

INSPECTION REPORT

DURRINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Worthing

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125952

Headteacher: Mr R M Pavard

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 6th July 2001

Inspection number: 196638

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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 primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 to 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Salvington Road

WORTHING

West Sussex

Postcode:

BN13 2JD

Telephone number: 01903 260761

Fax number: 01903 691714

E-mail address:
sussex.sch.uk

head@durringtonmiddle.w-

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G Harbinson

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Crowther <i>Registered inspector</i> 18814	Science Music Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Pauline Adenwalla <i>Lay inspector</i> 9400		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Raye Allison-Smith <i>Team inspector</i> 2501	Art Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
Anna Curtis <i>Team inspector</i> 27225	Mathematics Information and communication technology Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
Graham Jackson <i>Team inspector</i> 1508	Geography History English as an additional language	
Peter McGregor <i>Team inspector</i> 3525	Design and technology	
Susan Rogers <i>Team inspector</i> 31421	English Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey.
RH8 0RE Tel. 01883 723257

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	1
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?	6
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Durrington is a large, community middle school for boys and girls who are 8-12 years old. It has 508 full-time pupils. The school is situated in the western suburbs of Worthing, and draws pupils mainly from the local community. Information about the area shows that the social circumstances of the families are, overall, less favourable than national averages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is, however, broadly in line with the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they join the school is well below average, as shown by the results of national assessments at age seven. Across the school, 160 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, of whom seven have statements. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is above average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds; 15 are learning English as an additional language, but only three are at the early stages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Durrington is an improving school. It provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but it still has a number of significant weaknesses. Good leadership has enabled the school to improve gradually, even though the low attainment of many pupils when they join the school, and staff shortages have hampered progress. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, but vary significantly between classes. By Year 6, pupils attain standards in English and mathematics that are, overall, well below those expected for their ages, and below those achieved by similar schools. In science, however, standards have improved recently and are now close to those expected for pupils' ages. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, standards are rather higher, reflecting better progress made in the final year. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. The quality of teaching is good in many lessons. There are, however, weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some lessons that prevent pupils from making the progress of which they are capable. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is well organised, which is supporting improvements in pupils' achievements. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, by senior staff, has identified weaknesses, but action to tackle them has not always been rigorous enough. The leadership and management of the school are clear about where improvements need to be made. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils' achievements in science are good, and in music they are very good.
- Pupils' good attitudes to work and their very good behaviour support their learning.
- There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development because the school has a strong community spirit.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to raise standards.
- Educational visits and extra-curricular activities are used well to enrich pupils' learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Attainment in English and mathematics, though improving, is not high enough.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some lessons.
- Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology are not good enough.
- Information gathered about pupils' attainment and progress is not used consistently to ensure that work is appropriately challenging.
- Where weaknesses are identified in teaching and learning, action taken to ensure improvement is not rigorous enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in June 1997, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in a number of aspects of its work. Since then, it has made satisfactory progress in addressing many of the action points and in tackling some of the causes of pupils' underachievement. Guidance for planning pupils' work is now in place for all subjects and this provides good support for teachers. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now much more systematic. They are enabling the school to keep track of pupils' achievements and identify weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. As yet, however, this information is not used effectively by all teachers to match work to pupils' needs. Systems for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in lessons are much improved, but are not yet fully effective. The school development plan is better focused on raising attainment. In science, these measures have resulted in a marked improvement in pupils' achievements. In English and mathematics, however, a significant minority of pupils are still not achieving as well as they should, largely because there continue to be weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some classes. Shortages of staffing have hampered the school's drive for improvement. In view of the progress already made, and the clear plans for future improvement set out by the leadership and management of the school, the inspection team judges that there is a sound capacity to raise standards further.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	E	E	
science	E	E	C	C	

Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, but inconsistent between classes, depending on the quality of teaching. Results in national tests for 11 year olds are well below average in English and mathematics, but close to the national average in science. Results in English and mathematics have improved gradually over the past three years and, in 2000, the school met the target it set for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in English, but not in mathematics. The improvement in science results was very good and far better than the target set.

Inspection evidence shows attainment in the current Year 7 to be below national expectations in English and mathematics, but close to national expectations in science. In English, attainment in speaking and listening, and in reading, is better than in writing. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are below average throughout the school. In

information and communication technology, standards are well below national expectations because resources are poor and pupils do not spend enough time on the subject. In religious education, pupils' achievements are sound and standards in Year 7 are close to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. There are very good achievements in music, particularly for the substantial number of pupils involved in choir or orchestra.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS (continued)

Achievement in design and technology is sound, with pupils completing a good range of projects as they move through the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in French, history and physical education, reaching the standards expected for their ages. In art, however, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because their skills are not developed consistently through a wide enough range of work. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography because they do not learn the skills needed to investigate topics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority of pupils are happy to be in school and interested in activities. They generally concentrate well in lessons and try their best. However, where lessons are dull or the work is too easy, pupils' soon lose interest and do not settle to their tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good around the school and good in most lessons. Pupils know how they should behave in school and misbehaviour in lessons is rare. The very good behaviour of most pupils supports their learning. There have been 10 temporary exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are good. Pupils generally work and play well together. In some lessons, pupils do not take enough responsibility for their own learning.
Attendance	Close to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils	aged 8-11 years	aged 11-12 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in a significant minority of lessons. Teaching was very good, sometimes excellent, in 16 per cent of the lessons observed, good or better in 52 per cent, and at least satisfactory in 88 per cent. Where teaching is good or better, teachers have high but appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use a good range of strategies that capture pupils' interest and focus on the main learning objectives. These lessons are well organised, move at a brisk pace, and enable all pupils to make good gains in learning. As a result, pupils are keen to participate and they work productively on the tasks they are given. The excellent teaching has all these features, combined with outstanding knowledge of

the subject. The significant proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is a strength and has improved since the last inspection. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, however, or there are weaknesses, teaching and learning move too slowly and there is too little interest and challenge in the work provided. The whole-class introduction is often satisfactory, but tasks for individual and group work are not well chosen to fulfil the main purpose of the lesson, and pupils' learning is not organised effectively. As a result, pupils are not engaged by the activities, so they do not make enough effort with their work. In a few lessons, pupils' behaviour is not managed well enough. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced only marginally since the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy are soundly taught. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Broad and balanced, with a well-organised curriculum for English, mathematics and science. A significant weakness in information and communication technology, which does not meet statutory requirements. Music is an outstanding strength. Extra-curricular activities are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language.	Satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified carefully, appropriate targets are set and provision is well organised. Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs, but there are weaknesses in some lessons. Good support from adults benefits many pupils. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are satisfactorily catered for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development is well supported by the ethos of the school, the good role models provided by the staff, and good relationships between children and adults. The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness effectively. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils Assessment	Good. The school is effective in promoting the health, safety and well being of its pupils. The positive, friendly atmosphere makes a strong contribution to providing a caring, learning community. This is underpinned by a range of effective policies and procedures. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are developing well in English, mathematics and science, but all teachers do not yet make best use of this information to plan appropriate work for their pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. The school works hard to develop a partnership with parents so that they can support their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has a clear view of how he wants the school to improve. He has been successful in strengthening some aspects of the school's work, and is aware of the weaknesses that still need to be addressed. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher who is responsible for a number of important areas of the school's work. Co-ordinators are having a positive impact on raising standards in some subjects, but not in others.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school, bring considerable expertise to their work, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They are well organised into a range of active committees. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in the drive to raise standards, and are playing a more active part in planning improvements.

4

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED (continued)

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. This has improved during the last few years, and the school now gathers and evaluates a good deal of information to identify strengths and weaknesses in its work. It has, however, been less successful in tackling the weaknesses because plans for improvement are not sufficiently focused and action has not been rigorous enough.
The strategic use of resources	The school's financial situation has been very difficult in recent years, but it now has more equitable funding, which is being targeted effectively to raise standards. Financial planning and management are good, with the school paying due regard to the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has sufficient staff. In some lessons, the good skills of classroom assistants are not best used. The accommodation is adequate overall; there are some good specialist rooms, but some classrooms are cramped. The field and swimming pool provide good facilities for sport. Resources for learning are adequate for most subjects, but weak for information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children enjoy going to school. ▪ Their children are making good progress. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The behaviour of some children. ▪ The amount and pattern of homework. ▪ Information about how their child is progressing. ▪ Opportunities to work more closely with the school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The range of activities outside lessons.
--	--

Only a small proportion of parents returned the questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with the positive views held by many of these parents. However, inspection findings show that the quality of teaching is not good enough in some classes, and that the pupils in these classes are not making the progress of which they are capable. Behaviour is very good, with very few incidents of misbehaviour. Homework is generally set consistently and is appropriate for most pupils. Inspectors agree that information about how children are progressing is not clear enough. The school welcomes parents who wish to work closely with it, and many do. The range of activities provided outside lessons is good, particularly in music and for educational visits.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for 11 year olds, in English and mathematics, were well below the national average. Compared with results achieved by similar schools, they were below average in English, and well below average in mathematics. In English, about 60 per cent of the pupils reached the expected Level 4 of attainment, compared with 75 per cent nationally. In mathematics, only just over 50 per cent of the pupils reached the expected level. In both subjects, very few pupils gained the higher Level 5 of attainment. In science, however, results were close to the national average and about the same as those achieved by similar schools, with over 80 per cent of the pupils reaching Level 4. National test results have improved since the last inspection, from a low starting point, at a similar rate to the national trend. In science, there has been a substantial improvement since 1997 when about 50 per cent of the pupils reached the expected standard. In English and mathematics, the improvement has been more gradual. Schools set targets for test results, based on what is known about the abilities of the pupils in an age group. In 2000, the school exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in English, but fell well short of its target for mathematics. The school's analysis of the 2000 results revealed weaknesses in the boys' performance

compared with that of the girls, but over the past four years there has been no significant difference.

2. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows a slightly more positive picture than that painted by the year 2000 test results. Attainment in the current Year 6 continues to be well below national expectations in English, but has improved in mathematics to be below national expectations. In science, there is an average proportion of pupils who should reach the expected standard by the end of the key stage, but there are fewer higher attainers than last year, so overall attainment is below national expectations. At the end of Year 7 when pupils leave the school, the standards reached reflect the good achievements of pupils in their final year. In English and mathematics, overall attainment is below national expectations but represents a significant improvement since the national tests last year. In science, attainment continues to be close to national expectations.

3. Pupils join the school in Year 4 with overall attainment that is well below that expected for their ages. Assessments of five year olds shortly after they start at the main First school from which Durrington takes its pupils show that a significant proportion have low attainment. An inspection of that school in 1998 judged that pupils were underachieving. The results of national assessments for seven year olds at that school have been well below average. As a result of all these factors, a number of groups of pupils have joined Year 4 with low overall attainment. Pupils' achievements across the school are just satisfactory overall but, as at the last inspection, their progress is inconsistent, owing to weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that achievements are good in some classes, but unsatisfactory in others, often with the same age group. Lower-attaining pupils often make the best progress in lessons because the lower sets in English and mathematics are well taught and these pupils are well supported by classroom assistants. Middle and higher-attaining pupils, however, are not always given the challenging tasks they

6

need, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. The inspection team recognises that staff absences and shortages have hampered the schools' drive for greater consistency. There are, however, weaknesses in the teaching not affected by these issues.

4. Pupils with special education needs, and the few pupils learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in relation to their initial attainment. Tasks in lessons are generally well matched to their needs and help them to meet the targets on their individual educational plans. In some lessons, these pupils make good progress because of good quality support both from teachers and assistants. In a minority of lessons, especially where the management of challenging behaviour is weak, pupils make unsatisfactory progress and sometimes this has an effect on the learning of others. The previous inspection report identified the progress of higher-attaining pupils as unsatisfactory. They now benefit from work more appropriate to their needs, almost exclusively provided through the setting for ability in English and mathematics. In a number of lessons observed, however, the slow pace of teaching and the lack of challenge in tasks resulted in the higher attainers

not making sufficient gains in knowledge and skills. There are no significant variations in pupils' achievements by gender.

5. In English, attainment in the current Year 7 is below national expectations in reading and writing, but close to expectations in speaking and listening. Pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 are satisfactory, and they are good in Year 7. Throughout the school, listening skills are generally good, which was very evident in the assemblies observed. Speaking skills are less well developed. By Year 7, however, pupils listen carefully and make constructive comments whilst their partners read stories they have written. By Year 7, many pupils are reading widely both for information and pleasure. They have sound comprehension of the texts they read. By Year 6, many pupils write sustained stories and use different forms of writing appropriately. The average and above average attainers have most of the skills they need, but a large lower-attaining group do not write fluently, or use words imaginatively to enhance the quality of their stories. In Year 7, standards are higher and pupils use a range of techniques and vocabulary, for example to produce books for their younger schoolmates. The quality of handwriting is very variable in Key Stage 2, and spelling is similarly inconsistent. In Year 7, handwriting is of a much better standard with most pupils capable of neat, well-presented work.

6. Attainment in mathematics in Year 7 is below national expectations. Pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 are satisfactory overall, but progress in lessons is variable. By Year 6, just over half of the pupils are working at the expected level. Typically, they can calculate percentages and carry out long division. They work out the perimeter of compound shapes, investigate probability and order and simplify fractions. By Year 7, about two-thirds of pupils are working at the expected level. Work on angles ranged from the more able learning that the external angles of a triangle are equal to the sum of the interior opposite angles to the less able cutting and sticking the angles of a triangle to make a straight angle. Numeracy skills are below average, overall. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in learning number facts, and they use and develop their skills in some work in other subjects such as science, but teachers are not yet planning for the development of pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum.

7

7. Attainment in science in Year 7 is close to national expectations. Pupils' achievements through the school are good, even though the quality of teaching is inconsistent between classes. In Year 7, all the pupils understand the features of chemical reactions. They know that two substances such as sodium bicarbonate and lemon juice change when they are combined, that the change is irreversible, and that there are products from the reaction such as a gas and heat. Higher-attaining pupils, about half, record their experimental work logically, including diagrams where necessary, but middle and lower attainers find this more challenging, owing to weaker literacy skills.

8. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory through the school and, by Year 7, attainment is well below national expectations. Pupils do not spend enough time on ICT and do not experience the full range of work required by the National Curriculum. Low attainment in ICT was a key weakness at the last inspection, but lack of resources has hampered the

school's efforts to raise attainment. In religious education, by Year 7, pupils' attainment is close to that expected by the locally agreed syllabus, and their achievements are satisfactory across the school.

9. Pupils' achievements in music are very good and, by the time they reach Year 7, overall attainment is above that expected for pupils' ages. Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy their music making activities, and many learn to play an instrument or are members of the choir. In design and technology, pupils make sound progress and reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. They design and make a good range of products and learn new skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history and achieve average standards. Their knowledge of times past develops well, and they begin to use historical evidence to find out about the lives of people in the past. Progress in physical education satisfactory. In geography, pupils' achievements across the school are just satisfactory, overall, but weaker in some classes and in some aspects of the subject. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, standards of attainment are below those expected for their ages. Pupils lack the enquiry skills necessary to investigate geographical issues in sufficient depth. In art, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory across the school and standards are below those expected for pupils' ages. In all years, the range of the work is narrow and skills are not developed consistently. Pupils learn French in Years 6 and 7, make satisfactory progress, and reach standards expected for their ages.

10. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievements have improved gradually, largely through determined leadership and because the planning of the curriculum is now much better. The quality of teaching, however, is still too variable and slows pupils' progress in a significant minority of lessons. The rate of improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection and the school has a sound capacity to raise standards still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Parents agree that their children like school, but just over a quarter of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that there is a problem in the school with behaviour. The inspection team agrees that pupils' attitudes to school are overwhelmingly positive but disagrees that behaviour is a weakness. A small number of pupils did misbehave in the lessons seen, and the learning of other pupils was occasionally disrupted. This was due, however, to weaknesses in teaching. Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good, much improved since the last inspection, and a strength of the school.

12. The way pupils performed, listened and behaved during assemblies was excellent and demonstrated very high levels of interest and enthusiasm. Pupils showed great respect and consideration for one another, applauding friends for their achievements and listening intently to the headteacher as he explained the words of a hymn or told a Bible story. Music plays a very big part in building a positive ethos and gives pupils the chance to perform, gain success and experience the

appreciation of their peers. Singing is an enjoyable and uplifting activity that succeeds in promoting positive attitudes and values.

13. Pupils of all abilities have good attitudes to learning, which is a similar finding to the last inspection. In most lessons, pupils do what is asked of them and enjoy their work, particularly when it is challenging enough to hold their interest throughout. They are usually attentive in whole-class sessions, especially when they have good opportunities to answer lively questions. In the best lessons, pupils' enthusiasm for learning is strong, as was seen in a number of music lessons. Where there are opportunities to take part in extra-curricular clubs and sports' fixtures, pupils are keen to participate. In the lessons observed during the inspection, most pupils showed interest and worked hard even when the teaching was not stimulating.

14. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils are polite and trustworthy. The school is orderly and pupils move quietly and calmly to and from assemblies, the dining hall and the playground. They observe the rules of the playground, take turns at games and co-operate with one another when playing in teams. The school has worked hard to ensure this aspect of pupils' learning is developed within physical education lessons and pupils are able to apply what they have learned in lessons to their own informal games during breaks and lunchtimes. There have been a number of temporary exclusions from the school, but the number of pupils involved is small, and the sanction has been used appropriately. Class teachers keep a careful check on pupils' behaviour and the effort that pupils put into their school and homework, and they operate an effective system of rewards and sanctions.

15. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good. No oppressive behaviour was seen. Pupils express confidence in the headteacher and senior staff to deal quickly with the occasional bullying incident. Where it is taught well, the personal, social and health education programme plays an important part in developing responsible attitudes and values. Pupils have been profoundly affected by some of the materials used to introduce and explore social and moral issues. There has been considerable upheaval and discontinuity, caused by changes in staffing, that has had a negative impact on the development of some pupils. Restlessness and poor concentration were seen in a few lessons. In some cases, this was because the work that was set did not meet pupils' learning requirements and in others because teachers' did not manage pupils' learning well enough.

16. The school has recently begun to extend the opportunities for pupils to learn to undertake greater responsibilities within the school community and to develop their skills for independent learning. To achieve this target several steps have been identified, which will encourage and facilitate pupils' involvement in their own learning and in the life of the school. Inspectors feel that this aspect of pupils' learning is a weakness. For example, in several lessons, opportunities for using computers and carrying out independent research were missed. A school council has been introduced that provides a real chance for older pupils to have a say in aspects of the school's organisation.

17. Pupils' rate of attendance is satisfactory, and broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is slightly below the national figure. In the weeks prior to the inspection, attendance was unsatisfactory, owing to the high number of pupils on family holidays. The marking of registers is satisfactory and complies with statutory regulations. The late arrival in classrooms of a small number of pupils, at the beginning of the day and during the course of the day, hinders some lessons from starting promptly. This has an adverse effect on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in a significant minority of lessons. Where teaching is good or better, teachers have high but appropriate expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use a good range of strategies that capture pupils' interest and focus on the main learning objectives. These lessons are well organised, move at a brisk pace, and enable all pupils to make good gains in learning. As a result, pupils are keen to participate and they work productively on the tasks they are given. The excellent teaching has all these features, combined with outstanding knowledge of the subject. The significant proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is a strength and has improved since the last inspection. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, however, or there are weaknesses, teaching and learning move too slowly and there is too little interest and challenge in the work provided. The whole-class introduction is often satisfactory, but tasks for individual and group work are not well chosen to fulfil the main purpose of the lesson, and pupils' learning is not organised effectively. As a result, pupils are not engaged by the activities, so they do not make enough effort with their work. In a few lessons, pupils' behaviour is not managed well enough. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced only marginally since the last inspection.

19. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 88 per cent of the lessons observed. It was very good, sometimes excellent, in 16 per cent, good in 36 per cent, but unsatisfactory in 12 per cent. Literacy and numeracy are soundly taught overall, though the quality of teaching varies considerably between classes, and is best in Years 6 and 7. The teaching of music is excellent. Teaching of ICT is weak, largely owing to poor resources and a lack of opportunity for teachers to build their confidence and expertise. Teaching of art has weaknesses. Teaching of all other subjects is sound. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils.

20. The overall quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs, and for those learning English as an additional language, is satisfactory. However, across the school, the quality is variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, these pupils are well catered for because tasks are matched carefully to their needs. They behave well and respond positively. In a number of lessons seen, classroom assistants worked closely with pupils who have special needs, and their skilled support enabled these pupils to make good progress. In a few lessons, however, teachers did not plan the assistants' contribution well enough, so they did not fully understand what was required of them. When this happened, pupils made unsatisfactory progress and occasionally

wasted their own time and that of other pupils. This was particularly noticeable of pupils with behaviour difficulties who need a tight structure for their learning.

10

21. Teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects. Where teaching was very good or excellent, teachers used their knowledge to make learning challenging. For example, in an excellent French lesson for Year 6, it was the teacher's command of the language that enabled her to ask pupils a series of questions about themselves, at pace, and to switch easily between spoken and written language. As a result, the pupils were fully involved and made very good progress in their oral work. Extremely confident subject knowledge supported excellent teaching in a number of music lessons, including choir and orchestra rehearsals. In a few English, mathematics, science and art lessons observed, weaknesses in teachers' knowledge prevented them from explaining skills and ideas clearly and ensuring that tasks were challenging enough.

22. Basic skills are generally taught soundly, and often very well. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, a very methodical approach to teaching pupils how to multiply by 10, then 20, then 30 resulted in all of them understanding the skill and making very good progress. Reading is taught satisfactorily, though lower attainers lack a more structured approach, and their progress is not always monitored closely enough. A focus on calculating is a good feature of most numeracy lessons, but some of these sessions lack sufficient pace. There is good practice in other subjects, such as when pupils are taught the correct technical vocabulary in science, or when achievement of basic skills in design and technology is recognised by the award of a certificate.

23. Detailed planning is a good feature of many lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 7 about angles, the teacher had identified the learning objective precisely, the vocabulary that needed to be revised, and the concepts that needed to be taught so that the pupils would understand the sum of angles on a straight line. Thorough preparation enabled the lesson to move speedily and for pupils to make good gains in learning. Where teaching was good or better, teachers knew exactly what they wanted pupils to learn and they began by explaining the purpose of the lesson so pupils knew what was expected of them.

24. Where teaching was good or better, tasks were well matched to pupils' needs and sufficiently challenging to ensure progress. For example, a Year 7 English lesson considered the ways in which authors build tension in their writing. The teacher used examples of text, and very effective questioning, to encourage the pupils to articulate their ideas. A range of tasks, suitably challenging for groups of pupils, resulted in some excellent writing that was shared and discussed. However, in a significant proportion of the lessons observed, even when other features of teaching were satisfactory, the work was too easy for many pupils. Whole-class sessions covered work that many pupils already knew, and moved too slowly to hold their interest. Tasks set for groups were too easy, and expectations of the amount and standard of work that pupils should complete were too low.

25. Most lessons are well organised. Where teaching was good or better, a range of strategies was used, such as clear explanation, questions targeted to ensure the

involvement of all pupils, and well managed group activities within which adults had a clear teaching role. For example, in a very good lesson for Year 4, the teacher asked pupils to describe the feelings of the main character in the novel 'Tracy Beaker' because she wanted them to use adjectives to add variety and interest to their writing. She questioned pupils to test their understanding, asked the them to discuss their ideas in pairs, encouraged the use of a dictionary, and

11

supported pupils well as they wrote their own descriptions. The results showed that all the pupils had learnt how to enliven their descriptive writing. The music lessons seen were excellent examples of using a range of methods and activities to promote interest, involvement and learning. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, however, it was often the individual or group work that was poorly conceived. The tasks given to pupils did not fulfil the main objective of the lesson, they were uninteresting, and adults supervised the activities rather than teaching.

26. In almost all the lessons seen, teachers managed pupils' behaviour effectively. Positive relationships, a sense of humour, and good use of praise and encouragement all resulted in pupils listening attentively, concentrating on their work and behaving well. Very good teaching in a mathematics lesson for lower-attaining Year 5 pupils was characterised by constant praise for each success, which encouraged confidence and further success. In a few of the lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, however, teachers were not consistent enough in their management of poor behaviour. Pupils were allowed to call out answers, to be too noisy, and did not respond to the teachers' instructions. In these lessons, pupils found it difficult to concentrate, worked slowly, and made insufficient gains in learning.

27. The brisk pace of learning was a strong feature of the very good and excellent teaching observed. For example, in a science lesson for Year 6, the teacher used quick-fire questions to review previous learning about carrying out experiments, and kept the pace going by setting time targets for tasks. As a result, pupils worked urgently and productively and made good progress. In a number of lessons, however, where teaching was unsatisfactory or had unsatisfactory features, whole-class introductions were too slow and they lasted too long, so pupils lost interest and concentration. Classroom assistants are used well in many lessons, for example working with a group of pupils or individuals who have special needs.

28. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of opportunities to assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. They often begin lessons with a review of previous learning to check what pupils know. At the end of lessons, they question pupils to find out what they have learnt. In one good example, the teacher altered planning for a Year 6 mathematics lesson, having discovered that the pupils had not fully understood the previous work. However, in a significant number of lessons, teachers did not assess pupils' progress as they were working on tasks, and did not notice when work was too easy. On their questionnaires, a significant proportion of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework their children are set, and its consistency across the school. The policy for homework is clear and reasonable and, during the week of the inspection, sensible homework was set in a

number of classes. The inspection team judges that the work pupils complete at home makes a suitable contribution to their learning at school.

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

29. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, enhanced by educational visits and extra-curricular activities. At the last inspection, the amount of time allocated to each subject was inappropriate, and there were weaknesses in the guidance provided for teachers to plan pupils' work. As a result, the curriculum lacked breadth and balance, which inhibited pupils' achievements. Since then, the structure of the curriculum has been reviewed and improved, and good guidance is now in place for planning work in all subjects. As a result, pupils' achievements are now at least satisfactory in all but two subjects.

12

30. The curriculum has strengths in mathematics, science and history, and in activities to support pupils' personal and social education. Music is outstanding, owing to the high quality of experiences in lessons and the opportunity pupils have to learn an instrument or sing in the choir. The provision of French in Years 6 and 7 broadens and enhances the curriculum. Religious education is taught in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT), however, is weak, mainly owing to poor resources. As at the last inspection, provision for ICT does not meet statutory requirements. In English, the development of pupils' writing skills, both the content and the handwriting, has weaknesses, which are evident in the quality of pupils' work. In art, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas in a range of media. In some subjects, the school has yet to respond fully to the latest national guidance known as Curriculum 2000. Overall, however, the curriculum is satisfactorily organised so that the needs of all pupils are met.

31. The time allocated to each subject has been revised since the last inspection and is now appropriate on paper. In practice, however, ICT receives insufficient time because there are not enough computers, and opportunities to teach ICT across the curriculum are not utilised. Otherwise, curriculum time is generally well used, though in some classes time is wasted at the beginning of lessons, often as pupils come in from play and move to sets for English and mathematics lessons. These lessons are set in Key Stage 2, but pupils are not benefiting fully from setting arrangements because the work they are given is not always best suited to their needs. Pupils in lower-achieving sets were observed in some instances to be covering, with difficulty, the same tasks as the pupils in the top set. There is no setting for English in Year 7 but pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is more consistent.

32. The school has started to respond to Curriculum 2000, with a particular focus on personal, social and health education. Citizenship education is being introduced and there is a drugs awareness programme. Subject co-ordinators have made appropriate changes to existing plans and, in the main, nationally recommended schemes of work have been adapted to meet the school's needs. Current subject

policies, however, do not refer to these changes in content or to the key skills' element of Curriculum 2000 such as developing thinking skills.

33. The school has made good progress in adopting the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but there are still inconsistencies in practice, particularly in the teaching of writing. There are good opportunities for using and developing pupils' literacy skills in subjects other than English, but numeracy, particularly in relation to real life problem solving, is less well developed. Cross-curricular links between other subjects are generally good. For example, Year 7 visited Chichester and completed a range of literacy, art, history, geography and religious education work.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for the intellectual and emotional development of pupils with special educational needs, and for the few pupils learning English as an additional language. They are fully included in the life of the school and have equal access to the curriculum. There is a good range of provision to meet pupils' special needs. A specialist teacher for pupils with speech and language difficulties ensures that the school can meet the special needs of a significant minority of its pupils. Additional literacy support, a national initiative, provides extra help for some pupils, and a programme for 'brain gym' benefits some

pupils before morning school. Staff trained in anger and nurture management support pupils with behavioural difficulties and ensure that they can benefit from the teaching and learning offered to them. During English and mathematics lessons, pupils benefit from small groups or classes with extra support, which for the most part is well organised.

