory achievement by Year 8.
- Pupils' positive attitudes assist their learning.

Areas for improvement

- Achievement was unsatisfactory overall in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002.
- The monitoring of teaching and curricular planning does not sufficiently ensure higher standards.
- The use of assessment to help pupils to improve their work is improving but is not fully effective.

92. On entry, standards are broadly average. In 2002, results in the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 6 were much higher than in the previous year and matched the national average. This indicates that the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics lessons has contributed effectively to the rise in standards. The results of boys in the national tests in 2002 rose sharply, were much higher than those of girls and were above the national average for boys. Results fluctuate from year to year and have been improving at the same rate as the national improvement in recent years. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in 2002. Compared with pupils' prior attainment in the tests taken at the end of Year 2, they were slightly below expectations and indicated unsatisfactory achievement. Higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils attained higher than expected results based on their prior attainment. Pupils of average and below average attainment underachieved in these tests. Pupils' performance in mathematics was lower than that in English and science.
93. There are two important contributory factors to pupils' overall underachievement in the national tests. Firstly, the school receives insufficient information on pupils' attainment from the feeder first schools. As a result, teachers do not have a clear understanding of what value has been added to pupils' performance in mathematics at the first school during the two years following the tests taken at the end of Year 2. Accordingly, pupils often repeat, in Year 5, work that they have covered previously or receive work that is either too easy or too difficult. Secondly, the over-emphasis on the teaching of number, to the detriment of other areas of mathematics, hinders pupils' all-round performance in the subject.
94. By Year 8, attainment is average and indicates satisfactory achievement overall. This improvement occurs because teachers know the pupils' needs better and teach all aspects of the mathematics syllabus in appropriate detail.
95. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs, and those whose first language is not English, make satisfactory progress and achieve well. This is because class numbers are small and they receive appropriate support. Pupils who are gifted at mathematics make similar progress to that of most other pupils. They do not make better than satisfactory progress overall because the department has not identified these pupils clearly or made special provision to meet the particular needs of these pupils.
96. The quality of learning is good overall. Pupils' positive attitudes assist their learning, as reflected in the generally high quality of presentation of their work. With very few exceptions, pupils have a commitment to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics. They work hard and productively, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Pupils pay good attention to details such as setting out work correctly,

precisely and neatly. They concentrate well and apply themselves fully. Pupils respond well to questions that cause them to think. Their answers show a willingness to use technical language frequently, appropriately and correctly. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are less competent when handling data and solving problems. From Year 7, pupils increasingly transfer aspects of the subject into new situations to assist them in improving and widening their mathematical skills. This assists the good progress in learning made by higher attaining pupils in Year 8. Pupils have few opportunities to use ICT to extend their learning in mathematics.

97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. It has improved since the previous inspection. Unsatisfactory teaching arose, occasionally, when teachers, appointed to address staffing problems, had either insufficient knowledge or understanding of the subject or had low expectations of the pupils. In an excellent lesson observed in Year 8, which had many characteristics of other very good lessons, the teacher motivated the pupils by conducting the lesson with pace and rigour through a sequence of well-planned and challenging experiences. Pupils participated fully in these activities with enjoyment. The strengths in teaching include effective planning and the teachers' classroom management in which good relationships feature prominently.
98. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There are, however, a few areas requiring improvement and development. The monitoring of aspects of teaching and learning to raise standards further is not fully effective in sharing good practice. Teachers do not yet make good use of assessment to analyse pupils' performance, set individual targets or to determine what to teach. Recently, support from the local authority has resulted in a more coherent scheme of work and a subject development plan that contains suitable priorities for improvement. Changes in staffing have had an adverse effect on the continuity of provision and the standards reached by many pupils. Training for the implementation of the National Strategies for Numeracy in Years 5 to 8 continues to take place, although a few aspects, for example, the use of the three-part lesson, are not being used consistently.
99. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Results in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 continue to match the national average. Objectives are now set for each lesson and the subject scheme of work is linked more closely to the National Curriculum. The monitoring and evaluation of assessment data remain areas for improvement and development. Senior managers and governors are more involved in the development and progress of the subject than at the time of the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are improving in Years 7 and 8 and are average.
- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well by Year 8.
- Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes assist their progress in all lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Unsatisfactory teaching leads to underachievement in Years 5 and 6.
- Unsatisfactory leadership and management do not ensure good planning and monitoring of work.

- Marking and assessment do not give enough guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

100. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 matched the national average. They were well below the average for similar schools. When compared with pupils' prior attainment these results indicate unsatisfactory achievement because they were very slightly below expectations based on pupils' prior attainment in the national tests taken at the end of Year 2. Results since 1999 have been below average, except for 2002 when they were average. Boys attained better results than girls in these tests. Science results in 2002 were not as good as those in English but were slightly better than those in mathematics.
101. In classes seen and in scrutiny of work, standards in Year 6 are below average. They are slightly below those indicated by test results in 2002. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are average. Their achievement by Year 6 is not as good as might be expected in relation to their earlier attainment. It is difficult to ascertain achievement in this school, as there has been little documented evidence of attainment on entry. Pupils will have experienced half of their science teaching at their previous school, before taking the second round of national tests at this one.
102. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' practical and investigative skills are not as good as their science knowledge. This is because, in most lessons, pupils have few opportunities to make their own predictions of what will happen in experiments based on scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils seldom plan their own practical investigations from which they can evaluate the results and draw conclusions. Work observed in class and in pupils' writing up of experiments indicated that pupils rarely consider ideas of fair testing. Many do not understand the purpose of a fair test and what it involves. Pupils are generally good at carrying out experiments planned by the teacher and follow instructions well. By Year 6, many pupils have insufficient depth in their scientific knowledge and understanding because of weaknesses in teachers' planning in the subject. This is mostly a consequence of inadequate support for non-specialist teachers who teach at this level. However, in one Year 6 class observed, most pupils understood that non-reversible changes result in the formation of new materials. Higher attaining pupils knew that when wood is burnt, an ash is produced and a gas is given off.
103. In Years 5 to 6, pupils' use their above average skills in literacy to support their work in science. Most teachers help pupils to develop their literacy skills appropriately. However, a few middle and lower attainers lack confidence in using basic scientific terminology. Most pupils in both years are interested in science, but do not have enough opportunities to write at length to express facts, ideas and opinions. Pupils' numeracy skills are average. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in application of number, through collecting, considering and analysing first-hand and secondary data and problem solving. Graphical skills generally are below average. Pupils rarely have access to computing facilities to use their ICT skills to extend their work in science. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. A small number of higher attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they should because work is often insufficiently demanding. They have few opportunities to research appropriate information, think critically about it and produce original extended writing.
104. Standards of work seen in Years 7 and 8 are average. Achievement is good in relation to pupils' prior attainment. By the end of Year 8, pupils have a good knowledge of the topics they are studying. For example, most pupils know about the need for a

balanced diet containing carbohydrates, proteins, fats, minerals, vitamins, fibre and water. They have a good awareness about foods that are sources of these. Pupils' practical skills improve but, as in Years 5 and 6, they carry out little independent investigative work, so that standards are below those of their scientific knowledge. Pupils have few opportunities to suggest their own hypotheses and experiments. The majority of pupils understand the principles of fair testing. Higher attainers know that sensible predictions should be based on scientific knowledge.

105. Most pupils in Years 7 and 8, including those with special educational needs and the few for whom English is an additional language, achieve standards that match or exceed those expected from their prior attainment. Pupils' literacy skills are generally supported well in terms of their developing scientific vocabulary and terminology. However, they do not receive sufficient opportunities to write at length. The use of mathematics is less well developed. Few well-drawn graphs were seen in pupils' work. Pupils make satisfactory use of ICT to enhance the presentation of work, but do not use it often enough to collect data, particularly when performing their own experiments.
106. Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and is good in Years 7 and 8. Teachers have high expectations of presentation and behaviour that enable pupils to work in an orderly and safe environment. Teachers make good use of questions to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding and to involve all pupils in the work of the class. Pupils respond well and are keen to provide answers. However, teaching in Years 5 and 6 does not extend pupils' knowledge and understanding as well as it should. Most pupils of this age are naturally curious about phenomena and events in the world around them, but this curiosity is not exploited fully. The over-use of narrowly based, uninspiring worksheets does not challenge pupils sufficiently in Years 5 and 6 or provide enough opportunities for them to work independently. Teachers rarely encourage pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry or to carry out their own experiment, as a spur to critical and creative thinking. In lessons in which teachers set pupils more challenging tasks, as seen in Years 7 and 8, progress is good. When teaching is good, pupils share the teacher's enthusiasm, become involved fully in all the activities provided, enjoy the lesson and learn quickly and effectively.
107. Most teachers mark work frequently, regularly and in encouraging ways. However, they do not always give pupils a clear enough indication of how well they are progressing, of what they have got wrong, and what they need to do in order to improve. The best practice causes pupils to think carefully about the work, encourages them to make further progress and checks that comments have been acted upon.
108. Leadership and management of the department are unsatisfactory. The department lacks clear objectives and an understanding as to how to achieve them. Insufficient progress has been made towards ensuring more effective links with feeder schools, to establish pupils' attainment and to improve continuity in their learning. There are insufficient science specialists to share responsibilities and to assist in developmental work. Planning is insufficiently rigorous, particularly in respect of checking and assessing pupils' and teachers' work. Currently there is no regular monitoring of the curriculum to ensure accurate and appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. The department recognises the need to improve the ways in which pupils' work is assessed, and progress is tracked and checked for improvement. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Standards have improved slightly but the quality of teaching remains satisfactory overall.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards are above average.
- Teaching is good and leads to good progress for all pupils.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to this subject contribute to their success.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils make insufficient use of shading for tone and texture in observational drawings.
- The marking of pupils' written work does not pay enough attention to correcting writing errors.

109. In work seen, standards are above average by Year 6 and by Year 8. They indicate good achievement by Year 8. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in art and design at the end of Year 8 were not done in enough detail in previous years to judge how performance in art and design has developed over the past three years.
110. In Year 5, pupils create good designs in line drawings. They use these effectively to create repeat patterns using string block method. In Year 6, pupils devise a good range of original symbols to represent the sun and prepare these for large-scale work representing stained glass windows. In all work, pupils of all levels of attainment, including the few for whom English is an additional language, achieve good standards in composition, pattern, design, and printing. Drawing from direct observation is good with regard to the use of line. However, pupils make little use of shading to achieve tone and texture. Although pupils learn a very good range of mark-making techniques they have few opportunities to use these to achieve tone and texture in later work. In Years 7 and 8, pupils produce very impressive work in wood sculpture, inspired by African art. They make effective use of sketchbooks for research and development.
111. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout Years 5 to 8. Teachers' very good organisation of classes ensures good order. Teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of the subject to motivate the pupils to achieve well. All teachers have very good class-management skills. They create a very good working climate in all lessons. Pupils' behaviour is very good and contributes to good learning. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and this contributes to their success. They concentrate well, work at a good pace and complete the work set conscientiously and carefully. Teachers make good use of illustrations and demonstrations to show pupils what is to be achieved. This enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, to make good progress. All pupils receive good individual support from the teacher in lessons that builds their confidence and increases their competence in the subject. Work is generally open ended so there is good provision for the gifted and talented pupils to extend their learning.
112. Good leadership and management ensure that planning is very good. The schemes of work are suitably detailed and illustrated well to provide good support for the non-specialist teachers. They contribute considerably to the above average standards and good achievement of pupils in all years. Assessment is now good and most pupils know how their work compares with National Curriculum levels. Teachers make good use of ICT, including photographic records of pupils' attainment, to support pupils' learning.

