

# INSPECTION REPORT

**PARKFIELDS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Dunstable, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109662

Headteacher: Mr David Brandon-Bravo

Lead inspector: Dr Faysal Mikdadi

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 258724

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	483
School address:	Park Road Toddington Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU5 6AB
Telephone number:	(01525) 872 555
Fax number:	(01525) 875 967
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mary Caldwell
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Parkfields is an oversubscribed mixed 9 - 13 middle school in Toddington near Dunstable in Bedfordshire. The school has 483 pupils of whom 453 are white British whilst the rest are from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The local area is fairly affluent although pupils come from far afield. Parkfields has a high number of pupils with special educational needs, the proportion being just marginally below the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. The main SEN groups are dyslexia, moderate learning, social/emotional/behavioural, hearing impaired, visual impaired, autistic. The school population includes six pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit. Three pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum. One pupil is in the early stages of English language acquisition. Overall, attainment on entry is in line with the national average but a significant minority of pupils have above average prior attainment on entry.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2447	Dr Faysal Mikdadi	Lead inspector	Physical education Art and design Personal, social and health education and citizenship
9563	Jeanette Reid	Lay inspector	
22958	Terence Bailess	Team inspector	English
32382	John Bryan-Williams	Team inspector	Geography
4372	Ralph Fordham	Team inspector	Religious education
12408	Alan Frith	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
19222	Nigel Jepson	Team inspector	History
32288	Israr Khan	Team inspector	Mathematics
12125	Michael Slaughter	Team inspector	Science
28002	Susan Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs
11676	Geoffrey Thomas	Team inspector	Music
19983	Hayden Webb	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI  
Barley House  
Oakfield Grove  
Clifton  
Bristol  
BS8 2BN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>4 - 5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>6 - 9</b>
Standards achieved in subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>9 - 14</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>14 - 16</b>
<b>OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES</b>	
The hearing impaired unit	
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17 - 34</b>
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>35</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school whose headteacher, senior managers, governors and staff have created an effective and warm learning environment.** Pupils' attainment in all years is above the national averages in all subjects. Pupils make very good and steady progress all through their school life. Teaching and learning are very good and pupils respond very well and with evident enjoyment. The school provides **very good value for money**.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The National Curriculum Test results in the core subjects are above the national average.
- The National Curriculum Test results in science are well above the national average, which is a significant improvement on the last inspection when science was a key issue for action.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- The headteacher's leadership has helped create a safe, effective and warm learning environment.
- Pupils respond very well and with evident pleasure to their teachers and they behave in an exemplary fashion.
- The enrichment programme is outstanding.
- Pupils' achievement is very good.
- The Teacher Assessment results in 2003 were underestimated and did not tally with the National Curriculum Test results and with the standards in the classroom.
- Pupils receive excellent pastoral care and support.
- Some non-specialist teaching has a negative impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very happy with the school's provision and they offer very good support for their children's learning.

### IMPROVEMENT SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection have been **very good**. Science, which was a key issue in the last inspection, is now one of the highest performing subjects. Progress is monitored rigorously and all lessons start with clear targets. Since the last inspection, the school's main focus has been on the pupils' attainment and achievement.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in the National Curriculum Tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	C	C
mathematics	B	B	B	B
science	B	A	A	A

*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 9.*

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** Pupils attain above average National Curriculum Test results by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with hearing impairment, made very good progress.

**Pupils' personal qualities are very good.** Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils clearly enjoy their school life and they are keen to take responsibility and show considerable maturity in their attitudes. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural attitudes are very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of the pupils' education is very good.** The very good teaching invariably leads to the pupils achieving very well. The number of lessons seen with outstanding teaching was well above national figures. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make very good progress. Partnership with parents and the community is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership by the headteacher is very good, with many outstanding features.** The leadership provided by the governing body and by key staff is also very good. The monitoring of teaching and of pupils' progress is very good. School development planning is very effective in enhancing pupils' achievement.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**Parents and pupils think very highly of the school.** The school seeks the views of parents and pupils and acts on them effectively. Pupils say that they are very happy in the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Ensure that teacher assessment at the end of Year 6 matches the National Curriculum Attainment results and is in line with the pupils' performance in the core subject National Curriculum Tests.
- Identify where support is needed for non-specialist staff through closer monitoring of their performance and provide appropriate support.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

When pupils join the school in Year 5 their prior attainment matches national expectations. By the end of Year 6 their National Curriculum Test results are above the national average overall in the three core subjects. Results are in line with the national average in English, above in mathematics and well above in science. This indicates good value added education. By the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is above national expectations in all subjects. This shows very good achievement by the pupils during their four years at the school.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The National Curriculum Test results are above the national average overall in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The pupils' achievement is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) and numeracy skills are very good.

#### **Commentary**

1. In the 2003 National Curriculum Tests, results were above the national averages in all three core subjects in terms of the proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 or above. In terms of the Average Point Score, an indicator of the level of performance including at the higher Level 5 or above, English results were near the national average, mathematics results were above and science results well above the national averages. In all three subjects the school's target were met or exceeded. The trend over time is rising. This shows very good progress by the pupils over their first two years in the school. In the case of science, this also shows a significant improvement on the last inspection when attainment in science was a key issue for improvement. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve very well.
2. Standards of work seen in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection were well above the national expectations in science, design and technology and physical education in all years. Standards were also well above average in Years 7 and 8 mathematics and geography. They were above average across the school in English, art and design, citizenship, history, ICT and religious education as well as in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Standards were in line with the national averages across all years in music and in Years 7 and 8 French.
3. Overall achievement is very good. The pupils enter the school in Year 5 with average prior attainment and by the end of Year 6 they attain at least above average results. By the end of Year 8 their standards of work are at least above the national expectations and often well above. When the pupils go up to the upper school for their Year 9, they attain well above average end of Year 9 National Curriculum Test and Teacher Assessment results. The upper school designates pupils moving in from Parkfields as being with well above average prior attainment.
4. By the time that pupils reach the end of their final year at the school, their standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are above the national expectations. Pupils are generally good readers. By the end of Year 6 they can write for a variety of audiences. By Year 8 pupils are able to write more complex pieces, although extended writing remains less developed than other areas of literacy.

5. By the end of Year 8, the pupils' numeracy skills are well above average having been above average in Years 5 and 6. Pupils can use number well in solving a range of problems. They can interpret data in different ways as well as being able to measure accurately. In some subjects, numeracy skills are underdeveloped.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in their lessons through sensitive support. Some pupils, who have low literacy scores when they come into the school, show very good improvement in these skills.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (28.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.7 (27.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (30.8)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 127 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **very good**. Their attendance and punctuality are **good**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils develop very mature attitudes, and are enthusiastic to learn.
- Pupils show exemplary behaviour in all aspects of life in the school.
- Relationships are exceptionally good, and pupils give very good support to one another.
- There is excellent involvement of pupils in the life of the school and in the wider community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Both attendance and punctuality in all year groups are good.