35. Pupils from a local school for learning difficulties visit the school every Tuesday afternoon. Three pupils enjoy joining Year 4 for art, music and design and technology. The school benefits from the experience of the teacher accompanying them who assists with reading groups. This is a valuable contribution towards social inclusion.

36. More able pupils are carefully identified and a register is in place. The school's policy is under review. Currently pupils are encouraged to join in the local education authority enrichment programme and a comprehensive record is kept of the courses pupils attend. The school's provision for pupils showing musical talent is very good and sport is also promoted through links with local clubs.

37. A significant proportion of the parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the provision of extra-curricular activities was weak. The inspection team disagrees, and judges that the provision of extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Sports' clubs are similar to those provided by most schools. During inspection, the school orchestra played with great skill and plenty of enthusiasm. There is a good range of educational visits for each year group. This includes residential visits by Year 6 to the Isle of Wight, and by Year 7 to France,

which develop pupils' social skills as well as providing a good stimulus for other learning. The school makes very good use of visitors to support both the curriculum and collective worship. Good links with the local community are promoted in this manner and ties with churches are especially strong.

38. Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Assemblies and acts of collective worship take place regularly and meet statutory requirements, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Provision for the cultivation of pupils' spiritual awareness is good. It is promoted very effectively through whole-school assemblies and the range of music and dance taught throughout the school. Attention to pupils' spiritual development is less evident in lessons, with few opportunities to reflect on learning. There were, however, some good examples of pupils being fascinated by their learning, as seen when Year 7 pupils observed chemical reactions.

39. Pupils' moral development is good. It is well catered for by the good example set by staff, the clear moral code understood by the children and the way in which moral issues are discussed within the curriculum. For example, Year 4 pupils discussed the moral dilemmas contained in the novel they were reading about a girl who was unhappy in her foster home.

40. Plenty of opportunities are provided for pupils' good social development throughout the school day. Pupils are organised in working groups for lessons, and they work with a good range of adults. The school orchestra and choir perform both within the school and for local events. This provides ideal opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their ability to act in a responsible and mature way. Some pupils in Year 7 are nominated as prefects for the term and

14

assume a range of responsibilities. For example, they oversee younger pupils at break and lunch times, show visitors around the school, and set up equipment for assemblies. The formation of a school council is in its early stages. These activities make a positive contribution to pupils' citizenship skills. In discussion with inspectors, Year 6 and 7 pupils were articulate in talking through the merits of the school and backing up their judgements with well-chosen examples.

41. Provision for the appreciation of cultural traditions and diversity is satisfactory. Contributions to cultural development are made across the curriculum, particularly in music, but also in other subjects such as English, history and art. The Year 5 work about the Aztecs is a good example. The opportunities and resources for promoting the appreciation of a wide range of ethnic and cultural diversity are limited, except in music.

42. The school works within a local 'family' of first, middle and upper schools, which is mutually supportive. Liaison with the feeder first schools and local upper schools is good and induction is well planned, both into the middle school and onto the next stage of pupils' education.

43. The school promotes equality of opportunity through the provision it makes for boys and girls, for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and for pupils with special educational needs. It has looked carefully at the results achieved by pupils in national tests, identified discrepancies between various groups, and is taking action. There remain, however, significant differences between the quality of

teaching and learning experienced by pupils in various classes, of which the school is aware, but which compromise the equality of opportunity provided by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school is effective in promoting the health, safety and well being of its pupils. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well. The positive, friendly atmosphere within the school makes a strong contribution to fulfilling the school's vision of being a caring, learning community. Relationships throughout the school are good and parents feel that the school promotes good attitudes and values. The school has made good progress in this area since the last inspection.

45. The school has good child protection procedures. The deputy headteacher is the designated child protection officer and liaison with outside agencies is effective. Staff undergo regular training and are well informed about relevant child protection issues. Evacuation drills are held regularly. First aid procedures are good and records are carefully kept. The premises committee of the governing body makes a good contribution to the school by helping to ensure that a problematic site is a secure and satisfactory learning environment. It undertakes regular health and safety checks.

46. The school currently has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality. As well as participating in a local family of schools initiative to promote good attendance, it is developing its own more robust systems to analyse attendance trends and identify areas that can be improved. The school is clear in its messages to parents that good attendance and punctuality promote achievement and taking family holidays in term time, and lateness, are potentially detrimental.

15

47. The school has effective procedures to promote good discipline and behaviour. Pupils and staff are well acquainted with the school's behaviour policy and the emphasis it places on good behaviour. Pupils and teacher discuss and agree their own class rules. Good behaviour and work are acknowledged in assemblies and certificates are awarded. Oppressive behaviour is not tolerated. The majority of staff deal effectively and consistently with any incidents of misbehaviour, but there are inconsistencies in some classes. More serious misconduct results in a detention. At lunch times, Year 7 prefects help to encourage good behaviour.

48. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory overall. There are strengths in the monitoring and support for personal development, but the monitoring and support for academic development is a weakness that leads to underachievement in a few classes.

49. The school uses periodic testing and teacher assessments alongside the statutory assessments to group pupils for English and mathematics lessons. This allows the school to meet the needs of pupils more effectively by placing teachers with particular groups of pupils and teaching assistants where they are most needed. In recent months, several pupils have made enough progress to be moved into groups where the work is more challenging. The outcome of the grouping arrangements has, overall, begun to show improvements in pupils' achievements in mathematics. There is a clear indication of progress when the results of tests carried out at the end of Year 4 are compared with attainment when pupils joined the

school. In literacy, the improvements are less marked, though the setting arrangements are still a relatively new development. There are good systems in place to record and track progress in English, mathematics and science.

50. In other subjects, pupils are in mixed ability classes. When teachers plan work for these subjects they do not always make the best use the information they have on standards in English, mathematics and science to set appropriate expectations. Teachers assess whether certain aspects of the curriculum have been covered but, because they do not assess pupils' achievements, they do not have the information they need to plan the next stages of learning. The situation is further complicated because some teachers do not have the necessary confidence or expertise to know what standards they can expect of certain groups of pupils. In these subjects, assessment records are not kept at present.

51. The school has very recently introduced a computerised database of information gathered from the assessments made in English, mathematics and science. This provides a detailed breakdown of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils in all aspects of their school life. To date, the school has not made enough use of this information to analyse the results of national tests and to address weaknesses in pupils' achievements.

52. A key issue for development at the time of the last inspection was to implement assessment procedures consistently and use the information to support planning. After two attempts to introduce an assessment policy and procedures, the school has recently adopted a very good policy that it is working hard to implement. The procedures are now much more systematic in tracking pupils' achievements and in being able to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning. However, whilst the impact of the policy has proved effective in some classes it has been unsatisfactory in others. The arrangements for monitoring have failed to pick up the inconsistencies and to ensure that teachers use assessment information to match the work they set to pupils' needs.

16

53. The school provides effective educational and personal support and guidance for pupils. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for their achievements, behaviour and personal development. They are set targets for learning, for example in reading, where they regularly check their progress. They also learn the routines and discipline for working independently by having a deadline for completing work set outside the school day. The personal, social and health education programme provides an effective structure for much of pupils' personal development and the school has a number of outside agencies that it can call on to assist delivery. In addition, class teachers, lunchtime supervisors, adult helpers, visitors and counsellors each contribute to an effective network of support that operates on a day-to-day basis within the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents, which has been maintained since the last inspection. It works hard to cultivate links that will support pupils' learning.

55. Only a small proportion of parents attended the parents' meeting or returned the questionnaire, but the great majority of these feel that their children are making good progress and that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. A significant minority of parents have concerns about the behaviour of pupils in the school, but inspectors feel that these are unfounded. The overall standard of behaviour is very good and there were very few incidents of misbehaviour during the inspection. Further concerns about the amount and consistency of homework, opportunities for parents to work closely with the school and the range of activities provided outside lessons were not borne out by the evidence inspectors gathered. For example, extra-curricular activities in sport are a strength. Nonetheless, the school has much work to do to convince parents of its merits.

56. The school provides satisfactory information for parents in an informative prospectus, letters and the governors' annual report. There are information meetings about aspects of the curriculum such as sex education, and about forthcoming residential visits, but attendance at these is variable. There is a home/school agreement, which promotes good attendance, good behaviour and having the appropriate equipment for lessons. Parents can meet with teachers throughout the year to discuss concerns about their child's progress, and those at the meeting said that these informal contacts were very valuable. There are also two formal opportunities when parents are invited to discuss their children's achievements. Pupils' reports are satisfactory and give appropriate information about what children have learned. They identify individual targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science, but it is not always clear what pupils need to do to improve and how parents can help. Parents also said that they missed the 'effort grades' that used to be sent home termly, which gave them a good indication of their child's progress. Inspectors agree with parents' views that information about how their children are progressing is not clear enough. Newsletters are sent home to inform parents of forthcoming events.

57. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their child's progress through regular informal contacts with the class teacher, the special needs' co-ordinator, as well as periodic reviews. Individual education plans include practical ways for parents to support their children at home.

58. There is an active friends' association, which has made a significant contribution to improving resources. The school encourages parents to support their children's learning at home, but some parents said that the instructions for homework are not always clear enough to enable them to help as they would wish. A small number of parents help in school or on educational visits.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher provides purposeful leadership and has a clear view of the needs of the school and how it can improve. He actively promotes a positive ethos, which supports the school's aims and values. These are played out through a clear commitment to promoting pupils' confidence and self esteem, by providing them with a climate that rewards success. Despite serious past difficulties, with staffing and funding, he believes that the school has the capacity to succeed and he has been

successful in strengthening a number of aspects of the school's work. He is fully aware of the weaknesses that still need to be addressed. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher who is responsible for a number of important areas of the school's work and provides a good model through her skilled teaching. In some subjects the work of the co-ordinator has had a positive impact on the raising of standards, but in English and mathematics in particular, though provision is well organised, leadership has not been strong enough.

