

INSPECTION REPORT

CATSHILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Bromsgrove

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116958

Headteacher: Mr Stewart R. Burns

Lead inspector: Michael Merchant

Dates of inspection: 15th – 17th September 2003

Inspection number: 258586

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

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Terms used in this report

*Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are at **Key Stage 3**, having transferred in most cases from their primary schools at the end of **Key Stage 2** after Year 6. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are at **Key Stage 4** of their education. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 follow courses and Programmes of Study set out in the National Curriculum. A course of religious education is a requirement for pupils and students of all ages at school.*

At the end of Year 9, pupils aged 14 take national tests in English, mathematics and science. In all subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers also make their own assessments of what the pupils know, understand and can do at age 14. Because Catshill is a Middle School, pupils transfer from First Schools at the end of Year 4, mid-way through Key Stage 2. They then move to the High School at the end of Year 8, towards the end of Key Stage 3.

*Inspectors judge the **standards** reached by pupils by comparing their attainments with national test and examination results, or by the levels of performance expected for pupils of the same age nationally. The pupils' **achievements** reflect whether they are doing well enough. These judgements take account of the educational **value added** over time. In this report, similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	512
School address:	Meadow Road Catshill Bromsgrove
Postcode:	B61 0JW
Telephone number:	01527 872431
Fax number:	01527 837113
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Doidge
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Catshill is a larger than average middle school with 512 boys and girls, situated in a semi-rural residential area just to the north of Bromsgrove. The pupils' attainment on entry is average and the social-economic background of most is favourable. A very large majority of the pupils are of white-British origin and none has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average but the proportion of pupils who have a special educational need (mainly social, emotional or behavioural) is above average. The number of pupils who joined and left the school other than at the usual times is fairly high. During the last two years a very high number of teachers, 14, have left the school and 16 have joined.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27368	M Merchant	Lead inspector	
9974	D Singh	Lay inspector	
19135	D Ebbage	Team inspector	Mathematics
31135	R Hobson	Team inspector	English
20243	D Benstock	Team inspector	Science
15051	L Kaufman	Team inspector	Design and technology Information and communication technology Special educational needs
30518	M Johnson	Team inspector	Art and design
30215	H Feasey	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography
20380	N Pinkey	Team inspector	History Religious education
11836	D Cronin	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
15304	R Fletcher	Team inspector	Music
13196	M Douch	Team inspector	Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

ISIS

3 Harrowby Road

West Park

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an ineffective school. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should because there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Leadership and management are poor and have not provided the drive to move standards up. Standards are average in Year 6 and below average in Year 8. The behaviour of a large minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and there is too much bullying. For these reasons, Catshill is not an inclusive school. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- In all years, pupils do not achieve as well as they are capable of. This is because teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall and in Years 7 and 8 are poor.
- The school's use of assessment is inconsistent and ineffective in helping pupils understand their progress and so help them move on.
- The leadership and management of the school are poor. This is a major reason why its pupils are not receiving a satisfactory standard of education. Governors, the headteacher and other key staff have been complacent and ineffective.
- The behaviour of a large minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and interrupts the learning of others.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development does not effectively support pupils' personal development, and is unsatisfactory.
- The breadth of the school's curriculum and the quality of accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.
- The school's provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is good.
- The partnership between the school and parents is weakly developed and parents are not sufficiently encouraged to support pupils' learning.

Since the school was last inspected in 1998, it has **declined significantly**. Standards have slipped and there is far more unsatisfactory teaching and learning. The school was left with four key issues after the last inspection, of which only one has been met. Although standards in mathematics have improved, weaknesses remain in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), for school planning and for pupils to take more responsibility for their learning.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspection Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school, because:

- Pupils are underachieving.
- There is far too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning.
- There are very serious weaknesses in how the school is led and managed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	C	D
Mathematics	C	C	C	E
Science	D	C	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils join the school with broadly average standards but **achievement overall is unsatisfactory** because there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Standards seen are average in Year 6 and in Year 8. The school does not identify its pupils who are gifted and talented, nor does it monitor the standards of its ethnic minority pupils and therefore does not meet their needs. Pupils with a special educational need achieve satisfactorily to Year 6 and achieve well to Year 8 because of well-planned teaching and a careful tracking of their progress. Pupils achieve well in design and technology and history because teaching and learning are consistently good. **Spiritual and moral provision does not adequately support pupils' attitudes and behaviour.** Bullying and other types of anti-social behaviour affect learning and achievement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides an unsatisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Teaching is unsatisfactory in every subject with the exception of design and technology, history and religious education. In nearly one in five lessons, teaching and learning are less than satisfactory. Teaching was consistently good in design and technology and history and here pupils are achieving well. In most lessons teachers know their subject well, and explain points clearly but learning is spoilt by fussy, immature disruptive behaviour that takes up a disproportionate amount of the teachers' time and so too many pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Teachers do not always match work to pupils' ability.

Computers are insufficiently used to help pupils learn. There are no overall systems in place to record and monitor pupils' assessments and test results in order to track progress. Pupils do not always know how well they are doing, or how to improve their work. The school does not sufficiently encourage parents to support their children's learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are poor. Governors have been complacent and have not sufficiently held the school to account for its standards. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has not systematically and realistically evaluated its work and is therefore largely ignorant of, or in denial about, the school's weaknesses. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are poorly developed. Too many senior staff are over-worked.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Although most parents and pupils are happy with the school, both groups expressed considerable concern about behaviour and bullying. The inspection team supports these concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the governing body plays a stronger role in shaping the direction of the school and holds the school to account.
- Take steps to ensure that the headteacher and key staff provide effective leadership and management of the school by more rigorously evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses and carefully planning in the medium and long term to drive up standards.
- Monitor rigorously and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Introduce an effective, whole-school policy to address inappropriate behaviour and bullying.
- Make better use of performance data to monitor pupils' progress and take steps early to redress underachievement.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship.
- Ensure that citizenship is planned for and taught.
- Ensure that all subjects make a planned contribution to the development of ICT skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupil's achievement is **unsatisfactory** in all years. Standards are **average** in Year 6 and in Year 8. The English language skills of pupils and their competence in mathematics are **average**, but their skills in ICT are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils with special educational needs achieve **satisfactorily** in Year 6 and **well** in Year 8. The school does not identify its pupils who are gifted and talented and their achievement is **unsatisfactory**. There are no pupils in the school who have English as an additional language.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the tests taken in 2002, pupils' achievement was well below average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The test results in 2003 showed an improvement.
- Too many pupils are working below the standards of which they are capable and achievement overall is unsatisfactory because there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning.
- Standards seen in science, ICT, music and physical education are below average because of weaknesses in teaching and because of a shortage of computers in the school.
- The school does not identify its pupils who are gifted and talented and therefore does not meet their needs.
- Pupils with a special educational need achieve satisfactorily to Year 6 and achieve well to Year 8 because of well-planned teaching and a careful tracking of their progress.

