

INSPECTION REPORT

SEATON SLUICE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Whitley Bay – Tyne and Wear

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122334

Headteacher: Mr T. Moran

Reporting inspector: Mrs V. Lynch
1475

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th March 2003

Inspection number: 249231

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Alston Grove
Seaton Sluice
Whitley Bay

Postcode: NE26 4JS

Telephone number: 0191 2370629

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor Mrs E. Harvey

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1475	Val Lynch	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it? (Characteristics) How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? School improvement and overall effectiveness
10173	Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector	Inclusion	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32881	Jim Garbutt	Team inspector	Mathematics	
22695	Raymond Cardinal	Team inspector	History Religious education	
12568	Christopher Morris	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30596	Jack Brown	Team inspector	Science	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language	Geography Modern foreign languages
23544	Gair Hedley	Team inspector	Art and design	
11969	John Hardy	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Seaton Sluice is a middle school for pupils aged from 9 to 13 years. It is located in the village of Seaton Sluice and takes pupils from here and from the neighbouring villages of Seghill and New Hartley. Currently, there are 303 pupils in the school. With the exception of Year 6, there are spaces should new pupils wish to join the school. In all years there are more boys than girls. In Years 7 and 8 there are close to twice as many boys than there are girls. The attainment of pupils when they join the school is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is also in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is slightly below the national average. However, the proportion of students with Statements of Special Educational Need is average. It is rare for there to be pupils from ethnic minority groups in the school. The few that are in the school have English as their home language. The school has recently received recognition of its work by gaining the national Investors in People award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that has rapidly improved over recent years. It has some very significant strengths. Standards of work in Years 5 and 6 are in line with what is expected nationally. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are above the national expectation. Teaching is good and meets the needs of all pupils. The headteacher's very good leadership is ensuring that the school focuses on improving standards through improving teaching and learning. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teachers know their pupils well and make sure they achieve their best.
- Relationships are very good and everyone knows that they are part of a learning community.
- All adults who work in the school are enthusiastic and committed to doing their best by the children.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; they come to school willing to learn and to work hard.
- The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction for the school and has provided an impetus for improving standards.
- The school makes very good use of its limited funds and adequate accommodation.

What could be improved

- Assessment is not sufficiently related to National Curriculum levels and does not identify how pupils can improve.
- There are not enough resources specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils across the ability range.
- Subject leaders do not have enough time to observe teaching and learning in order to support the sharing of best practice.
- Homework is not used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- The school's computers are not readily available for use by teachers of subjects other than information and communication technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Although results at the end of Year 6 are below the national average, they improved in 2002 and were the best ever. In relation to the key issues from the previous inspection, teaching has improved and pupils make good progress. Work has been done to improve assessment. The school now has data on all pupils so that it can track their progress in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. Attainment and progress in design and technology in Years 5 and 6 have improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
End of Key Stage 2 tests	D	E	D	D

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

Overall, test results are below the national average and have been so over the last four years. Results have been improving in line with the national trend. In 2001 and 2002, test results in science were much better than those in English and mathematics and were above the national average. In 2002, results in English and mathematics were below those in similar schools. Results in science were better than results in similar schools. Pupils show good achievement in their test results at the end of Year 9 at the local high school. Their results are above the national average.

Work seen in Year 6 in English and mathematics is better than Year 6 achieved last year in their tests. In science the work seen is as good as last year's Year 6 results. Work in Year 6 in most subjects is in line with or better than is expected nationally. In design and technology and religious education, standards are not high enough. Work seen in Year 8 is good in English, maths and science, art, technology, history, information and communication technology, French, music and physical education. In religious education the quality of the work is not good enough. Pupils are now achieving well in all years in most subjects. Pupils with special needs make good progress. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented make satisfactory progress but would do better if more challenging resources were provided. The school set targets for last year's tests at the end of Year 6. Results were below what was expected. If the school achieves the targets set for 2003, results in tests at the end of Year 6 will be above the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils like coming to school and enjoy all the activities that the school provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave responsibly at all times. Because they are so well behaved in lessons, all the time is used for teaching and learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: relationships throughout the school community are very good. During their time at the school pupils become increasingly mature and responsible.
Attendance	Good: attendance is above the national average. Pupils arrive in good time for lessons to start promptly.

This area is a real strength of the school. Parents expressed concern about behaviour in the past. There were no examples of poor behaviour during the inspection. On the contrary, behaviour was very good. However, pupils do not yet take sufficient responsibility for their learning because teachers do not encourage them to do so as much as they could.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good. The quality of teaching in English and science is always good. In mathematics it is usually satisfactory and is often good. Teachers know their pupils well and because of this they know who needs help in lessons because of their special educational needs. They also know who are particularly able and try to provide work that is harder for these pupils. However, with the exception of French and history, teachers do not provide enough materials that are specially designed to meet the needs of the lower or higher attainers. Marking is good in English but is not as well developed in other subjects. In all subjects not enough use is made of National Curriculum levels to mark and assess work. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and pupils use these skills confidently in their work. Because teaching is good pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. They concentrate and work at a good pace. Not enough opportunities are provided to help pupils become more independent in their learning. Homework is set irregularly and is not planned for as a way of encouraging independent learning skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: a wide range of activities meets the needs of all pupils. A range of activities outside school hours enhances what happens in lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils participate in all the experiences the school has to offer. They also get very good support because teachers know them well
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good: the school successfully creates an atmosphere that supports pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. They provide personal support based on the knowledge of and the relationships they have with their pupils.

There is not enough time for religious education and, therefore, pupils cannot study all aspects of the locally agreed syllabus. In design and technology there are no computers to use to design and make things. There is a very good emphasis on moral and social development particularly. Some subjects contribute to cultural development, but not enough is done to prepare pupils to live in our multicultural society. Assemblies make a very good contribution to spiritual development, but the lack of a contribution from religious education makes the school's overall provision only satisfactory instead of good. Academic guidance is only satisfactory. The school does not assess pupils' work satisfactorily. It is difficult, therefore, to tell pupils and parents about the progress made and how pupils might improve further. Parents are very supportive of the school because the school values and respects their views.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: the headteacher's leadership has focused the school on raising standards. He has put in place a number of systems to improve the management of the school. There is good leadership in subject areas and in other aspects of the school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are appropriately involved in major strategic decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the schools' self-evaluation prior to the inspection was perceptive, honest and accurate. The systematic collection of evidence to support these judgements does not yet involve subject leaders.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: all resources are well used to achieve the priorities in the school improvement plan. Because finances are tight the school has had to make some very difficult decisions.

There is effective leadership in all aspect of the school. The school has prioritised the use of data and target setting in order to raise standards. Monitoring and evaluation have been introduced but are at an early stage of development. There is a good match of teachers and subject specialisms to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a small number of non-subject specialists who require further support. Accommodation is adequate but rooms are small for older pupils. There is a good range of learning resources in most departments. Because there is so little access to information and communication technology, computers are not used to support subject learning. The headteacher and governors have a very good understanding of best value principles and apply them in their work.

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 like school. • Their children make good progress at school. • Teaching is good. • The school responds well to questions and problems. • The school has high expectations. • The school is well managed and led. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and regularity with which homework is set.

Eight parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector and just over 50 per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire. Overall, parents' views are very positive about the school. The inspection team supports these positive views. Inspectors also support parents' concerns about homework. Little was set during the inspection and the school does not use homework to extend learning in the classroom. At the meeting parents recognised recent improvements in reports, but some parents rightly comment that some of the reports are confusing. The inspection team found that breaking down National Curriculum levels into smaller steps and using these in all reports was not helpful. They also found that in some reports grades that were given did not match the comments that were written. Overall, the team judge the school to have a good partnership with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results from tests taken when pupils are 7 are used to predict what they might achieve by the time they are 11. These predictions indicate that attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. Sometimes it is slightly above, sometimes slightly below. This is because year groups are small. Two or three pupils can make a significant difference to the figures used to compare the school with other schools. Results in tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were below the national average. Again, two or three pupils make a significant difference to the school's figures. When pupils take tests at the end of Year 9 at the high school their results are above the national average.
2. Results in tests taken at the end of Year 6 are below the national average and have been so over the last four years. Results in 2002 were an improvement on those in previous years. Overall results have been improving in line with the national trend. There was a higher proportion of boys than girls in the year group and they did particularly well. In mathematics and science they did better than girls and their results were above the national average for boys. In 2001 and 2002, test results in science were above the national average and much better than results in English and mathematics. Science results have been steadily improving since 1998.
3. Test results overall in 2002 were also below those in similar schools. In mathematics, results were well below and in English they were below those in similar schools. Results in science were better than in similar schools. In mathematics and English there were fewer pupils gaining the higher levels than there is nationally. In science the reverse was true with a high proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels. In mathematics and English there was a higher than average proportion of pupils not reaching the nationally expected level for their age.
4. Teacher assessments in English and mathematics were higher than the test results, significantly so in mathematics. This was because teachers were still developing their assessment skills and there were no whole school procedures to help them with this. In science, teacher assessments are well below the test results. The department believes that they were too hard on pupils in their assessments.
5. Standards of work seen in Year 6 in most subjects are in line with or better than the standards expected nationally. The exception is in design and technology and religious education. In design and technology, pupils have a lot of work to do to develop skills that it was not possible to teach in their first school. The work seen during the inspection in English and mathematics was at least in line with if not better than the standards expected nationally.
6. Standards of work seen in Year 8 are good in most subjects, particularly in English, maths and science. In these subjects the standard of work is above the standard expected nationally. Standards of work in design and technology are better than in Years 5 and 6. In religious education there is not enough time in any year for pupils to cover all aspects of the locally agreed syllabus.
7. Pupils achieve better overall in Years 7 and 8 than they do in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics, art, and design and technology. In all other subjects their achievement is the same in all years. In most subjects achievement is good in Years 7 and 8 with the

