

INSPECTION REPORT

**DR THOMLINSON CHURCH OF ENGLAND MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

Rothbury, Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122371

Headteacher: Mr D J Johnson

Lead inspector: Ms J McKenna

Dates of inspection: 29 September – 1 October 2003

Inspection number: 258615

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	9 – 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	175
School address:	Silverton Lane Rothbury Morpeth Northumberland
Postcode:	NE65 7RJ
Telephone number:	(01669) 620 287
Fax number:	(01669) 621 919
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Curry (Acting)
Date of previous inspection:	9 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a rural middle school with 175 pupils on roll, which is much smaller than average. Almost all of the pupils are white and speak English as their first language. The very small number from minority ethnic groups speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average and none have statements. The small number with the most severe need have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, although overall, the socio-economic profile of pupils is above average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. The pupil population is fairly stable, although because of the small numbers, the movement of just a few pupils can have a considerable impact on statistical analyses.

Courses and activities for the community are run on the school site. Although this provision is technically separate to that of the school, it is managed by a deputy headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2485	J McKenna	Lead inspector	
9843	S Drake	Lay inspector	
27984	A Whitehall	Team inspector	Mathematics Numeracy Science
19056	G Leech	Team inspector	English Literacy Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
22524	S Innes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs
31008	P Rourke	Team inspector	Citizenship Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. It provides very successfully for pupils' personal development, ensuring that they develop as fully rounded individuals. Curriculum provision and teaching are good and as a result pupils achieve well. Leadership and management are good and there is a clear commitment to continuing to improve the quality of education provided. To improve effectiveness further, promoting the highest possible academic standards now needs to be pursued with as much precision as other aspects of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well overall and very well in English and information and communication technology.
- Teaching ensures that pupils are interested and involved in lessons, and so they learn well. However, work in lessons is not always closely enough matched to the range of needs of pupils.
- The headteacher is deeply committed to the school and to ensuring that pupils develop into caring, responsible citizens.
- Pupils' very high standards of behaviour and relationships help to create an excellent environment for learning.
- Staff know pupils very well and provide them with a high standard of care and support.
- The identification of how priorities for developing the school will be achieved and how success will be monitored and evaluated is not detailed enough.
- Information from tests and marking is not used consistently well to promote pupils' progress and there is not yet a reliable system in place for measuring the value the school adds to pupils' achievements.
- The community programme widens the range of activities open to pupils and enriches their curriculum.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Most of the key issues identified then have been effectively tackled, and teaching and pupils' achievement are better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Girls and boys of all ages and levels of prior attainment are **achieving well** across the school and they are making systematic progress in all aspects of their learning. Achievement is **very good** in English and information and communication technology (ICT). It is good in mathematics and science and in most other subjects. It is satisfactory in French and some aspects of design technology.

Results in mathematics and science have not been as good as those in English, as can be seen in the table below. The results in 2003, however, improved considerably, with those in mathematics being as high as those in English, and results in science even higher. This is because of improvements in the provision of both subjects. Current standards are above average in most subjects including mathematics and science, and are well above average in English and ICT. They are average in French and aspects of design technology.

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.*

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **exceptionally good**. Their social and moral development are also **excellent**, while their personal development overall is **very good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**.

Teaching is **good**. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a variety of stimulating activities. As a result, pupils learn well. The degree of challenge provided for pupils is not always appropriate. Some good assessment procedures are in place, but the use of information generated is not consistent.

The quality of the curriculum is good, with very good extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities. Good use is made of the accommodation and resources available.

The school is very successful at providing its pupils with good quality care and ensuring their health and safety. Staff provide good support, advice and guidance for pupils, although there needs to be greater precision in academic monitoring and guidance. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are satisfactory.

The school has good links with parents. Its partnerships with the community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of **leadership and management** is **good**. The headteacher's leadership results in a very positive ethos, and this is contributed to well by other staff. More detailed planning for development would help the school to improve further. Governance is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school and supportive of its provision. Pupils are very proud of their school and greatly enjoy being involved in all that it has to offer them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure identification of sufficient, precise enough detail on how priorities for developing the school will be tackled and how progress will be monitored and evaluated.
- Ensure that assessment is further developed so that information is used consistently well to promote pupils' progress.
- Ensure a reliable system for measuring the value the school adds to pupils' achievements is in place.
- Ensure that work in all lessons is closely enough matched to the range of needs of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are above average overall and the achievement of pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment is **good**. Standards are well above average in English and information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils achieve very well in these subjects. Standards in the small amount of work seen in French and some aspects of design technology are average and achievement in these subjects is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and ICT are consistently well above average and pupils achieve very well in these subjects.
- There was a significant improvement in results in mathematics and science in 2003 and they rose to their highest ever levels.
- Standards of work seen in most other subjects on inspection are above average.
- Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment achieve well in most subjects of the curriculum.
- Standards in the food and textiles aspects of design technology and French are average and achievement is satisfactory.
- Pupils' very good literacy skills and good numeracy skills help them to achieve well in other subjects.

Commentary

1. As a middle school with pupils from Years 5 to 8, the only formal test results available are those taken by pupils at the end of Year 6. In 2002, results in English were well above the national average, and results in mathematics and science were above the national average, as indicated in the table below. In relation to schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, the results were above average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics. The latter was due mainly to the underperformance of higher attaining pupils.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (29.4)	27 (27)
mathematics	27.6 (26.9)	26.7 (26.6)
science	29.6 (29.1)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. However, results in 2003 rose to their highest ever levels. The difference between results in mathematics and English which has been evident for several years was eradicated, with the results of the two subjects being very similar. Higher attaining pupils performed similarly in both subjects. Results in science were even higher. This is because of improvements in the provision of mathematics and science.
3. The standards observed during the inspection based on the evidence available are above average in most subjects for pupils of all ages, including mathematics and science. Standards are well above average in English and ICT. The standards of the small amount of work seen in French and the food and textiles areas of design technology are average. Pupils' very good

literacy skills enable them to have full access to the whole curriculum and their good numeracy skills allow them to cope well with mathematical demands in other subjects.