60. The organisation of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice. Individual education plans have clear and specific targets, and pupils with a statement of special educational need receive their correct entitlement. The designated governor for special educational needs monitors the school's provision effectively. She visits the school regularly, meets with the co-ordinator formally once a term and is very well informed.

61. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school. They are very supportive and bring considerable expertise to the full governing body from their own work outside the school. This enables them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They have worked together well to improve their usefulness to the school and are well organised into a range of active committees. Some governors on these committees are very knowledgeable about detailed aspects of the school, especially finance, buildings, special educational needs and the curriculum, but as a whole governing body they have yet to become fully involved in the drive to raise standards. They are beginning to play a more active part in planning for this improvement.

62. The school's evaluation of its performance in relation to pupils' attainment has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. A good deal of information is gathered which is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in English, mathematics and science. It has been less successful in tackling the weaknesses because plans for improvement have not been sufficiently focused and action has not been rigorous enough. However, the new school development plan offers a clear direction for improvement, is carefully phased over a three-year period and identifies important priorities. Raising pupils' attainment and close monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning are central to this plan, and are key factors in the drive

to raise standards. Currently, the headteacher and senior staff observe teaching and look at pupils' work in an effort to monitor progress, but there is not a rigorous approach to this important area of the school's work. The headteacher has developed a good model for monitoring progress across the school, but this has yet to be implemented. Considerable staff shortages, the lack of experience of new subject co-ordinators and the long-term absence of key members of staff have continually hampered development. The government requirement for a policy for the management of teachers' performance is in place and has been successfully implemented.

63. The school's financial situation has been very difficult in recent years, but it now has more favourable funding, which is being targeted effectively to raise standards. The development plan clearly links funds to priorities and specific grants have been used appropriately. A good example of this is the plans for the development of the use of computers within the curriculum. Financial planning and management are good, and appropriate use is being made of new technology to support both financial planning and the collection and interrogation of information about pupils' attainment and progress. The governing body chair of the finance committee has a good grasp of budgetary information and has designed a comprehensive summary to help other governors understand the school's position and to assist with decision making. The school is paying due regard to the principles of best value.

64. The experience and qualifications of staff offer satisfactory cover for all subjects across the curriculum and the number of teachers is sufficient. Teachers and assistants have attended a considerable and varied number of courses over the last year particularly in numeracy. Many of the classroom and special needs assistants have good skills. They are well organised in themselves, but are not always briefed adequately by the teachers so their time in the classroom is not always put to best use. The accommodation is adequate overall, with some specialist rooms, but some classrooms that are very cramped. The field and swimming pool provide good facilities for physical education and resources are adequate for most other subjects. They are particularly good for music, but poor for information and communication technology.

65. At the last inspection there were deficiencies in the leadership and management of the school. Some of these have been rectified and the continuing, determined attitude of the headteacher ensures that the school does have the capacity to improve further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. During the last four years, the school has made satisfactory progress in improving many of the serious weaknesses that had been evident in its work. It now

provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but their attainment in English and mathematics is still not high enough. Within this context, and to continue the improvements already achieved, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics. This will be achieved by improving the following aspects of the school's work:

(paragraphs 1-3, 6, 67-75, 76-81)

- ◆ Raise the standard of teaching in the lessons where there are weaknesses, by:
 - having higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, and ensuring that teaching methods and tasks are interesting and appropriately challenging;
 - injecting more pace into teaching;
 - ensuring that the tasks provided for pupils are best suited to achieving the learning intentions of the lesson;
 - managing pupils' independent work more effectively, so that they make good progress;
 - enabling all teachers to observe and learn from existing good practice.

(paragraphs 4, 18-28, 73-74, 79-80)

- ◆ Raise standards in specific aspects of literacy, by:
 - improving pupils' skills in writing, including opportunities to write in subjects other than English;
 - improving the standard of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.

(paragraphs 5, 30, 71-72)

- ◆ Use the information gathered about pupils' attainment and progress more consistently, in all classes, to set targets for achievement, and ensure that the work pupils are given enables them to reach the targets.

(paragraphs 48-52, 75, 81, 87)

- ◆ Adopt a more focused approach to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - identifying aspects of pupils' underachievement more precisely and using these to target monitoring;
 - the headteacher taking a firmer lead in more rigorous monitoring, in order to identify the causes of underachievement;
 - ensuring that all staff are fully involved in the action needed to tackle the causes of underachievement.

(paragraphs 62, 75, 81)

Continued on the next page

- ◆ Raise standards in information and communication technology, as planned,

making full use of improving resources, by:

- teaching a curriculum that meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum;
- increasing the amount of time pupils spend on computers;
- ensuring that pupils use and develop their ICT skills whilst supporting work in other subjects of the curriculum;
- strengthening teachers' subject knowledge.

(paragraphs 8, 30-31, 87, 103-106)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Each is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

- ◆ Improve pupils' achievements in art and design. *(88-91)*
- ◆ Improve resources for reading, both in the library and in classrooms *(70)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	87
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	9	36	36	11	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	508
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	53

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y4 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	160

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	5.6
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

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

22

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	77	66	143

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	40	65
	Girls	51	34	55
	Total	90	74	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (63)	52 (54)	84 (71)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	39	43
	Girls	42	31	41
	Total	71	70	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (51)	50 (46)	61 (46)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	499
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	10	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

23

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4– Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	30

Education support staff: Y4– Y7

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	259

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1022112
Total expenditure	978169
Expenditure per pupil	1926
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9791
Balance carried forward to next year	34152

Results of the survey of parents and carers**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	508
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	30	60	6	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	57	7	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	49	16	11	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	59	20	5	1
The teaching is good.	18	66	4	4	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	49	16	7	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	47	1	10	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	33	56	9	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	15	54	16	9	6
The school is well led and managed.	19	53	6	10	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	23	56	11	4	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	40	18	15	15

Although only a small group of parents attended the meeting prior to the inspection, they were generally positive about most aspects of the school's work. They said that

they are well informed about and appropriately involved in the work of the school. Almost all these parents are happy with the progress their children are making, but some felt that the recent staffing difficulties experienced by some classes had affected their child's progress. They thought that information from teachers about how children are progressing is generally good, but many regretted that termly effort grade reports were no longer sent home. These parents said that the amount of homework was about right, but it was not always set consistently. They felt that the great majority of children are well behaved in school, but that the poor behaviour of a small minority causes problems in some classes.

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

ENGLISH

67. Standards in English are about the same as those found at the last inspection, with overall attainment well below national expectations. Results of the 2000 national tests for 11 year olds were below average compared with those gained by similar schools, and well below the national average. Nevertheless, test results have risen gradually over the last four years and the school is now reaching its targets. Inspection findings for attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to the test results, but show that attainment in speaking and listening is close to national expectations. They also indicate good achievement in Year 7, at the end of which pupils' attainment in reading and writing is below national expectations rather than well below.

68. On entry to the school, many pupils lack confidence in speaking and have a poor vocabulary. They have a very short attention span and so find listening difficult. There is a significant group of lower attainers whose reading skills are poorly developed and whose writing skills are very limited. During Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, and they make progress in closing the gap between their existing attainment and national expectations. During Year 7, pupils' achievements are good. The achievements of pupils with special needs are satisfactory but variable, depending on how well teachers plan work for them, and on the skills of special needs' assistants. Where these pupils achieved well, the assistants were very clear about the task and objectives and were able to support the pupils actively throughout the lesson. The few pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

69. Throughout the school, listening skills are generally good, which was very evident in the assemblies observed. In lessons, listening skills improve as pupils move through the school, and are very good in Year 7. Speaking skills are less well developed, being only satisfactory at age 11, but the improvement pupils make parallels that in listening. Opportunities are taken to encourage speaking as part of literacy and other subject lessons. For example, Year 4 pupils were confident talking about their own feelings in a literacy lesson in which they discussed the feelings of the main character in their novel. In Year 7, pupils listened carefully and made constructive comments whilst their partners read stories they had written. There are,

however, too few planned opportunities for pupils to practise and to receive specific feedback on their speaking achievements.

70. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry, they do well to make satisfactory progress in reading during Key Stage 2. By Year 6, pupils are reading widely both for information and pleasure. They can use comprehension skills and knowledge of vocabulary effectively to unpick the language used and understand a character in depth. In Year 7, appropriate reading targets have been set and pupils can, for example, note key phrases and explain the use of language to build up tension in a story. Throughout the school, higher-attaining pupils read fluently with expression and find information readily. They spoke about their favourite authors and achieved a good standard of reading. A substantial number of pupils, however, particularly the below-average attainers, were reading books that were not

26

well matched to their ability. Many demonstrated an enjoyment of reading and were keen to talk about their books. This love of books is fostered effectively through planned work during the literacy hour, with authors such as Jacqueline Wilson and Anne Fine being the focus for different year groups during the inspection week. Resources for reading, however, are not stimulating enough to promote reading further. Both the library and the reading areas in the classroom lack impact and the latter are inadequate in content.

71. Standards in writing are similar to those in reading, though for some children progress in writing is a little slower. By Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation. They can write sustained stories and use different forms of writing appropriately. Year 6 were focusing on formal writing at the time of the inspection, enjoying creating and replying to invitations. The average and above average attainers have most of the skills they need, but a large lower-attaining group are still struggling. They do not write fluently, or use words imaginatively to enhance the quality of their stories. Writing skills are well developed in Year 7 where extended writing is practised to good effect, and the pupils were seen using a range of techniques and vocabulary to produce books for their younger schoolmates. Throughout the school, a good range of fiction and non-fiction writing is taught.