exception of geography where it is satisfactory and religious education where it is unsatisfactory.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils who are identified as gifted and talented make satisfactory progress. With the exception of French and history, there are not enough resources specially designed to challenge these more able pupils in lessons.
9. Standards of literacy are good throughout the school and successfully support learning across the curriculum. Reading skills are good and enable pupils to understand and work with a large range of texts. Pupils' ability to structure their work and write with technical accuracy is such that they are able to meet the demands of the different subjects. Where relevant, they have a good command of subject specific vocabulary.
10. Because the teaching of numeracy skills in mathematics lessons is very good, pupils are confident and competent to use their skills in other subjects. Pupils show good skills with number work and have effective mental strategies.
11. Standards of work in information and communication technology are good. In the taught programme they are learning all the skills they need to support their work in other subjects, including the use of the Internet. The lack of easy access to computers in other lessons means that they cannot apply their skills in their other subjects.
12. The school did set targets in 2000 for test results at the end of Year 6. Test results were below this target. Challenging targets have been set for 2003 with the expectation that results will be above the national average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils achieve well because they are very happy at school and enjoy their work. Their attitudes to school were good at the previous inspection and are now even better because the staff make life at the school fun and interesting. This community often laughs and learns together. Parents report that their children are therefore keen to come to school. The inspection team confirms this view. The annual Fun Run exemplifies this feature of school life. All pupils and staff and many parents and governors participate and most wear fancy dress whilst completing the five mile course.
14. Pupils talk about their classrooms as learning zones and their approach to their lessons shows very clear understanding of this description. They eagerly anticipate almost every lesson, listen carefully to introductions and immediately settle to try things out for themselves. Their perseverance is particularly commendable. This meant that in one lesson Year 7 designers solved their own problems when making a prototype desk calendar. Pupils offered classmates four different solutions by the end of the lesson. Pupils are only reluctant to join in lessons when the teaching is dull, which seldom happens.
15. The school deliberately refers to classrooms as learning zones through its code of conduct. Staff very rarely have to remind pupils about how to behave either in the classrooms or around the school. This means that pupils can continue learning or playing without interruption. Pupils behave very well at all times. The inspection team saw no poor behaviour during their time in school. The school keeps careful records of any incidents and these records show that only a few pupils fail to conform to the school's high expectations. Pupils talk maturely about the consequences of any misbehaviour and comment that the school applies sanctions fairly. They were

adamant that the school deals promptly and effectively with the rare incidence of bullying. The school hardly ever excludes any pupils.

16. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults were a strength of the school at the last inspection and they remain so. Pupils often help each other in lessons. They happily share equipment or listen to the views of others before they proffer their own. They know that others will be tolerant of any mistakes so they confidently answer questions or ask for clarification. They don't fear failure or ridicule. A Year 7 pupil offered reduced sperm count as a negative impact of smoking without a moment's hesitation. Teacher and classmates accepted this suggestion naturally and easily. Relationships between staff and pupils are relaxed and calm. Pupils comment that they like the staff and recognise that the staff value and respect them. They enjoy light-hearted banter with adults.
17. A particular strength of these relationships is the ease with which pupils seek to ensure that all are included in school life. Pupils care for others who have challenges because of their individual circumstances. They recognise that some pupils have particular difficulties and make no fuss about the implications of these. Girls ensure that a classmate has company at lunch because she has to eat early. There are more boys in the school than girls, but pupils say this does not matter and has no effect on the way they work and play together. The inspection team endorses this view. These very good relationships which the school consistently nurtures ensure that all pupils feel safe and secure in school. Everyone thrives in this environment.
18. Pupils carefully respect school systems because staff consistently encourage them to recognise and value the purpose of doing so. This means that pupils hold doors open for others when their arms are full of books. It also means that the school is practically litter free so that everyone has a pleasant environment in which to work. Pupils take good levels of responsibility for themselves and others. Consultation is a strong feature of school life. This includes the school council representatives who eagerly participate in discussions about a wide range of school activities. A young member suggested music in the dining room at lunchtime as one of many ideas presented for the future consideration of pupils and staff. Pupils take increasing responsibility for their own work. They organise their work effectively and make good use of resources and materials. The school encourages them to work in pairs and groups and correctly identifies the need to extend these opportunities even further now that pupils behave very well in lessons.
19. The pupils enjoy their school so they only stay away for illness or holidays during term time. The school actively discourages parents from taking holidays when children should be at school. This means that attendance is good and better than other schools with similar aged children. Pupils arrive promptly to school and to individual lessons. This good attendance and punctuality mean that lessons can begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is good in all years. Because of this, and pupils' enthusiasm and willingness to work hard, learning is also good. The proportion of lessons that are at least satisfactory has improved since the previous inspection. In a high percentage of lessons teaching is good. However, there are only a small number of lessons where teaching is very good or excellent. This improvement in teaching is largely due to the headteacher's focus on raising standards and the willingness of teachers to accept their responsibility in this.

21. Teaching is satisfactory in geography and religious education and good in all other subjects. During the inspection there were examples of very good teaching in English, mathematics and physical education. Unsatisfactory lessons were observed in mathematics, French and physical education. In all three lessons teachers were teaching outside their specialist subject and did not have sufficient subject knowledge or expertise. All three lessons were in Year 6.
22. Teaching of the basic skills is good. The teaching of literacy in different areas of the curriculum is good. In science there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in extended writing whilst in history there are good opportunities for pupils to write explanations of significant events. Many of the writing skills required in French complement the skills being developed in English lessons. In religious education, however, much of the writing consists of copying notes. There are opportunities in most subjects for pupils to use oral work to develop opinions, but sometimes the work is too teacher dominated. The teaching of numeracy skills in mathematics lessons is very good. In subjects such as geography and physical education teachers support the development of these skills by asking pupils to use them in real situations. Teaching of information and communication technology is good. There has been a heavy investment in computers since the previous inspection and all pupils now have a lesson a week in information and communication technology. Because of limited access to the room there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in other subjects.
23. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Many teach with energy and enthusiasm, which results in pupils who are interested and eager to learn. In English high expectations are successfully helping to raise levels of attainment. Most teachers use a good variety of methods in their lessons and this, combined with brisk pace and good resources, results in pupils working hard and achieving good standards. In a number of subjects, teachers do not build on these positive attitudes. They are reluctant to give pupils responsibility for their learning and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills to learn independently.
24. Some parents feel that their older children do not get enough homework. Little homework was given during the inspection and pupils appeared ambivalent towards homework. They explain the time-table, but claim the amount can vary from teacher to teacher and subject to subject. Homework is not a strong feature of school life and does not make a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. One of the reasons why it is not set is that it is not planned into schemes of work.
25. The school has worked hard to establish an atmosphere in which teaching and learning are priorities. Teaching areas have a notice telling pupils that they are now entering a learning zone, the name that the school gives to teaching areas. Because pupils are willing and expect to learn it is rare that teachers have to spend time establishing discipline. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and are based on mutual respect. These attitudes do much to support the good progress pupils make throughout their time in the school.
26. Assessment of pupils' work in lessons is often used to show individual pupils how they might further improve their work. However, when teachers mark written work there is little information given to tell pupils what they have achieved and how they might do better. This is a weakness in most subjects with the exception of English. The weakness is compounded by the fact that subjects do not use National Curriculum levels as the basis for assessment. Most subjects use a system of A to E grades to assess pupils work. Using their knowledge of pupils, teachers give them a National Curriculum level when required to do so.

27. Pupils with special educational needs and those that are gifted or talented are well taught and they make good progress. Teachers know these pupils well and know when they need to give extra help and support. In French and history, teachers had also prepared materials specifically to meet their needs. However, in other subjects such as religious education and mathematics this does not happen as often as it should. Support staff and teachers who work with pupils with special educational needs in lessons are very effective. They are familiar with the needs of the pupils and work closely with class teachers. Individual education plans and individual behaviour plans are good. They provide clear targets for pupils to achieve, particularly if it is their behaviour that is a problem.