4. Girls and boys of all ages are achieving well across the school and they are making systematic progress in all aspects of their learning. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment make good progress overall, although in some lessons higher and lower attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they might due to inappropriate levels of challenge. Pupils consistently make very good progress in English due to very good management and consistently good teaching. The rate of progress has improved recently in mathematics and science, and is now good because of developments in the curriculum, and, in science, the refurbished laboratory providing much improved facilities. The very good achievement in ICT is due to very good facilities for the subject and very good teaching. Pupils achieve well in most other subjects because of the good quality of teaching and very positive climate for learning within the school. The excellent attitudes and behaviour of pupils contribute significantly to their good progress. In French and the food and textiles aspect of design technology, achievement is satisfactory, due in part to less time being given to these subjects than the norm. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets identified in their individual education plans. They make particularly good progress with reading and spelling where the quality of teaching is very high. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.
5. There is a desire on the part of the school to improve standards further and appropriate targets are set, which are usually met. The school now needs to give greater attention to setting targets for individuals and groups and to ensure that work is consistently well matched to the different needs of pupils to promote even greater progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **exceptionally good**. Their social and moral development are also **excellent**, while their personal development overall is **very good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' eagerness to learn ensures that they make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils' consistently high standards of behaviour help to create an excellent environment for work and play.
- Warm, trusting relationships among pupils and staff significantly enhance the quality of education.
- Pupils' regular attendance ensures that they do not have gaps in their learning.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development lies at the heart of the school's work.

Commentary

6. Pupils are very proud of their school and greatly enjoy being involved in all that it has to offer them. They arrive cheerfully in the morning and maintain these positive attitudes throughout the day, settling very well to work, listening attentively, sustaining their concentration, trying hard to work out their own solutions to problems and generally demonstrating a real joy in learning. Many pupils choose to take part in the wide variety of extra-curricular activities that are available both at lunchtime and, through the community programme, out of school hours, confident that they will enjoy learning new skills within a congenial atmosphere.
7. The bedrock behind the unusually good attitudes that pervade the school is the outstanding quality of relationships which ensures that teachers need waste no time on persuading pupils to behave well and work hard. Staff act as very good role models, unfailingly treating each other and pupils with respect, and this inspires pupils to do the same. Around school, even in crowded cloakrooms, there is no pushing or jostling but, rather, a mature understanding of

others' needs and a polite holding of doors or thanking others for help or consideration. Pupils treat resources and the accommodation with care, instinctively disposing of litter appropriately and appreciating the displays of pupils' work, while not interfering with them. Pupils of different ages, gender, ability and ethnicity enjoy each other's company and collaborate exceptionally well in practical activities and when offering ideas or pooling resources. While, inevitably, there is some minor falling out with friends, pupils do not consider that bullying occurs although it is clear that they know what to do should they have concerns and are justifiably confident that staff will treat these seriously and deal with them effectively. The absence of exclusions is another indicator of the high standards of behaviour.

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	160	0	0
White – any other background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0
Information not obtained	6	0	0

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

8. The school is committed, through its mission statement and aims, to basing its life upon Christian principles and, taking a clear steer from the headteacher, all those connected with the school act this out on a daily basis. They encourage pupils to grow in their awareness of life beyond the mundane, to consider the consequences of their actions, to appreciate others' efforts and to understand how they can make a contribution to the community. Pupils respond extremely positively to the guidance and example set by staff and become increasingly self-assured young people who are confident but show no signs of silly self-importance. The house system encourages team-work and a sense of joint responsibility, with Year 8 house captains showing good initiative when developing schemes to raise funds for charitable causes. There is a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong; for example, pupils are happy to leave their belongings unattended with no fear of theft saying, when questioned about this, "We're so lucky it's not that type of school." Messages in assemblies and many lessons emphasise, for instance, the importance of treating others as one would wish to be treated oneself and of judging a person by their actions rather than their appearance. Such guidance ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society even though most of their day-to-day experiences are confined to a relatively remote, rural community.
9. The school's actions to ensure regular attendance are highly effective. The figures below relate to 2002, the most recent year for which there is comparative national data. Pupils' very good attendance, excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships ensure that the school operates as a predictable, lively and friendly community in which good quality learning takes place.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.6	School data	0
National data	6.1	National data	0.3

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The quality of the curriculum is **good**, and there are **very good** extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The school is **very successful** at providing its pupils with good quality care and ensuring their health and safety. Staff provide **good support, advice and guidance** for pupils, although there needs to be greater precision in academic monitoring and guidance. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good**, and as a result, pupils learn well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, use a good variety of stimulating activities in lessons, involve pupils and engage their interest. As a result, pupils are motivated and learn well.
- Pupils help their own learning by concentrating hard, giving teachers their full attention and pushing themselves to perform of their best.
- Relationships in the classroom are excellent and teachers create a positive and supportive environment for learning.
- Work in lessons is not always matched closely enough to the range of needs and levels of prior attainment in the class.
- The approach to assessment is not consistent and is not always fully used to promote maximum progress by pupils.

Commentary

10. The quality of teaching in the school is good. Almost four out of five lessons are good or better, with just over two out of five very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a very positive profile, which has improved since the previous inspection, and the good quality of teaching plays a key part in the good learning of pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	15 (41%)	13 (35%)	9 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (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.

11. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use to give a good grounding to pupils in the knowledge, skills and understanding of subjects across the curriculum. They use a good variety of stimulating activities in lessons, which involve pupils and engage their interest, and as a result, motivate them well. Explicit learning objectives for lessons are usually identified, although are not always shared with pupils. When they are, pupils are very clear about what they are expected to learn and this helps to focus their attention on key points. Lessons proceed at a good pace and time is well used. Teachers display very high expectations of both behaviour and work and pupils respond to this very well. Relationships in the classroom are excellent and teachers create a positive and supportive climate for learning. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are excellent. They give teachers their full attention, concentrate hard and push themselves to perform of their best. As a result of these positive features, pupils learn well. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils in some lessons and in these, pupils' strengths and weaknesses are well understood and tasks are adapted accordingly, enabling pupils of all levels of prior attainment to make good progress. However, this is not always the case, and sometimes there is too much challenge for low attaining pupils or too little for high attaining pupils. In some lessons, notably in English, physical education and specialist lessons

for pupils with special educational needs, good use of assessment information is made and prior knowledge of pupils' attainment is used to promote very good progress. Such good practice is not yet a sufficiently strong feature of all lessons. There is appropriate promotion of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in most lessons.

12. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs taught by specialists is very good, and learning support assistants make a good contribution to supporting pupils in class so that they are able to achieve well. Other teachers are provided with good information about the needs of pupils. Although most teachers support pupils appropriately in lessons, work is not always sufficiently well planned to match individual needs.
13. There is some good assessment taking place in most subjects, with work marked regularly and often well, providing information to pupils on how well they are doing. Assessments are recorded centrally half-termly and are monitored to track progress. In some subjects, such as English, information gained from this is used to alter planning to promote improvement. However, approaches to assessment are inconsistent across the school. Some work is marked more thoroughly than others. Pupils are given feedback relating to National Curriculum levels and criteria in some subjects but not others. The way in which assessment information is analysed and used varies. In general, more use needs to be made to inform and adapt teaching on a regular basis, to give pupils precise feedback on how well they are doing, and to set targets for improvement. Monitoring needs to be more closely linked to progress towards targets.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good**, and extra-curricular and enrichment activities are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad curriculum for all pupils which meets statutory requirements.
- A very good programme of extra-curricular activities, including those offered through the community provision, enriches pupils' academic and personal development.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection, and is now good.
- Good use is made of the accommodation and resources available and it is a bright and welcoming place for learning.
- Too little time is allocated to design and technology, resulting in pupils having insufficient knowledge in food and textiles. Too little time is also allocated to French.
- There is insufficient planning to ensure that the range of needs and levels of prior attainment of all pupils are consistently met.

Commentary

14. The curriculum is carefully organised to ensure the full delivery of all the subjects required by the National Curriculum. Improving aspects of the organisation of the curriculum was a key issue for action at the last inspection, and all of the points raised then have been effectively tackled. Since the previous inspection, ICT has developed significantly as a subject in its own right and there is greater use of it across the curriculum. The curriculum now includes a newly-established course in citizenship in Years 7 and 8 as required. It contains some of the elements of personal and social education and the school has audited other subjects to ensure that remaining elements, such as sex and health education and personal development, are appropriately delivered. The time allocation for subjects closely matches the national distribution, except for the allocation to design and technology and French in Years 7 and 8. Statutory requirements for design technology are met and pupils have good experiences in resistant materials but there is insufficient time allocated to food and textiles, which lowers standards in these areas. The daily programme of silent reading is now a purposeful activity which contributes significantly to pupils' literacy development.

15. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are being implemented well. Curriculum planning shows how the requirements of different subjects will be covered with pupils of different ages. While there is some attention paid to planning for the range of needs and levels of prior attainment, this is not yet sufficiently detailed. Provision for pupils with special educational needs, identified as an area requiring improvement at the last inspection, is now much better and is good. These pupils have additional support for reading and spelling during whole school reading time and are effectively supported in class by learning support assistants. There has been some additional provision for high attaining pupils. Last year, 12 pupils in Years 7 and 8 were selected to attend weekend master classes at the high school in mathematics, science, design technology and information and communication technology and they responded well to the challenges. A positive feature of curriculum planning is the collaboration with the school's first school and high school partners to ensure that there are good links between all concerned so that pupils can continue to make good progress through times of transition. It also facilitates a sharing of expertise to everyone's benefit.
16. A very good programme of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' academic and personal development. There is a range of sporting activities, games and clubs – many associated with subjects, like art and technology – which engage pupils' interest. The library is open every lunchtime and is popular with pupils. Music is strong in the school and pupils enjoy singing in the choir, playing in the orchestra or the ceilidh band. A significant number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition. The community provision attached to the school also offers very good enrichment opportunities. All of these activities contribute significantly to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school life.
17. There are sufficient experienced and appropriately qualified teaching and support staff to deliver the curriculum. The staff is relatively small so some teachers have to teach outside their subject specialism, but good subject coordination ensures that teaching is appropriate. In Years 5 and 6, science, history, geography and physical education are taught to mixed year group classes, but pupils are not seen to be disadvantaged. Though the building is small, good use is made of the accommodation and resources available and it is a bright and welcoming place for learning. The problems of accommodation identified at the previous inspection have been solved as far as is possible. There has been good progress overall since the previous inspection.

Care, guidance and support

The school is **very successful** at providing its pupils with good quality care and ensuring their health and safety. Staff provide **good** support, advice and guidance for pupils, although there needs to be greater precision in academic monitoring and guidance. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pastoral systems are clear, consistently applied, effective and sensitive to individual pupils' needs.
- Staff listen to pupils who, therefore, have confidence to go to them for help and support.
- There are very good arrangements to help new pupils settle into school life.
- Although there are some good assessment procedures in place, they are not yet used sufficiently well to inform the academic guidance given to pupils.
- There is not yet a reliable system in place for measuring the value the school adds to pupils' achievements.

Commentary

18. The school makes great efforts to welcome new pupils, whether at the beginning of, or midway through, their middle school career. On their visit in Year 4, each prospective pupil is teamed up with a partner from the year above whose responsibility it is to guide and support them through the day. Much of the curriculum in the early days of Year 5 is deliberately designed to encourage pupils to work together in different groups so that they have opportunities to get to know the others in their class, and the results are carefully but discreetly monitored to highlight any need for extra support. The display of 'Dr Thomlinson's Middle School New Stars' confirms Year 5's place in the community and helps others to get to know who is who. When new pupils arrive at other times they, too, are allocated a buddy while the generally warm, open relationships that typify the school mean that it is easy for newcomers to join in. Parents and pupils both identify the induction arrangements as a particular strength of the school.
19. The procedures to ensure health and safety, and child protection are clear cut and put into effective practice with the result that pupils feel comfortable and relaxed in school. Similarly, the systems to ensure pupils' pastoral care are well thought out and well known to all staff and pupils. This means that they are quick to observe any potential problems and so swift to take action that it is hardly noticeable. The excellent relationships, again, have an impact here because pupils want to please staff and work with, rather than against, them. There are very good systems for recording incidents and any action taken which build up an itemised picture of individual pupils that highlights any areas of weakness. This is then used to guide any extra support, which sometimes includes outside help. Similarly, pupils' positive qualities are recorded through the house system. This also provides some opportunity for pupils to voice their opinions although the school does not yet actively seek these out on a regular basis.
20. There is accurate identification of the areas in which pupils with special needs require support, and individual education plans give good detail of how this will be provided. Teachers are involved in devising strategies to help pupils meet their targets. Good arrangements are in place to monitor their progress although the transmission of information that teachers have is too informal and needs to be more structured. There is need for more sharing of information between the mathematics department and the special educational needs coordinator so that pupils with special needs linked to problems of numeracy can be better supported.
21. There are some good assessment systems within individual subjects and within the school as a whole. Pupils are regularly assessed against National Curriculum criteria, and this provides a means of monitoring pupils' progress. This information is looked at to spot any issue or trends within subjects, although it is not yet used to formally monitor the progress of individual pupils across subjects. Some analysis of assessment outcomes takes place, and in some cases, such as in English, it is well used to inform future action and developments. The assessment coordinator undertakes some useful whole school analysis. However, as yet analysis of data is not yet systematic enough or comprehensive across all subjects to be fully effective in promoting improvement. For example, it is not used enough to set targets for individuals and groups and to monitor progress towards those targets. Although some attempts have been made to measure the value the school adds to pupils' achievements, there is not yet a reliable system in place. Despite the complexity of developing such a system in a middle school, it is an important area to be developed if the school is to be able to judge its effectiveness accurately and take targeted action for improvement.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents. Its partnerships with the community and other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the school and supportive of its provision.
- Very good overall links with the community enrich the quality of pupils' education.
- Strong working partnerships with other schools ensure that pupils are well prepared for transfer to high school.
- Although the quality of information provided is good, the school could do more to involve parents in its work.