113. The teaching of literacy is good. Pupils produce a good range of accurately written work in art. This includes lengthy evaluations of their own progress. However, pupils' written work is not marked closely enough to support their skills in literacy. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes are not always corrected in enough detail.
114. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils consider all these aspects in the work of artists and art movements. These include African, South American and Egyptian art, as well as some modern European art and architecture.
115. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. All pupils make good progress. Standards have improved in Years 5 and 6. There is more effective use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Teaching has improved and is now uniformly good. Assessment has improved and is now good. All the good and very good features reported at the time of the previous inspection are maintained.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good overall and often very good so that pupils learn well.
- Good programmes of study ensure that lessons are relevant and interesting.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop citizenship in activities outside of lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not record clearly the progress that pupils make.
- Work on democracy and government is not covered sufficiently in lessons.

116. Pupils' standards of work in citizenship are above average and indicate good achievement. Before the subject was introduced to the timetable, many elements of the citizenship programme were already being taught in personal, social and health education lessons. Teachers had good experience of teaching the subject and pupils were already working at above average levels. The programme for pupils in all years continues to be integrated in the weekly lesson of personal, social and health education. The course covers a good range of topics including themes on being assertive, education about drugs and the law, attitudes and the media, mental health and homelessness. Pupils do not yet receive direct teaching about democracy and government but an appropriate unit is currently being planned. Some of the ground is already being covered as a result of the newly introduced procedures for electing and running year and school councils. The programme for pupils in Years 7 and 8 is the local authority's programme based on a commercially produced course. This is less exciting than the course for younger pupils but is designed to help pupils when they transfer to the high school.
117. In work seen, higher attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8 show good evidence of reflection and mature thinking. In Year 7, pupils' ideas on children's and students' charters show mature understanding of rights and responsibilities. All pupils show in their work on the STAR project that they have a good grasp of basic facts about drugs and their misuse. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment are involved in carrying out and completing the work. As a result they acquire a good amount of valuable knowledge about important issues. Although lower attaining pupils develop their ideas less far, they show, for example in the enthusiasm and care of their written work on friendship and safety in Year 6, that they are achieving well.

118. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is occasionally excellent. Regular and suitably frequent meetings of teachers help to ensure a good sense of teamwork. Many activities are covered in Years 5 and 6 including the preparation of posters, checklists and brainstormers. Lessons are usually lively and involve pupils in discussion and reflection on important issues. As a result of their full involvement, pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn very well. In Years 7 and 8, activities and materials are sometimes less engaging so that pupils have fewer opportunities to extend themselves. Accordingly, their progress in lessons is less rapid. All pupils' work is marked and commented upon but teachers do not always indicate to pupils how well they are doing. Progress is therefore difficult to quantify. Self-assessment does occur through achievement sheets that pupils complete at the end of each half term.
119. Leadership and management of citizenship are good. Direction of the programme for pupils in Years 5 to 6 is very effective. Subject areas have been checked carefully to ensure a balanced provision of citizenship across the curriculum. Pupils receive good encouragement to participate fully in a range of activities outside the classroom that help them to develop qualities of good citizenship. Such activities include being members of the year and school councils, raising funds for charity, taking part in recycling activities through the school Eco group and acting as senior pupils. Citizenship is well established in the curriculum and makes an important contribution to the personal development of all pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well by Year 8.
- The curriculum is now broad, balanced and relevant and helps to extend pupils' skills of design.
- Pupils use their research skills well in preparation for designing and making.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils have few opportunities to use ICT, particularly in Year 7 and 8.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent.

120. By the end of Year 6, standards of attainment are average as they were at the time of the previous inspection and represent good achievement. Pupils make good progress through Year 5 and 6 in developing their skills in design. Right from the start teachers encourage pupils to prepare well as they tackle design problems. As a result, pupils understand the importance of taking the views of potential users into account as they prepare for designing. They search for and use information as they explore possible ideas. This was well illustrated in their work in food technology. Having already learned how to make bread, pupils designed and made a new bread product for a specific special occasion. They made decisions about an event, researched the required specification and explored variations in recipes. They proceeded to prepare a flow chart to sequence the steps they needed to take in making their new bread product. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of the need for and purpose of evaluating what they have made. They learn to use a variety of tools and to work with an appropriate range of materials.

121. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment build well on this sound base as they move through Years 7 and 8. Standards by Year 8 are average and indicate good achievement compared with the prior attainment of these pupils. In Year 7, pupils make good progress in extending their understanding of design. They discuss design problems, with a good understanding of function and minimum tolerances, which enables them to draft out their ideas. They develop their skills of researching information effectively, which they use well to support their designing. By Year 8 pupils bring a range of skills to their different projects. In their work on moving toys, for example, they demonstrate how well they have thought through the implications of the design specification. They have prepared clear and detailed plans, which they follow carefully, and work skilfully with appropriate manual and power tools. In discussing their models, pupils show that they are giving careful consideration to the final product, both in terms of its appearance and the purpose for which it will be used.
122. Overall, boys and girls make satisfactory progress in developing their skills of design and making in Years 5 and 6, and good progress in these skills in Years 7 and 8. They acquire an appropriate knowledge of materials and processes, including textiles, resistant materials and food technology. The progress they now make in developing their design skills is much better than at the time of the previous inspection because the curriculum has been revised and teachers are now more focused on this aspect of their work. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support, which enables them to make similar progress to other pupils.
123. The quality of pupils' learning is good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their work in design and technology. They concentrate well in lessons, tackling their various projects with a real seriousness of purpose. There is frequent good co-operation as pupils work together, share tools, discuss plans or provide mutual support. In one lesson seen, a pupil was able and willing to teach another a particular skill successfully. In all lessons, pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of safety, particularly when using tools.
124. The quality of teaching is good throughout Years 5 to 8. It enables pupils to achieve well by Year 8. Teachers generally ensure that pupils are aware of the specific learning objectives for each lesson. As a result learning is good because pupils are well prepared for what they are going to do. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, organise their rooms well and prepare the resources needed effectively. As a result, the efficient use of time promotes pupils' learning and contributes positively to the progress they make. Teachers provide effective demonstrations and ask questions that stimulate and challenge pupils to think and that assess their understanding and evaluate their progress. Teachers manage their classes well to encourage pupils' interest and positive attitudes in design and technology. They provide appropriate training for pupils to ensure the safe handling of tools and equipment. The best teaching, as observed in a Year 6 lesson, engages pupils in thinking about their own learning very effectively. In evaluating their own work and that of others, the teacher involved pupils in evaluating what they had done in terms of National Curriculum levels. This enabled pupils to identify ways in which their work could be improved to reach a higher level.
125. Assessment is improving, but teachers do not track pupils' progress as effectively as they should. Teachers' marking is insufficiently helpful in indicating ways in which pupils should improve or extend their work. Teachers generally make insufficient use of ICT to promote and support pupils' learning, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

126. The new and effective leadership and management have resulted in improved planning of the curriculum and the development of better guidance for the use of assessment. As yet, the co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching across the department to determine how it needs to improve to ensure that standards rise. However, appropriate priorities for further development have been identified, including the continued updating of course materials, the introduction of moderation in the levelling of pupils' work and improving liaison with contributory first schools to enable better continuity and consistency in pupils' learning. The introduction of computer-assisted design into the Year 8 scheme has been a positive improvement, although the lack of reliability of the hardware in one of the rooms is frustrating further development.
127. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to use and extend their literacy and numeracy skills during design and technology lessons. Pupils extend their literacy and speaking and listening skills in discussing the requirements of particular products, in researching information to support their designs, in learning appropriate technical vocabulary and in the evaluations they undertake of completed work. They consolidate and extend their numeracy skills in work on their designs and models that frequently involves diagrams, measuring and calculation.
128. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards remain average, but good improvement in the overall curriculum provides pupils with a wider range of learning experiences in design and technology. The leadership and management of the subject have improved.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching results in good progress by pupils in Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils behave well because of the high standards expected by their teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not make effective use of assessment to track pupils' progress.
- The work in Years 5 and 6 is too dependent upon worksheets.

129. Pupils' attainment in work seen in Year 6 is average. Pupils' achievement from their previous learning is satisfactory. In Year 6, most pupils use maps of different scales to find places. For example, most could locate St Lucia when moving from a world scale map to one of the Caribbean. Pupils with special educational needs had difficulty with this but the good support they received from teachers and teaching assistants enabled them to complete the task successfully. Most pupils in Year 5 develop a satisfactory understanding of maps. They know how symbols are used and many recall accurately those used on Ordnance Survey maps. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are beginning to explain geographical factors such as the reasons for the limited vegetation on the floor of the equatorial forest. Standards of literacy are above average. However, most pupils' written work is descriptive and brief as the opportunities for extended writing on geographical topics are limited. There is little difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who are gifted or talented make satisfactory progress.
130. Standards of work seen in Year 8 are above average. Pupils' achievement from the end of Year 6 is good. This is due to the well-structured course and good teaching,

largely by subject specialists. Most pupils in Year 8 show good research skills in developing projects on a European country of their choice. Although the work of most pupils is largely descriptive, higher attaining pupils analyse their findings well. For example, they interpret climatic graphs accurately and write good comparisons between the climates of different European cities. Their work is detailed and uses a wide range of resources. Many pupils use ICT well in their projects. They respond positively to teachers' encouragement for them to use ICT. Most projects are detailed and carefully presented. Teachers prepare each pupil well for the project through individual discussion. In this way, all pupils receive work of appropriate difficulty and interest to suit their particular needs. Therefore all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Most pupils develop a good awareness of the factors influencing the distribution of population in the world. Teachers help them to deepen their understanding of the complexities of this topic by the good use of discussion. The contributions of the gifted and talented pupils are especially sophisticated and wide ranging.

131. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8. Teachers prepare lessons well to ensure good continuity of learning. The best lessons have a variety of activities that involve the pupils fully. Lessons move at a good pace so that pupils maintain their interest. Teachers make the pupils think, especially in Years 7 and 8, with their challenging questioning. They place particular emphasis on pupils' understanding of geographical words. Teachers reinforce the use of these key words regularly, especially in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' behaviour is good because of the high standards expected by their teachers. As a result learning proceeds without interruption. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly. However, comments made by the teachers do not always refer to how pupils' geographical skills can be improved. The provision of fieldwork is good. This is effective in extending pupils' geographical experiences. Work sheets are used too extensively in Years 5 and 6. This restricts the range of geographical activities available for the pupils.
132. Pupils' attitudes towards geography are good. They work well together. Discussion is orderly and individuals' views are respected. Pupils show good concentration throughout the lessons because of the high expectations of the teachers. Relationships among pupils, and with their teachers, are good. They result in a purposeful and productive learning atmosphere. Good provision is made for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils discuss moral and ethical issues about life in rich and poor countries.
133. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The department is led in a dynamic manner, and considerable improvements have been made in recent months. Improved schemes of work have been put in place for most year groups. Future planning emphasises improving attainment whilst making the subject enjoyable and exciting. However, the tracking of pupils' progress and the means of assessing standards are inadequate in order to improve attainment further. There is little use of ICT to support teaching and learning in the department. The department has the capacity to improve further.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to good achievement by Year 8.
- Pupils develop good skills of research, analysis and writing in history.
- Effective leadership has ensured the sharing of good practice within the department.

Areas for improvement

- History skills are not linked closely enough to teaching strategies and learning activities.
- Assessment information is inadequate for monitoring and analysing progress.

134. Standards of work seen are average in Years 5 and 6. In these years, the system of sharing time allocations with geography interrupts the continuity of learning. Standards are above average in Years 7 and 8. Taking into account pupils' previous attainment, pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including those who are gifted or talented, achieve well throughout Years 5 to 8.
135. In Years 5 and 6, pupils place events in time accurately. They compare text and visual sources to speculate about historical events. They learn to appreciate the legacy from the civilisations of ancient Greece, Rome, Britain and the Aztecs. Pupils of all levels of attainment analyse reasons for the actions of monarchs, leaders and industrialists. They make suitably considered judgements about the consequences for ordinary people in England from Mediaeval to Victorian times. Very good provision, in all years, for visits to historical sights increases the range and challenge of source material. It helps to develop pupils' social skills and brings history alive in places not far from where they live. Writing from different points of view excites pupils and helps them to feel the spirit of the times and to develop an awareness of how individuals suffered. Teachers' good planning of lessons and the effective use of good resources for learning ensure that pupils have acquired appropriate basic skills in the subject by Year 6.
136. Pupils build well on the basic skills acquired in Years 5 and 6 so that by Year 8, pupils write detailed, well-constructed pieces at length and with confidence and competence. They begin to be critical of sources although they do not often consider what sources do not say. They rarely judge the value of the sources in the light of authorship and vested interest, weighing, for example, a poem or video against an official report. However, higher attaining pupils spot ambiguities and patiently tease them out before making a decision. For example, in a Year 8 class, studying the confession of one of the alleged plotters in the Gunpowder Plot trial, one pupil said he could not really accept it as a source because it seemed too neat: "I don't trust it". Pupils are not always challenged to articulate contributions in which they integrate judgements, illustrations, reasons and a conclusion. Pupils make little use of ICT to work independently, to analyse sources or to develop their numeracy skills in history.
137. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all years. They receive good support from teachers in literacy through the use of simple devices for sorting knowledge, starter phrases for paragraphs, key word lists and good opportunities for reading aloud.
138. The quality of teaching is good throughout Years 5 to 8. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed was due to the lack of expertise of the non-specialist teacher. Teachers usually ensure learning proceeds quickly. In most

lessons, pupils of all levels of attainment are involved actively in pairs, groups and such activities as mock trials or reading their own work aloud to the class. Therefore learning is good also, because pupils are eager to be partners. In the better question and answer sessions, teachers' skilful questions accelerate learning by making pupils use knowledge to throw light on key questions and to make deductions and speculate. The specialist teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to help pupils to acquire a good picture of the events studied. Pupils learn techniques like note making, annotating and highlighting. As a result, they become efficient in handling a range of sources and in planning their writing. Teachers develop pupils' imagination and moral conscience by challenging them to write in a variety of ways. These include such activities as writing letters, obituaries, guide booklets, interviews, poems and problem pages. The teaching of history skills is planned. However, teachers do not always share with pupils the link between learning activities and key history-targeted skills.

139. Teachers keep thorough records of assessments. Pupils appreciate teachers' marking because it tells them how to improve. In many classes, pupils have started to set targets. Good procedures ensure that standards are agreed among teachers in the school, in local middle schools and in the high school. Teachers do not use National Curriculum levels for history to monitor pupils' progress against previous attainment and make predictions, or to analyse the department's performance over time and raise questions about standards.
140. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The relatively new head of subject has succeeded in maintaining coherence among the large number of teachers of history by monitoring standards through exercise book sampling, meetings to share good practice and targeting support. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Systems for planning for improvement and for monitoring the performance of the subject are in place, adequate and improving. Good resources in the library support lessons and homework but do not compensate for insufficient resources within the department to cover, for example, the history of tolerance and integration with reference to immigrant, racial and refugee groups, vital for insights into 21st century Britain.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to pupils achieving well.
- Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject so they work hard in lessons.
- A good system for assessment greatly assists the monitoring of pupils' progress in ICT.

Area for improvement

- Pupils do not use ICT enough in a few subjects to enhance and extend learning.