**Commentary**

7. The last inspection report says that the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. This very positive picture has been maintained. Pupils continue to show very mature attitudes. Nearly all are eager to learn and they enjoy the range of activities planned for them. They are almost unanimous in saying that theirs is a good school. They are confident in voicing their opinions and ask interesting questions. The level of the pupils' application is often outstanding. For example, in a Year 6 art and design lesson, where pupils were learning about proportions of the human figure, they worked with considerable enthusiasm, made intelligent guesses and paid careful attention throughout. The pupils take on these attributes very quickly when joining the school. All of this has a very good effect on their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs show very positive attitudes to their work in lessons and when withdrawn for small group work.
8. The behaviour of nearly all pupils continues to be exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. They are articulate, friendly, and polite, with high self-esteem. Pupils are fully aware of the very high standards of behaviour expected of them. Staff deal quickly and effectively with the very few incidents of inappropriate behaviour that occur. There were five fixed-term exclusions last year for unacceptable behaviour off the school site. The pupils say that bullying is very rare. Both parents and pupils say that incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively.
9. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The school has an ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. This climate gives very good support to the personal development of the pupils. There is a high level

of involvement of the pupils in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. At the time of the inspection, over half of the pupils gave a truly memorable and moving evening performance in a physical education display for the local community.

10. The pupils' spiritual development is very good. The well planned and stimulating assemblies make a valuable contribution. In religious education, pupils develop an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs. In art and design and music they learn to appreciate the intangible. Although spiritual, moral, social and cultural topics are taught in subjects across the curriculum, there is no whole-school plan that identifies these, and opportunities are missed in some subjects.
11. The pupils' moral and social development is very good. All pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, especially in relation to behaviour and attitudes to others. Many opportunities are provided to explore and develop moral concepts and values. For example, in a Year 5 religious education lesson, pupils were looking at the concept of good overcoming evil in the Hindu faith. They considered different viewpoints in a sensible manner. Pupils' relationships with adults and with each other are very good, and have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils from different ethnic groups and those with hearing difficulties are very well integrated into the school community. The pupils show a clear sensitivity to the feelings and views of others, and they give very good support to one another. There are numerous ways for pupils to take responsibility, exercise leadership, and show initiative, which they take up willingly. For example, Year 8 pupils successfully mentor Year 6 pupils in numeracy and reading programmes. The Green Team has raised awareness of environmental issues in the school. It has introduced a recycling programme in each class, and raised money to save an area of the rain forest. Through the rich physical education programme, they develop a strong sense of fair play through respect for rules and an understanding of teamwork. The School Council is very active, and is effective in improving the quality of school life. For example, each pupil now has a locker, and toilets have been refurbished. Residential visits for pupils provide a good opportunity for them to develop maturity and responsibility. Pupils contribute to the wider community and adjust to different social contexts by, for example, organising a senior citizens' tea party, and participating in residential visits.
12. Pupils' cultural development is good. The school's work in art and design and music contributes greatly. Pupils are very involved in music and school productions. Year 8 pupils performed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* very successfully last year. A French exchange takes place. Visits have been made to a Hindu Temple and a church, and a member of the Muslim faith has visited the school. The successful school Arts Week includes visits by Zulu and Indian dancers, steel bands, and a percussion group.
13. Attendance is good throughout the school, and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is very low. Pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits, although a few parents do withdraw their children from school for holidays during term time.

***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.1
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year for which national figures are available.*

## Ethnic background of pupils

## Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	453	5	0
White - Other	8	0	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British - any other background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	5	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good.** Pupils make very good progress and their achievement is very good. The main reasons for this success is the very good quality teaching as well as the headteacher's and the governors' leadership, which has succeeded in establishing a strong, business like and warm ethos wherein everyone works hard and shows strong commitment. Another reason for achievement being very good is the pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their parents' support.

### Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching is **very good** and in one out of every five lessons it is outstanding. Teaching is what has helped pupils to learn so well and to make such very good progress. In almost every lesson seen, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and more often a great deal better.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils respond very well to their teachers' very good teaching.
- Teachers have succeeded in establishing clear routines that enhance learning. These include outstanding support outside the classroom.
- Teacher Assessment results in the National Curriculum in 2003 were well below the National Curriculum Test results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and well below the standards attained in other subjects.
- Some non-specialist teaching has a negative impact on the pupils' achievement.

### Commentary

14. The quality of teaching was almost overwhelmingly at least satisfactory in the lessons seen. In nine out of ten lessons seen, the quality of teaching was at least good and in over half at least very good. The quality of teaching was outstanding in one out of every five lessons seen. This

is a significant improvement on the last inspection when in only a third of lessons seen was the quality of teaching very good or better.

15. Teachers always start each lesson by setting clear targets. These targets are carefully articulated and the pupils' understanding is gauged. Teachers know their pupils very well, which means that they can set work that matches the pupils' differing capabilities and they can offer individuals appropriate support. Teachers also show their pupils considerable respect and treat them with courtesy. As a result, the pupils respond well and this helps relationships to remain very good. Pupils are also keen and interested and they often come back after school for booster classes or for fun enrichment programmes. In lessons, pupils remain on-task and work consistently hard. Teachers ensure a variety of interesting activities, which causes pupils to genuinely enjoy their learning. Teachers encourage pupils' individuality and creativity. They also give them many opportunities to learn independently through interesting problem solving exercises. Teachers match these challenges to pupils' needs. There is a positive working atmosphere in all lessons. Teacher assistants are very well used. Literacy, numeracy and ICT provision are very strong across the curriculum. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour to which pupils respond well.
16. The two lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory were taken by non-specialists whose teaching in their own specialist subject areas was at least good.
17. Assessment is very effective overall. Pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work. They are also given a great deal of praise. The school is rich with data, which is used effectively to aid lesson planning. There are considerable opportunities for self-evaluation by pupils. In 2003, teachers tended to underestimate pupils' attainment in their National Curriculum Teacher Assessment. The results were well below the pupils' National Curriculum Test results as well as their classroom standards of attainment.
18. The learning support assistants provide very good support in lessons, focused on increasing each pupil's ability to become an independent learner. They plan small step behavioural programmes for individual pupils, which are effective in modifying behaviour and increasing the pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
19. Individual education plans are generally of good quality and provide useful information to subject teachers about individual pupils' needs, but the targets are sometimes too numerous and unclear. The information is used by many teachers to plan for work for pupils and the work of learning support assistants in their lessons. This planning for individual pupils, allied to the setting arrangements, results in pupils with special educational needs achieving very well.
20. The special needs department produces a wealth of assessment data on individual pupils, but this is not linked to their achievement generally or to any specific strategies that may be used to help them. There seems to be little rationale for the battery of tests, which are regularly administered to certain pupils, who were identified as having special educational needs on entry from their lower school.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 118 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
14 (18%)	30 (38.5%)	25 (32%)	7 (9%)	2 (2.5%)	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.*

## The curriculum

Overall, curriculum provision is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and balance of the curriculum are very good.
- Enrichment opportunities offered to the pupils are outstanding.
- Provision for ICT, literacy and numeracy is very good.
- Some non-specialist teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge to teach the curriculum.
- Apart from a very small number of non-specialists, staff are very well matched to the requirements of the curriculum.