Commentary

Results in National Tests 2002

1. Results were average overall. They were average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels (5 and above) was well above average in English, average in mathematics, but well below average in science. Girls did better than boys in English and mathematics by a margin greater than that seen nationally, but in science, girls did much less well than boys.
2. The improvement in the school's results over time is broadly similar to that seen nationally. However, results in science fell sharply in 2002 and show a decline over the last three years. The test results in 2003 showed an improvement in all three subjects over the previous year.
3. Pupils did not make fast enough progress overall in relation to their prior attainment and overall achievement was unsatisfactory. The achievement of pupils in mathematics and science was poor. When compared with pupils in schools with similar attainment at the end of Year 2, the achievement of pupils at Catshill was well below average

Standards seen during the inspection

4. Children enter Catshill with standards that are broadly average. By Year 6 standards of work are still average overall, and are about average in Year 8. There is little difference in the standards of girls and boys. Above average standards were seen in design and technology in Years 7 and 8 and history in all years. This is because teaching and learning in these two subjects are consistently good. In English and mathematics, art and design, geography, religious education and French, standards are broadly average. Standards in science, ICT, music and physical education are below average. In each of the subjects in which standards are average or below average, there are significant pockets of unsatisfactory teaching and learning. There is more unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 7 and 8 and this is why

standards are lower in these years than in Years 5 and 6. Standards in ICT are depressed because of weaknesses in the co-ordination of the use of computers across all subjects in the school, and because there are not enough computers for teachers and pupils to use. It is a serious weakness of the school's management that robust mechanisms are not in place to check on the quality of teaching and to help teachers improve.

5. Too many pupils are working below the standards of which they are capable and achievement overall is unsatisfactory. This is because teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory. In nearly one lesson in five seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory or poor.
6. The school does not identify its pupils who are gifted and talented, nor does it monitor the standards of its ethnic minority pupils. In lessons seen, those few pupils belonging to an ethnic minority were achieving similarly to other pupils in the school. Gifted and talented pupils are not well catered for because teachers do not plan to meet the needs of these children.
7. Pupils with a special educational need achieve satisfactorily to Year 6 and achieve well to Year 8 because teachers are careful to match the work in lessons to the needs of these children. By the end of Year 6 the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs matches, and in many cases exceeds, the targets on their individual and group education plans. Statemented pupils have appropriate provision to meet the requirements of their statements. Good record-keeping and repeat testing ensures achievement is monitored effectively. Liaison with the first school supports a smooth transition to the middle school. Pupils are confident with their reading, writing and spelling because of the carefully structured programmes of support from the teaching assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator, plus the valuable work of parents in supporting the reading scheme through reading homework.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance rates have declined and are now **average** and pupils' punctuality to lessons is **satisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes to learning and school are **satisfactory** although behaviour is **unsatisfactory**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development does not effectively support pupils' personal development and is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy supporting the school and community as members of the school council and as fundraisers.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally satisfactory and support learning and personal development.
- Bullying and other types of anti-social behaviour are evident and supports the concerns of both parents and pupils, which affects the learning and achievements of pupils.
- Silly, immature and time-wasting behaviour in a significant number of lessons affects pupils' attitudes to learning and causes disruption to teaching.
- Exclusions are given as a last resort and pupils are provided with adequate support during the period of exclusion.
- The spiritual and moral provision does not adequately support pupils' attitudes or behaviour and makes a limited impact on their personal lives, both inside and outside of the school.

Commentary

8. Most pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and are on time for registration. Pupils' appropriate attendance supports their achievement and their personal development. Most teachers ensure that registers are marked appropriately, but not all registers comply with statutory requirement. The school and the education welfare officer were informed about the breach in registration requirements by inspectors and the issue was put right.

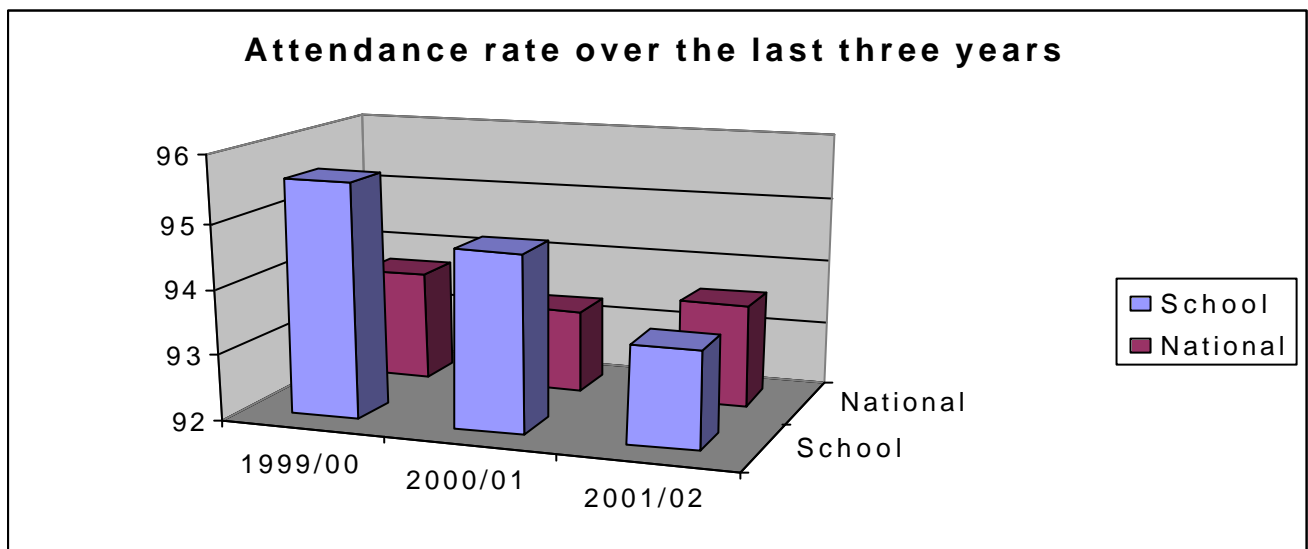
Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.2
National data	6.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.3

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

9. The graph below shows how the school's attendance rate has declined over the past three years when compared with the national average.



The school has not worked closely enough with outside agencies or with parents to redress this trend, nor does it have an effective computerised system for collecting and analysing attendance information.

10. Where teaching is well planned, interesting and lively (as in many design and technology, history and English lessons) pupils respond eagerly, forming very effective relationships with teachers. In these lessons pupils achieve in a confident and mature manner and make significant progress, responding enthusiastically and working independently in pairs and small groups. Pupils thrive when relationships such as these are allowed to develop and grow in maturity. Pupils with special educational needs display positive attitudes to their learning, good classroom relationships and improving independence. This stems from good teaching that plans well to meet the needs of these pupils. The result is that most pupils with special needs are confident, have high self-esteem and generally respect each other's views.
11. A significant minority of pupils (mainly boys and older girls) display silly, immature, boisterous and sometimes very anti-social behaviour. Many pupils challenge their teacher's authority, waste time and interrupt the learning of others. Often, too much of the teachers' time is taken in dealing with these disruptive pupils with the result that girls are neglected and fall behind in their learning. **Whilst most pupils treat adults with courtesy and respect, too many incidents occur where racist and abusive language.** Inspectors witnessed incidents of harassment and verbal bullying amongst pupils which caused distress and anguish to others. These incidents confirm some of the very serious concerns of anti-social behaviour reported by a large minority of parents and by a significant number of pupils during and prior to the inspection.