Commentary

22. Parents speak very warmly of the school, particularly the way that staff know their children as individuals and offer them good support. They consider that the 'open door' policy works very well in practice and find staff approachable. The information provided for parents is very welcoming and pupils' progress reports are of good quality, balancing clear-cut assessments with personal comment and guidance to help pupils improve their work. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are keen to work with the school to assist the progress of their children. They are welcomed and their views fully taken into account at review meetings. The school keeps parents suitably informed about important dates and events. Although it gives parents some details about what their children will be learning, this information is not comprehensive and does not always indicate how they could support their work. While welcoming parents, listening to their opinions and acting on any concerns, the school does not yet actively seek their views or use these to inform its planning.
23. The school's extensive community provision is commented on elsewhere in this report but its more general links with the wider community also enhance the opportunities available to pupils. Vicars from three local congregations regularly take assemblies, while their churches are used as a resource to, for instance, look at their similarities and differences. Pupils use the village to conduct traffic surveys or carry out work related to the river. They learn about coping with a ration book from elderly local residents and sing carols or distribute harvest gifts to senior citizens. On a weekly rota basis, curriculum leaders meet with their colleagues in local middle and high schools to discuss items of mutual interest, such as assessment of pupils' work. This helps to widen their own horizons as well as make sure that pupils arrive at high school with a reasonably common experience and thus do not cover old ground. The partnership among the group is strong and has led, for instance, to the high school providing funds that allow pupils to learn 'forgotten crafts' such as embroidery and lace making in their free time. Pupils start some projects, such as in English at Dr Thomlinson which are completed once they have transferred into Year 9, all of which helps to create a sense of continuity and familiarity that help pupils settle swiftly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is deeply committed to the school and to the development of all its pupils into well-rounded individuals.
- In this small school almost all staff are also leaders. They all share and effectively implement the vision for the school.
- The governors are assiduous in their work within the school and are well informed about all areas of its work.
- The school makes good use of its resources to benefit all pupils.
- The overall strategic priorities of the school are not accompanied by precise enough detail about how they will be achieved, and are not sufficiently well reflected in curriculum plans.

Commentary

24. The headteacher is profoundly committed to the school. Under his leadership, the school's vision, encapsulated in its mission statement as its desire to pursue excellence in every aspect of school life, was developed jointly by governors and staff and is shared by all. The life of the school is based firmly upon Christian principles and much emphasis is placed upon developing the contribution that each pupil will be able to make to future society as a well-rounded individual. The headteacher and other leaders provide good role models in this regard, treating all with respect and giving considerable time and energy to carrying out their responsibilities. All staff have a strong concern for the well being of each individual, they know them well and value all their achievements. Staffs' efforts in these areas are very successful, and as a result the behaviour of pupils, their attitudes to learning and their commitment to helping others are excellent. However, although there is a commitment to promoting the highest possible academic standards for all, and pupils achieve well, these areas are not pursued with as much precision as are other aspects of the school's vision. For example, the fact that work is not always closely enough matched to the range of pupil needs and there are inconsistencies in assessment means that the progress pupils make, although good, could be even better. The school has identified both of these areas as priorities for development.
25. Strategic planning is shared with governors and staff who are all involved in the construction, monitoring and evaluation of the school development plan. Clear priorities for improving the school are established, along with priorities for development within each subject. There are some links between the two groups of issues, but they are not explicit or comprehensive enough. Precisely what action will be taken and by whom is not sufficiently detailed. Success criteria for issues are identified, but they are not always related to specific outcomes including measurable improvements in pupil achievement. Details of monitoring and evaluation, although present, are not sufficiently systematic to make monitoring fully effective. The school evaluates its general performance, including the quality of teaching, on a regular basis and as a result main strengths and areas for development are well known to the school. However, some evaluation is informal rather than formal and it does not always identify inconsistencies that exist in practice or promote enough sharing of the good practice that takes place within the school.
26. Almost all staff have subject responsibilities, and many staff have several areas of responsibility. They work hard to be effective in their roles. Senior staff support the headteacher well in the running and development of the school. There is a good teamwork and collaboration between many staff, as seen, for example, in the effective working relationships between the English and special educational needs coordinator. The management of special educational needs was a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and is now much improved. Performance management is well established within the school and senior staff are enthusiastic about its effectiveness in bringing about improvement in the school. Continuing professional development of staff is carefully devised in relation to the priorities of the school and the individual teacher. By accepting three students each year, the school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training in spite of its small size.
27. The governors support the work of the school well. The chair visits the school weekly and other governors take part in regular and frequent visits in which they monitor an aspect of the school's development plan. They therefore know the school and its strengths and weaknesses well and can contribute in an informed manner to shaping the direction of the school. This includes challenging the thinking of senior staff when appropriate. Policy development is carried out well by the various sub-committees and governors have ensured that all the statutory duties of the school are fulfilled.

28. The school uses its resources well, to the benefit of pupils. It is careful to seek to ensure that it obtains the best value for money from all its financial decisions. The headteacher retains control of subject spending to ensure that resources are spent to best effect. The large balance from the previous year results from an unexpected rise in income, largely from lettings, but will be absorbed by an anticipated deficit in future funding. Because it is a small school, costs are high but in relation to its achievement the school gives good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	493,815	Balance from previous year	42,733
Total expenditure	432,477	Balance carried forward to the next	61,338
Expenditure per pupil	2,443		

COMMUNITY PROVISION

The community provision makes a **very positive** contribution to pupils' educational experiences.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The courses available to pupils through the community provision significantly widen the range of experiences and enrichment opportunities open to them.
- Pupils benefit from financial and material contributions made through the community programme.
- Having adults from the community around the school helps to develop pupils' social skills.