### Commentary

21. The school offers its pupils a broad and balanced curriculum, which fully complies with the National Curriculum statutory requirements. In addition, pupils are also offered the opportunity to learn French from their entry in Year 5.
22. The school offers pupils outstanding opportunities for enrichment to supplement their curriculum. Almost every single pupil in the school takes part in some extra-curricular activity. One in every three pupils takes extra instrumental music lessons from peripatetic teachers. An outstanding physical education display evening involved over 250 pupils taking part in three hours of gymnastics, dancing, drama work and singing. This event took place over three evenings, with a total of some 700 adults attending. Other enrichment activities include a very well received science drama workshop taken by Professor Bonkers, booster classes in many subjects, drama productions, which included an excellent performance of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The school has a very strong local reputation for such activities and parents offer excellent support. Almost every single member of staff in the school, teaching as well as non teaching, is involved. The site agent makes a very major contribution to every school production in a way that is well beyond the call of duty.
23. Teachers' qualifications and expertise match the pupils' curriculum needs. The overwhelming majority of teachers have qualifications that are appropriate for the subject that they teach. In a few instances, teachers lack some subject expertise and in a very few lessons this has a negative impact on the pupils' progress. The school is aware of this staffing shortcoming and has strategies in place to support teaching in the lessons concerned. Learning support assistants give very good support to pupils with special educational needs. The six hearing impaired pupils also receive very good support in the classroom. Outside the classroom, there is always a person using British Sign Language to help the hearing impaired keep up with what is going on in assemblies, visiting speakers, drama workshops and other enrichment activities. Technicians provide very good support across the school.
24. Resources for learning are good. Music and ICT have had considerable additional resources since the last inspection. Access to ICT resources is good and most subjects use them well. The library is well stocked and equally well used. Pupils use the library regularly.
25. Since the last inspection a great deal of refurbishment has taken place. New music practice rooms have been created. New and spacious ICT suites have been opened. The school has kept up a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecorating. Currently, the Year 5 block is being updated, redecorated and refurnished, with access being built to allow disabled pupils to attend. The playgrounds have been improved with the building of a covered area by the PTA in response to a request made by the School Council. The appearance of all areas in the school is made bright and attractive with displays of pupils' work and other colourful posters.
26. Pupils with special educational needs have the same access to the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, as all other pupils in the school. The skilled learning support

assistants provide additional activities, including small group teaching on social skills, literacy and anger management, which are carefully tailored to individual pupils' needs. Provision for these pupils in lessons is very good overall, and outstanding in physical education and design and technology.

### Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, and health and safety of pupils are **excellent**. Pupils are very well provided with support, advice and guidance for both academic and personal development. The school is very effective in seeking, valuing and acting on the views of pupils.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent arrangements for induction help new pupils settle in very quickly.
- 'Pupil Profiles' give pupils a clear, regular picture of their effort and behaviour in each subject.
- Health and safety, and child protection procedures are exemplary.
- Very caring environment with a very strong and committed pastoral team.
- Very good strategies and support for those pupils with problems.
- Views of pupils sought and valued.

### Commentary

27. The school has an exceptionally high standard of health and safety management. The governors are fully involved. The health and safety officer gives health and safety a high profile, and there are very effective arrangements in place to eliminate and minimise hazards. Risk assessments are carried out extensively and cover all areas and activities. The site agent maintains the buildings to a high standard. There are regular training and information sessions for staff, which raise awareness of health and safety issues and promote good practice.
28. Child protection procedures meet requirements, and the school exercises its responsibilities with vigilance and care. All teachers and staff were trained in child protection recently.
29. The school promotes healthy and safe living through its personal, social and health education programme. It helps pupils very effectively to be increasingly independent, and knowledgeable about themselves. A group of pupils has recently finished a project on safe travel to school.
30. The care shown by teachers for the pupils is an especially strong aspect of the school's provision. They know the pupils and home circumstances very well. Senior members of the pastoral team and heads of year are dedicated and experienced. The structure of pastoral care ensures that the pupils are very well guided and supported, both educationally and personally. Pupils help to evaluate their own progress and know how well they are achieving. Both parents and pupils speak favourably about the 'Pupil Profiles', which are in their Pupil Planner and are updated regularly. Teachers attach much importance to pupils' achievements in all aspects of work, in and out of school. They celebrate them in assemblies and record them meticulously. There is a very effective pastoral support network to help pupils with problems. For example, a counsellor comes each week to work with specific pupils where there is a distinctive need. The teaching assistants provide invaluable support and are knowledgeable about the pupils.
31. All staff in the school are very familiar with the needs of pupils with special educational needs and work together to support them. Pupils with statements usually attend their own annual review meeting and contribute to it. The school has very good links with a range of outside specialist agencies whose advice is sought and used. Very good links with lower schools ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs are very well known prior to their entry into the school and can be planned for.
32. The arrangements for the transfer from the lower schools are excellent. Many parents commented favourably about them. The Year 5 team shows its care for pupils long before they

arrive at Parkfields. Staff visit the feeder schools many times to collect information, establish curriculum links, and to meet the pupils. Year 5 and Year 7 pupils also visit to answer questions and allay concerns. Pupils from the feeder schools visit Parkfields to watch productions during the year. Year 7 pupils act as mentors when the new pupils arrive. Similar thought and care is given to the transition to the Upper School.

33. The school is very effective in seeking, valuing and acting on the views of pupils. The large majority of questionnaires completed by pupils said that they were trusted, and that the school is interested in their views. The school council is very effective in collecting the views of all pupils and the school has responded to their ideas. Lockers have been provided, the toilets refurbished, and the uniform is under consideration. Year 5 pupils have been consulted about their induction into the school and Year 8 on transition. One third of pupils who responded to the questionnaire thought that pupils did not behave well, and that staff did not treat all pupils fairly. The inspectors found that behaviour was very good overall, and that some pupils have different parameters for behaviour in an inclusive school. The inspectors found no evidence of staff treating some pupils unfairly.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents have very positive views of the school and of the education that it provides. The partnership between school and home, other schools and the community is very good and plays a very positive role in supporting pupils' learning, at school and home.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very happy with what the school provides for their children.
- The school makes very good efforts to involve parents in their child's learning.
- Information for parents is very good, and they have clear information about what their child needs to do to move onto the next stage of learning.
- Extensive links with other schools and the wider community support and greatly enrich learning.