12. School managers and governors have not taken these concerns seriously enough. The school has not managed the disruptive behaviour of the minority of pupils well enough and lacks a concerted and uniformly applied strategy to deal with pupils who persistently spoil lessons.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	399	101	0
White – any other White background	4		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1		

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

13. All excluded pupils were supported during their expulsion and the school makes every effort to minimise disruption to pupils' learning. Whilst all pupils are interviewed and agree to observe the school's code of conduct, many of these pupils re-offend.
14. The school's approaches to the development of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are ineffective because:
- The school does not provide for a daily act of corporate worship that would offer a guided development of pupils' self-awareness and of wider spiritual issues.
 - The occasional acts of worship do not encourage pupils to reflect on their views of life, periods of reflection are very brief and not adequately directed, and prayers are rather superficial.
 - Pupils' awareness of other cultures is limited. The English curriculum does expose pupils to a wide range of multi-cultural texts. Further, there is no direct contact with other cultures or faith groups to enrich their understanding and to develop their awareness of the cultural traditions linked to alternative forms of society or worship.
15. The school does offer satisfactory opportunities for pupils' moral development; for instance, form tutor time and circle time are generally well used by pupils to explore personal relationships and moral attitudes. Clear moral messages are put across in assemblies and in several curriculum areas such as religious education and history. But the impact of these activities is limited because they are not reinforced in lessons. This is one reason why there is too much inappropriate behaviour and bullying at the school.
16. The school's prefect and monitor systems, paired reading scheme and opportunities for residential trips contribute positively to pupils' social development. The recently established school council enables pupils to participate in collective decision-making within the school and has already identified areas of school life that need addressing, such as behaviour and litter. However, the lack of an established and evaluated programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education in recent years has not helped pupils in their efforts to develop themselves as responsible, informed and caring members of society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **unsatisfactory** overall and in Years 7 and 8 are **poor**. The school's use of assessment to help pupils understand their progress and so help them move on is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in every subject with the exception of art and design, design and technology, history and religious education. In nearly one in five lessons, teaching and learning are less than satisfactory.
- Teaching was consistently good in design and technology and history and here pupils are achieving well.
- In most lessons teachers know their subject well, and explain points clearly.
- Learning is spoilt by fussy, immature, disruptive behaviour that takes up a disproportionate amount of the teachers' time and so too many pupils are not achieving as well as they should.
- Teachers do not match work to pupils' abilities.
- Computers are insufficiently used to help pupils learn.
- There are no overall systems in place to record and monitor pupils' assessments and test results in order to track progress. The school has an incomplete picture of how well pupils are achieving.
- The use of assessment data to set individual targets for improvement is inconsistent. Pupils do not always know how well they are doing, or how to improve their work.

Commentary

17. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is nearly twice that seen at the last inspection. This is because of:
- the complacent attitude of the headteacher, senior staff and some governors towards standards in the school:
 - the almost complete absence of a consistent and reliable mechanism for ensuring the quality of teaching and learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 68 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (8.8%)	27 (39.7%)	22 (32.4%)	12 (17.6%)	1 (1.5%)	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

18. The National Key Stage 3 strategy is beginning to be well applied in English, mathematics, science and French. Here, teachers use the strategy to structure lessons, but, as yet, lack the experience to time tasks so that pupils have a clear sense of achievement at the end of the lesson. The introductory part of too many lessons is too long, resulting in less time to develop main activities and conclusions. Too often, teachers do not leave enough time for a thorough plenary session to confirm pupils' achievements. In Years 5 and 6, literacy is soundly taught, with teachers using aspects of the national strategy to plan lessons.
19. In most lessons teachers know their subject well, and explain points clearly. They mostly exploit this knowledge well to use a good range of enjoyable activities to stimulate pupils and generate a keenness for the subject. In just over half of lessons seen, work is appropriately challenging, and skilfully and effectively tailored to pupils' capabilities. It is in these successful

lessons that are well planned, interesting and proceed at a rapid pace, that pupils are becoming increasingly well motivated and achieving well. Consequently, pupils show very positive attitudes because they are interested and stimulated by what they are doing.

20. Teachers in most lessons ensure that learning objectives are clearly explained to pupils at the beginning of most lessons. In this way, pupils know exactly what is expected of them and are able to judge how well they have achieved. In the better lessons, teachers present pupils with a range of quality resources to stimulate enquiry. In French, history and geography, pupils' learning is greatly enhanced and enriched by the use of visitors and visits.
21. The quality of marking and assessment in some subjects (for instance French and mathematics) ensures that pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and receive good guidance on how to improve to the next level. In other subjects, however, assessment is not consistent and some work is lightly or too generously marked.
22. In too many lessons, learning is spoilt by fussy, immature disruptive behaviour that takes up a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time. Too many pupils, notably boys, are persistently inattentive, disrupting their own work and that of others. This is one of the main reasons why too many pupils are not achieving as well as they should. Too many teachers fail to prevent the unsettled behaviour of a few pupils holding back the learning of the majority. This is made worst by the ineffectiveness of school management to deal with disruptive behaviour.
23. Another reason for the unsatisfactory achievement of many pupils is that learning is limited because teachers do not match work to pupils' ability. In classes that contain pupils of widely different abilities, teachers do not always successfully ensure that individual pupils are challenged and work is well matched to their capabilities. Learning is too often unsatisfactory either because the material provided is too difficult or teaching approaches are mainly traditional, dull and unimaginative, and pupils have insufficient opportunities for practical work. Computers are insufficiently used, either for research or in the production of written work, largely due to lack of computers or access to the ICT suite.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn well. The special educational needs co-ordinator and her team of assistants know their pupils well. Relationships are good and pupils are given opportunities to be independent. Teaching assistants have limited time to plan with their class teacher, which weakens their attempt to match work to pupils' needs. Exciting use of interactive computer programs improves pupils' spelling and reading and makes them proud of the work they complete. Assessment is good and pupils are constantly encouraged to discuss what they must do to improve.
25. Although there is now plenty of data available on standards of work and pupils' achievements from test results and from teachers' assessments, the school does not use this information in planning or tracking pupils' progress year by year. There is no agreed system that requires teachers to set and review rigorous individual targets for improvement. The school has an incomplete picture of how well pupils are doing. Good assessment practice has been developed, for example in mathematics, French and science, where results are used to track individual achievement and to modify the curriculum accordingly. The school has not established systems to share this good practice amongst other departments and so help to develop consistent and rigorous procedures.
26. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, often with encouraging comments. The practice of relating the standard of work to national levels is inconsistent and so pupils do not always know how their work compares with others outside this school. Examples of detailed marking in several subjects including design and technology, French and geography celebrate pupils' achievements and give them challenging targets for improvement. The lack of constructive marking in music, in ICT and in physical education means that pupils do not know the standards that they have reached or how to improve their work. The school does not monitor

the use of assessment information to meet the needs of pupils identified as gifted and talented. The challenge provided for these pupils is, therefore, inconsistent.

The curriculum

The breadth of the school's curriculum is **unsatisfactory**. The school's provision for enrichment and extra-curricular activities is **good**. The quality of accommodation and resources meets the needs of the curriculum **unsatisfactorily**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements in respect of a daily act of corporate worship and in the cross-curricular delivery of ICT.
- The school's timetable is broad and generally well balanced, although the allocation to music is slightly below the national average.
- There is good curriculum enrichment through a range of extra-curricular activities and visits.
- In art and design and design and technology inadequate accommodation is a barrier to learning.
- Poor management and co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum holds back learning.
- The library is too small to provide adequate learning resource to support a large middle school.
- The curriculum makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special needs.