Commentary

29. There is a community education programme run from the site of the school. This is funded separately to the school, and is not formally part of the school's provision, but is managed by a deputy headteacher who teaches one day a week at the school. There are close links between the two organisations, with the deputy headteacher reporting regularly to the governing body of the school to keep them informed of issues and developments. A wide range of educational and recreational courses and activities is run for the community at large, mainly adult education courses and youth service provision. These take place during the school day, evenings and at weekends.
30. Some courses are run specifically for pupils of middle school age. While these are open to pupils from other middle schools, in practice pupils from Dr Thomlinson are the main participants, especially for those courses run immediately after school. Such courses include cooking, country dancing, computing, art and craft and badminton. There is also a course on babysitting. These courses significantly increase the range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities open to pupils and greatly broaden their curriculum experiences. The school benefits from good links and contacts with adults with a wide of expertise within the local community. Adult education course tutors occasionally help with specific sessions in school, and there is sometimes help with the provision or loan of resources.
31. Because of the shared use of facilities and in acknowledgement that the community programme uses the school building for activities, pupils benefit from financial and material contributions made from the community education department. This includes some use of the excellent community education building, which provides comfortable meeting spaces for the

staff and governors, and space for small group work with pupils, such as peripatetic music tuition. The community education department has also contributed to the buying of new curtains for the dining hall, floodlighting for the hard play area, basketball posts and laptop computers.

32. Pupils benefit socially from having adults around the site using and sharing the same facilities. It brings a very genuine community feel to the school, and pupils enjoy, for example, sharing the dining facilities with their grandparents or neighbours. This helps to develop the social skills of pupils. The adults provide good role models of people of all ages involved in life-long learning and this makes a very positive contribution to the ethos and inclusive atmosphere within the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English was inspected in full. Six lessons were seen being taught to pupils of all ages. Pupils' work, its assessment and curriculum planning were also looked at. French was not inspected in as much depth and it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in the subject. French is taught to all pupils, though the allocation of time in Years 5 and 6 is a nominal, single lesson a week. This is increased to two lessons a week in Years 7 and 8. One lesson in each of these Year groups were seen. Pupils' work, its assessment and the records of its planning were also looked at.

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good, ensuring consistency in the teaching of the subject and the promotion of high standards.
- Curriculum planning is very comprehensive and ensures that the subject requirements are fully covered.
- Teaching is good, which, along with pupils' very positive attitudes, enables them to achieve very well.
- Pupils' work is very thoroughly and helpfully assessed so that they understand how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Commentary

33. Pupils' achievement in English is very good. In all years, pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in the development of English skills through the systematic implementation of a very well planned curriculum. Generally girls and boys do equally well compared to national averages, though boys did significantly less well than girls in 2003. No difference was observed during the inspection.
34. The standards currently being attained by pupils of all ages are well above average. There has been a steadily upward trend in the results of national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, and they have been well above the national average for several years. The 2003 results are similarly high.
35. Standards of speaking and listening are well above average. In all years, pupils participate willingly in class discussion, responding articulately to questions. They volunteer ideas freely and mostly show good recall of previous work. They work very cooperatively in groups, listening politely to each other and taking turns to discuss information and draw conclusions. Pupils are very attentive to teachers' explanations.
36. Standards of reading are well above average. Pupils have no difficulty in understanding and responding to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts and develop a good understanding of the conventions of poetry and drama. By Year 8, pupils have the analytical skills to identify particular features in a text – for example the indications of character and background in 'West Side Story'. Pupils read fluently and with enjoyment, taking advantage of the newly-refurbished school library and making good use of the silent reading time in afternoon registration.

37. Standards of writing are well above average. Pupils produce an extensive body of writing in a wide variety of forms for different purposes. They are quickly able to write extended stories and autobiographical pieces and by Year 8 produce detailed and well-researched projects. Pupils develop good understanding of the use of language – in Year 5, recognising the difference between open and closed questions, for example – and their writing is mostly accurate, except for some uncertainty in spelling by pupils of lower levels of prior attainment. Pupils make good use of ICT in the presentation of work.
38. Teaching is good overall, and some is very good. Lessons, following the framework of the literacy strategy, are very well planned. Teachers provide a good variety of stimulating activity and make good use of audio-visual resources. Pupils' strengths and weaknesses are well understood and tasks are adapted accordingly. In Years 5 and 6 a lesson a week is dedicated to the improvement of spelling and pupils profit from learning strategies to improve their accuracy. Relationships in the classroom are very good. Pupils' contributions are encouraged and valued and this is reflected in the very thorough and helpful assessment of their work.
39. English is very well managed and this is reflected in the very good achievement of pupils. The work of a team of specialist and non-specialist teachers is well coordinated, with dedication to the subject, and supported by a very comprehensive curriculum. Assessments of pupils' attainment are thoroughly analysed to identify action to promote further improvements. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, with previously good standards further raised.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

40. Pupils' very good literacy skills enable them to have full access to the whole curriculum. The emphasis in English on spelling development is reinforced in other subjects where pupils are required to use key subject words. They are very attentive to teachers and to each other in all subjects. They make good use of opportunities to speak in a variety of subjects, for example talking about their self-image in art or their activities in physical education – as well as conversing in French. They take good advantage of opportunities to read aloud. Their very good reading and writing skills enable them to note and use information from a wide variety of texts and ICT research, in many subjects of the curriculum. In all subject areas they show awareness of the need to communicate accurately.
41. Three pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. The provision for them is good. None of the pupils are at an early stage of language development and they are all able to access the curriculum and participate fully in the life of the school.

French

42. Although there is no nationally published expectation of standards in French at the end of Year 6, the evidence from the small amount of work seen indicates that pupils are achieving satisfactory standards. They are being systematically introduced to a range of basic vocabulary, recording it in their vocabulary books, and are able to use it in the completion of test word lists and simple sentences.
43. Standards attained by pupils in Years 7 and 8 are in line with expectations for pupils of that age. Standards of speaking and listening are average. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher, to tape recordings and to each other. Relationships in the classroom are good and help pupils to converse without inhibition. Girls tend to speak more confidently than boys but, when encouraged, boys contribute equally as effectively. Pupils have reasonable recall of vocabulary and can speak quite clearly and in some cases with good accents and pronunciation. Standards of reading and writing are average. Pupils can read the material provided and write using correct spelling. Extended responses are limited but by Year 8 pupils can compose letters and write about themselves.