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

28. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall. Pupils are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. In addition, French is taught to all years. Statutory requirements are not fully met in design and technology in Years 7 and 8. It is not possible to do computer-aided design and manufacture because there is no equipment for this.
29. The time allocated for religious education is insufficient to cover the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum is good. There has been successful implementation of the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. Although there are good examples of the teaching of information and communication technology in different curriculum areas, there are restrictions on the opportunities for cross-curricular development because of the difficulties of arranging access to the computer room. The wider reading of pupils is encouraged and enhanced by the good quality contemporary fiction in the library, which is read during some registration time.
30. The provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The content of courses offered is generally good and the aspects covered in sex education are relevant to the ages of the pupils. There is, however, little real monitoring of the effectiveness of the programme and more time is needed for the most to be made of the content. The school has already identified and is addressing these issues. The drug education programme is comprehensive and is part of a composite course that is continued in the High School. Careers education occurs in Year 8 and adequately addresses various issues relating to the world of work. It does not, however, provide detailed guidance on the implications of future option choices at the High School at the end of Year 9
31. Opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside lessons are very good. There is a range of subject-related clubs including music, French and mathematics within the school. Pupils are offered a range of residential activities including an annual residential for outdoor activities and ICT, foreign visits and camping trips to the Lake District. There are sports activities include skiing, cross-country running and football.
32. There are good links to the community. For example, a French project involved trips to a local bakery and the visit of travel agents to the school. Pupils support local charities and as part of a Harvest Festival scheme they deliver produce to local Old People's Homes. The school has also formed very effective links with its partner schools. There are successful joint curricular initiatives with the High School. There are also good links with the partner first schools involving all the schools in activities such as musical

productions. Visits to the middle school by pupils from the primary schools are well-planned and effectively support transition between the schools.

33. The provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. Targets set for such pupils are focused and clear. For the most part, pupils take part in the same lessons as their peers. Teachers ensure that pupils are supported in the lessons. There are currently no pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language.
34. The school's mission statement places a strong emphasis on personal development and this is matched by good provision. The school consistently and effectively promotes a strong moral code. There are very clear guidelines regarding behaviour and the consequences of misbehaviour. Expectations are high and clearly set out. The impact of such expectations is clearly seen in pupils' very good behaviour. The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to consider moral issues, for example discussing environmental problems in science and in personal, social and health education and the use of animals in medical research in English.
35. There is a very strong emphasis on the school as a community, working together and supporting each other. Assemblies enhance the sense of community. Pupils on the school council have very good opportunities to take responsibility. They are involved in trying to resolve challenging issues. There are very good opportunities for pupils to display initiative by identifying charities they wish to support and organising fund-raising events. Pupils have frequent opportunities to work together in groups in lessons, for example in drama and history. School productions such as *The Wizard of Oz* give pupils of different ages very good opportunities to work together.
36. Personal achievement is recognised in a variety of ways including opportunities for pupils to nominate each other as a 'cool kid'. Achievement is celebrated with the presentation of certificates a regular feature of both whole school and year assemblies. Pupils learn to value their own and each other's achievements. The record of achievement introduced into Years 7 and 8 gives pupils good opportunities to reflect on their own achievements and targets for improvement. Values and beliefs are explored during assembly time. Assemblies and registration time both include opportunities for prayer. Assembly time seeks to achieve a sense of community as well as provide time for reflection and it does this well.
37. There is insufficient time for religious education and this reduces the subject's contribution to personal development, especially pupils' opportunities to develop skills in reflection and to develop insights into other cultures. Cultural awareness is enhanced through the school's cross-curricular French project. There are good opportunities to study a range of cultures in art including both European and Japanese art. In information and communication technology, pupils study differences in education in their link with a Danish school and in geography there are good opportunities to learn about life in different parts of the world. Pupils' study of scientists from different backgrounds and cultures is limited. Overall, the curriculum is less effective in preparing pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. All adults take very good care of pupils. This is an improved feature of school life and one commended by parents and pupils. Staff pay very careful attention to the health and safety of the school community. The recently appointed caretaker makes an outstanding contribution to the welfare and security of the school community. The school ensures that all staff follow child protection procedures.

39. Parents are confident that staff know pupils very well and instantly attend to needs as they emerge. Pupils feel safe and secure and always have someone to turn to for help and support. Staff provide comfort to troubled or worried pupils and administer first aid to pupils who are sick or injured. Support staff make very valuable contributions to school life. They ensure, for example, that they communicate information about pupils' needs very quickly to both teachers and parents.
40. Pupils attend regularly because staff promote the importance of regular attendance. Staff ensure that parents understand the need to explain any absence immediately. They correctly record and follow up any non-attendance.
41. Pupils' behaviour has improved recently and is very good because the staff now promote a clear code of conduct. Pupils talk understandingly of learning zones and rewards and consequences. Staff make it very clear what they expect and praise pupils for meeting these expectations. They use the merit system very well to encourage good behaviour and to reward good work. This approach is successful with the vast majority of pupils. The school uses short-term exclusions very carefully to ensure that pupils and parents understand that the code of conduct is a serious statement of expectations. The headteacher has not permanently excluded any pupil in recent years. The school community is one in which bullying or harassment, whether racial or otherwise, seldom occurs.
42. As at the time of the previous inspection, assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory because practise varies too much. The school has worked hard in the last year to create and implement an assessment policy. Staff now recognise the value of continuous assessment. This means that some departments, particularly English and science, now have good systems in place and can regularly assess how pupils are progressing with their work. These departments mark work carefully and explain to pupils how to improve. They regularly identify targets for improvement and share these with the pupils. They also alter what and how they teach in the light of pupils' previous understanding and performance.
43. This is not the case in other subjects. Some teachers do not identify subject specific areas for improvement. They do not all regularly assess pupils work against simple criteria which can be shared with pupils and parents. Recent attempts to use the National Curriculum level descriptors and define them in terms of levels and sub levels using a, b, c, might help staff to consider performance and predict grades. In some subjects this requirement is putting additional pressure on staff as it is not an easy task to do. These attempts also seem to confuse pupils who are not sure what they refer to and what they need to actually do to achieve the next level or to move from *b* to *a*.
44. Despite this wide variation in assessment systems and their use, staff supply good support for pupils' academic progress. Staff know pupils very well and encourage them to try harder in areas of weakness. They take time in lessons and in some tutor periods to check pupils' work. They notice when pupils' learning patterns change and communicate this to other staff. The staff team meets every day and shares concerns about individual pupils. The school now collects a suitable range of data about pupils' prior attainment, particularly when they first start at school, and departments have access to this information. The school rightly identifies the rigorous and systematic analysis of data for departments, individual pupils and groups of pupils as an area for development.
45. The school successfully supports pupils' personal development. Good induction arrangements ensure that all pupils settle easily and happily in their new environment.

Considerate tutoring means that pupils quickly feel they have a friend on the staff and these close relationships with tutors continue as they move through the school. Pupils and staff use the planners well to record and communicate aspects of pupils' personal development such as merits gained. The school successfully monitors pupils' behaviour and attitudes, analyses patterns and plans improvement. This good personal support helps secure pupils' and parents' strong commitment to the school. It also means that pupils become increasingly mature, confident and responsible.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents rate the school highly and correctly identify recent improvements. They appreciate that their children like the school and all applaud the high expectations that it promotes. They rightly attribute this to very good leadership and management.
47. Consultation is a particular strength of the partnership between parents and school. Parent surveys are a regular feature of school life whether for particular topics, such as school reports, or for general OFSTED-style questionnaires to check on parents' views of the school. Parent governors say staff seek their opinions eagerly and gave specific examples of action the school takes as a result. Aspects of the behaviour policy were, for instance, amended in the light of parent governors' comments.
48. Responses to a survey completed after the school circulated pupils' annual reports indicate parents' pleasure with the new format and improved content. The inspection team endorses these comments and judges the reports to be satisfactory. There is detailed information on what pupils have studied and in some subjects there is good information about what pupils have achieved. The overall quality is, however, still not good and justifies the concerns of a few parents in the inspection questionnaire responses. English teachers describe what their pupils can and cannot do and give clear targets for improvement. They do this because they have good assessment procedures and use these regularly to identify and record pupil performance. Other teachers do not write such clear reports and some give contradictory statements and grades for work and effort. Descriptions in the front of the report about National Curriculum levels are also over complicated and confuse some parents.
49. A few parents help in school such as running the art club or assisting with drama productions. Many parents support the relatively new but very active parent teacher association which thrives and whose events raise considerable funds for the school. Teachers submit bids for support and parents comment that this system encourages staff involvement in the activities organised.
50. Every child has a large brown A4 envelope which parents know to expect to receive home each Tuesday. This is an excellent system for conveying messages and information and one which parents value enormously. New pupil planners provide key information for both pupils and parents. Tutors quickly follow up children not using them or parents failing to sign them. The planners draw together the responsibilities of pupils, parents and school through the inclusion of the home school agreement. Everyone takes this seriously, realising that it is the basis for good relationships between school and parents. The school values the families of its children and genuinely seeks to include them in the partnership for learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school is focused on raising standards. He has introduced a number of systems and procedures to support the effective management of the school. A good example of this is the collection,

analysis and use of data to set targets for individual pupils and years. Another example is the use of computer software to manage and communicate appointments made by all staff in the school. This ensures that everyone knows what is happening both in the longer term and on a day to day basis. The headteacher is well supported by the good leadership and management exercised by subject leaders and those with responsibilities for other aspects of the school's work. He has established a very positive working relationship with the governing body. The work that the school has done to achieve the Investors in People Award has ensured that there is an agreed vision for the school that is shared by all those who work there.