Commentary

27. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught and all pupils have equality of access to all curriculum areas. Pupils make an early start to the learning of French in Year 6. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in most subject areas in Years 5 and 6. Teachers make good use of class discussion called circle time and this activity is now well-established and proving valuable in allowing pupils to address sensitive issues in their relationships.
28. The planned use of ICT across the curriculum was a key issue at the previous inspection and little has been achieved since then. There remains very restricted and limited access to computers by subject areas within timetable time. The teaching of personal, social, health and citizenship education has only just started and the vast majority of pupils in the school have received little or no teaching in this area of the National Curriculum. These weaknesses reflect serious weakness in the management of the school's curriculum by the headteacher and other key staff.
29. One of the school's strengths is its provision for extra-curricular activities. This provision is well organised and provides a good range of clubs and sporting activities outside the school day, although provision for the use of ICT outside school time is limited. Take-up is generally good with pupils from various backgrounds participating. One particular strength is the attention the school pays to organised visits. The early start to learning French is well supported through a French club and a residential trip to Normandy in Year 7. Pupils are also developing links with a school in Montpellier. An opportunity to make an early start to learning German is offered through a lunchtime club. Educational visits and visitors are well used to provide curriculum enrichment in geography and history. Fieldwork trips provide opportunities to develop a range of geographical skills, and visits to museums and period houses offer pupils rich experiences to develop further awareness and empathy with a particular period of history. These visits play a big part in helping pupils form effective relationships with each other and with other adults.
30. The school uses its own and public facilities to offer a wide range of sporting activities, and there is a regular programme of inter-house and inter-school competition in several sports. Pupils in Year 6 present a major production of drama, music and dance in the summer term, involving every pupil in the year group. The strength of music reported at the previous inspection has declined.

31. The school has sound links with other schools to ensure there is consistency in curriculum coverage. Valuable work has also been achieved through these links in developing procedures for assessment of pupils. All relevant data on the Year 8 pupils is forwarded to schools to which pupils transfer.
32. Accommodation is safe and generally adequate for its purpose although practical subjects have limited storage space. In art and design, and design and technology, inadequate accommodation is a barrier to learning and health and hygiene, because the rooms are for multi-use, and lack basic equipment and adequate ventilation. Although most subjects have adequate resources there are deficiencies in the provision and management of specific resources that have an adverse effect on teaching and learning. Lack of management and co-ordination of ICT has an impact on all curriculum areas. The library also lacks ICT and is too small to provide adequate learning resources to support a large middle school.
33. Pupils with special educational needs have a modified curriculum, stronger in some areas than others. There is equal access to all areas of extra-curricular activities including drama and sport. Accommodation is very good, bright and well organised, having a positive impact on learning. Reading schemes and well-structured booklets as well as interactive computer programs aid learning in the special needs department.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures the care, welfare health and safety of pupils **satisfactorily**. Pupils are provided with **satisfactory** support advice and guidance. The school succeeds in involving pupils in the life of the school, but seeks out and acts on pupils' views **unsatisfactorily**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff, particularly form tutors, work well with pupils, ensuring they receive appropriate information, support and guidance, as well as supervision.
- The arrangements for child protection ensure that the school community receives adequate information, support and guidance, and that the governors and the designated teacher work diligently to ensure they comply with the law.
- Tutors keep careful records of pupils' personal development, which are passed on to the next stage of education.
- The school has failed to address the anti-social behaviour of some pupils and this affects learning and the personal and emotional development of some pupils.
- Pupils' personal records of anti-social behaviour, including racism, are not detailed and this affects the support and investigation process.
- Some registers are not adequately maintained to include the number of pupils in school and this has implications for the safety and well-being of the school community.

Commentary

34. The school's approach to pupils' pastoral support, welfare and guidance, arrangements for child protection and its policy for health and safety ensure the school community learns in a safe and secure environment.
35. The governors and the designated teacher for child protection ensure that the arrangements for child protection are appropriately implemented and complement the provision for health and safety. The existing procedures for the safety and welfare are regularly monitored, evacuation procedures are known to pupils and regular risk assessments are undertaken. The programme enables members of the school community to learn in a safe and secure environment.

36. The new personal, social and health education programme includes information and guidance on drugs education and sex education and ensures that pupils can make informed choices about health, safety and personal relationships. This provision supports pupils' personal, emotional and social development, as well as their welfare and well-being.
37. Many teachers and support staff are caring and ensure that pupils' individual and collective concerns are addressed and that they receive good quality information, support and guidance. This supervision enables the majority of pupils to learn as caring and considerate pupils.
38. The pastoral team ensures that pupils' personal records are passed on to the next stage of pupils' education. This complements the information provided by the first school and the information passed on to the secondary school. This readily assists staff to support and assess pupils' individual needs and place them in appropriate classes and sets. All pupils in Year 5 and Year 8 are given purposeful opportunities to integrate into their new school through a helpful induction programme. These arrangements support pupils' progress and assist a smooth transition to the next stage of their education. Parents who value the contribution of staff support the provision. Pupils with special needs are set in smaller groups that enable them to take an active part in lessons. Lessons in the special needs department are matched to each pupil's need, but this is not consistent in all lessons.
39. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and concerns through surveys and the school council. For example, the school's anti-bullying policy has been developed with the effective support of pupils. The school council has worked hard to combat the litter problem by improving the quality and quantity of litterbins around the school. However, a significant number of pupils presently in the school rightly believe their concerns about anti-social behaviour are not fully addressed. The inspection team agree with these views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is **ineffective** and this affects the relationships between school and parents. However, links with other schools and the community are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The partnership between the school and parents is not well developed.
- The school fails to address some important concerns raised by parents.
- The school has an ineffective relationship with many of its parents.
- Parents rightly report that their child's progress needs to be reported in a more clear, concise and accessible style.
- Communication between the school and home, as well as parents' concerns, needs to be more effectively addressed.

Commentary

40. The school provides appropriate information through its parents' evenings, newsletters, the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. But the information about pupils' standards and progress shared through the pupils' annual report is often unclear and affects the parents' understanding of their child's progress.
41. The school elicits parents' views through surveys but it is evident that parents' concerns are not appropriately addressed and this affects the relationship between parents and the school. ***School managers and some governors have a complacent and dismissive attitude towards the very real concerns of parents, particularly with regard to poor behaviour and bullying.***

42. Parents are invited to support the school's parents' association, which works well to help the school and parents to work closely and support learning in school and the community. A significant number of parents support school events, particularly sports events. Parents also recognise the importance of regular attendance and, when given the opportunity, readily work closely with the school to raise existing levels of attendance. Parents support their child's homework tasks by supporting them at home. However, the level of interaction and communication between parents and staff is ineffective and this affects the contribution that parents make to their child's learning.
43. The school has sound links with its wider community, particularly with its feeder schools and the church. Representatives from these organisations regularly visit the school to support pupils' learning and help them to make progress. However, there are no links between the school and other places of worship and this affects the preparation of pupils to live and learn in a multi-cultural and multi-racial society.
44. The majority of parents of pupils with special educational needs take an active part in annual reviews, but contact with parents whose children have more general special needs is not well developed. Parents participate in the reading scheme and pupils are proud to show the comments by their parents in their reading records. There are good links with the first school when pupils move to the middle school. Some teaching assistants move up with their target pupil so the move is smooth and learning is consistent and there are links with the upper school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **poor** and this is a major reason why its pupils are not receiving a satisfactory standard of education. The governance of the school is **unsatisfactory** and the leadership of the headteacher is **poor**. The quality of leadership of other key staff is also **poor**, as is the effectiveness of the management of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors have been complacent and have not sufficiently held the school to account for its standards.
- The leadership of the headteacher has been poor because he has not provided the unremitting drive needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise standards enough.
- The school, under the leadership of the headteacher, has not systematically and realistically evaluated its work and is therefore largely ignorant or in denial about the school's weaknesses.
- The headteacher and other key staff have failed to establish consistent and rigorous procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, which is one reason why 19 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection were unsatisfactory.
- The school does not understand the principles of best value and provides unsatisfactory value for money.
- Too many teachers have left the school over the past two years.