72. The quality of handwriting is very variable in Key Stage 2. In Year 6, a significant minority of pupils are capable of neat, cursive script. In other books, handwriting is not joined and presentation is messy. Spelling is similarly inconsistent. Spelling is taught through the literacy hour, such as when Year 6 pupils worked on suffixes and prefixes, but transferring these skills to independent writing is not sufficiently consolidated. In Year 7, handwriting is of a much better standard with most pupils capable of neat, well-presented work.

73. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but varies between classes. Of the 18 lessons observed, 11 were good or very good, five were satisfactory, but two were unsatisfactory. Teaching in Year 7 is good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons observed. Where teaching was good or better, teachers were

knowledgeable about English. They explained information clearly and questioned pupils in a lively way, which held their attention. They ensured that pupils were very clear about what they were going to learn, and about what they had to do to achieve success. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson were able to produce persuasive letters containing appropriate emotive language after such writing styles had been well modelled for them.

74. Teaching follows the National Literacy Strategy in both key stages. Good lessons utilised the structure effectively so that the lesson flowed well and tasks were clearly related to the work discussed or modelled in the first part of the lesson. A weakness in some lessons was when the task given to the pupils was not well matched to the teaching at the beginning. Planning is not always sufficiently detailed, and across year groups it is not consistent. As a result, where teaching was unsatisfactory or it had weaknesses, tasks did not match the learning aim or the ability of the pupils, and the teacher did not involve pupils sufficiently in discussion. For example, pupils in a lower ability Year 6 set attempted, inappropriately, to cover the same task as the top set. Learning objectives in planning for reading are often unclear, so reading lessons lack focus, and standards in the more advanced reading skills such as scanning, skimming, and note taking are not high enough.

27

75. Assessment of pupils' achievements in English is improving, but the detailed analysis necessary to identify weaknesses in teaching is still at an early stage. An individual target setting system for pupils has been introduced. This is proving beneficial in those classes where teachers follow up targets and use results to set future goals, giving very clear feedback in notebooks. As yet, the system is not being implemented consistently. Planning for literacy across the curriculum is generally good. Teachers work particularly hard at emphasising vocabulary in subjects such as science and mathematics, with all classrooms having useful words displayed on the wall. Links with literacy hour work are made explicit. For example, pupils in a Year 5 religious education lesson reinforced their literacy work on styles of authorship by writing a story from an apostle's point of view. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. This is mainly because lines of responsibility between Year Leaders and the subject co-ordinator are not always clear, which leads to inconsistency. The co-ordinator has produced a subject action plan, but evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in standards is not systematic enough. Staff changes and shortages have made it difficult to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, but the monitoring of planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work are not well managed and little useful data is gathered to prompt future action.

MATHEMATICS

76. Results of the year 2000 national tests for 11 year olds were well below average, both compared with all schools and compared with schools in similar social circumstances. Only about half of the pupils reached the expected Level 4 of attainment, compared with three-quarters nationally, and very few pupils gained the higher Level 5. Inspection evidence for pupils currently in Year 6, however, and early indications of national test results for 2001, show an improvement from well

below average attainment to below average, with a larger proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. At the end of Year 7, when pupils leave the school, attainment is below national expectations, with a significant proportion of lower-attaining pupils. There has been a gradual improvement in national test results since the last inspection when only about a third of pupils reached the expected standard. The school's results are improving at a similar rate to the national trend, but the target set for 2000 was not achieved. The improvement in pupils' attainment has been supported by the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, its concentration on mental work and well-structured mathematics lessons, and setting by ability for the dedicated mathematics hour every day. These factors are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' learning. There are, however, still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and weaknesses in parts of numeracy lessons that are preventing the school's numeracy strategy from having a full impact on raising standards.

77. Pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 are satisfactory overall, but progress in lessons is variable. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Number skills are emphasised across the school and lessons generally make a good start with relevant, mental practice. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and observations during lessons revealed an over reliance on worksheets and a lack of practical activities and investigations in some classes. Across the school, therefore, pupils do not make enough progress in using and applying their mathematical skills. Pupils made good progress in lessons where clear learning objectives and whole-class teaching were followed up with appropriate independent tasks, returning at the

end of the lesson to what the teacher expected pupils to learn. Too often however, pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable because the tasks did not give them the right opportunity to practise the skills that had been introduced by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress, owing to setting arrangements for the subject, which allow teachers to concentrate more fully on providing work at the right level.

78. In Year 4, about a half of the pupils are working at a satisfactory level for their age. They work confidently with numbers to 1000, adding and subtracting, multiplying by two-digit numbers, and dividing by a single digit. They have a well-established understanding of the place value of digits. The large proportion of lower attainers are less assured in their use of number and are still more confident working to 100. By Year 6, a higher proportion of pupils is working at the expected level. Typically, they can calculate percentages and carry out long division. They work out the perimeter of compound shapes, investigate probability and order and simplify fractions. During the inspection, lessons to teach problem solving in Year 5 ranged from the most able pupils working out complex problems with two or more operations to the least able learning how to double and halve numbers. In Year 6, pupils were observed learning to plot co-ordinates and rotating shapes on a grid. The less able pupils learned the four points of the compass and practised locating simple co-ordinates in the first quadrant. By Year 7, about two thirds of pupils are working at the expected level. Work on angles ranged from the more able learning

that the external angles of a triangle are equal to the sum of the interior opposite angles to the less able cutting and sticking the angles of a triangle to make a straight angle.

79. The quality of teaching is variable, but satisfactory overall. Of the 18 lessons observed during the inspection, about half were good or better, five were satisfactory, but three were unsatisfactory. Teaching was best in Years 6 and 7. In most lessons, teachers have good relationships with pupils and there is a good balance between praise and firm handling of potential misbehaviour. As a result, pupils pay attention, concentrate well and make an effort with their work, which in most cases is neatly presented. Where teaching was very good, teachers used interesting ways of presenting learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about constructing a shape accurately, the teacher used an overhead projector to demonstrate and asked pupils to finish the task, explaining what they were doing to the class. This successful strategy held the attention of the class. Where teaching is good or very good, pupils make good gains in their learning, even though their attainment in some cases is well below expectations. For example, in two lessons, very good teaching for pupils in the lowest sets enabled them to gain a great deal of enjoyment from their learning and to make very good progress.

80. Lessons are planned well and in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy. What teachers want pupils to learn is made very clear to them at the beginning of a lesson and revisited at the end. Mental work is given due emphasis and often taught at a good pace. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, or there were weaknesses, however, pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable because the independent activities they were given were either unchallenging or not carefully matched to the learning intention. For example, in an unsatisfactory lesson on division, pupils were given a worksheet to complete, which

29

included questions that had not been demonstrated and where understanding had not been established during the first part of the lesson. There are too few opportunities, particularly for younger pupils and those with special educational needs, to use practical equipment to help them to solve problems.

81. The mathematics co-ordinator has provided considerable training for teachers and assistants to implement the Numeracy Strategy and this has been largely successful. He has gathered considerable data about pupils' attainment, which has the potential to assist in the task of analysing their achievements and identifying strengths and weaknesses. As yet, this is not being used effectively to ensure that teachers set work at an appropriately challenging level for all pupils. Management of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has yet to form a clear view of standards across the school. Priorities set out in the action plan for improvement are not sufficiently focused on rectifying identified weaknesses. Despite these shortcomings, pupils' attainment is improving gradually and there is a sound capacity for the school to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

82. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for 11 year olds showed attainment to be close to the national average, with just over 80 per cent of the pupils reaching the expected Level 4 of attainment and about 30 per cent gaining the higher Level 5. These results were about the same as those achieved by schools in similar social circumstances, and exceeded the target the school had set itself. They were a significant improvement on the 1999 results, and a considerable improvement on results gained at the time of the last inspection, when less than half of the Year 6 pupils reached the expected standard. Pupils' achievements in science are now good across the school because the curriculum is organised and planned more effectively, and good leadership by the co-ordinator has ensured that weaknesses have been identified and tackled. The quality of teaching, however, is still inconsistent between classes.

83. Attainment in the current Year 6 is below national expectations because the year group has a greater proportion of less able pupils than last year, and fewer more able pupils. Early indications of the 2001 national test results reflect this picture. Nonetheless, the overall upward trend in achievement is being maintained. In their current work about planning experiments, the great majority of Year 6 pupils understand how to construct a fair test. They recognise that, if they want to find out whether a sweet melts faster in the mouth or held in the hand, they must ensure that the two sweets are the same size and condition, they must avoid chewing or squeezing the sweets, and they must time their experiment accurately. Most pupils predict the possible outcome of the experiment cogently, drawing on their scientific knowledge by referring to the effects of saliva in the mouth and perspiration on the hand. They recognise the value of repeat testing and record their results in a table they have prepared. Higher attainers speculate about the differences in their own results and those of others, and they formulate further questions to test, such as whether it is the heat or the saliva in the mouth that increases the melting. Past work shows a sound knowledge of forces such as friction and gravity, a good understanding of the ways in which plants and animals are adapted to their habitats, and investigation of materials that are insulators or conductors within electrical circuits. In pupils' experimental work, however, it is only the higher attainers who reach well-reasoned conclusions, drawing on their scientific knowledge.

84. Attainment in the current Year 7 is close to national expectations, reflecting these pupils' results in national tests last year. In their current work about chemical reactions, all the pupils understand that two substances such as sodium bicarbonate and lemon juice change when they are combined, that the change is irreversible, and that there are products from the reaction such as a gas and heat. Most pupils use the correct scientific terms consistently in their explanations. Higher-attaining pupils, about half, record their experimental work logically, including diagrams where necessary, but middle and lower attainers find this more challenging, owing to weaker literacy skills. It is the higher attainers who are able to write more complex conclusions to their experiments. All pupils have good practical skills and handle laboratory equipment confidently and safely. The good range, amount and quality of pupils' past work shows their knowledge and understanding of variation in living

things, life cycles and reproduction, and the structure of plant and animal cells. For most pupils, work is presented carefully, and homework plays a valuable part in supporting what has been learnt at school. The presentation of work lower down the school is often much weaker and detracts from its content.