44. Teaching, which is by a subject specialist, is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, informed by a curriculum which gives good coverage of required areas, and delivered predominantly in French. A range of activities in lessons and good use of audio-visual aids maintain pupils' interest. Generally, all pupils follow the same curriculum in a lesson through group work, particularly in Year 8, offers some opportunity to challenge pupils of different levels of prior attainment appropriately.
45. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The time allocation in Years 7 and 8 has not been increased and is still a little below that allocated nationally, but the extension of French into Year 5 means that pupils enter Year 7 with a better grounding in the subject. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Enrichment for French beyond lessons is not a strong feature of the subject.

MATHEMATICS

Judgements are based on five lesson observations, assessment records, curriculum planning, review of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in mathematics show a steadily rising trend with a particular improvement in results from 2002 to 2003.
- Pupils' investigative skills are well developed.
- Teaching is good with well-structured and fast-paced lessons and pupils learn well.
- The challenge in lessons is not always well enough matched to the wide range of needs of pupils, especially in the mixed ability classes.
- Pupils' work is assessed, but information gained is not used fully enough to promote maximum progress.

Commentary

46. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were a considerable improvement from those of previous years. Although in line with the national average or above in the past, results had been less good than those in English, and in 2002 had not compared well with mathematics results from similar schools. There has been, nevertheless, a steadily rising trend and this trend has increased with the improved results in 2003, which were similar to those in English.
47. Current standards are above average. Pupils have a good grasp of number and number operations, and can apply their knowledge to solve a good range of problems and calculations. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, can identify equivalent fractions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 are able to identify equal angles between parallel lines. Pupils' mental skills are above average. Their knowledge in other aspects of the mathematics curriculum, such as data handling and understanding of shape and space, is also good. For example, Year 7 pupils were able to plot a route through a series of mazes following a lesson involving computer control, although higher attaining pupils could have dealt with more complex mazes. Pupils' investigative skills are particularly well developed, as seen when Year 5 pupils were correctly working out possible seating plans for the class based on different arrangements of tables.

48. The improved standards indicate better achievement on the part of pupils, which is now good for pupils of all ages. This is because the national numeracy strategy is firmly in place providing a better basis for lesson planning, resulting in a sharper focus to the teaching and to good improvements in pupils' investigative skills. Generally, pupils of all levels of prior attainment, and those with special educational needs, make similar rates of progress. However, occasionally pupils with lower or higher levels of prior attainment do not make maximum progress due to work either being too challenging or not challenging enough.
49. Teaching is good and, as a result, pupils learn well overall. Lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives, although these are not always shared explicitly with pupils. Classes are well managed and lessons are delivered at a fast pace, an improvement since the previous inspection. While classwork is planned to take account of the different needs of pupils, it is not always fully effective in ensuring suitable levels of challenge, especially in the mixed ability classes. Plenary sessions are used to reinforce learning although they could be more effective in helping teachers and pupils gauge the progress made in the lessons. The focus on developing pupils' skills in using mathematics and investigating mathematical problems has been particularly effective. ICT is used satisfactorily as an aid to learning. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and their progress is monitored. Some analysis of outcomes takes place but is not yet used fully to inform pupils of how well they are doing and how to improve their work in sufficient detail, nor to identify areas of curriculum strength and weakness precisely enough. Pupils' attitudes on the whole are good, although younger pupils show a greater interest in mathematics than older pupils.
50. Leadership and management are good. There is a commitment to improving standards and strategies for improvement are succeeding. To improve provision further, there needs to be better planning to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of prior attainment, especially in mixed ability classes, and greater use of assessment information to promote progress in pupils' learning. The steadily rising standards indicate good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Pupils' good numeracy skills allow them to cope well with mathematical demands in other subjects. Pupils can display data in charts and graphs in science, geography and ICT. They can measure accurately in science and design technology. They can use formulae to calculate accurately as required in science. Numeracy skills are also effective in the less mathematical subjects, such as counting beats in music, and counting in French.

SCIENCE

Judgements are based on four lesson observations, assessment records, schemes of work, review of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils.

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in tests at the end of Year 6 are rising steadily and showed particularly good improvement in 2003.
- Pupils' investigative and experimental skills are well developed.
- Teaching is good and engages pupils' interest, and as a result they achieve well.
- A system of assessment is in place but it is not used to promote maximum progress in pupils' learning.

Commentary

52. Results of national tests have improved steadily over the past few years and significantly so in 2003. Current standards are above average for pupils of all ages across all areas of the science curriculum. Pupils have appropriate levels of scientific knowledge and are developing good understanding of scientific concepts. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 show a sound grasp of the idea of the particle theory of matter. Year 8 pupils are able to relate elements, compounds and mixtures to their atomic structure. Standards are particularly high in experimental and investigative science. For example, Year 7 pupils planned and carried out an investigation into the preferred habitat of woodlice very well, controlling many variables in the process and showing a good understanding of how to ensure a fair test. Pupils use appropriate scientific terminology.
53. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils of all ages and levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make systematic progress in the acquisition of scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. The improvements recently are due to a sharper focus to the teaching, helped by improvements to curriculum planning and the good quality of practical work resulting from the refurbishment of the laboratory.
54. Teaching is good and pupils of all ages learn well. Lessons are structured effectively and taught at a good pace. There are generally appropriate levels of challenge for pupils, and opportunities are taken to assist pupils having difficulties. A particularly strong feature is the emphasis on making the children aware of the learning objectives for the lesson and presenting them with criteria to enable them to judge the effectiveness of their learning. They respond well to this. Experimental activities are carefully planned and the stages in an investigation are introduced methodically to pupils, which helps in their understanding of them. Pupils are interested in the work and participate with enthusiasm. Their good relationships with each other assist in their practical work, where they show good collaborative skills and this helps their learning. Homework is set but it does not always provide enough challenge. Pupils' work is marked but this is not consistent, and it does not identify clear targets for pupils to help them improve their work. The new laboratory helps to provide a very positive climate for scientific learning, and it is well organised and used. Resources are good and are used well. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted in lessons.
55. Leadership and management are good. There is a firm commitment to raising standards and good teamwork is evident. The curriculum and individual lessons are well planned. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and their progress is monitored, but target setting and provision of information to pupils to help them improve their own performance is not yet effective enough.
56. There has been a significant improvement in all issues raised at the last inspection. Standards have improved, challenge is better directed through more effective teaching and accommodation and resource provision are now very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good quality of teaching leads to very good achievement.
- Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and show very high levels of interest which result in very good learning in lessons.
- The new computer rooms are very well equipped and allow pupils to work independently and to explore the potential of a wide range of resources.