Commentary

45. The leadership of the school's governing body is unsatisfactory because, although they are loyal and supportive to the school, they have not held it sufficiently to account for its weaknesses. Most governors have been complacent, not asking the searching questions of the school managers they need to if they are to be the school's critical friends. Many governors know what school they would like Catshill to be; others think it is that school now, because they do not have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors have played an insignificant role in shaping the overall direction and ethos of the school. For instance governors had very little involvement in the production of the school development

plan, a document that is devoid of vision. The governing body do not fulfil some important statutory duties:

- they have not ensured that a daily act of collective worship takes place;
 - the school does not meet the National Curriculum requirement for all subjects to make a contribution to pupils' ICT skills.
46. The headteacher is committed to the school and inspires the loyalty of most staff and pupils. His leadership is poor, however, because he has not promoted the relentless drive for consistent and improved achievement. Instead, he has nurtured a culture where too many governors and members of the leadership team look outside the school for reasons for its inadequate performance rather than finding ways, within the school, of raising standards. The result is that governors and other key staff share the headteacher's complacency about the performance of the school. The headteacher does not fully understand the principles of best value. Under his leadership there is an absence of a swift exploration and implementation of how others manage to do things better.
47. ***The very high degree of dissatisfaction by parents and pupils with regard to poor behaviour and bullying, which is supported by inspectors, the racial abuse directed towards one of the inspection team, and the unsatisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, mean that Catshill is not an inclusive school.***
48. The school is poorly managed because it does not carefully and scrupulously evaluate its work and then take effective steps to improve. In particular:
- the school's self-evaluation is superficial and bears very little resemblance to the reality of the objective performance data;
 - the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour and does not involve heads of department enough, and clear pointers for improvement are not always given. For instance, when teaching shows weaknesses, support is not always offered and further monitoring undertaken. ***One reason for this is that, often, those senior managers who carry out the monitoring fail to recognise weaknesses in the teaching they observe;***
 - the leadership team have not been effective in their role as quality assurance managers. They have applied the processes of monitoring inconsistently and ineffectively;
 - the school collects data, but does not use it to secure improvements in pupils' achievements;
 - the school's development plan is a very weak instrument for securing school improvement. It has far too many aims, they are not prioritised and it is muddled as to how it will raise standards;
 - although the school monitors its results, conclusions about its performance differ from those indicated by national data. Consequently, the action it is taking to raise standards lacks appropriate focus.

The result of all the above is that in nearly one lesson in five seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were less than satisfactory and most pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

49. Arrangements for staff performance management are satisfactory. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, benefit from good induction procedures. There is a good level of commitment to continuing professional development, which enables teachers to keep abreast of national strategies, for example in literacy and numeracy. There is a limited involvement in initial teacher training. The impact of these initiatives is reduced by high staff turnover. Substantial numbers of staff have left the school recently, for a variety of reasons. The school has done well to fill vacancies and to increase the number of subject specialists. However, with so many responsibilities shared among a fairly small staff, some teachers have an unacceptably heavy workload, with inevitable consequences for standards.

50. Inspectors were unable to judge whether the school's finances are effectively managed on a day-to-day basis because the school was unable to provide any recent auditor's reports. Financial planning is completely unrelated to development planning, however, and therefore managers are unable to evaluate the effectiveness of their spending decisions. The school has carried a very large surplus (over 8 per cent of budget) over the last two years, but plans to use this on capital building in the next financial year. The school's high unit costs and the overall unsatisfactory achievement of its pupils mean that it gives unsatisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1171985
Total expenditure	1074643
Expenditure per pupil	2098

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	105850
Balance carried forward to the next	97342

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' oral skills are well developed.
- Skills of literary analysis are introduced effectively in Year 7.
- Pupils develop moral and spiritual understanding through literature, well.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Some lessons have over-long starters, leaving insufficient time for main activities and summing-up.
- Computers are not used regularly enough to support learning.

Commentary

Test results

51. In the 2002 National Tests, taken at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were average compared with all schools nationally but below average when compared with similar schools. Pupils did better in these tests than they did in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement for this year group was unsatisfactory. Girls performed better than boys, and the gap between them was broadly similar to the national picture.

Standards and achievement

52. When pupils enter the school, their standards are broadly average. In work seen, by the end of Year 6, pupils' reading and writing are average. The majority can write straightforward sentences accurately, using largely correct spelling and punctuation at the ends of sentences. They understand how writers develop themes and characters and can themselves write from different viewpoints. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are a little above average. Most can express their ideas clearly and confidently using appropriate vocabulary. In Years 7 and 8, pupils develop the skills of literary analysis and are introduced to a good range of literature, including Chaucer, Shakespeare, and writing from other cultures. By the end of Year 8 they are able to write imaginative pieces as though they were someone in a play or novel, or write about a character, such as Lady Macbeth. They continue to develop confidence in speaking and listening for a variety of purposes. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily in all years and there is little difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

Teaching and learning

53. Pupils' learning is satisfactory across the school. In Years 5 and 6, literacy is soundly taught, with teachers using aspects of the national strategy to plan lessons. They know the subject well, and explain points clearly. Work is usually appropriately challenging. In Years 7 and 8, teaching, too, is satisfactory with similar features enabling pupils to learn about both language and literature. The introductory part of some lessons is rather over-long, resulting in less time to develop main activities and conclusions. Some lessons make insufficient use of resources such as overhead projectors and whiteboards, or more stimulating learning methods. Computers are insufficiently used, either for research or in the production of written work. There are some examples of very helpful marking, with teachers writing clear and sometimes detailed comments and targets. Assessment is not, however, consistently good, and some work is lightly or too generally marked.

Leadership and management

54. The head of the department has not been long in post. She has a clear vision for developing the subject, but a lot of ideas are at an early stage. Management is currently satisfactory. Performance data is starting to be used to track progress, however the monitoring of lessons has been weak. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, with particular attention being given to developing schemes of work and lesson plans in line with the National Literacy Strategy. Standards have risen, mirroring the national trend.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Literacy is taught in Years 5 and 6 largely using the National Literacy Strategy methods and, overall, pupils show average achievement, across subjects. There are some examples of more effective practice. For example, in rooms in which science is taught, key words are displayed on walls and technical terms are clearly reinforced with correct spellings emphasised. There is a good emphasis in geography lessons on developing different kinds of writing and pupils are also encouraged to speak confidently and fluently.
56. By the end of Year 8, pupils' literacy skills are broadly average. The school is at an early stage of using the National Literacy Strategy techniques in Years 7 and 8. It has a literacy policy, but this has not yet made a consistent impact. Some subjects are making useful contributions by, for example, creating 'word walls', such as in a textiles room, but this practice is not spread across the school. There are 'catch up' classes, targeting the lowest attaining pupils in English.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Year 7 helps these pupils to achieve well.
- Good leadership and management are effective in providing a strong sense of direction and teamwork.
- Good assessment procedures give pupils a clear sense of their progress and how to improve.
- Some initiatives are not yet effective in bringing about improvement.
- A significant number of Year 8 pupils lack concentration, which hinders their progress.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

57. By the end of Year 6, all pupils make satisfactory achievement in learning vocabulary within a limited range of personal topics. Higher attaining pupils do not make the expected progress because all pupils do the same work. By the end of Year 8, many higher attaining pupils write brief accounts using past tenses, whilst others are beginning to learn these tenses. Pupils in middle sets lack confidence and express themselves poorly in both oral and written work. Pupils with special educational needs often make better progress than expected because good teaching keeps them interested. In lessons seen, Year 7 pupils respond to good teaching and participate willingly. In Year 8, however, pupils' attitudes are not as positive. They show less enthusiasm and are often inattentive, affecting progress. There are twice as many girls than boys in higher attaining groups. Girls concentrate better.