85. Pupils' achievements across the school are good. Pupils join Year 4 with low attainment overall, as shown in the result of national tests at age seven. Work seen across all year groups shows a steady development of scientific knowledge and skills. For example, work in Year 4 concerning the preferred habitat of woodlice increases pupils' understanding of living things effectively through a simple experiment, and provides opportunities to develop skills of prediction, observation and drawing conclusions. The use of scientific vocabulary is emphasised well so that, by Year 7, pupils generally use the right terms to describe their work. Pupils' recorded work shows particularly good progress in Year 7.

86. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths but some weaknesses. Teaching was good in four out of the 11 lessons observed, satisfactory in five, but unsatisfactory in two. In contrast, pupils' recorded work across the school, and current attainment in Years 6 and 7 indicate that teaching has been good. Recent staff changes and shortages influence the current picture of the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, teaching has a number of good features. The first part of lessons, in which teachers review previous learning, introduce new vocabulary and involve pupils through questioning, is often good. For example, in a lesson for Year 5 about classifying organisms, a quick-fire review of previous work checked pupils' understanding and ensured they were well prepared for the task. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, however, the opening lacked pace and pupils were not fully involved in the discussion. Pupils are often given interesting tasks, such as the experiment with sweets in Year 6 or the work on chemical reactions in Year 7. In these lessons, they visibly enjoy their learning, concentrate well, and work productively both individually and in pairs. Where teaching had weaknesses, and sometimes following a satisfactory whole-class session, the tasks given to pupils were not challenging enough, so pupils showed little real interest in their work and made unsatisfactory gains in learning. These tasks were not well matched to achieving the learning intentions that were stated in teachers' plans. Teachers' knowledge of science is variable. In a Year 6 lesson, very good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to probe pupils' understanding about planning an experiment, making the questions more and more challenging so that pupils had to think hard. For some teachers, however, a lack of confidence and expertise prevents them from planning suitably challenging tasks or adding rigour to the questioning.

87. Throughout the school, the curriculum is broad and well planned so teachers know what pupils should be learning at each stage. Topics are revisited regularly so that pupils' knowledge and understanding develop steadily. This supports pupils' achievements and is a distinct improvement since the last inspection. In some classes, however, there is too little emphasis on teaching scientific knowledge, skills and understanding through experimental and investigative activities, and tasks focus too heavily on facts. ICT is not used sufficiently to support work in the subject.

Assessment procedures are clear, with teachers' assessments of pupils' knowledge and skills, and a test at the end of each unit of work, helping to build an individual record of pupils' achievements. The information gained from these procedures, however, as at the last inspection, is not used consistently to ensure that work in lessons is appropriately challenging. Development of the subject is well led by an effective co-ordinator who, through perceptive monitoring, has a clear view of the areas in which the subject still needs to improve. Leadership of the subject is far better than at the last inspection, and this has been an important factor in raising pupils' attainment. Despite remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, the school is well placed to continue the upward trend in standards seen during the past few years.

ART and DESIGN

88. In the very small number of lessons seen, and based on examples of pupils' past work, standards in art and design vary widely across the year groups and classes and are, overall, below those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils make insufficient progress year on year and their achievements are unsatisfactory. This indicates a significant fall in standards since the previous inspection. However, in the classes where teachers have the necessary expertise to develop pupils' understanding and teach skills systematically, standards are higher.

89. In all years, the range of the work is narrow and skills are not developed consistently. Consequently, a significant proportion of the pupils in Year 6 are working at levels well below those expected for their ages. Sketchbooks have little work in them and what is there is poorly presented. Topics in other subjects provide some classes with good opportunities for art and design work. For example, displays of work by Year 7 pupils showed some carefully annotated drawings of Chichester Cathedral where pupils noted the architectural features of the building and stained glass work and wrote about the historical events that led up to and influenced the design of the building. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils studied the shapes and decoration on pottery made by the ancient Greeks. Some recognised the painted images of mythological creatures and explained how they would decorate their own piece of ceramic ware with their own patterns and imagined creatures.

90. Pupils are very keen to learn. Discussions with them showed both their interest and enthusiasm for the subject, but also their frustration at not being able to achieve the effects and ideas they would like. Insufficient lessons were seen to judge the quality of current teaching and learning, though teaching and learning over time are unsatisfactory because the quality and standard of work is so variable.

91. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The good teaching and learning seen at the time of the last inspection have not been sustained and changes in staffing have added to the lack of continuity. The subject has a low priority on the school development plan at present. The co-ordinator has been absent on long-term sick leave for a considerable time causing leadership and management to be unsatisfactory.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

92. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, standards of attainment are close to those expected for their ages. Across the school, pupils'

achievements are sound, and have improved since the last inspection because progress is much more consistent. Planning of the curriculum has been strengthened and now provides good support for teachers. Projects in a good range materials are undertaken, usually one each term, which develop pupils' skills steadily.

93. In Year 7, pupils' most recent project was to make a powered buggy. They examined and took apart a range of wheeled toys, noting how they were made and how the parts worked. In small groups, they designed their own buggies, making detailed design drawings and writing precise instructions for construction. Examples of these drawings show that they are of good quality. To add rigour to the process, design teams swapped their working drawings, so pupils had to make a buggy from other's plans. The final products show good skills in construction, requiring precise cutting and jointing of wood, fitting of axles and siting of motor and batteries. They are attractively finished in a range of materials. The basis for this work is well laid from Year 4, where pupils have made propagators, linked to their topic in science. Their labelled design drawings, accompanied by a list of the materials needed and instructions for making, are of sound quality. The finished products seen were carefully made, imaginative in design, and already in use to explore plant growth. Year 5 pupils made biscuits of various textures and tastes, and Year 6 pupils made pizzas with a range of toppings. The Year 6 work was part of a wider project on 'marketing' so the pupils made boxes for their pizzas, which are well constructed and decorated with appropriate publicity. A good feature of all this work is that teachers agree a 'quality charter' with pupils at the beginning of each project outlining what is to be achieved and how it will be achieved. In this way, teachers can refer back to an agreed design brief at any time.

94. The quality of teaching was variable in the three lessons seen. It was very good in one lesson, good in another, but unsatisfactory in the third. Teachers' planning is generally clear about what they want pupils to achieve, and they share these objectives with pupils. Teachers use a good range of methods, leading whole-class discussion, demonstrating skills and ensuring that pupils are involved practically in activities. In a very good lesson for Year 7, in which the pupils designed a questionnaire to consumer test their curries, the teacher's challenging questions and high expectations of what pupils could achieve resulted in them making very good progress. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, however, weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour resulted in them not concentrating fully on the teacher's instructions or their task, so too little was accomplished and the quality of the work was poor.

95. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned through a good scheme of work that draws on nationally recommended guidance. Links with other subjects are very good. There are very clear structures in place, which ensure that each project contains a good balance of all aspects of design and technology. Features such as design 'charters' and certificates for achieving competence in skills, including safety, have raised the profile of the subject with both pupils and teachers. Organisation of the subject across the school is good, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, provides helpful support for colleagues, and monitors standards though teachers' planning and evaluating finished work. An action plan sets out future development clearly.

GEOGRAPHY

96. By the end of Year 7, standards of attainment are below those expected for pupils' ages, as found at the last inspection. Pupils' achievements across the school are satisfactory, overall, but weaker in some classes and in some aspects of the subject.

97. By Year 7, pupils understand the physical features of rivers. They make basic comparisons between climate and ways of life in different localities in the United Kingdom, Europe, Mexico and India. Pupils locate places and geographical features on outline maps. They also draw maps from observation in fieldwork carried out in local villages and can represent their own ideas for a local redevelopment area. However, pupils do not make sufficient progress in mapping skills during their time at the school. Pupils show their ability to locate and organise information and, in some classes, they can also identify geographical questions to structure research tasks. On the whole, however, pupils lack the enquiry skills necessary to investigate geographical issues at greater depth. Pupils' written responses are largely short and based on comprehension tasks in worksheets. There is little evidence of extended writing in Key Stage 2 classes, though the range and quality of written work begins to improve and is of a broadly average standard in Year 7. Some pupils use CD-ROMs and word processing for research tasks, but there is little evidence of the use of ICT for teaching.

98. In the few lessons seen, teaching had some strengths, including effective questioning and opportunities for shared research. There were, however, weaknesses in the lessons where pupils were not encouraged to take an active role in their learning, and where the level of pace and challenge was unsatisfactory. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory progress and showed interest in their learning. However, learning was unsatisfactory in one lesson because pupils lost interest, owing to a lack of pace and purpose in teaching.

99. Subject leadership is satisfactory with weaknesses. There has been some progress in the provision of basic resources such as atlases, but the subject remains under-resourced and there is an over-reliance on worksheets in some classes. Short-term planning is of a satisfactory standard, but the scheme of work is in need of updating to fully reflect National Curriculum requirements. As yet, there are few systems to assess pupils' attainment and progress.

HISTORY

100. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7, their attainment in history broadly matches what would be expected for their ages. Pupils' achievements across the school are satisfactory. Pupils describe features of past civilisations, as seen in a Year 5 presentation about life in Ancient Greece. They are beginning to use historical evidence by identifying areas of Viking settlement from clues in place names, and they can make deductions from Celtic and Roman objects about the lives of the people who once owned them. In Year 7, pupils select and organise historical information to write accounts of events in medieval Britain. More

able pupils are beginning to develop the ability to compare written historical sources and to draw basic conclusions about reasons for differing interpretations of events.