### **Commentary**

34. The parents who returned the questionnaire gave very favourable responses to questions throughout. The least positive concerned the school seeking the views of parents. The school has sought the views of parents in the recent past on the Pupil Profiles, the Friends of Parkfield, school uniform change, and the mathematics workshop and detailed mathematics information. The inspection team finds that the school seeks the views of parents, values them and acts on them, as appropriate, in a satisfactory manner.
35. The quality of documentation that the school provides for parents is very good. Pupils' annual reports include appropriately detailed information about their progress, and give specific areas for improvement in each subject. The newsletter is excellent. It celebrates the many achievements of pupils, gives departmental news, and up-dates general information and expectations. The mathematics and science departments have started to send out detailed, interim reports to parents.
36. The contribution of links with parents to pupils' learning at home and at school is very good. There is very high attendance by parents at parents' evenings and events. The Pupil Planner is an excellent source of reference to enable parents to be fully informed about school life. It includes the Pupil Profile, which grades their child's effort and behaviour at regular intervals in all subjects. Parents commented very favourably about the Pupil Planner as a line of communication. Parents know what their child is studying each term as curriculum outlines are sent home. Curriculum evenings are held, for example, a mathematics workshop, a physical education demonstration, and a science workshop on puberty. The school has a website. Friends of Parkfield is organised by a dedicated group of parents. It raises considerable

amounts of money, which improves the quality of life in the school. Many parents help in the school.

37. The school has good links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. All parents of pupils with statements attend their child's annual review. However, individual education plans are not routinely sent home and so parents are not informed of what they might do to support their child.
38. The school has very good links with the wider community. There is very good liaison with both lower and upper schools. There are very regular visits by pupils and staff from the lower schools to observe performances and teaching. Pupils' transfer to the Upper School is likewise well developed. The school participates in the Graduate Teacher Programme, and gives regular support to pupils on work experience. There are a very wide range of organisations, groups, and individuals from the community, which enrich the curriculum and help pupils to gain an understanding of society. Many outside speakers participate in lessons and assemblies, such as the police, musicians, and the local minister. Outside performers give sessions on drug abuse and science demonstrations. There are strong connections in sport, such as Luton Town Football Club, and Ampthill Netball Club. Harvest gifts are delivered to the homeless and to the elderly in the community. The pupils raise considerable sums of money for local, national and international charities. They fund raise for the local hospice, carol sing in the village, and help a school in Ethiopia. All of these activities and events contribute greatly to pupils' learning.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The quality of the headteacher's leadership is **very good with many outstanding features**. He has given the school a strong sense of purpose, a vision and very effective and influential leadership across all areas of its work. He is supported by a **very good** governing body with whose help he has succeeded in creating a warm and happy learning environment. Leadership and management by key staff are **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership qualities of the headteacher, the governing body and key staff are very good.
- The school development plan is very good and it relates well to the overall strategic financial planning.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' progress is very effective and contributes significantly to the school's overall success.

### **Commentary**

39. Parents, pupils, governors, teachers and all other staff spoke very highly of the headteacher's leadership. They rightly felt that his strong and effective leadership is replicated by the senior team and by every person with leadership responsibility in the school. Since his arrival just over two years ago, the headteacher has succeeded in creating a happy, warm and successful school. He has done this by focusing almost every aspect of the school's work on the pupils' ability to achieve. The result has been a school where pupils work hard and where they have very good attitudes to their learning. The focus on the pupils has also meant that aspects of the school's pastoral care are very good and many are outstanding. The headteacher maintains a high profile presence around the school, knows his staff and pupils well and enjoys excellent relationships with all.
40. Governors know their school very well. They know the strengths and weaknesses very well. They support the senior management team. They can also challenge effectively and supportively as critical friends. The result has been a strong governor involvement in the strategic planning of the school's work. Governors fulfil their statutory duties of ensuring that the National Curriculum, religious education and a daily act of worship are delivered.

41. The headteacher, the senior team, teachers and other staff have consistently high expectations of their pupils. The result has been a clean school within which pupils behave very well. These high expectations also transfer themselves to what happens in the classrooms as well as to the enrichment activities. The result is pupils who are very proud of their school and of the work that they do. The other result of this leadership has been effective staff, each of whom knows exactly what is expected of him/her. This allows individuals the autonomy to do their job freely within a happy and productive ethos. Monitoring is largely effective in ensuring accountability and in allowing proper planning for very good, continuing professional development. Slightly more rigorous monitoring would have discovered the discrepancies between the Teacher Assessment component and the end of Year 6 National Curriculum Test results, as it had done successfully in discovering the impact of some lack of subject specialism on pupils' progress.
42. The monitoring of pupil performance is extensive. The school has significant amounts of data, which is largely well used to set pupils' targets. In subjects such as mathematics, assessment data is well used to plan lessons, enhance learning and set challenging targets for everyone. Although this practice is never less than satisfactory in all subjects, the good practice in mathematics is not sufficiently shared in other subjects.
43. Improvements since the last inspection have been very good. Perhaps the most dramatic improvement has been in the key issue regarding the low attainment in science. Science now has the highest results in the school, its end of Year 6 National Curriculum results are well above the national averages. Science is also highly popular with pupils who clearly enjoy the opportunities offered to them to take part in solving problems and in producing exciting results in experiments. Progress is now monitored effectively and no lesson starts without clear targets being set. The school's focus now is entirely on the pupils' achievement and attainment. Subject leaders are effective at monitoring their area. Assessment has also improved and realistic but ambitious targets are set for pupils. The National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results in 2003 were significantly lower than the National Curriculum Test results and than the pupils' attainment in the classroom.
44. The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator has made a number of changes to improve the quality of special educational needs provision in the school, including reorganising the teaching room and plans for disabled access. She has a very clear idea of the future changes, which need to be made to ensure that the work of the department is fully co-ordinated and in line with the Code of Practice, for example, by ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are correctly identified. The learning support assistants are very enthusiastic about their work, share their ideas and form a supportive and cohesive team.
45. Leadership and management in subject areas are never less than good and more often very good or better. Leadership is good in French, geography and history. It is very good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, citizenship, ICT and music and outstanding in design and technology, physical education and religious education. Management is good in French, geography and music and it is very good in all other subjects except for design and technology and physical education where it is outstanding.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,472,259
Total expenditure	1,416,529
Expenditure per pupil	3,048

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,730
Balance carried forward to the next	92,711