Teaching and learning

58. Pupils learn satisfactorily because, overall, the quality of teaching is sound. In Year 6, pupils' learning is limited because they have little time and because teachers do not match work to ability. However, teachers use a good range of enjoyable activities to stimulate an initial keenness for a new subject. In Years 7 and 8, work is more effectively tailored to pupils' capabilities. Teachers apply the National Key Stage 3 Strategy to structure lessons, but, as yet, lack the experience to time tasks so that pupils have a clear sense of achievement at the end of the lesson. However, the quality of marking and assessment ensures that pupils are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and receive good guidance on how to improve to the next level. Though individual lessons are well planned and resourced, some activities lack clarity of purpose and do not deliver lesson objectives. Oral standards are below average because teachers do not ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to exchange information in French. Listening skills are adequately developed because teachers use French well to conduct lessons.

Leadership and management

59. There is good awareness of national requirements, and a collective willingness to implement these to raise standards. The department's self-evaluation is thorough and incisive, so that planning is well directed. Weaknesses highlighted at the previous inspection have been rectified, especially in the monitoring of work and in assessment. However, plans to support learning through the use of ICT are thwarted by lack of access to facilities.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory	

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers insist on good behaviour in their classes.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and often very good.
- The quality and thoroughness of marking are good.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in developing mathematical concepts.
- Mathematics across the curriculum is at a very early stage of development.

Commentary

Test results

60. In the 2002 National Tests, taken at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were average compared with all schools nationally but well below average when compared with similar schools. Pupils did better in these tests than in science, but not as well as in English. Results in mathematics have improved over the last four years at a rate similar to the national average. Pupils' achievement was poor. Girls performed better than boys, and the gap between them was broadly similar to the national picture.

Standards and achievement

61. When pupils enter the school, standards are average. Current standards are average in Year 6 and Year 8 and pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Achievement is better than that indicated in the national tests because of the effective use made of the National Numeracy Strategy and well-focused teaching in Year 6. Higher attaining pupils understand the rules for multiplying positive and negative numbers, and complete calculations quickly and efficiently. Lower attaining pupils do not have a secure knowledge of number bonds, but can find the factors of two-digit numbers. Pupils with special educational needs are usually placed in lower sets which have a smaller number of pupils and in which the pace of learning is appropriate for their needs, and they achieve satisfactorily.

Teaching and learning

62. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Almost all the lessons observed are at least satisfactory, and half the teaching is good or better. Teachers show a good command of the subject for the level at which they teach. Learning objectives are clearly specified to pupils at the beginning of most lessons. Long-term planning is detailed and medium-term planning is agreed between teachers. Several three-part lessons are seen, which follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. In a few lessons, the mental starter part of the lesson takes too long, and this does not leave enough time for the main part of the learning. Also, teachers do not always leave enough time for a thorough plenary session to confirm pupils' achievements. Teaching approaches are mainly traditional, and pupils have insufficient opportunities for practical work within lessons. The use of ICT for learning mathematics is underdeveloped.

63. Teachers assess pupils' work very regularly. Exercise books are thoroughly marked and teachers' comments give good guidance about how pupils can make progress. Teachers keep detailed records of test and assessment results; these are carefully analysed to discover

areas of knowledge that require further understanding. Targets are set and pupils know what they must do to improve their mathematics.

Leadership and management

64. Two members of staff have responsibility for mathematics. This system works satisfactorily as they work closely together and share ideas sensibly. Both have a clear vision about how to develop the mathematics department, and understand the pressures to increase the levels of attainment. Both have observed lessons in the department, have records of the teaching and learning, and help other teachers to develop their skills. They have analysed pupils' exercise books and commented on progress and on the quality of marking. Teachers who are new to the department comment that they have received very high levels of support.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented in terms of the three-part lesson in mathematics, which works well in some lessons. Few other departments have yet planned for the use of numeracy in their subjects and provision is unsatisfactory, though there are opportunities in science to use databases, and the use of numeracy in design and technology is very well planned and monitored. Pupils perform simple calculations, use spatial awareness in design programmes, and test the accuracy of measurements in resistant materials. In geography, pupils use graphs satisfactorily and collect data from fieldwork investigations. While learning about the French revolution in history, pupils use data to compare the death rates of the peasant classes and the aristocracy. There is no reference to a numeracy policy in music. In ICT, pupils compile spreadsheets and use formulae satisfactorily.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership lacks drive to push up standards, and management fails to adequately monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
- Standards observed are below average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 and achievement in Years 5 and 6 is unsatisfactory.
- Examination performance was well below the national average and that of similar schools in 2002, but performance improved significantly in 2003.
- Unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 occur because there is insufficient provision of work to match the needs of all pupils, lack of specialist teaching and unsatisfactory management of the behaviour of a minority of pupils.
- Well-organised teachers develop good relationships with the majority of pupils to ensure their interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT in pupils' learning, largely because there is insufficient access for them to ICT resources.
- There is insufficient development of investigative skills, especially in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

Test results

66. In the 2002 National tests, taken at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were well below average compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Pupils did not do as well in science as they did in mathematics and English. Results in science have improved over the last four years at a rate similar to the national average but fell sharply in 2002. Pupils' achievement was poor. Girls performed worse than boys. In 2003, results have improved; most notably, the percentage of pupils gaining level 5 or higher has increased significantly. In 2003, there is little difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Standards and achievement

67. Pupils enter the school in Year 5, with average knowledge and understanding of basic scientific ideas but below average development of investigative skills. The work seen of pupils in Year 6 through lesson observation and analysis of their work reflects the improvements found in recent examinations, but standards remain below average. Pupils' achievement in the first two years is unsatisfactory, not least because there is a policy of not using specialist teaching or the available specialist laboratories. In Years 7 and 8, pupils have specialist teaching and achievement is satisfactory. Standards seen in Year 8 remain below average. Investigative skills are improved but not at a sufficiently satisfactory pace.

Teaching and learning

68. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory and are better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. In the later years, pupils are placed into classes based upon their prior attainment and teachers provide a satisfactory range of work to suit the ability of pupils in the set. In Years 5 and 6, classes contain pupils of widely different abilities and the extent to which individual pupils are challenged is not well matched to their capabilities. Provision for those pupils with special educational needs is similarly unsatisfactory, although classroom assistants often provide helpful support. Opportunities to use ICT in lessons are not sufficiently exploited, largely due to lack of computers or access to the ICT suite. In a minority of lessons unsettled behaviour of a few pupils is allowed to hold back the learning of the majority. Nevertheless, teachers are well organised and committed to improvement, and develop good relationships with the majority of pupils which encourage their good motivation, attitudes and interest.

Leadership and management

69. The department is led unsatisfactorily because there remains insufficient determination to raise achievement. Good support, however, is given to colleagues with the result that there is a strong team approach. The high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning renders its management unsatisfactory. In particular, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent and ineffective. Resources are kept at a good level apart from those in ICT, and curriculum development based on recent national initiatives is taking place. Enthusiastic use of assessment and performance data is beginning to enable progress on setting targets for pupils and identifying areas of underachievement. There is an increasing rigour in development planning. Since last year, examination results have improved after a previous declining trend but overall, since the last inspection, improvement has been unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Below average	Average

Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Good

Leadership	Poor
Management	Poor
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Commentary

Standards and achievement

70. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are below average and their achievement is unsatisfactory. A very high turn-over of staff, lack of consistent communication with the first school and no planning or monitoring of the use of computers across curriculum subjects contribute to pupils' lack of knowledge and understanding. Skills are taught, but lack of opportunity to practise those skills away from direct ICT lessons diminishes pupils' achievement.
71. By the end of Year 8, pupils' standards are average and achievement is good in pockets, but satisfactory overall; word processing, spreadsheets and general research and communication skills have been taught well but not practised and embedded. Using computers to control light, sound and movement or to help in measuring results of experiments are weaknesses. Years 7 and 8 benefited from specialist, monitored use of ICT when they were in Years 5 and 6. This grounding has given them enthusiasm and confidence to use computers at home.