101. Very little history teaching was seen during the inspection week, but evidence from pupils' work and photographs identifies several strengths in teaching. These include opportunities for bringing the subject to life through visitors, presentations, museum links and

34

handling historical artefacts. For example, Year 4 pupils have experienced recreations of Victorian schooldays and washdays. Year 5 pupils have visited 'The Mary Rose', including role play and work with artefacts. Teachers' planning is of a sound standard and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Pupils have written positive comments about history lessons where they have been involved in evaluating their progress. Whilst planned activities are usually worthwhile and often interesting, they are not always sufficiently matched to individual learning needs.

102. Subject management is good. The policy and scheme of work support good practice in teaching. Much effort has gone into devising systems for assessing pupils' progress. Whilst this provides a helpful foundation, it requires some adjustment to give a more accurate representation of pupils' attainment.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

103. Standards of attainment in ICT were unsatisfactory at the previous inspection and a key issue for improvement. Attainment is still well below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 7, and continues to be a significant weakness. There are signs of improvement, owing to some recent additional resources and a new acting co-ordinator for the subject, but these have not been in place long enough to raise standards significantly. In the few lessons seen, pupils made satisfactory progress, but progress over time is unsatisfactory because there is a wide variation in teachers' subject knowledge and very little use of computer applications in other subjects.

104. Pupils have more experience of word processing than other elements of the curriculum. By Year 6, pupils can design a front cover for their work on 'Invaders and Settlers'. They plan and set out their work, experimenting with fonts and borders and using a scanner to add pictures. By the end of Year 7, pupils use a desktop publishing program for literacy work. In Years 4 and 5, pupils make first drafts and edit their work. They choose page layouts and use facilities such as underlining, bold and italics. As well as word processing, younger pupils have a very limited experience of using control programs with directional commands and of data programs to construct simple graphs. Although these activities show that tasks are relevant and clearly linked to other areas of the curriculum, other elements of the subject are significantly underdeveloped. For example, ICT is used little by older pupils for recording information or analysing data in mathematics, science or geography. There are plans for pupils to have more extensive use of the Internet and e-mail, which is very limited at present. In the few lessons seen, tasks were very

closely directed by either a teacher or skilled classroom assistant, so pupils did not take the initiative in planning and carrying out their own ICT work.

105. Insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection to form an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning revealed careful preparation for lessons. In the one lesson seen carried out by a teacher and two seen that were carried out by classroom assistants, pupils concentrated well and were enthusiastic and interested in the tasks. Lessons were well organised. Although very directed, good use was made of technical language and the projector. Pupils knew exactly what it was they were expected to learn. In a successful lesson using a branching database, Year 4 pupils were

35

encouraged to use their findings about habitats to construct their own database. Full use was made of meagre facilities by pairing pupils at computers and arranging for other pupils to complete related work whilst waiting for their turn.

106. The acting co-ordinator for ICT has written a comprehensive development plan with appropriate and clear priorities. The school is adapting a nationally recommended scheme of work for ICT but this is at an early stage at present. A simple form has been prepared, which teachers can use to keep a record of when pupils have experienced certain elements of ICT and what skills they have learned. Despite all this hard work by the co-ordinator, currently the management of, and provision for, the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. Too little use is made of computers in classrooms. Throughout the inspection these were noted as being turned off or not in use during most lessons. Resources are very poor at present and are approximately of the ratio of 55 pupils to 1 computer. The government recommendation is 11 to 1. A new computer suite is planned to be installed by the end of the autumn term, which will greatly enhance provision. The school is fortunate to have several skilled assistants, one of whom is a resource technician who maintains the network. The staff are to receive their government funded ICT training in the spring and summer of next academic year.

MUSIC

107. Pupils' achievements in music are very good and, by the time they reach Year 7, overall attainment is above that expected for pupils' ages. About 80 pupils learn to play an instrument and many attain high standards in their ability to read and play music. About 125 pupils are members of the choir and show well above average attainment in singing. Pupils' achievements have improved considerably since the last inspection through excellent teaching and very good development of the subject. Music is now an outstanding strength of the work of the school.

108. Throughout the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy their music making activities. In assemblies, they sing tunefully, and are given a strong lead by the choir. In a music assembly for the whole school, pupils were totally involved in a series of rhythm activities, led by the music teacher, including rap, clapping and clicking. They sang hymns enthusiastically, accompanied by the piano and a range of instrumentalists. Pupils' achievements during this session were excellent because

they all improved a range of skills in listening and performing. In the lessons observed, Year 6 pupils showed their good grasp of the elements of music. A unit of work about folk tunes required them to use their knowledge and understanding of melody, harmony and rhythm to perform 'Shepherd's Hey'. Most of the pupils could identify quite complex rhythms and recognise these in standard notation. They showed great skill in playing a range of instruments, including tuned and untuned percussion, to produce a very polished series of performances. They made sensible evaluations of the quality of their work and suggested where it might be improved. Finally, groups of pupils performed a Morris dance to accompaniment by the rest of the class. In a Year 7 lesson, a range of tunes from around the world provided a vehicle for developing ideas of rhythm and harmony. Pupils followed a simple musical score to play 'Sun Arise', in many parts, using a wide range of instruments. The way in which pupils' balanced their performance against that of others was particularly impressive.

109. The choir and orchestra rehearsals seen were excellent. The choir sang a series of pieces, often in two parts, ranging from the Latin cantata 'Ubi Caritas' to the more modern

36

'Day by day'. The overall standard was well above average for pupils' ages, though the quality of features such as diction and the duration of notes (much encouraged by the teacher) was not so good. The orchestra of 44 musicians was outstanding, and much better than is normally seen at this age. For example, their performance of the theme music from 'The Great Escape' was lively and dynamic, but with an accurate control of timing. This was all the more remarkable given that a number of pupils had only recently joined the orchestra.

110. The quality of teaching in the six sessions seen was excellent. The music specialist teaches all classes as well as taking the orchestra and choir. Her excellent subject expertise shines through in all her teaching, so that she is able to balance the complex organisation of musical activities with a constant focus on musical skills. For example, throughout the lessons for Years 6 and 7, the teacher kept returning to her chosen learning objectives of rhythm, melody and harmony, taking every opportunity to pose fresh challenges and explore new ideas. Music lessons move at pace, with a very good range of activities, so pupils are kept active and interested all the time. The teacher's high expectations of what can be achieved encourage pupils to try their best, and succeed. No peripatetic instrumental teaching was observed.

111. The curriculum is broad, balanced and carefully planned, though there is little use of ICT to support composing. Musical activities make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. There is little formal assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, but the music teacher has a good informal knowledge of their achievements. The music room and a very good range of resources support pupils' learning effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. In the lessons observed during the inspection, standards in Year 7 were broadly in line with expectation for pupils' ages. Across the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Their athletics skills are improving, in particular throwing and running, and also standards in swimming. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, experienced swimmers made very good progress when they practised back crawl and butterfly strokes, and beginning swimmers swam their first width.

113. An improvement on the standards observed at the time of the last inspection is in the way pupils have begun to critically evaluate their performance. Where this is taught well, pupils look closely at particular techniques and try to refine their own style accordingly. This was particularly effective in a swimming class and also in an athletics lesson where a boy who plays for a local cricket club demonstrated an over-arm throwing technique. In dance, Year 7 pupils worked co-operatively, in small and larger groups, to choreograph a sequence of steps and movements based on the gestures and steps of Indian dance. These examples highlight effective teaching and learning that enable pupils to achieve well. Achievement, however, is inconsistent and better in some classes than in others. In a minority of lessons, pupils' attitudes, the way they wasted time or failed to take the lesson seriously, hampered progress. Too many pupils were unable to participate in physical activities because they did not have appropriate clothing and footwear.

37

114. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was sound overall. Teaching was particularly effective where group or teamwork was managed well and where expectations of pupil involvement, and the routines for ensuring health and fitness, were well established and understood by pupils. Teachers' expertise is variable, being good in some classes but less secure in others. Where teaching was satisfactory but had weaknesses, expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low, and time was not used effectively so pupils lost interest and did not work hard enough.

115. The school provides a good range of physical activities both in lessons and in some after school classes, clubs and coaching. There are regular competitive games and sports fixtures throughout the year. Leadership and management are sound and ensure the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are developing well. The subject will shortly become a priority for improvement but so far there have been no formal opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Teachers now regularly plan opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance in order to refine their skills and game tactics. This is helping to raise standards. Dance has a higher profile and shows improving standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus both for pupils aged 11 and at the end of Year 7. Only a few

lessons were observed and judgements were made mainly by looking at work and talking to pupils. Findings are very much in line with judgements made at the last inspection. Pupils' achievements across the school are satisfactory, regardless of their varying abilities. Pupils recalled the work they had studied earlier in the year but required much prompting to do so. They had little recorded work to remind them of what they had covered. Such work as was available was well presented and had been enjoyed by the pupils.

117. In the few lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Where teaching was good, the lesson included a challenging and diverse range of approaches. Planning was generally very clear with good attention to the next step pupils needed to take in improving their knowledge and understanding, though in one lesson seen the task was not appropriate to the learning objective. Good links are made with spiritual and cultural issues. For example, pupils in Year 6 were designing gardens that reflected calm and were applicable to people of different faiths. This related well to the week's assembly theme of calm and quiet, and links were also made with Christianity and with the local church. Other appropriate cross-curricular links were evident in Year 5 where pupils used and developed literacy skills by telling a story from Peter the apostle's point of view, and again in Year 7 where a topic on India incorporated study of Hindu and Sikh faiths.

118. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator sets a good example through her own enthusiasm and dedication and is very supportive of her colleagues. She plans much of the work herself. She has a satisfactory action plan to improve teaching and learning in the subject, and a very effective monitoring system involving the measurement of attainment by talking to pupils. Resources are good and well used.