52. The governing body are hard working and very supportive of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what needs to be done to bring about improvement. They have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and take their work very seriously. All required policies are in place. In fulfilling their responsibilities they have had to make some hard decisions. As pupil numbers have fallen there has been a corresponding reduction in the school budget. They decided to decrease the number of classes in Year 5 in order to reduce costs. This has increased class sizes for this year group. However, they have been able to give time to the special educational needs co-ordinator who has made sure that the new Code of Practice is in place. They are now facing up to decisions that have to be made for next year.
53. The school has a very thorough and systematic approach to planning. Governors and staff are fully involved in the planning process and in reviewing progress at the end of the year. The plan has a number of key priority areas. Governors are now linked to priority areas in order to monitor progress. The budget is clearly seen as an enabling tool to support the development of these key priorities. The headteacher and governors effectively carry out budget planning and monitoring. There are regular reports provided on the progress of the budget to the governing body.
54. The school's own monitoring and evaluation of its work completed prior to the inspection was accurate and perceptive. The headteacher has recently extended the monitoring of teaching and learning to involve staff responsible for year groups in the school and subject leaders. It is expected that staff responsible for year groups will look at pupils' work and that subject leaders will look at pupils' work and observe lessons. Because these activities are scheduled to occur over a year, subject leaders do not observe lessons until the summer term. This means that there is not enough support for individual teachers who, because they are not specialists in a subject, are not teaching as well as they can. It also limits the sharing of good practice through direct observation.
55. The headteacher and governors have a very good understanding of the principles of best value and apply them in their work. They are very aware of how the school compares with other schools in terms of test results and would like to do more work on how the school compares with other middle schools. There is very good consultation with parents and with pupils. Staff are fully consulted on all matters to do with the school. Governors are also concerned to make best use of their limited resources by ensuring that they get quality at the best price in terms of services provided to the school.
56. There are an adequate number of teachers in the school, but sometimes teachers have to teach subjects in which they are not specialists. There is no technician support for science, design and technology and information and communication technology, although the school has access to information and communication technology support from the local education authority. This does put additional pressure on staff to

maintain equipment and prepare equipment for lessons. Performance management is well established. From this and from the school improvement plan a professional development plan is written. This is carefully costed so that best use is made of limited resources. Office and administrative staff are well sited within the school and work very well as a team. They present a very professional yet friendly face to parents and visitors.

57. Accommodation is adequate but some rooms are small for larger groups of older pupils. There is good access for the disabled. The outdoor accommodation for physical education is not as good as it could be. Hard play areas are poorly marked and there is no fence to ensure that balls stay in the playing area. The caretaker and his team of cleaners do a very good job in keeping the buildings clean and ready for learning.
58. Funding for learning resources is limited but the school has made sure that all subjects have a good selection of textbooks and other learning resources. There are sufficient computers in the school but access to them during lessons, other than in information and communication technology, is difficult. There is a good section of up-to-date texts, both fiction and non-fiction, in the library. The library provision has recently been improved and new books have been purchased. Every form has a lesson where pupils can go to the library to read and to change their library books. The library is popular with pupils at lunchtime and after school.
59. Taking into account the level of funding coming into the school, the context in which it works, the standards achieved, the quality of education provided and the overall effectiveness of the school, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school has improved, particularly in recent years. In order to maintain the pace of improvement and ensure that standards continue to rise the governors, the headteacher and staff need to address the following key issues:
- (1) improve assessment and marking by:
 - using National Curriculum levels as a basis for assessment in all subjects;
 - marking work in ways that tell pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve;(paragraphs 26, 42, 44, 88, 94, 100, 108, 113, 120, 127, 138 and 143)
 - (2) provide resources that meet the needs of pupils across the ability range to complement the good support that teachers provide;
(paragraphs 27, 72, 80, 85, 97 and 107)
 - (3) provide time for subject leaders to observe teaching and learning in order to share best practice and support any non-specialists in their area;
(paragraphs 30, 54, 76, 82, 94, 108, 127 and 137)
 - (4) extend the use of homework by:
 - building this into schemes of work and lesson plans;
 - monitoring the quantity and quality of work set;
(paragraphs 24, 72, 100 and 131)

- (5) find ways of making computers more accessible to teachers in subjects other than information and communication technology.
(paragraphs 11, 22, 29, 58, 66, 78, 89, 99, 113 and 119)

In addition the school needs to:

- explore ways of giving pupils opportunities to experience computer assisted design and making in technology in Years 7 and 8; (paragraphs 28 and 99)
- improve the experiences provided for pupils and the standards they achieve in religious education. (paragraphs 139-143)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	8	34	11	3	0	0
Percentage	0	14	61	20	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	303
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	40

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	49

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.3

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	50	27	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	34	37	46
	Girls	20	13	25
	Total	54	50	71
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	70 (65)	65 (59)	92 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	37	42	36
	Girls	21	19	19
	Total	58	61	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	75 (73)	79 (70)	71 (70)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	301
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	12	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	87
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	25.2
Key Stage 3	23.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
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	£
Total income	749,903
Total expenditure	721,512
Expenditure per pupil	2,255
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,402
Balance carried forward to next year	28,391

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

50.9%

Number of questionnaires sent out

303

Number of questionnaires returned

154

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	4	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	38	61	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	58	10	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	58	17	4	0
The teaching is good.	32	60	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	52	14	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	5	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	12	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	46	44	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	56	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	47	8	5	8

Other issues raised by parents

Only eight parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector. They expressed many positive views about the work of the school. They thought that the attitudes and values within the school were very good. They thought that the school valued parents and was keen to maintain good home school links. They expressed some concern about homework in terms of the frequency with which it was set. They liked the new reports format and think that the school has improved.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils create a very positive ethos.
- By the time pupils leave the school standards of attainment are above national expectations.
- Teachers take care to involve all pupils in lessons.
- There is effective leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Not enough opportunities are provided for sustained writing in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils do not make enough constructive use of drafting.
- There is not enough access to information and communication technology facilities.

61. Overall, standards in English are above average. Attainment in 2002 tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 was below the national average and below the average for similar schools. The high proportion of boys in the year lowered the comparison with national averages overall. The results showed an increase on the standard attained in 2001. The standards of attainment seen during the inspection demonstrate a further improvement and are in line with national averages. Attainment by the time pupils reach Year 8 are above national expectations. There is little difference in the work produced by boys and girls in lessons. Good leadership and management of the department, good teaching and an emphasis on meeting the needs of all pupils in lessons have all contributed to the improvement in standards.

62. By the end of Year 6 the highest attaining pupils are very good at participating in discussions, interviewing others and presenting their opinions. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, although equally confident and keen speakers, are less skilled at taking account of contributions by others. Many pupils read fluently with appropriate emphasis and intonation. Weaker pupils find it difficult to ascertain the meaning behind the written word. Pupils generally enjoy reading and many pupils, particularly girls, read good quality fiction outside lessons. Pupils in Year 6 write effectively in a range of styles and forms and the highest attaining pupils are starting to use literary devices and develop their own voices. Many are using internal sentence punctuation for effect and to cause strategic pauses. For example, one pupil writing of an incident when he was three years old stated 'I was wearing gloves on my feet, just like a penguin.'

63. By Year 8, the most successful pupils are able to structure talk effectively and use dramatic delivery for impact. In reading, the highest attaining pupils have developed the ability to make perceptive critical comments. One girl writing on poetry stated, 'Owens's words are harsh, graphic and are a portrayal of the real horror of war.' Pupils are able to justify their opinions with apt quotations. Even lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are able to identify how authors achieve desired effects. One class of lower attaining pupils in Year 6 commented in detail on the significance of grammatical features in an Alan Garner novel. By the time they leave

the school, pupils write for a wide range of purposes and the highest attaining pupils are well able to sustain and structure extended writing coherently. They use an increasingly varied and more complex sentence structure, although lower attaining pupils are far less adept at this. All but the highest attaining pupils experience difficulties in using the drafting process productively.

64. The quality of teaching is good with many very strong features consistently displayed. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is clear setting of objectives so that all pupils understand expectations for the lesson. Very good questioning ensures that all pupils are fully involved. Questions frequently build on preceding ones to increase systematically the demands on pupils. Good varieties of activities are used to interest and motivate pupils. In a Year 5 lesson on *The Highwayman* the sequence of reading moved from a single reader to a small group reading to a whole class reading in order to emphasise and demonstrate the rhythm of the poem. Very occasionally teachers talk for too long before actively involving pupils. There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils and all teachers have very good knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The good use of praise and the very positive class ethos enables all pupils to feel confident and secure in participating even when the work is challenging. The quality of marking is very good as it both identifies achievement and gives good guidance on how to improve.
65. The response of pupils to the teaching they receive is very good. They are very attentive, well-motivated and keen to be involved. In a low attaining set of pupils with special educational needs reading *Romeo and Juliet*, all the pupils wanted to read aloud.
66. Many good opportunities to develop the social and moral education of the pupils are provided. These are frequently based on issues in the texts that pupils are reading. There is good cultural development through literature, although multi-cultural texts are far less evident. Drama now enhances the rest of the English curriculum. Although there are good examples of information and communication technology being used in English, opportunities are hindered by difficulty of access to computers.
67. There is effective leadership and management of the department. Schemes of work have been re-written and these have had a beneficial impact. Teaching of English fully represents the aims of the school. There is a great consistency in approach even though a number of teachers teach the subject. The very good morale within the department is very evident.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall
- Pupils are enthusiastic and behave well.
- Relationships within the classroom are good.
- Leadership and management are now strengths in the department.
- There is good use of information and communication technology in mathematics lessons.