**The hearing impaired unit**

46. The provision made by the unit for pupils with hearing impairment is very good, because of the high level of inclusion and the skilled support it offers. There are six pupils who currently receive support from the unit, which is very well staffed by five signing communicators and a qualified teacher of the deaf. The teacher of the deaf has a clear idea of how the unit should develop and manages its day-to-day running very well.
47. Unit pupils are achieving very well in their lessons and when they are withdrawn for individual or small group tuition to develop their communication skills and use of the English language. The unit staff know their pupils very well, understand their needs and provide excellent support, but also place a strong emphasis on pupils becoming independent in their learning. There is excellent ongoing monitoring of pupils' progress and areas of difficulty by school staff. Statements are regularly reviewed, but at present pupils do not routinely attend their own annual review meeting.
48. Unit pupils are extremely well integrated into all aspects of school life, are members of tutor groups and take part in the range of activities available, including extra-curricular ones. About half of the pupils study French. They are taught alongside their peers for the majority of their lessons, with the same expectations for learning and behaviour. When withdrawn, the teaching is targeted on specific areas of difficulty relating to communication, including those identified by the speech and language therapist. The teaching observed during small group and individual sessions in the unit is very good.
49. The pupils show very positive attitudes towards their learning and maintain a high level of concentration when working. They have a very good rapport with support staff. Their attitudes and behaviour when taught in the unit are excellent.
50. The unit staff work to raise the awareness of all in the school to the needs of the unit pupils. They provide a range of information about the needs of hearing impaired pupils to all members of staff. There is a choir, which provides opportunities for members of the school to learn to sign.
51. There is close liaison with outside agencies who provide information and advice for individual pupils, which is used very well by staff. Very close links with lower schools and a gradual introduction into the school for pupils, enable staff to plan to meet their needs appropriately on entry. Formal and informal links with parents are very strong and all attend their child's annual review of their statement.

# 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 **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, with very good practice in the assessment of pupils' work.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and try hard in lessons.
- Teachers and assistants help pupils with special educational needs very well.
- The subject leader is a very good role model for staff.
- Few pupils gained higher levels in the Year 6 tests in 2003.
- The range of more extended writing is less developed than other areas of English work.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since previous inspection	Good

#### National Curriculum Test and Teacher Assessment results

52. Year 6 National Curriculum Test results in 2003 were average, compared with national figures and similar schools. Fewer than expected reached the higher levels, particularly in writing. This year was untypical, however. Over a three-year period, results are above average overall.

#### Standards and achievement

53. Standards in the current Year 6 and in Year 8 are above average. Teachers provide closely structured support during class work, and achievement is good throughout the school. Most pupils are good readers. In Years 5 and 6, teachers use effective strategies to develop an interest in wider reading. Pupils' personal reading logs show enjoyment in books. Those who find reading more difficult receive good levels of extra help, and are able to take part in a very good reading recovery programme, paired with Year 8 pupils. By Year 6, pupils come to terms well with writing for a range of different purposes. There is much emphasis on exercises to improve accuracy in spelling, use of words and punctuation, but technical errors continue to hold back overall standards for many middle and lower-attaining pupils.
54. By Year 8, pupils work conscientiously to structure their writing effectively and to develop ideas, for example using imagery and sensory detail well in descriptions. However, the range and regularity of more extended writing could be further developed in some classes. There is a clear process of improvement in analytical, close-reading skills during Years 7 and 8. Very good practice was seen in one Year 8 lesson for higher-attaining pupils on *Romeo and Juliet*, with detailed comment on use of language in Lord Capulet's speeches from the play.
55. Speaking skills are above average throughout the school. Pupils answer teachers' questions confidently and make constructive contributions to paired and small group discussions. They listen very well to teachers and their peers. They take part enthusiastically in drama activities,

which feature regularly in English lessons. Word-processing and desktop publishing are used to good effect in all classes, to develop clear presentation of pupils' work and to improve accuracy through the use of spell checks. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in English throughout their time in school. They receive very good help from teachers and classroom assistants during lessons, when they are normally taught in smaller groups.

### **Teaching and learning**

56. Teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils very well, and form positive relationships. They know their subject well and lessons are suitably varied, with a range of methods and resources used to engage pupils actively. There is also very good practice in the assessment of pupils' work and setting targets for improvement. As a result, pupils' learning is good. They acquire skills and knowledge well. Most try hard to improve their work. Achievement is limited in some lessons when teachers do not judge pace and timing appropriately. For example, too many activities may be planned, so that effort is rushed and there is not enough time to assimilate ideas properly. Occasionally, explanations are not fully clear, and the aims of the work are not made sufficiently relevant to pupils. Teachers give generously of their time, however, to help in after school study sessions in preparation for the Year 6 tests. A school play is produced every two years. Special events are also arranged regularly, including theatre trips and visiting drama groups.

### **Leadership and management**

57. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The head of department is a very good role model and has taken a lead in developing skills for teaching literacy amongst staff as a whole. Day-to-day management of teaching is a challenge, since a large number of staff are involved. They are experienced teachers and those taking lessons in Years 7 and 8 are subject specialists. However, thorough planning is in place to ensure appropriate coverage of the curriculum. There is also an annual programme of lesson observations, and regular moderation of assessed work to promote consistency of approach. Improvement since the last inspection is good in these respects.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

58. The school is working well to implement the National Literacy Strategy, particularly in English lessons. There are also good links with other areas of the curriculum to promote work on literacy, in particular geography, history and religious education, with some good examples of extended writing in factual reports and more imaginative accounts of topics studied. In design and technology, pupils are encouraged to use language sensitively and precisely in their evaluation of projects and work undertaken. In mathematics and science lessons, there is an appropriate emphasis on the correct use and spelling of technical vocabulary. Key words are displayed prominently in classrooms, and used well in the most effective lessons to reinforce pupils' understanding. Overall, teaching across the curriculum promotes above average standards of literacy throughout the school. Teachers have agreed appropriate priorities for further development of literacy skills.

### **French**

Provision for French is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because they are well motivated.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are good plans to improve it.
- The recently appointed head of department provides good leadership, with a clear sense of direction.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	No national comparisons	In line with expectations
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	Unsatisfactory

## Commentary

### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

59. Standards vary and are in line with national expectations overall by the end of Year 6, with some pupils reaching higher levels.

### Standards and achievement

60. Standards seen in lessons are also average overall. By the middle of Year 8, pupils are able to use a range of useful vocabulary and basic structures. They can use the future tense, but are only just starting to describe past events. Achievement is good because most pupils work to capacity and they are well motivated by the lively teaching in most lessons, which encourages good attitudes. Pupils with identified learning needs and those who have hearing impairment also achieve well because they are taught in small groups and receive good support from specialist assistants and voluntary staff.