- Although assessment of pupils' work is very thorough, it is not used with pupils sufficiently often to keep them well informed of their progress or to set targets for them to aim at.

Commentary

57. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. This represents very good progress from the time pupils entered the school. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection when standards were broadly in line with the national average. The improvement has been brought about by much improved facilities and very good teaching. By Year 6, pupils have very good understanding and skills in word processing and desktop publishing and they present work using moving images. They confidently select fonts, colour and images to communicate information, already working at levels usually expected during the following year. Because they are very competent users of computers, they quickly grasp the principles of writing simple programs to control events on screen, building on work from previous years. By Year 8, pupils apply their understanding of a good range of applications. They use their very good knowledge of available software and select the ones they want to design logos. They understand how to communicate information through the use of images and develop imaginative ideas that work very effectively. Pupils are very keen to learn and approach problem solving enthusiastically and showing very good levels of perseverance. They discuss their work with each other supportively and exchange ideas in a mature manner. Pupils achieve very well in ICT. Girls and boys of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, systematically acquire knowledge and understanding of ICT and the skills necessary to be able to use ICT to enhance their learning.
58. The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils learn to work independently because teachers provide opportunities for them to explore software and experiment with the presentation of text and images. Pupils use these opportunities well and do not waste time. They aim to achieve high standards and show pride in the work they produce. Teachers use more competent pupils sometimes to explain work to others, with the teacher listening to assess the learning of both. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use it very effectively to plan lessons that match the learning needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are given plenty of opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge fully. Lower attaining pupils are provided with appropriate support to guide them through the work whilst expecting them to contribute as much as they can by teachers helping them to clarify their thinking. Pupils are expected to take a full part in planning their own work and in evaluating finished work. This leads to pupils understanding tasks and considering what they can do to improve. ICT is used well to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
59. Both leadership and management are very good. Statutory requirements for the subject are met. The head of department has a very good insight into developments in the subject and uses this for long term planning. Very effective and efficient management result in high levels of self evaluation and analysis of information being used to improve standards. Appropriate safety measures are in place to protect pupils when they use the Internet. The department has prioritised the need to share information about pupils' progress with them in more detail and to set targets for them to aim for. Work on this has already begun. There is good improvement since the previous inspection, to standards, to teaching and to facilities in ICT.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Overall, ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. It is led and managed separately from ICT as a subject. Access to facilities for other subjects has much improved since the previous inspection because accommodation and resources are better. All staff have completed appropriate training to use ICT in their subjects and now have ICT built into their planning. Although resources are limited in subject rooms, there is good access to specialist facilities. In addition there is a set of laptop computers that can be used in any subject area. The use of resources is well managed across the school and pupils have opportunities to develop their

skills and knowledge in relevant contexts in different subject areas. Statutory requirements are met for the use of ICT in all subject areas.

61. Although the use of ICT is monitored by the co-ordinator through teachers' planning, there is insufficient documented auditing of what aspects of ICT are being used and when so that the overall provision can be monitored and evaluated.

HUMANITIES

It was only possible to observe three lessons in each of geography and history. Pupils' work and assessment records were scrutinised.

Geography

62. Standards are above average and higher than at the last inspection. Pupils are competent in a wide range of geographical skills and have a good vocabulary. They can draw appropriate conclusions from well-conducted first hand investigations. Although pupils' literacy skills are very good, insufficient use is made of their ability to write independently. Pupils' numeracy skills are appropriately promoted.
63. The achievement of all pupils is good. Pupils with special educational needs do well, as work in most lessons is modified for them, teachers give them much individual attention and encouragement and they receive a little support from teaching assistants. Higher attaining pupils also do well but not as well as they could, for they are not always challenged sufficiently and extension work not always made available when necessary.
64. Teaching and learning are good. All lessons are very carefully planned, well resourced and incorporate a good range of interesting activities. Styles of teaching are lively and pupils are eager to participate in lessons and are keen to do well. They work equally well independently or collaboratively and their exceptionally good attitudes to learning means that teachers do not have waste time or energy in managing pupil behaviour. Effective use is made of ICT. Sometimes pupils spend too much time copying material rather than writing in their own words. This limits potential achievement, particularly of higher attaining pupils. Target-setting and thorough processes of assessment are not yet evident in pupils' books and although formal assessments are carried out, in Year 8 they are a little generous.
65. The humanities co-ordinator is committed to pupils achieving as well as they can. In her comparatively short time in the school she has instituted effective change and raised standards. Both her leadership and management of the subject are good. Her planning of her own teaching is exemplary. Curriculum planning ensures that the requirements of the national curriculum can be met. However, it encompasses a tendency to repeat the learning of some skills without developing them sufficiently or for an obvious purpose. Modification of work for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils is not indicated in curriculum plans as it is in lesson plans. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

History

66. Standards overall are above average, although in some lessons and work seen standards were well above average. Standards in Years 5 and 6 are satisfactory overall. Staffing changes earlier this year meant that pupils did not cover as much history as they should have done. However, the standard of work that they completed was comfortably above average and made very effective use of independent writing. Standards in Year 7 are well above average. Pupils have a good sense of the chronology of their own lives, which they write in a lively, engaging style. They understand how this work relates to the historical skills of evaluating and ordering information, and drawing reasoned conclusions. Pupils in Year 8 have very good recall and understanding of the concepts of idle and deserving poor that led to the formulation

of the Poor Laws and why the rich were reluctant to embrace the Laws. Pupils' written work confirms that they are attaining standards that are at least above average.