Teaching and learning

72. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall but are good in Years 7 and 8. At present temporary unqualified staff are teaching units taken from the national programme but planning fails to take note of pupils' prior learning. For example, a Year 6 lesson to encourage the merging of text and graphics did not meet its targets because pupils were not able to cope with the copy typing exercise so did not achieve the target of merging documents. This led to lack of concentration and effort from the pupils and too high a demand on help from the teacher. The result is that in Years 5 and 6 pupils struggle with ICT. Homework is rarely set. In Years 7 and 8 pupils have gained skills from their previous teachers and, through well-planned and interesting lessons, pupils are becoming increasingly well motivated.

Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are poor and there is no long-term appointment to teach ICT. A technician visits the school at variable times to troubleshoot problems. All subjects with the exception of physical education highlight ICT as an urgent area for development but teachers have restricted access and need additional training to build their confidence.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. There is no co-ordination, leadership or vision for ICT across the curriculum. The use of ICT across all subjects of the curriculum is *ad hoc*, poorly planned and hindered by an acute lack of computers. The school is not meeting its statutory duty to teach ICT through all subjects of the curriculum. As a result, there are severe weaknesses in pupils' ICT skills, knowledge and understanding, compounded by lack of planned, monitored, cross-subject computer use. In English, mathematics and science, opportunities to use ICT in lessons are not sufficiently exploited, largely due to lack of computers or access to the ICT suite. Pupils used the Internet well in design and technology to support their healthy eating research. Pupils were able to use *PowerPoint* to develop presentations and some data logging in Year 7 science. At this stage there are still gaps in pupils' ICT skills, knowledge and understanding. There is insufficient communication with the upper school to aid the transition into Year 9.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and have high expectations of pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well as a result.
- Very good use is made of educational visits and visitors to enrich learning.
- Tasks set for lower attaining pupils do not always take account of their prior attainment.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

75. By the end of Year 6 pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the key events and personalities in the periods studied. They use resources well to gain understanding of the social and economic conditions of the times. They are creative in their thinking and writing, producing imaginative narrative versions of events from a personal viewpoint. By the end of Year 8, pupils have good, mature historical skills. They have a sound appreciation of the social and political climates that led to civil conflicts such as the English Civil War and the French Revolution. They use language well to discuss their ideas with clarity and fluency.

Teaching and learning

76. Pupils in all years learn well as a result of the good quality of teaching. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan lessons that are interesting, challenging and that actively engage all pupils. They present pupils with a range of quality resources to stimulate enquiry. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced and enriched by the use of visitors, and visits to historical buildings and museums. These activities are well planned and integrated into the teaching scheme. Written tasks demand thought and research, and role-play is well used to develop language skills and empathy with the period. Role-play is very effectively used as an aid to learning. Homework is well used to extend learning.

Leadership and management

77. The department is well led and managed. Since the previous inspection good progress has been made. Standards have been maintained and the number, range and quality of visits has been increased. The quality of curriculum planning contributes significantly to pupils' learning.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Very good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly appointed leader has a clear vision of how to improve the subject.
- Very good teaching in a few lessons in Years 7 and 8 results in very good learning for these pupils.
- Good improvements in enquiry work encourage pupils' interest.
- There is no effective monitoring of teaching and learning, which, as a result, are variable in quality.
- Assessment of work is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how well they are achieving.

Standards and achievement

78. In 2002 at the end of Year 6, no teacher assessments were recorded to show the standard of pupils' work. Inspection evidence in work seen shows that standards are average. Achievement is satisfactory. More capable pupils write moving, accurate accounts of flood damage. They understand how to read simplified maps and how river systems develop. Less capable pupils make valid comparisons between their own environment and others. New schemes of work do not always provide appropriate activities for pupils and so they lose interest when they do not understand what to do.
79. At the end of Year 8, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. When teaching is good, standards are above average and all pupils achieve well in debates about topical issues and in independent and group research activities. Very limited access to ICT in lessons prevents higher achievement. Pupils with special educational needs have difficulty in writing accurately but when work is adapted for them they learn as well as others. In lessons where the behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils are unsatisfactory, learning for all pupils is reduced and the standard of work is below average.

Teaching and learning

80. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers work well together, sharing resources and evaluating their work informally. Until this term there has been no subject leader for several years and so teachers' individual efforts and expertise have been hampered by the lack of departmental monitoring, policies and targets. The department benefits from experienced, specialist teachers, especially in Years 7 and 8. The minority of very good lessons observed were very well planned and proceeded at a rapid pace, with activities adapted to a wide range of needs. Pupils showed very positive attitudes because they were interested in and stimulated by what they were doing. In contrast, learning was unsatisfactory in some other lessons either because the material provided was too difficult or the teacher could not control the disruptive behaviour of a group of boys and girls.

Leadership and management

81. The newly appointed head of department is already providing satisfactory leadership and management. He has produced a development plan, based on the weaknesses identified in the previous report, and is tackling the task ahead with vision, energy and enthusiasm. As yet there is no plan for monitoring teaching rigorously and for eliminating unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons. Assessment systems that record the standard of pupils' work and focus on setting targets to improve the achievement of all pupils are at an early stage of development. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop personal views of spirituality.
- The absence of direct links with other faiths restricts pupils' understanding of today's multi-cultural society.
- Pupils have limited understanding of the value of reflection and prayer.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

82. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound understanding of the key features and beliefs of the Christian faith, its symbols and festivals and are achieving satisfactorily. They recall accurately key events in the life of Jesus and some of his teachings, which they interpret in their own words through re-telling some of the parables. Pupils understand the elements of Sikhism, Islam and Judaism and demonstrate sensitivity to these different faiths. By the end of Year 8 pupils have gained a deeper sense of their own spirituality through writing psalms and assessing their own views of God. However, skills of reflection and prayer are less well developed. They gain much from studying the lives of several 20th century spiritual leaders and from debating such issues as prejudice and persecution.

Teaching and learning

83. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons well with clear learning objectives and high expectations of pupils. Lessons are led at good pace and pupils are given many opportunities to express their own views and debate fundamental issues. Pupils generally respond well and respect each other's views. Religious artefacts from all faiths are well used to add interest and relevance, and are treated with due respect. Pupils gain much from a visit to local Christian churches, but no concrete links have been developed with other faiths. Pupils generally achieve well as a result of the good quality of the teaching.

Leadership and management

84. The subject is satisfactorily led. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Sound standards have been maintained and curriculum planning is now firmly based around learning objectives. No progress has yet been achieved on forging links with other faiths. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, personal and moral development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall provision in design and technology is **very good**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very Good

Leadership	Very Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of assessment, including pupils' self-assessment, is very good.
- Achievement by the end of Year 8 is very good because of innovative and high calibre specialist teaching and very high expectations in Years 7 and 8.
- Inspirational leadership has the vision and confidence to drive the department forward.
- ICT is under-used to enhance learning because of whole-school problems of co-ordination of ICT.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

85. Pupils begin their study of design and technology with below average standards. By the end of Year 6, pupils' designing and making are average and this represents good achievement for boys and for girls. Teachers assess pupils on entry to the school and use these assessments well to plan learning. This ensures teachers build on pupils' prior learning from the first school. Technical vocabulary, handling a range of materials and working to a structured design system are average; there is a good emphasis on food and textiles work. By the end of Year 8, pupils' standards of work are above expectation and achievement is very good in both designing and making. The assessment of pupils is used to make sets for two years. This enables acceleration for higher ability pupils and good support for those who have difficulties with learning.