### Teaching and learning

61. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some weaknesses emerge in classes taken by teachers who lack modern foreign language teaching experience. In Years 5 and 6, relationships are good, pupils are well motivated and teachers use a variety of means to promote learning, including games, songs and computers. Some teaching of the less able lacks pace and, in some cases, the teacher fails to give pupils the opportunity to use French for themselves. In Years 7 and 8 also, pupils are well motivated and relate well to their teacher. Teaching includes a range of strategies for engaging pupils' interest, including a glove puppet, which encourages lively responses in spoken French, and kinaesthetic techniques, which improve pupils' ability to remember the new language. Pupils often produce work using the word-processor and learn to type accent marks, but do not use spelling and grammar checks in French. They use the Internet for research and the head of department has already enabled some pupils to send emails to young people in France. Some teachers rely too heavily on the use of English and do not use the available resources effectively, resulting in less learning.

### Leadership and management

62. The head of department, in post since January 2004, leads the department well, providing a good role model for other staff, with clear vision and direction. Management is also good, with an appropriate set of priorities for development, which have the capacity to secure improvement. They include improving the skills and knowledge of support staff and the non-specialist teaching staff, who receive considerable guidance from the new head of department. No monitoring of teaching has taken place yet, but it is planned. The head of department, who reports to senior staff on the performance of pupils and the quality of teaching, has introduced new assessment procedures so that pupils receive regular information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. The previous report made no negative judgements and the quality of teaching is currently less good overall than it was at that time.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision in Mathematics is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good with some outstanding features.
- Standards at Year 8 are well above average and at Year 6 they are above average.
- Very good assessment, target setting and tracking procedures are in place.
- Numeracy skills are strong.
- There are insufficient opportunities for sharing best practice.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

### Commentary

#### National curriculum test and teacher assessment results

63. National Curriculum results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above the national average, which indicates good progress, given the pupils' average prior attainment on entry.

#### Standards and achievement

64. Standards of work are well above average in Years 7 and 8 and pupils make very good progress overall. The most recent test marks for Year 6 are above average and the school has consistently attained above average standards in recent years. Boys perform better than girls and this is in need of closer investigation. Year 8 pupils reach well above average standards, as shown by lesson observation and other data. Basic numeracy skills, which are well taught, are well 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.

#### Teaching and learning

65. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Most lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils and against which pupils can measure their own progress. Many lessons start with mental arithmetic activities, which include quick fire tables tests and elements of competition, which successfully motivate pupils. Good planning, based on national initiatives, provides a framework for lessons that usually move at a fast pace. However, more opportunities for using and applying mathematics could be created. Teachers plan for and use ICT successfully as an integral part of the curriculum. Teachers use ICT well to help understand new ideas, for example, to explore enlargement and transformations. Popular lunchtime activities include the use of computers and games of strategy. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. As a result, pupils usually have very good attitudes to the subject. Pupils arrive at lessons promptly and settle quickly. They are polite and orderly, enabling teachers to teach well. Assessment is used very well by the teachers, and especially by the head of department, to monitor pupils' learning and to find out which areas need more attention. Key objectives are identified and help pupils to appreciate the extent of their understanding. Target setting and tracking procedures are very

good. Good attention is given to pupils' literacy skills; the technical language is clearly emphasized during lessons. Classroom and support assistants, who work closely with mathematics teachers, ensure that pupils experiencing difficulties are fully engaged and progress well. These staff are used well in mathematics lessons to help and encourage pupils who need the extra support. The mathematics team has two specialist teachers and a number of non-specialists. The secure subject knowledge of specialist teachers enables clear, structured explanations of skills and concepts so that pupils' understanding is developed well. Where teaching was only satisfactory, activities went on for too long and the pace of the lesson slowed. Opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are not seized upon.

### Leadership and management

66. Leadership of the department is very good. The head of department, who is an excellent classroom practitioner, leads by example and is dedicated to raising standards. Her commitment to her role is outstanding. Liaison with local schools, together with a strong involvement in initiatives for which the school has a high reputation, help to inform her work and ensure that pupils receive a well-planned and co-ordinated curriculum. She provides very good management, which effectively directs the work of teachers new to the school within a mutually supportive team. However, considering the breadth of her role in the school, very best practices are not shared sufficiently with non specialists to benefit all pupils. Teaching is improving well and there was certainly no evidence of the difficulties mentioned in the last inspection. The number of pupils attaining higher levels has improved considerably. The overall improvement in the department has been very good.

### Numeracy across the curriculum

67. The national numeracy strategy has been implemented well in mathematics lessons so that pupils' numeracy skills are good and a contributory factor to their progress in subjects such as science, design and technology, ICT and geography. Pupils are able to interpret information and present it in a variety of ways. They have the required measuring skills for work in design and technology, as well as using their skills to measure heart rate in physical education. There is still scope for development with some other curricular areas.

## SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Achievement is very good.
- The department is well led and managed.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

## Commentary

## **National Curriculum Test and Teacher Assessment results**

68. National Curriculum Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above the national average. Based on their prior attainment, this cohort of pupils made very good progress. The results of Teacher Assessment for these pupils were much lower than the results of the National Tests. This was because the teacher assessments were carried out very early in the year and the results were not amended to reflect later improvement. Pupils from the school go on to attain high standards in the National Curriculum Tests at the end of Year 9 in the upper school.

## **Standards and achievement**

69. In all year groups standards exceed national expectations. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in developing their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. This very good progress continues in Years 7 and 8. Year 5 pupils are able to explain why some wild animals do not live long enough to complete their life cycles. In Year 6, pupils can draw and interpret line graphs showing the time taken for sugar to dissolve in different volumes of water. They can label and describe the functions of the parts of a flower correctly. Year 7 pupils can read force-meters accurately and recognise that dilute acids and some metals produce hydrogen. In Year 8, many pupils work at standards that are well above the national expectation. More-able Year 8 pupils can describe how heat affects the movement of particles in a liquid. They understand the need to repeat measurements in order to obtain a reliable result. At the beginning of new topics, teachers ask pupils to complete "target sheets". These help pupils to think about what they already know and what they are less sure about. Teachers help pupils understand how to improve through verbal and written comments. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and make very good progress.