Areas for improvement

- Test results at the end of Year 6 are not as good as they could be.
- Teachers do not provide resources to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Marking does not provide information to pupils on how they can improve.
- There are not enough opportunities for the subject leader to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning.

68. In 2002, test results for pupils aged 11 were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Overall in these tests, boys' results have improved whereas girls' results have fallen. Current assessments indicate that there should be a significant rise in attainment in national tests in 2003. Attainment in lessons for the current Year 6 is at least in line with national expectations. There were no significant differences seen in the progress and attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs made satisfactory progress. Although progress since the last report was initially slow the recent changes within the department have significantly increased the pace of change. Although results in 2002 were not as good as at the time of the previous inspection, overall improvement is satisfactory.
69. Teachers' assessments together with the standards seen in lessons in Years 7 and 8 show that pupils make good progress. Consequently, by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 8 attainment is above the national expectation. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and there were no significant differences seen in the attainment of boys and girls.
70. In Years 5 and 6 most pupils use numbers confidently and spot patterns in a sequence of numbers or shapes. Pupils also use charts and graphs to display data and the most able pupils use fractions, percentages and calculate simple probabilities. However, in the majority of lessons teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematics and to plan their own strategies. Consequently, standards seen in investigational work are not as high as those seen in routine class work. Many of those who find learning difficult solve simple number and shape problems. However, they found the use of mathematical instruments such as protractors too difficult. A more able group had a very challenging angles exercise at the start of a lesson and responded well to the pace and challenge set by the teacher. Numeracy skills are well developed.
71. In Years 7 and 8 higher attaining pupils use the properties of angles to solve problems. They use algebra confidently and are able to calculate percentages and ratios. They use computers to plot and analyse the properties of straight-line graphs. Most pupils use number confidently. One group had a very challenging starter exercise requiring them to use algebra to solve a magic square problem. The pupils rose to the challenge and demonstrated good problem solving skills. Pupils showed good skills in numeracy

and almost all pupils have a very positive attitude to learning, building upon the skills learnt in earlier years with enthusiasm.

72. Overall, teaching is good. The quality of teaching is, however, variable and there is a gap between the most and least effective teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subject and have an infectious enthusiasm for their work. Some lessons are stimulating, conducted at a very brisk pace and challenging pupils to think for themselves. In these lessons teachers use effective questions to extend pupils' understanding and have high expectations of behaviour, managing it with good-humour. Pupils have the confidence to answer questions and put forward their own ideas for the solution of problems. In most of the lessons seen all pupils were set the same exercises. Because pupils work in ability groups this was often appropriate. However, there were occasions where the work set was too difficult for some pupils. In these instances pupils were unable to make satisfactory progress. There was some evidence of homework set in books and in planners, but very little homework was set during the period of inspection. Several pieces of homework were self marked and some remained unmarked.
73. A learning support assistant was present in one lesson. She provided help to those pupils who needed it and they made good progress with the work set. There were a few instances where the progress of pupils would have been enhanced by additional support staff. The department has developed some excellent starter modules for lessons using information and communication technology and these have been published on the school's web site for other schools to use. This work is exemplary. However, the department does not have enough access to the information and communication technology to develop their many excellent ideas. Computers are available in some of the classrooms and are used effectively with individuals and groups of pupils. The department has recently purchased an interactive whiteboard to extend their use of information and communication technology further.
74. Marking of books was variable and in some instances there were constructive comments. There were, though, also examples of work not marked in books and incorrect work being marked correct. This usually occurred where pupils had self-marked work. The majority of the marking congratulated and rewarded pupils for their efforts but did not give enough information or advice to help pupils to improve. The department has begun to trial new procedures for setting targets for individual pupils in order to raise achievement.
75. Pupils' attitudes are good in all years and there are swift, orderly starts to lessons. Pupils respond to oral and mental mathematics activities with considerable enthusiasm. They commence work immediately and respond well to the use of time targets for the completion of work, where these are in use. Relationships are very good and pupils listen well to each other and their teachers. Pupils are interested in their mathematics, sustain their concentration and show mutual respect for each others' contributions. Relationships are very good.
76. The leadership and management of the department are good. The new head of department is a leading mathematics teacher and leads by example. She has swiftly begun the process of implementing the changes necessary in order to raise levels of achievement. Monitoring of teaching and learning within the department is currently unsatisfactory because the head of department is not given time to do this.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Good use of practical investigations helps pupils understand scientific principles.
- Pupils make good progress in all years.
- The good working relationships between pupils and teachers give pupils the confidence to both ask and answer questions.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good in all years.

Areas for improvement

- The monitoring of teaching to ensure consistency and the spread of good practice.
- The use of marking to give pupils more help and guidance on how to improve.

77. The standards of pupils' work on entry to the school are average. Pupils make good progress through the school. Standards of work seen during the inspection confirm this progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and by the end of Year 8 standards are good.

78. In 2002, test results at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average, but above average when compared with similar schools. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Results have been rising slowly over the past three years. Standards are now above average and are improving. This good progress is mainly due to the new teaching schemes that have a clear focus on learning. Good lesson planning ensures that lessons have pace, a variety of learning methods and frequent checks of understanding. Pupils are also motivated by being given individual achievement targets. Boys and girls do equally well. Boys have improved since the last report. Pupils obtain better results in science than in English or mathematics. Practical work is widely used to help students understand the underlying principles of science. This is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs and consequently they too make good progress. Pupils display good oral and writing skills when explaining their understanding of science. Numeracy skills are effectively applied in the collection of data and in the use of graphs to illustrate and interpret their findings. Although the use of information and communication technology for class teaching has improved from the last report, there are not enough computers to allow more individual work by pupils.

79. Observations in class and analysis of class-work, coursework and tests show that standards are improving and are good by the end of Year 8. This is an improvement from the previous report. All pupils build on their understanding from Year 6 and continue to make good progress during Years 7 and 8. Boys achieve as well as girls. In Years 7 and 8, much higher demands are placed on pupils and this is reflected in their greater understanding of scientific method, cell structure, chemical reactions and electricity. Practical skills and understanding of scientific method are good and have improved from the previous report. Pupils make good use of their writing and oral skills in the many opportunities for discussions and making their own conclusions. Numeracy skills are good and pupils use graphs effectively to illustrate and interpret their work. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the extra support given by the teaching staff in lessons. They can explain how to carry out a fair experiment and give considered reasons for the behaviour of solids, liquids and gases. They make good progress.

80. Teaching is consistently good in all years and pupils make good progress. Teaching

and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils clearly benefit from planned learning activities like role-play, discussions, creative writing and practical work. Homework books and associated revision guides are used very effectively to keep learning objectives clear. Teachers do not set different levels of work within classes for pupils of different abilities. However, they work very hard to give the individual help that enables each pupil to join in and make good progress. The very good lessons fully involve pupils in their learning right from the outset. Such lessons start with an activity that immediately catches the attention and develops at pace with regular changes of learning activity and frequent checks of understanding. For example, at the start of a Year 6 lesson, pupils were enthralled by a beautiful arrangement of flowers. In the same lesson, the use of an electronic microscope to look at the ovary of some flowers made learning easier, relevant and more enjoyable for the pupils. This was a good example of an enthusiastic teacher producing enthusiastic scientists. In the very small proportion of lessons where teaching was not quite as good, pupils were rushed to finish practical work and the final check of understanding was very brief. Marking of books is mainly done by ticks. Pupils require more information on their strengths and areas for improvement in order to become more responsible for their own learning.

81. Pupils are willing workers and show a keen interest in science. They take great care over the quality and presentation of their work. They work well together during practical work. They listen attentively to each other and their teachers. The working relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and give pupils the confidence to both ask and answer questions.
82. The department is well led and managed. The new schemes of work, introduced for Years 5 to 8, focus on teaching and learning and are regularly reviewed to ensure good development. Assessments are accurate and used to set demanding learning targets for pupils. There is a need to monitor all teachers so that there is consistency and spread of good practice in teaching and learning. Overall, there has been very good improvement since the previous inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Teaching in the subject supports the development of creative ideas through the use of imagination and discussion.
- Working relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils and their peers are very good.
- Lessons are well-structured with good routines and purposeful activities.
- There are good quality resources.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not spend enough time exploring the different effects that can be created when using pencils and charcoal, for example.
- There is too great a reliance on imaginative work at the expense of working from direct observation.
- Planning does not take enough account of the needs of pupils of different abilities.

83. The work seen during the inspection confirms that attainment is in line with expectations overall. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, as do the more able. The cross-curricular nature of many of the projects as well as what the teacher says gives lessons a wider significance than just the subject itself.

84. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 and in Years 7 and 8 it is good. In Years 7 and 8, examples of printmaking represent a good level of attainment. Ideas are followed through to a completed piece of work and the results are pleasing to the eye. A Year 5 printing and collage exercise using tessellation was satisfactory, as was a painting composition. Colour is used sensibly and is applied well. A Year 8 lettering exercise resulted in very detailed work with interesting colour and some examples of blending and subtle colour mixing. A still life painting has led to a further piece of work in a Cubist style that has some lively and enjoyable images with good colour combinations. Pupils are able to generate ideas and use a range of tone and apply colour freely.
85. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall and in Years 7 and 8 it is good. Lessons are characterised by structured and controlled introductions. Well-established routines and purposeful activities conclude with a plenary that both celebrates pupils' achievements and supports further developments. Most work is aimed at the middle ability range. Higher and lower attaining pupils are supported by the teacher but do not have work that is specifically planned for them.
86. A well-structured lesson that engaged pupils used the Bayeux Tapestry as the starting point. The teacher's description of the event and the use of an impressive scroll of the whole of the tapestry captured pupils' imagination. In another lesson the teacher read the story of the Ramayana. This contained a ten-headed creature which pupils then illustrated. As the lesson progressed the teacher supported individual pupils by assessing their progress and giving advice for further developments. This involved the redrafting of parts and in some cases the entire image, emphasising the quality of the line work in the process.
87. Teachers' explanations are good but some introductions to lessons are too long. This limits the potential for ideas to be fully realised and skills to be exercised. Where teaching is only satisfactory instead of good, there is too much reliance on imagination at the expense of using observation as a starting point. The use of display is good but it is used mainly to celebrate achievement and not as a direct teaching aid. Not enough emphasis is given to exploring the variety of effects that can be created using pencils, charcoal and other dry media.
88. Management of the department is satisfactory overall and good in some aspects. Much work has been done to develop schemes of work. Assessment of pupils' progress and its influence on the curriculum programme is not fully established. Pupil target setting is built into the assessment process.
89. Sound improvements have been made since the last inspection, although assessment and moderation still require some further consideration in order to make the system more effective. Improvement in the use of information and communication technology within the subject has been limited by the availability of both space within the art room and hardware.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- Pupils have mature attitudes and behave well.
- Citizenship provides good support for pupils' personal development.
- Whole school planning for the subject is good.

Areas for improvement

- There are no procedures to monitor how well pupils are doing.
- Assessment procedures are not in place to help with future planning.
- There is no monitoring of how well citizenship is being taught.

90. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils have considered some of the differences between people from other areas both within this country and other countries. They further their understanding of what is regarded as anti-social behaviour and the consequences of it. In their work in science pupils debate issues around smoking and taking drugs. They develop a very good understanding of the serious consequences of both.
91. By the end of Year 8, pupils' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory. They discuss views on such issues as animal welfare during their work in English. In the course of the personal, social and health education programme they consider human rights and the issues surrounding immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In English and drama, pupils act out various scenarios on the rights of children, the elderly and the disabled. Work in history introduces law making and how laws affect the lives of individuals and groups. Study of the feudal system and ancient civilisations helps pupils to gain an understanding of how societies develop and function. Some pupils from all year groups participate actively in the school council. Regular meetings take place at which the headteacher discusses suggestions received via a suggestion box system. Pupils are elected representatives. Boys and girls are equally well represented on the council. Pupils carry out their duties with maturity and commitment. They gain a good understanding of citizenship for the next phases of their lives.
92. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the time devoted to personal, social and health education. However, time is too short to enable all the topics detailed in the well-planned programmes to be covered fully. This is recognised by the school and plans are being made to increase the time in the next academic year.
93. In the very small amount of lessons observed where aspects of citizenship were identified, teaching was satisfactory. Those pupils with special educational needs were given adequate support to ensure their progress matched that of other groups of children. Whilst the school identifies pupils with particular talents in other subjects, this is not the case in citizenship.
94. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievement are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has yet to develop a system for monitoring pupils' performance. Most subjects make contributions to citizenship but the quality of planning varies. Monitoring of how the subject is being taught across the school is unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils have a good attitude towards the subject.
- Pupils in Years 7 and 8 achieve well.
- Teaching and especially the management of pupils is good.

Areas for improvement

- The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 does not meet the statutory requirements to provide for computer-aided design and manufacture.
- The procedures for assessment and for the use of assessment information are underdeveloped.

95. Pupils come into the school with standards that are below the national expectation. They have had a very varied range of experiences and practical skills are generally underdeveloped. During their first two years they improve their knowledge and understanding of the design process. They have the chance to work in different materials, improving their practical skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach a better level of competence in the subject but still remain below what is expected nationally. Progress over the two years is satisfactory for all groups of pupils. However, girls consistently outperform boys. Those pupils who have special educational needs receive additional teacher guidance when required and, therefore, progress at the same rate as others. The more gifted pupils work on extension tasks, which ensures that their progress is also satisfactory.
96. During Years 7 and 8 pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of design and technology. The increased time allocation allows pupils to work with a greater range of materials. They have a better understanding of construction methods than they did in Year 6 and become conversant with the technical language. They apply it in context, demonstrating good gains in their learning. By the end of Year 8 the standards of pupils' work match national expectations. Throughout the two years, as with Years 5 and 6, girls achieve at a better level than boys. They take greater care to achieve a higher degree of accuracy in designing and presenting ideas.
97. The quality of teaching is good. In food, textiles and resistant materials, pupils have objectives clearly explained so that they know what is expected of them. Teachers manage the pupils very well, expecting high levels of commitment and industry. There is effective support for individuals because teachers know their pupils well. They provide good oral assessment during lessons, enabling pupils to make progress because they know how to improve their work. Sometimes teachers do not allow sufficient time to review what has been achieved in the lesson and test the quality of learning. They make insufficient use of pupils' experiences to illustrate problems encountered and how solutions were found. Although additional teacher support helps pupils, tasks are not always designed to fully meet the needs of all groups.
98. Pupils are generally very responsive to the teachers and demonstrate a mature approach. This is especially true of girls. Pupils are quickly on to task and usually remain focused. There is genuine support for one another; pupils willingly assist each other when required.
99. The curriculum provides a good range of experiences in most disciplines. Time allocation is restrictive in Years 5 and 6 but adequate in Years 7 and 8. The subject

does not, however, meet the statutory requirements in Years 7 and 8 as a result of the lack of computer aided design and manufacture. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped across all years.

100. Assessment of pupils' work and monitoring of their performance are underdeveloped. Records of levels achieved are kept but are not analysed well enough to influence the planning of future lessons. Teachers mark the work regularly, providing positive encouragement but insufficient developmental comment on how pupils can achieve the higher levels. Homework is under-used as a way of raising standards.
101. The subject is well managed and has the benefit of teachers with good subject knowledge. Some of the larger classes restrict the amount of practical work that can safely be achieved. The absence of technician support increases the pressure on the teachers who already have responsibilities in a number of other areas.
102. Since the last inspection achievement by the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 8 has improved. Better quality planning has produced more appropriate activities to meet the needs of pupils and accommodation has been refurbished. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teachers control their classes well so no time is lost in lessons.
- Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to work.
- Teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and information and communication technology within the subject is good.

Areas for improvement

- The subject co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to monitor and support the teaching of her colleagues.
- Assessment procedures are not specific enough to show pupils how to raise attainment.
- The range of work does not always ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve well.

103. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of the same age, both at the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 8 when pupils leave the school. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but achievement for higher attaining pupils is less than it could be because teaching methods do not always provide work at a challenging level for them.
104. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired a good geographical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6, for example, use and understand such terms as meander, erosion and deposition when working on river valley development. They have good drawing and mapping skills. Year 6 pupils understand the use of symbols and scales on maps and can use basic grid references. In general, pupils have limited opportunities to propose questions they want to answer and then to set up investigations to find the answers. Because of this, higher attaining pupils do not always develop the more sophisticated skills of analysis, interpretation and exploration that enable them to reach higher standards.
105. By the end of Year 8, pupils are beginning to develop studies of events on a worldwide scale. They study the distribution of tropical rainforests and problems affecting

developed and developing countries, for example. They can describe patterns that are developing such as the 'north-south divide' in economic development. The lack of a strong base of research and interpretation skills is still evident. Although pupils' factual knowledge is good, they do not often produce work that shows detailed research and real depth. This is the main factor that affects standards for higher attaining pupils.

106. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and the development of key vocabulary has a positive impact on literacy standards. This is restricted a little by the lack of opportunities for extended writing and individual work. Pupils often use measurements and draw graphs and tables to present information and interpret data. The subject makes a good contribution to numeracy development. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to present their work in visual forms. Geography makes a good contribution to citizenship. Pupils have regular opportunities to examine and discuss a number of moral and environmental issues such as global warming and the destruction of tropical rainforests.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good class control is a feature of all the teaching, achieved with good humour and quiet authority. Good relationships between pupils and with their teachers are also a feature of the subject. As a result, classrooms are relaxed and businesslike and no time is lost in controlling unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils behave well and show good attitudes to work. This is seen in the care they take over presentation of written and drawing work. Although pupils' work is marked and corrected, there is limited use of this type of assessment to give pupils advice about what they need to do to improve. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that there are lessons where planning is not sufficiently good to ensure that work is tailored to the needs of all pupils in the class. This was an issue raised at the previous inspection that has not yet been corrected.
108. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is especially so in the social aspects of working together in pairs and groups and in the cultural aspects of learning about the lifestyles of people in other countries. There are limited procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. In particular, the use of National Curriculum level descriptors is under developed. This was reported at the previous inspection and has not been addressed sufficiently well. The previous inspection reported that the subject scheme of work needed developing. This has been completed and the scheme of work provides a detailed and progressive programme for pupils. The subject co-ordinator has very limited time available to monitor and support teaching in the subject. This means that good practice is often not shared as well as it should be. The subject has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils' achievement is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Planning does not place sufficient emphasis on developing history skills.
- Assessment procedures do not focus on the assessment of specific skills.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology.

109. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6 and better by the end of Year 8. Overall, achievement is good. Achievement is good because teaching is consistently good and pupils are well motivated and have very good attitudes. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between different groups of pupils. Improvement since the previous inspection is good with pupils achieving better now than they were then.

110. Younger pupils in Years 5 and 6 show a good and developing sense of chronology. They produce a timeline for the Egyptian pharaohs and write about their own ideas for things to take to 'another life'. All pupils, including those with special needs, write in detail and use terminology well; for example, higher attainers give clear explanations of latitude and longitude in writing about voyages of discovery.

111. By the end of Year 6, pupils have widened their experiences because lessons provide a good variety of opportunities. They conduct their own research into Greek gods and higher attainers produce imaginative illustrations. Pupils write in different forms, including giving explanations of how one faction in ancient Greece gained supremacy over another. Pupils learn to distinguish between fact and opinion and write biased accounts of wars. Pupils were motivated by a thoroughly planned lesson about a sailor's life in the fifteenth century. In one lesson a problem-solving approach was used effectively with pupils studying a diagram in pairs to find out how life on board ship was organised. Teachers do not always ask challenging enough questions to encourage pupils to comment and explain.

112. In Years 7 and 8 pupils display a detailed knowledge of the topics studied. They acquire a good depth of understanding by the end of Year 8, for example in explaining the success of the Roman army. The quality of the work of higher attainers is impressive and includes very carefully drawn and annotated diagrams of castles. Good quality resources support pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 8 lesson on the French Revolution the teacher had planned a variety of activities and good resources were used. In another lesson the teacher made good use of a quotation from a story read previously. She then constantly challenged pupils to explain how for people living at the time it was both 'the best of times and the worst of times.' Teachers plan some challenging activities. For example, pupils are required to use source materials to explain what made the peasants angry during the peasants' revolt. The resources used were particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs. Additional tasks with extra resources extended the learning opportunities for more able pupils. All pupils made good gains in their learning because they were challenged to

go beyond the facts by giving their own views on whether the class system they were learning about was 'fair'.

113. Co-ordination of the work in history is good. Schemes of work have been revised. Resources that are well matched to the needs of different groups have been purchased. There is insufficient emphasis on what needs to be improved in history, including the development and assessment of skills in history. In Years 7 and 8 there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' historical knowledge, but this sometimes leaves insufficient time for the development of skills in using and evaluating evidence. More information and communication technology opportunities need to be incorporated into planning. Staff are constrained in their use of computers for teaching and learning by difficulties of access to information and communication technology facilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The subject knowledge of the co-ordinator is very good.
- Attainment of pupils by the end of Year 8 is above the national expectation.
- Pupils achieve well in all years.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment information that is gathered is not analysed sufficiently to plan future work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers in lessons other than ICT because the computer room is not available for their use.
- Access to computer facilities by other subjects is inadequate.

114. Pupils arrive with a varied range of experiences, but, overall, are at a level below that expected for pupils entering Year 5. During the first two years in the school, pupils make good progress and reach the National Curriculum level expected for the end of Year 6. From the work seen and observation of the activities in lessons, there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls in the subject.

115. By the end of Year 8, pupils reach standards that are above what is expected nationally. They are becoming confident users of information and communication technology (ICT). They give consideration to intended audiences and the appropriate use of the technology. They have a good understanding of the main software applications such as word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheets. In all year groups teachers' support, together with work showing different degrees of challenge, allows pupils with special educational needs to develop at the same rate as other pupils. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls. In an activity using the Internet the teacher selected sites with care to ensure that their accessibility and challenge matched pupils' needs.

116. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use word-processing to support work in other applications. In one Year 6 group, pupils searched selected Internet sites for specific information. They were able to capture the appropriate data and produce a document containing text and graphics. The activity supported other areas of skills development such as skim reading in order to make the correct selections efficiently. Most pupils in Year 8 are confident in their use of basic spreadsheets, understanding the value of modelling using the software. A small number of pupils observed did require help to identify cell references correctly.

117. Teaching in the subject is good. Lessons are well planned and suitably resourced. The good variety of activities encourages and motivates pupils. The work is usually well matched to the needs of pupils, which ensures that the majority make gains in their knowledge and understanding during lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils and therefore are quick to provide additional support as the need arises. At times, pupils are given too little opportunity to demonstrate their learning partly because of teacher enthusiasm for the subject and a desire for pupils to succeed.
118. Attitudes of pupils are good and at times very good. They adopt a mature approach to the subject with only the very occasional lapse on the part of a small number of less committed boys. Pupils relate well to one another and the teachers. Those with greater levels of expertise are very prepared to assist others when required. All show respect for the equipment, recognising the responsibility placed on them when using the computers and accessing the Internet.
119. The use of ICT in other subjects varies in quality and quantity. Because the computer room is often used for teaching the computers are not easily accessible; teachers do not plan to use computers as an integral part of learning.
120. Assessment is still developing. The information that is available related to pupil performance is not widely used. Pupils are given good guidance in lessons, but marking does not give sufficient informative comment to show them how to improve further.
121. The subject is led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator providing effective day-to-day management. There is no technician support on site which places increased pressure on the co-ordinator.
122. There have been considerable developments in the ICT over the last six years and pupils continue to achieve well in all year groups. The quality of teaching remains good and the number of computers in the school compares well with the national average. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Standards are above the national expectation.
- Teaching is good overall.
- There is a wide range of opportunities provided to interest pupils in French and France.
- Pupils show good attitudes to work and achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures do not make use of National Curriculum levels.
- There is no time available for the subject co-ordinator to monitor and support the non-specialist teacher.

123. Standards are above the national expectation at the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 8. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls or across different levels of attainment. There are also no wide differences in attainment across the four aspects of the subject. Careful attention is paid to spelling and grammar in many lessons and pupils are encouraged to write accurately. Pupils also use measurements and counting regularly and this makes a good contribution to the

development of their numeracy skills. There is good use of computers for presenting written and pictorial work. Good work was seen on display during the inspection where pupils designed posters and pictures of imaginary houses for sale. Pupils start to learn French in Year 5, which is before the National Curriculum requirement. This is of great benefit to them because the standards they achieve are higher than the national expectation.

124. By the end of Year 6, pupils answer questions about such topics as numbers in French, how to greet people and their subjects in school. The majority of pupils can listen to and understand the basics of French. This is clearly seen when the teacher gives instructions, for example. Pupils answer questions in French and try hard with pronunciation. A majority of pupils are confident speakers and can ask and answer questions confidently by the end of Year 6. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, one of the contributory factors is that the teacher speaks too much English, which naturally restricts the challenge for pupils to learn the foreign language. In these lessons the teacher does not provide work at an appropriate level to raise standards. A majority of pupils are confident readers and can read short, simple texts confidently when finding the answers to questions. In their written work a majority can write short phrases from memory and higher attaining pupils write short paragraphs, about their likes and dislikes in school, for example.
125. By the end of Year 8, pupils build on these topics and add others such as the clothes they wear, illness and descriptions of the rooms in their houses. Most pupils can carry out basic conversations with three or four exchanges to ask questions and gather information. Many lessons start with a question and answer session between pupils and this gives very good practice. Higher attaining pupils can vary their use of language to fit different and unforeseen situations. A majority of pupils can read short passages of French and note the main points contained in them. Higher attaining pupils write accurately with agreement of adjectives and correct verb endings by the end of Year 8. Good extended writing was seen, for example, about the clothes pupils wear for different activities such as going to parties and for school.
126. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Good control of pupils is a feature of all the lessons and no time is lost trying to control unsatisfactory behaviour. Pupils show good attitudes to work, are generally interested in French lessons and are keen to respond to the teacher's questions. Where teaching is good, lessons are carefully planned to provide a range of challenging and varied activities that meet the needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. The teacher makes creative use of the overhead projector, word reinforcement 'games' and question and answer sessions to actively involve pupils in the lesson and strong learning is the result.
127. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. This is particularly so at the annual French Evening where pupils contribute by being hosts to the guests and by providing food and a number of items such as small plays carried out in French. The subject also makes a good contribution to a cross-curricular project on France run by the geography department. Assessment procedures are under developed. Marking does not show pupils how to improve. National Curriculum level descriptors are not used to set targets and assess progress. The subject co-ordinator has very limited time to support the work of her less experienced colleague. Nevertheless, good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and the subject has made good progress since that time.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The teacher's very good subject knowledge encourages pupils to learn.
- The well-planned lessons motivate pupils and encourage very good attitudes towards the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment of pupils' work does not focus on National Curriculum levels.
- Homework is not used as effectively as it could be to raise standards even further.