Teaching and learning

86. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Years 7 and 8. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught to design and make by their class teachers. These teachers are non-specialists who become confident in the subject because of the very detailed planning and training given by the subject leader. Lessons are exciting. Pupils' enthusiasm, together with a clear and structured approach to designing and making, enables them to build up their confidence in handling tasks such as the design and embellishment of a draw-string bag, and the production of a batch of biscuits.

87. In Years 7 and 8 pupils' achievement moves up a gear to very good because of specialist teaching and clear criteria in each unit of work. The development of resistant materials, and systems and control are not taught well because of the lack of computers. This issue is highlighted in the development plan for immediate action. Attitudes are always very good because of the short-term targets in lessons that maintain a rigorous pace, the active involvement of pupils in their learning which inspires independence, and the very wide range of teaching and learning methods to encourage very good research and decision making.

Leadership and management

88. The department is very well led and effectively managed. Excellent subject knowledge is teamed with a very good philosophy on children's learning. The head of department is a motivator with high expectations of staff and pupils. Technical teaching assistants in design and technology make a huge contribution to the organisation and smooth operation of the department. The good links with the upper school and the developing links with the first school are strengthening designing and making across pupils' education career. There has been good progress since the last inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Satisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The use of sketchbooks for research and development in all years is good and enhances learning.
- Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships and pupils benefit from personal tuition and guidance.
- The display of work is good and creates a positive learning environment.
- Pupils' insufficient use of ICT and ceramics limits media experience in Years 7 and 8.
- The use of assessment procedures to identify National Curriculum levels is unsatisfactory.
- Large group sizes and lack of specialist accommodation does not allow skills and media experience to be fully developed.

Standards and achievement

89. In the classes seen and in scrutiny of work, standards are average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their average standards when they entered the school. There is no significant difference between boys and girls. These standards are achieved because the teaching is satisfactory and pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and are supported well in classrooms. Little creative use is made of ICT, although pupils in Years 7 and 8 use it in research for cultural and historical information. Pupils are able to explore ideas and gain access to visual information. They observe well and understand three-

dimensional concepts. The ability to use line, tone and texture effectively in their drawings was evident.

90. The work seen in Year 8 is average and all pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes to communicate ideas and meanings, and make images and artefacts. They show some influence of important movements in art and design or of particular artists. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged sufficiently to achieve their full potential.

Teaching and learning

91. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good lessons are characterised by a brisk pace of work and a variety of activities, which maintain pupils' interest. Teachers are committed, caring and supportive of pupils within their charge. They make good use of praise to encourage the participation of all pupils and make good use of question and answer to ensure pupils are actively involved. Teachers, however, do not always make clear assessment objectives, nor are these shared with all pupils, with the result that learning sometimes lacks rigour. Teachers pay suitable attention to improving pupils' literacy: sketchbooks reveal that they are given active support with the development of their reading and writing skills. Homework is used well to support project work in Years 7 and 8. Visits to galleries and museums and the use of an artist in residence have a positive effect upon the quality and range of pupils' work.

Leadership and management

92. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the teachers work well as a team. The lack of specialist accommodation has an adverse effect on standards and does not allow for work on a large scale. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. Schemes of work now address continuity and progression. Year 8 pupils now have access to a wider range of materials and are more aware of different art techniques.

Music

93. Three class music lessons and two instrumental music lessons were observed. Other available evidence in writing and discussion was reviewed and assessed. No first-hand evidence was offered or seen of extra-curricular activities in music, either in reality or on video/audio recordings.

Provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Below average	Below average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum and time allocated are currently insufficient to meet National Curriculum requirements.
- Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are not properly monitored.
- Large numbers of pupils underachieve.
- Leadership in the subject has undergone major changes in the last year with damaging effects.

- Very newly appointed teachers are determined to meet the challenges they face.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

94. There are no records of recent or past teacher assessments, either at the end of Year 6 or at the end of Year 8. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils' musical skills, knowledge and understanding are inadequate; especially those of higher and lower-attaining pupils whose gifts and talents or special educational needs are neither reliably recognised nor properly met. Pupils' grasp of important basic musical concepts is unreliable and their use of technical vocabulary limited. By the end of Year 8, these deficiencies are even more marked; standards remain below average and achievement is unsatisfactory, with no reliable records to aid curriculum development planning in this school or to inform teachers in schools to which pupils transfer.

Teaching and learning

95. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory and this is why too many pupils are under-achieving. Instrumental music lessons provided by the local education authority are good or very good. Too many pupils, notably boys, are persistently inattentive, disrupting their own and others' work. Behaviour management consumes too much of the teachers' time and distracts those pupils who wish to apply themselves and achieve good work. Homework is not used.

Leadership and management

96. There have been significant changes in the leadership of the department in recent times and this accounts for some of the above deficiencies. There is much to do to establish adequate curriculum planning, assessment, recording and reporting in music. Newly appointed staff are well placed to meet this challenge but are restricted by the complete lack of ICT, other resources and the time and space in which to deploy them. Even the good work seen in instrumental lessons is restricted by the cramped and untidy practice room, which doubles as storage.

97. There has been serious regression rather than progress since the last inspection when provision for music was satisfactory, especially in relation to ICT.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Below average	Average
Achievement	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Unsatisfactory
Management	Unsatisfactory
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The department lacks a clear, organised process for monitoring, recording and reporting on standards in line with National Curriculum requirements.
- Planning is weak and lacks relevance.
- Teaching of the subject by the specialist teachers is good.

- Non-specialist teachers working in the area are not well supported
- The use of outside agencies to promote opportunities for extra-curricular provision is good.
- There is a well-supported extra-curricular dance club, which attains high levels of performance.

Commentary

Standards and achievement

98. Standards in the subject are below average. This problem is partly due to the below average standards on entry to the school but also to no clear plan to address this. Consequently not enough pupils achieve as highly as they should. Standards in games are higher than in other activity areas. This is reflected by the disproportionate amount of time that is spent on this aspect during the four years. Achievement elsewhere, as reflected in the department's assessment of the pupils, is unsatisfactory and in gymnastics the boys make less overall progress than the girls.

Teaching and Learning

99. Teaching and learning overall are unsatisfactory, although in Years 7 and 8 they are satisfactory. Here, the specialist teachers capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm and engage the pupils in active, productive, learning. Non-specialist teachers of physical education, who primarily work in Years 5 and 6, receive little support and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Little useful assessment is made in any year to help address individual achievement or to enable pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding within the subject.

Leadership and management

100. Overall planned delivery of the subject within the curriculum is unclear as are the methods of recording and monitoring progress. There is no clear plan as to how to improve standards that are currently below average when measured against national expected levels. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP

Provision in citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

101. Although there is now a statutory requirement for the school to provide citizenship studies for pupils in Years 7 and 8, this is not yet in place. Planning is in its early stages, schemes of work are incomplete and there were no identified opportunities to observe citizenship activities in lessons during the inspection. The school does provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities within the school community, for example as members of the recently formed school council and as monitors and prefects in Year 8.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	5
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	5
The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	6
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	6
The leadership of other key staff	6
The effectiveness of management	6

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