## **Teaching and learning**

70. The quality of teaching is good in Year 5 and this enables pupils to make good progress. In Years 6, 7 and 8 pupils are mainly taught by science specialists. Teaching is very good, enabling pupils to make very good progress. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons carefully and explain learning objectives to pupils. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they are going to learn and how it relates to their previous learning.
71. Teachers focus strongly on the correct use of scientific vocabulary and key words are displayed and referred to during lessons. Year 5 pupils correctly use terms such as xylem and vascular bundles. Year 6 pupils use words such as dispersal, pollination and stamen correctly. A teacher of a Year 7 class challenged her pupils to explain the difference between mass and weight. In Year 8, pupils use words such as spectrum, refraction, absorb and transmit accurately when describing the effect of coloured filters on white light. Specialist teachers use their excellent subject knowledge and understanding to give clear explanations and to ask probing questions. In a Year 6 class, the teacher skilfully used a mixture of prompts and questions to help pupils think about why objects float. Lessons are very well organised. Teachers maintain good pace and actively support individuals and groups during independent work. This helps to ensure that pupils work hard and use their time productively.
72. Teachers fully understand the key principles of teaching and learning promoted through the National Strategy for Key Stage 3. Lessons begin with brisk starter activities, which ensure that pupils are quickly focused. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils had to design their own questions to answers on insulation. This encouraged thinking and productive discussion. Pupils were then ready and alert for the next part of the lesson. Pupils work hard and are actively engaged throughout lessons. Teachers use plenaries effectively to clarify ideas and to consolidate learning.

## **Leadership and management**

73. The department is very well led and efficiently managed. The improvement the department has made since the last inspection in 1998 is very good. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in the National Tests in Year 6 has increased from being in line with the national average to well above. The subject leader has introduced a detailed scheme of work and monitors teaching and learning closely. This has helped the continued improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Support from technicians is well organised and makes an effective contribution to the success of the department. There is a good range of science enrichment activities. The “green team” is effective in raising environmental awareness throughout the school.

### Information and communication technology

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is very good.
- The staff work very well as a team.
- There is exemplary corporate approach for teaching ICT in other subjects.
- Very good teaching throughout the school leads to high achievement.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and individual support is outstanding.
- There is very good tracking and monitoring of the pupils’ progress.
- In assessments, pupils’ attainment is underestimated when compared to National Curriculum Level descriptions.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Outstanding	Outstanding
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

74. At the end of Year 6, standards are well above national expectations. The pupils continue to make exceptional progress to achieve standards at the end of Year 8 that are also well above those which can be expected for their age. For example, in Year 8, they can take satellite weather information from a web site and create input, process and output spreadsheets to process this raw data and present it in an easily understood, graphical form.

### Standards and Achievement

75. Many pupils start in Year 5 with an average set of skills, knowledge and understanding of ICT. The pupils are very attentive, diligent and confident. Their achievement at the end of Year 8 is outstanding. Higher-attaining pupils achieve equally as well, as there are many opportunities for them to extend their studies. Boys and girls are achieving similar standards. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well because the lessons are planned to meet their needs. Pupils of all interests, needs and abilities are fully engaged in the learning process.

### Teaching and learning

76. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. High expectations, coupled to attention to the needs of pupils as individuals, are all pervasive. Pupils quickly learn difficult

skills and concepts with ease while they are enjoying doing the tasks that they are set. Consequently, the quality of learning is very good in this subject throughout the school.

## Leadership and management

77. A dedicated co-ordinator leads the department to a very good standard. All the teachers, support staff work and the network manager work very well as a team to ensure consistency and continuity in standards. The facilities are very good and organised so there is access to the computers out of formal lesson times. Learning is enhanced through a successful and popular robotics club. The network manager makes an outstanding contribution to the quality of learning through her support for teachers and pupils.
78. The scheme of work is exemplary and offers a broad and interesting course. There are many interesting elements designed to capture the pupils' imagination. This is the feature that underpins the outstanding achievement seen in this subject. Pupils are assessed regularly and they are fully aware of how they are progressing and what they need to do as individuals to improve their work. However, there has been consistent underestimation of the pupils' national curriculum levels of attainment when compared to national expectations. The department now has a revised model for grading, which will be applied in the next assessment cycle.
79. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the standards of the pupils' work. Pupils in all year groups now make excellent progress within a much-improved scheme of work.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Throughout the school there are examples of outstanding practice. ICT is used extensively and the pupils' skills are developed to advanced standards as they use computers in the majority of their subjects to research, record and present information. They also log and process numerical data and use ICT to solve problems. The teachers of many subjects work together to produce a corporate strategy that very effectively improves teaching and learning within the different subjects of the curriculum.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good
- Pupils achieve very well because of the very good teaching.
- Pupils' work is assessed well through end of topic tests.
- Marking of work in exercise books is of variable quality and quantity.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Well above average
Achievement	Well above average	Well above average
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Very good

## National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

81. The end of Year 6 Teacher Assessment results are above the national average.

### Standards and achievement

82. Pupils make very good progress from Year 5 to Year 8. Standards are above the national average in Year 6 with no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls, which is better than the national picture. In Year 5, pupils are able to read and analyse maps and make decisions about the features of settlements of different sizes. Higher-attaining pupils can both describe and explain geographical relationships and features. At the end of Year 8 pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made large gains in their learning so that the use of geographical terminology is widespread and the manipulation of data is successfully carried out in a variety of contexts.

### Teaching and learning

83. The quality of teaching is very good. In most lessons, pupils' achievement is well above average because the teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and challenging. The lessons are well planned and there is a good match between the variety of tasks set and the needs of the pupils. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and use well-presented teaching resources. For example, in a lesson on Rio de Janeiro, a variety of maps, photographs and text were used very well to fix learning of geographical terms with Year 7 pupils. There is an appropriate balance between independent and collaborative learning in the work seen. Pupils with special educational needs, including hearing impairment, are particularly well supported.
84. Occasionally, a lesson is over-reliant on the teacher explaining and/or the pace of the lesson is not as brisk as normal. Not all of the marking gives pointers for pupils' improvement.

### Leadership and management

85. Leadership and management are good. A detailed plan for the teaching is in place, which is matched by resources for different pupils. There is a clear vision by the head of the subject about teaching methods and effective management of a number of staff, not all of whom are subject specialists, to create a united team. The use of topic assessments is well developed to help pupils progress and also to modify what is taught in the future. There are well-organised links with the upper school, expanding fieldwork opportunities, good use of ICT in lessons and excellent relationships, which all contribute to pupil progress. Improvements since the last inspection have included improved results by lower-attaining boys, the use of assessment data to help plan future work and the use of national curriculum levels with pupils to promote individual improvement.

### History

Provision in History is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good.
- Teaching and Learning are very good overall, with some outstanding teaching.
- Lesson planning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are very good across the age and ability range.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

86. National Curriculum Teacher Assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above the national average, which indicates very good progress and achievement given the pupils' average attainment on entry. Similarly, evidence from end of Year 9 National Curriculum Test results shows the strong contribution made working with pupils in the two years prior to transfer. Achievement, although not quite so high in lessons observed, is still judged as very good overall.

### Standards and achievement

87. Work seen in pupils' exercise books and standards observed in lessons were good overall. Across different capability groups, pupils make good gains in knowledge, understanding and skills by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as others. Very good use is made of learning support assistants to raise achievement of pupils, including the hearing impaired. The same positive outcomes were seen for groups with special educational needs in Years 7 and 8.