128. From the evidence of the lessons observed and taped examples of pupils' work, attainment in both key stages is above national expectations. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The good teaching is a key factor in improving pupils' learning.
129. By the end of Years 6 and 8, attainment is above average with all abilities making progress and achieving well compared with their prior learning. General musical knowledge is improving because of the lively teaching. Higher attaining pupils understand musical terminology and use technical language well. Lower attaining pupils struggle for the right word to describe dynamics. Singing is done enthusiastically in two and three parts without any sign of self-consciousness. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the lessons and make good progress. Those recognised as talented are often the first to answer questions. In the lessons seen there was no significant difference between the work of boys and girls.
130. Teaching and learning are good in Years 5 and 6 because lessons are well-planned to meet pupils' needs. Year 5 pupils develop an understanding of simple notation and learn how to co-operate together when improvising on classroom instruments. Year 6 pupils improvise examples of call and response with higher attaining pupils confidently producing tuneful examples. Lower attaining pupils sometimes speak or chant their contributions. Pupils enjoy playing African drums and they develop a good sense of rhythm because of careful counting and effective teaching. Good listening skills are encouraged and pupils answered well-chosen questions on pitch, tempo, dynamics and instrumentation after hearing an extract from Britten's *Sea Interludes*. All of this contributes to pupils' cultural development.
131. Good teaching and learning in Years 7 and 8 are due to the high expectations of the teacher, which motivate pupils of all abilities. Year 7 pupils use Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* as a stimulus for group compositions and appraise their own work and that of their peers. The dictation of rhythms is a regular part of lessons which helps to develop careful listening and counting of beats. Year 8 pupils build up their knowledge of serial music to compose in the style of Schoenberg, which demonstrates the broad scope of the music curriculum. In contrast, they use local folk songs such as *Katie's Conker* and the *Blackleg Miner* as starting points for development of their ballads. Good habits of physical exercises, breathing and voice exercises are used to warm-up before singing is attempted. In the lessons seen no homework was given. Attitudes are very good and occasional bouts of negative behaviour are soon checked so that learning is not disrupted.
132. There is good leadership and management of the subject by a co-ordinator who has a good rapport with pupils. All policies are in place and the scheme of work is

comprehensive. However, the teacher does not use National Curriculum levels to assess pupils. Music is taught in a mobile classroom that is in need of attention. Learning resources are good and music software has been purchased to support composition. There is a school show each year and joint concerts with the feeder schools. A small number of pupils learn to play instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Good standards of performance are achieved in gymnastics, athletics and swimming.
- Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress in practical skills.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and work hard in lessons.
- Good use is made of the local swimming pool and of coaches from the Community Into Sports initiative.
- Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently related to National Curriculum levels.
- The outdoor hard play areas are poorly marked and unfenced.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to plan and evaluate their work.
- There is not enough time for the subject leader to monitor and support the work of non-specialist teachers.

133. Good standards of performance are achieved because teachers make very good use of limited facilities to provide a full range of opportunities for pupils. A number of teachers teach the subject and all are keen and enthusiastic.

134. By the end of Year 6, standards in practical work are above those expected nationally. Standards in swimming are good and nearly all pupils in Year 5 can swim. In athletics, standards are good. Using the small hall/gymnasium pupils are taught the basics of sprinting and jumping. Some boys and girls in Year 6 lack control in throwing and catching. One of the reasons that standards are as good as they are is that pupils regularly get two lessons of physical education a week and the teaching is good.

135. By the end of Year 8, standards are in line with the national expectation. Pupils' achievement in volleyball in Year 7 is good considering that they are just learning the game. Many can dig and volley with a good degree of control. A display of photographs of gymnastics shows boys and girls with a good understanding of balance and composition. Pupils' performing skills are better than their planning and evaluating skills. Very few opportunities for these aspects to be developed are identified within schemes of work. There are no differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls.

136. Overall, teaching is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Teachers plan their lessons so that there is a gradual development of practical skills. Where teachers are knowledgeable and confident in the subject, they assess what pupils are doing and tell them how they can improve. This is of great benefit to pupils who find it difficult to learn physical skills. Routines and expectations have been clearly established and this enables the maximum use to be made of the time for learning. Teachers always begin lessons with a warm up. In some lessons in Years 5 and 6 not enough links are made with health education because teachers do

not explain the effect of exercise on the body. Not enough opportunities are given to pupils to lead these warm-up activities. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop and use their skills in speaking and listening and pupils listen exceptionally well. Relationships between pupils are very good and practising in pairs leads to good learning. This is an area that has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' behaviour is nearly always very good. In Years 7 and 8 pupils are sensible and mature. Some silly behaviour, often involving boys, occurs when teaching is not as good as it should be.

137. The department is well led by a hardworking subject leader. She is committed to providing the best possible range of activities to meet the needs of all pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities open to all. Talented pupils can participate in local competitions and some go on to represent the county, for example, in athletics. The department has a helpful plan to direct its work but the priorities are not sufficiently related to improving standards. There is not enough time for the subject leader to monitor and support non-specialist teachers, although she helps as much as she can in the time available. This was an issue at the previous inspection.
138. Assessment procedures are under-developed and are not sufficiently related to National Curriculum levels, despite these levels being used in reports to parents. Consequently, it is difficult to track pupils' progress other than through teachers knowing their pupils well. Reports have improved and provide good information to parents about the curriculum and about what their children have achieved. The department is well resourced. Good use is made of the limited indoor accommodation. However, outdoor accommodation could be better used if it was marked out for activities and was fenced. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Planning for the future development of the subject is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes in lessons.

Areas for improvement

- The time given to the subject is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- The curriculum does not place sufficient emphasis on developing pupils' skills of reflection and response.
- There are no subject specific assessment procedures.
- There is a narrow range of resources.

139. Standards are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement is unsatisfactory because there is not enough time allocated to the subject. The main reason why there is not enough time is that personal, social and health education is also taught within the time available. Although there are links between these two areas, they are planned separately and connections are not made between the two aspects. The school is aware of the situation and from September there is to be an increase in the time for religious education and a re-allocation of time for personal, social and health education.

140. During the inspection there were very few lessons in the subject taking place. Judgements are made therefore on the basis of these few lessons and on the basis of talking with pupils and looking at their work. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between different groups of pupils. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers are confident in planning to teach the basic beliefs of different religions. However, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on how these beliefs affect people's lives. They also do not encourage pupils to work out how they might respond to these beliefs. Improvement from the last inspection is unsatisfactory because standards are lower than they were then.
141. By the end of Year 6, standards are below the national expectation. The work seen of pupils in Year 5 is better than that in Year 6. There is a greater balance between learning about and learning from religion. Year 5 pupils write their own modern versions of incidents from the life of Jesus. Pupils with special educational needs write well-constructed short stories about being 'lost and found.' Year 6 pupils use terminology well in writing about different religions, but do not develop their own ideas and responses to key beliefs. Higher attainers show good literacy skills in summarising the Good Samaritan story. In the one lesson seen in this age range the teacher's well-prepared introduction gave pupils a clear understanding of the beginning of Lent. Pupils gave their own ideas on things to give up for Lent but their ideas were not explored fully in discussion. The teacher placed too much emphasis on writing activities.
142. By the end of Year 8, standards are below those expected nationally. Year 7 pupils can define the Trinity but in work seen they do not give their own responses to this concept. Teaching restricts learning about Islam in Year 7 to basic facts. Year 8 pupils' work has a similarly narrow focus. At the time of the inspection a factual study of Hinduism was the total of written work completed in one and a half terms. The progress of both higher and lower attainers is unsatisfactory because written work on specific religions is restricted in some cases to copied notes. In opinions expressed pupils displayed good attitudes but did not regard the subject positively in comparison with others. In the one lesson seen in this age range, however, teaching and learning were good. Pupils were each challenged at the start with the question 'What happens when you die?' This gained their interest well and was then linked clearly to the Bible account of Jesus' resurrection. Pupils were encouraged to express their own ideas about the Resurrection. Finally the lesson returned to the question posed at the start. Pupils were motivated because good use was made of their ideas. The teacher enabled them to learn from religion as well as learn about religion.
143. The newly appointed co-ordinator has identified key priorities. Schemes of work have been developed to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Resources have been purchased that should provide a good range of learning opportunities. Planning places too much emphasis on acquiring factual knowledge. There is insufficient emphasis placed on developing pupils' skills in applying their knowledge, for example to social and moral issues. Opportunities are not taken to link issues from the personal, social and health education course to religious belief and practice. There are no subject specific procedures for assessing pupils against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Until these changes happen, provision and assessment procedures remain unsatisfactory.