141. Standards of work seen in Year 6 are slightly above average. Pupils achieve well by Year 6 because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils use ICT well to present their work. Most pupils in Year 5 show good understanding of page layout, correct text formatting and the appropriate use of fonts in designing a school passport. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have above average understanding of how to use a database to sort, calculate and graph information. They analyse their own work very well and offer good suggestions on how it could be improved. Most pupils use control software well to operate a house lighting system. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and over time because of the effective support they receive

from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils are encouraged to investigate for themselves. As a result they develop well as independent users of ICT.

142. Standards of work in Year 8 are above average. Pupils continue to make good progress in lessons in Years 7 and 8 because teachers set more demanding tasks. Pupils develop further their skills in presenting information. Year 7 pupils understand how to use columns in a newspaper. Gifted and talented pupils produce sophisticated word-processed reports that incorporate graphics and pictures to give clear and mature presentations. Middle attaining pupils make good progress but their presentations are not always well designed. For example they do not always incorporate pictures into the body of the text. Lower attaining pupils continue to develop ICT skills well. However, their limited literacy skills inhibit their own analysis of their work. There is little difference in the attainment and progress of girls and boys.
143. The quality of teaching is good overall. Learning is also good. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good personal support to meet pupils' individual needs. This is especially effective for pupils with special educational needs who, as a result, are included fully in the lessons. Pupils learn successfully when teachers use projectors to give clear demonstrations. In a Year 8 lesson observed, the class listened in rapt attention as the teacher demonstrated how to use automatic weather station readings. From this, pupils interpreted the data on their own computers successfully. Lesson planning is good with appropriate tasks being set for most pupils. A particular strength is the specific time that teachers give for pupils to use the computers. As a result pupils use the computers in a disciplined manner. Most lessons have clear learning aims. Teachers use good questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding of what they have learned. They explain difficult words well. For example, all of a Year 5 class understood the term 'hypothesis'. They used a database successfully to test a hypothesis by graphing results. Pupils generally behave well or very well and, as a result, learning proceeds effectively. However, in one lesson, a few pupils were inattentive and necessitated the teacher repeating instructions. Staff provide good opportunities for pupils to use ICT outside of lesson times. Many pupils take advantage of these to continue with their ICT work on their own initiative.
144. Pupils are interested in their work and work hard. Their willingness to help each other is a particular strength. These good attitudes contribute positively to the good learning that takes place.
145. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory overall. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection. However, the use of ICT is not yet fully developed across all subjects. In English, pupils use ICT well for project work and autobiographical writing as well as for drafting and redrafting text. In art and design, pupils make good use of computers to enrich their work. The use of digital cameras for work on portraits is particularly well developed. Most subjects encourage pupils to use the Internet for research. Pupils in Year 8 use this well to research topics on European Union countries for their geography project. In mathematics, science, physical education and music, pupils generally have too few opportunities to practise and develop their ICT skills.
146. Good leadership and management of the subject have led to good improvements, including the overall development of ICT in the school. Computing resources have improved since the previous inspection and are used fully. Teachers have received appropriate training and their confidence in using ICT has improved. There is a very clear focus in the thorough planning that is undertaken on improving pupils'

attainment. Liaison with the high school is good so that the National Curriculum is taught systematically as the pupils move from school to school.

147. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements. A good system for assessment now enables pupils' progress to be tracked effectively so that teachers can assist pupils to improve. This is a major reason for the above average standards reached by the pupils. The school has the capacity to improve standards in ICT still further.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good and sometimes excellent teaching helps pupils to learn rapidly so that by the end of Year 8 standards are above average.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and very good listening skills support good learning.
- Very good leadership and management provide good teamwork to help pupils to achieve well.

Area for improvement

- There are insufficient up-to-date texts to support the curriculum.

French

148. Pupils begin French in Year 5, two years before the National Curriculum requires them to do so. By the end of Year 6, attainment is at least average for pupils of this age who study French. It indicates that achievement is good. In listening, standards are above average. Pupils listen attentively to the teachers and to one another, so they are developing good pronunciation. They speak confidently, give their names in French and enjoy practising new phrases and songs in unison. For example, two Year 5 classes sang *Nous sommes en France* with gusto. They read aloud individual lines fluently and with basic understanding. In writing, most pupils copy accurately, though lower attaining pupils find it hard to maintain accuracy, missing accents and word endings. Pupils illustrate word meanings neatly, as when learning vocabulary related to colours and clothes, and take a pride in their work.
149. By the end of Year 8, standards overall are above average. In listening, they are well above average. Achievement is good. Pupils make particularly good progress in writing. Standards of writing are clearly above average and approaching well above average. Pupils listen very carefully to teachers and to one another in paired work. As a result, they quickly acquire new vocabulary and understand grammar points relating to verb endings and the agreement of adjectives. They answer questions about themselves, speaking clearly. Higher attaining pupils ask questions in French, as a matter of routine, when they require a teacher's help. For example, one pupil asked, in French, what 'mot' meant. Lower attaining pupils are less ready to use the foreign language. Pupils of all levels of attainment read words off the board and from their books with confidence. They understand at least the gist of what they read. Good examples of extended writing were seen in work on 'Ma Famille' and 'La Journée'. All but lower attaining pupils write well in sentences or short paragraphs. They improve their spelling by referring to dictionaries or exercise books.

150. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because in Years 5 and 6 the emphasis is on oral work and they benefit from oral repetition with the whole class. In Years 7 and 8, the grouping of pupils by attainment helps teachers to match work closely to pupils' capabilities. Those who are gifted and talented achieve well. They benefit from suitably difficult extension work in Years 5 and 6. The grouping system in Year 8 enables pupils to be taught at an appropriate pace and with differing levels of support.
151. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and join in oral work with relish. For example, a Year 7 class enjoyed the game 'je pense à quelque chose', joined in readily with choral work and felt a sense of achievement. Pupils respond well to routines, such as greeting the teacher at the start of a lesson. When writing, they can be trusted to get on with their work without close supervision. A few lower attaining pupils in Year 8 show little interest in the subject and so their learning is slow.
152. Teaching and learning are good overall. There are several excellent features, such as teachers' classroom management, and lesson planning. Teachers present a variety of activities to interest pupils and keep them busy. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher began with a recap on masculine nouns, then introduced new vocabulary. Pupils repeated in unison, read from word cards, and worked in pairs and as a whole class. As a result, pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment, including the small number for whom English is an additional language, make outstanding progress. Teachers, appropriately, use French most of the time during the lesson. This accounts for the good achievement in speaking and listening. They use questions and answer very effectively to assess what pupils have learnt and to draw in the more reluctant speakers. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and of how they should behave. Hence, pupils work hard and have high expectations themselves of what they can do. Teachers make satisfactory use of computers, though access to the machines is not always convenient. Day-to-day assessment is good, but the recording of pupils' achievements in each of the four elements of the National Curriculum is in the early stages of development. Marking, however, is good and comments guide pupils towards improvement.
153. Leadership and management are very good. There is a common commitment within the department to raise standards and to attend to whole-school issues. For example, literacy is developed through close attention to accurate spelling and pronunciation. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is furthered through strong emphasis on good behaviour and opportunities for pupils to work sensibly together in groups, helping one another to improve. Teachers make very good use of what resources they have, but there are no modern texts for pupils to use and this limits the way pupils learn. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Attainment at the end of Year 8 is higher and writing skills are better developed.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Very good relationships between teacher and pupils help to promote pupils' interest in music.
- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well.
- A large number of pupils have a good commitment to learning to play a musical instrument.
- Concerts and productions help pupils to develop confidence and skills in performance.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills in appraising music.
- Procedures for assessment and tracking pupils' progress need further development.

154. Standards of attainment in music are average by the end of Year 6 and indicate good achievement. Pupils sing enthusiastically as they learn new songs. They achieve average standards in singing. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are confident in playing simple rhythm patterns. They are making good progress in understanding the formal notation to read them. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the elements of music satisfactorily. They are beginning to understand form, as they learn the structure of a twelve-bar blues for example. They maintain a steady pulse and move in time to music played to them.
155. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 7 and 8. When they leave the school they are on target to achieve at least average standards by the time they reach the end of Year 9. In Years 7 and 8, they reinforce their understanding of rhythm patterns effectively. Many of them sight-read rhythms from formal notation. They know the names of notes of different lengths and have a good understanding of time signatures. Pupils make good use of their increasing knowledge and understanding in their own compositions. Higher attaining pupils pay due regard to form in composing a theme and variations. They are also beginning to explore dynamics in their playing.
156. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in developing skills of composition, because they have good opportunities to compose in a variety of situations. Very good work in small groups supports this development. However, they have too few opportunities to appraise music other than their own. Consequently, their skills in this area are not developing as quickly as they should. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, receive good support so that, at times, they are enthused by music. As a result, these pupils make at least as much progress as others in their class.
157. The quality of learning is good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and keen to participate in the variety of singing and instrumental activities provided. They experiment with sound confidently in their own compositions. They work together very well with high levels of co-operation. They listen to and accept each other's ideas maturely, for example as they work on their group compositions. Behaviour during music lessons is usually very good. Most pupils thrive on the responsibility they receive. They work well in small groups, without constant direct supervision. Younger pupils find this way of working more difficult, however, and often need a more controlled and varied programme of activities to retain their interest and attention. In Years 5 to 8 pupils have few opportunities to use ICT to extend their work in music.
158. The quality of teaching in music is good. Teaching is skilful and communicates a real enthusiasm for the subject to pupils. Very good relationships between the teacher and pupils enable good management of pupils' learning. The teacher's considerable

expertise enables pupils to make good progress in developing their own musical skills, both in singing and playing. The teaching of the older pupils is particularly impressive. It provides a good range of appropriate activities, carefully planned to ensure the participation of pupils of all levels of attainment, good learning and enjoyment. Pupils were clearly motivated and encouraged by the teacher's approach. The teacher manages the behaviour and learning of pupils with special educational needs well and has a very clear understanding of individual pupils' particular strengths and their further learning needs. However, this is not sufficiently supported by assessment nor formally recorded in departmental records. Pupils' personal assessment sheets are useful and enable them to reflect on their own learning. However, the statements provided, to which they respond, are not linked closely to specific topics in the music curriculum.

159. A particularly impressive feature of music in the school is the frequent involvement of pupils in a good variety of extra-curricular activities. A large proportion of pupils receive instrumental tuition. Teaching by visiting specialists ranges from satisfactory to good. Many of these pupils make good progress on their chosen instrument. The orchestra provides a good opportunity for pupils to play in a larger group. They demonstrated good progress as they played an extract from Vivaldi's *The Seasons* in a rehearsal. Pupil benefit from good opportunities to perform music in smaller groups and in large-scale productions. The choir makes an important contribution to helping raise standards. In a recent performance of *This Precious Gift*, an original composition by the co-ordinator, standards of singing were good.
160. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The department is committed to improving standards and promoting participation and enjoyment in music across the school. As a result, pupils respond well to music in lessons and in extra-curricular musical activities. This has ensured that this is an active department and that much of the provision is good. However, while there are advantages in terms of securing continuity and progression with one teacher teaching all the music, there are also inherent disadvantages. The lack of a colleague, to share ideas and to discuss issues, has inhibited rigorous evaluation of teaching and learning and curricular planning.
161. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Standards are broadly similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The department continues to demonstrate commitment and enthusiasm. However, there has been little progress in developing effective procedures for assessment and recording to track pupils' progress formally.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good teaching leads to good learning in all years.
- Good management and leadership are bringing about improvement.
- The very good range of extra-curricular activities has a positive effect on standards.