67. The achievement of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is limited by the smaller quantity of work that they have completed but the quality of their work indicates that their potential achievement is very good. All pupils in Years 7 and 8 achieve very well. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs both individually and by amending tasks and materials for them. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well as the properly open-ended nature of much of the work allows them to maximise their achievement.
68. Teaching is good and in some lessons seen was very good. It is lively and engaging with much emphasis on the development of good literacy skills by pupils in order to communicate historical information in a way that is interesting as well as informative. Pupils very evidently enjoy their lessons, work hard and so learn effectively.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Curriculum plans meets National Curriculum requirements and has been developed in collaboration with partner first and secondary schools to ensure good curriculum continuity, which is now better than at the last inspection. Although opportunities for such things as the use of ICT and the development of numeracy are identified, they are not yet developed in sufficient detail to ensure that these opportunities are fully realised. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons of art, four lessons of design technology, two lessons of music and two lessons of physical education were observed. Pupils' work where available was looked at, as were curriculum plans and assessment systems. No overall judgements on provision in these subjects were possible.

Art

70. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards with observational drawings and collage. The quality of teaching was very good in the two lessons seen. The teacher has a very good subject knowledge and uses this to plan work that is creative and challenging. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on wider issues, leading them to presenting positive images of themselves through imaginative interpretation and creative expression of ideas. They have further opportunities to extend the scope of their knowledge when they visit exhibitions and galleries. This is sometimes linked to pupils' own experience such as an exhibition of book illustrations, including some books they have read. Pupils are very well behaved and interested in lessons. They are able to discuss sensitive issues and offer opinions of their work and that of others because of the confidence they have in the teacher and their own relationships with each other. There has been much improvement in the use of accommodation, which was very cramped at the time of the previous report. Pupils are now taught in smaller groups. Additional working space has been created in the immediately adjoining area to improve opportunities to raise standards further, particularly in painting.

Design and Technology

71. Standards in resistant materials are above average and are average in other materials areas. Not enough time is allocated to teaching all aspects of the subject in Years 7 and 8. This affects food and textiles in particular and results in lower standards in these areas. Pupils have a good knowledge and experience of the principles of designing and making because these are reinforced in all materials areas that pupils study. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning are exceptionally good, as are relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. This contributes significantly to the good achievement pupils make. There has been significant improvement to design skills since the previous report. Pupils now have well-structured lessons which reinforce the design process and provide choice and challenge.

72. The quality of teaching is very good in resistant materials. The work provided inspires pupils to work independently and creatively. All pupils are provided with work that matches their individual needs and interests so that they are able to achieve highly. It is satisfactory in food technology, although pupils have too little time to learn about the subject in depth. Pupils are proud of their work and try very hard in lessons to achieve high standards. They learn to use a wide range of hand and machine tools competently and confidently because teachers emphasise safety issues during very effective demonstrations. Teachers expect high standards in all materials areas to which pupils make a very positive response because they are highly motivated by the work provided.
73. There has been significant improvement in standards and provision since the coordinator took up the responsibility three years ago. Partnership with and support from the technology college to which most pupils will transfer, at age 13, is having a very positive effect on raising current standards as well as enabling smooth transition to pupils' next stage of education.

Music

74. Curriculum planning indicates that statutory requirements for the subject are met. Teaching is based on very good subject knowledge, and lessons are well structured with a satisfactory balance between performing, composing, listening to and appreciating music. Lessons are delivered at a good pace and pupils work hard. A high degree of challenge is evident in the teaching, and the learning of most pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, is good. Sometimes work is pitched too high for those pupils less knowledgeable about music and musical terms, and this affects the confidence with which they approach tasks and the progress they make.
75. A wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' musical experience exists, such as the orchestra, choir, ceildh group and recorders, and participation rates are good. These activities help to improve pupils' standards of performance. Instrumental tuition is available from visiting tutors. The use of ICT has been developed, including the use of a computer-linked keyboard, although resources such as an interactive whiteboard which would widen learning opportunities, are not available. Otherwise resources are good and are well managed. Provision for music has improved since the last inspection. The use of ICT has been developed and resources have improved, with more recorded music. The acquisition of a drum kit has increased percussion opportunities for pupils.

Physical education

76. The teaching of physical education has very positive features. Lessons are carefully planned, and skilfully delivered. Very good relationships between the teacher and pupils, a good use of humour and a very inclusive approach helps to create an extremely positive climate for learning. Activities help to develop pupils' physical skills very well, for example, improving their speed and stamina in circuit training activities. A notable feature is the excellent use of knowledge of pupils' prior attainment to set individual targets for them in the lesson. This greatly motivates them and spurs them on to work as hard as they possibly can. Both girls and boys show much enthusiasm in their physical education lessons, work very hard and achieve well. A greater degree of difficulty and challenge for older pupils would enable them to make even better progress.
77. Curriculum planning shows that the requirements of the subject are fully met, with opportunities for using ICT beginning to be identified. While comprehensive in terms of coverage of the curriculum, the planning does not sufficiently indicate how progressively greater levels of challenge as pupils move up the school will be ensured. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities, with high standards achieved by some individuals. A helpful system for assessing pupils' attainment in physical education is in place. Attention is paid to developing a team approach amongst the staff who teach the subject. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, although the co-ordinator has of necessity been prioritising the development of other areas of responsibility recently.

Nevertheless there is a strong commitment to developing practice and to improving standards and a good capacity to bring this about.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. No citizenship lessons were observed during the inspection, although pupils' work and planning documents were looked at. Personal, social and health education is not formally taught as a subject. The citizenship course contains some of the elements of personal and social education and the school has audited other subjects to ensure that remaining elements, such as sex and health education and personal development, are appropriately delivered.
79. Standards of citizenship seen in pupils' written work in Years 7 and 8 are good. Pupils acquire a good basic understanding of democracy through devising class rules for behaviour at the beginning of Year 7 as an introduction to consideration of what makes a good citizen. All participate in the election of house captains in Year 8, writing election addresses and, eventually, voting in an election. This latter exercise involves the whole school and is prepared for through assemblies as well as lessons. Pupils make effective use of ICT for the presentation of their work.
80. Judging by pupils' written work, teaching and learning in lessons are good. Pupils' work is assessed as in all other subjects and pupils collect portfolios of their work. Daily assemblies make a significant contribution to citizenship for all pupils, not just those in Years 7 and 8 for whom it is a statutory part of the National Curriculum.
81. Citizenship is developing within a very supportive framework. The school has a long-standing commitment to developing its pupils into well-rounded, responsible citizens. Its ethos is very good and the behaviour of its pupils is excellent. Citizenship is co-ordinated by the headteacher and given parity of esteem in the curriculum with other subjects. An audit of provision has been carried out and all three areas of citizenship are covered across the curriculum as well as in the discrete lessons and assemblies.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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