Areas for improvement

- Assessments are not used enough in lessons to show pupils how to improve.
- There is little use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

162. Standards in Year 6 are average and represent satisfactory achievement. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand how and why to prepare for physical activity. They do this conscientiously and with care. Pupils respond well to music and poetry when creating their own dances. They have a good understanding of how to develop a simple idea of movement into a dance. Teachers use technical terms and encourage a wider vocabulary that helps pupils to improve their skills of literacy. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is average but often in a narrow range of activities. Good teaching ensures they reach an average standard across a much wider range of activities.
163. By Year 8, pupils attain standards that are above average. This is good achievement. Pupils have a greater depth of understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies and the particular muscles involved when warming up. They quickly learn new skills because they practise and repeat actions until they reach a good standard. In dance they work well together to create group dances that demonstrate good understanding of composition dance. Pupils apply the skills they learn in games that are played with energy and enthusiasm. Teachers help pupils to learn and improve through good use of demonstrations. Pupils develop the skills of watching the performance of others in order to improve their own performance. They give helpful comments to others in their group on how to improve. Teachers help this learning by giving frequent comments in lessons to pupils on how they are doing. However, the formal assessments made by teachers are not shared and used with pupils so they know for themselves what to do next to improve.
164. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. Pupils of all levels of attainment benefit from the clear explanations and demonstration given by teachers. Pupils with behavioural problems do well because teachers have good control. The gifted and talented pupils have been identified and make the best of their talents through connections with local sports clubs and teams.
165. Pupils' very positive attitudes contribute to good achievement in physical activities. Pupils of all backgrounds work with enthusiasm in lessons. Participation is high in the very good programme of extra-curricular activities. Pupils and parents value these opportunities. Physical education makes a good contribution to the personal development of pupils. The strong emphasis on working together helps to develop pupils' social skills. Pupils are encouraged to support one another and to celebrate the success of others. They recognise the need for rules and fair play and how to react as rules are applied in a game.
166. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils throughout the school benefit from the very good specialist knowledge of teachers. This shows in the planning of lessons that develop skills carefully. Teachers set tasks that are interesting and motivate pupils. There is a good climate for learning in lessons because teachers are enthusiastic and have good management and control. Lessons run smoothly and at a good pace. Very good relationships underpin learning and the very good behaviour of pupils. Teachers make little use of ICT to support learning or to record progress and analyse information and ideas.
167. Good management and leadership are taking the subject forward. Appropriate priorities for the subject have been identified and acted upon. The assessment of pupils' work is accurate and frequent. This information is not yet analysed and used to review the work of the department. There is good potential for further improvement with a committed and hard-working team of teachers.

168. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards and the quality of teaching have been maintained. New schemes of work have been written. The school gained the Sportsmark Award for extra-curricular provision in May 2002.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Standards are above the average expectations of the agreed syllabus.
- Teaching is good and leads to good progress for all pupils.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to this subject that contribute to their success

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment needs further development to raise standards further.
- The marking of pupils' written work does not always pay enough attention to accuracy in writing.

169. Assessments have not been done in enough detail to judge pupils' performance against standards set out in the agreed syllabus in religious education over the past three years. Currently, standards of work seen are above the average expectation of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 6 and Year 8. They represent good achievement for pupils of all levels of attainment, given pupils' broadly average standards on entry.
170. In Year 5, pupils show a good general knowledge of Islam. In Year 6 they have a good knowledge of all the precepts in the Lord's Prayer and explain the meaning of each verse. In Year 7, they identify and name the objects used in Jewish religious ceremonies. They know the origins and significance of these practices. In Year 8, pupils have a very good knowledge and understanding of the use of symbols in general and particularly in religious practices. They show impressive understanding of the symbols used to represent the Trinity in Christianity. They take particular interest in the Greek letters and the origins of some of these symbols.
171. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and teach in an academic way that has high expectations for pupils' standards in the subject. They have excellent class-management skills and maintain very good discipline. They employ very good strategies to involve pupils and to engage their interest. They encourage them to think for themselves, to speculate from evidence and to research in good depth. Teachers make good use of illustrations, visual aids and religious objects. These resources help all pupils to understand the details of religious practices and ceremonies. They convey cultural situations more clearly. They are of particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They enable these pupils to make good progress. Pupils make good use of ICT, including the use of the Internet for research. This makes good provision for the gifted and talented pupils to extend their learning
172. The good leadership and management of the subject contribute to pupils' success. The change of leadership within the past year has continued earlier developments well. Planning is done in good detail and gives good support to the non-specialist teachers. Assessment needs to be developed in more detail to help raise standards further. Pupils benefit from good support for literacy in the range of written texts of high quality used. However, pupils' written work is not always marked carefully enough. Teachers do not consistently correct spelling, punctuation and grammatical

mistakes. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All these aspects are studied in the teachings and practices of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism.

173. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards have improved. Teaching has improved and all pupils make good progress. The subject has considerably improved its contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.