88. Pupils respond well to teachers' questioning and are capable of making good oral contributions to lessons. In the majority of top and middle-attainment groups, pupils had insufficient opportunity, however, to develop independent learning skills. The best example of enhancement of pupil confidence and motivation arose in a lesson with pupils with special educational needs who became actively engaged in comparing life in a Victorian setting with a modern-day school setting. Good progress is made by all pupils overall so that by the end of Year 8, extended writing takes place, which shows good appreciation of factual accuracy.

89. More thought needs to be given to encouraging a stronger appreciation of empathy amongst more-able pupils to help them enrich their work and understanding. Whilst the content of schemes of work offers opportunity to enhance pupils' appreciation of cultural and spiritual aspects, such appreciation is not always fully realised in lessons. For example, a Year 8 lesson on the lifestyle of black workers on a cotton plantation concentrated too narrowly on a 'calendar of events', without exploring workers' broader feelings relating to other issues. By contrast, another Year 8 lesson used a scaffolded writing approach to lead pupils towards taking an empathetic approach to the changed situation of a black African following capture and slavery.

### Teaching and learning

90. The quality of teaching is very good overall in Year 6, with a range of good, very good and outstanding lessons observed. In Year 8, it is very good overall with a range between good and very good. Despite a large number of different staff contributing to history who also teach other subjects, teachers generally show a good understanding of their subject. Teachers prepare themselves well and lesson plans show very good attention to detail, which means that class and resource management are effective. In some lessons, greater variety of teaching and learning strategies (beyond teacher exposition, recourse to textbook and factual question-and-answer techniques) would undoubtedly have fostered pupils' investigative skills and spirit of inquiry more strongly. The example of outstanding teaching demonstrated the value of the teacher seeking to involve pupils directly in acting out a historical experience in context. This had the effect of enhancing pupil's learning and enabling them to develop a warmer sense of empathy, which in turn increased their knowledge, skills and understanding of the topic being studied. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning were very good. They listened attentively and responded very well to teachers. They learn well when required to work in pairs or small

groups. They rapidly engage with the task in hand, work hard and show themselves capable of extended co-operation.

### Leadership and management

91. The good standard of leadership of the department has produced a good level of improvement since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above has improved over time. Management of the department is very good. Schemes of work are tailored to enabling pupils to make further progress. Resources have been improved. Effective cross-phase liaison takes place on a regular basis. Although the head of humanities is currently absent from work, her thorough organisation has enabled the department to continue working in efficient mode. A variety of extra-curricular work takes place to enrich the formal curriculum and there is strong application of ICT.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards in all years represent good achievement by pupils.
- Teaching is very good and contributes very well to pupils' achievement.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Assessment of pupils' work is well developed.
- The excellent leadership and very good management of the subject ensure that pupils receive a very rich curriculum.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Good	Very good
Teaching and Learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Outstanding
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Good

### Commentary

#### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

92. The 2003 National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results were above the national expectations.

#### Standards and achievement

93. In Years 5 and 6, standards in the work seen are above average. Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of how they can learn from religion and apply it in their lives. They question and explore their own attitudes in depth, as a result of teaching that enables this to happen.
94. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are above average in relation to the Bedfordshire LEA agreed syllabus. Given pupils' average standards on entry to the school, these standards represent very good achievement for pupils. There are some very good examples of pupils developing their knowledge and understanding of religious language, principles and concepts. They are able to link their knowledge of religion with their everyday experiences. Pupils with special

educational needs achieve well. The use of key words, technical language and very good discussion work enable pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills.

### Teaching and learning

95. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The teachers' very good use of discussion and questioning enables pupils to express their opinions and form clear judgements about religious and moral issues. The teachers' very good knowledge of the subject enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers have clear expectations of pupils and challenge them to succeed, and are very effective in contributing to very good pupil achievement. Very good use of information and communication technology enables pupils to develop their investigative skills and helps them to become independent learners. The assessment procedures provide a clear basis for assessing what pupils know and understand. The subject uses levels of attainment well, and sets detailed targets against which it can assess pupils' progress. In addition, pupils are clear from the detailed comments in their books about the standards they are reaching and what they need to do to improve.
96. Pupils' spiritual and moral awareness is particularly strong. They demonstrate a clear respect for the views, faiths and traditions of each other.

### Leadership and management

97. Curriculum leadership is outstanding, with a clear sense of purpose and direction. The head of the department approaches the task with great enthusiasm and deep commitment. He has been very successful in developing a strong team approach, and is very well supported by other teachers, none of whom are specialists. The monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils is well developed. The subject is managed very well and this is reflected in the rich curriculum provided for the pupils.
98. Since the last inspection, standards have improved. Very good improvements have been made in planning and in the schemes of work. The hard work of the curriculum leader has achieved great credibility for the subject. The quality of teaching has also improved. Overall, the improvements since the last inspection have had a good impact on standards, pupil achievement and progress.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **outstanding**.

### Strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is outstanding.
- An excellent scheme of work ensures that all pupils are fully engaged and involved.
- Pupils receive an excellent range of stimulating projects.
- Teaching is outstanding, with the effective use of study guides and a wide range of support materials.
- Monitoring of the pupils' progress is very good.
- High expectations for learning, skills and presentation of work that are met by interested and diligent pupils.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Outstanding	Outstanding
Teaching and learning	Outstanding	Outstanding

Leadership	Outstanding
Management	Outstanding
Progress since last inspection	Outstanding

### **National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results**

99. At the end of Year 6 the standard of pupils' work is well above national expectations. They go on to Year 8 maintaining excellent progress. They gain skills, knowledge and understanding that are much better than can be normally expected for their age.

### **Standards and Achievement**

100. From the observation of lessons and the analysis of pupils' work, standards have improved since the last inspection and they are now well above national expectations throughout the school.

101. Achievement is very high throughout the school. This is demonstrated in the confident and safe way the pupils use power and hand tools to cut, shape and join a good range of compliant and resistant materials. Achievement is also high in their design work, which shows thoughtfulness and creativity. Pupils of all interests, capabilities and needs achieve equally as well because of the individual encouragement and support that they receive in their lessons. There is plenty to challenge gifted and talented pupils in the projects and the research that the class is set. There is no significant difference in the high achievement of boys and girls.

### **Teaching and learning**

102. The quality of teaching is outstanding throughout the school. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils. Lessons are based around interesting projects that capture the interest and enthusiasm. The pupils obviously enjoy their work and they are all fully included in the learning process. Consequently, the quality of learning is very high. There are many stimulating examples of pupils' work on display and a good range of resources easily at hand to further enhance learning. Very good attention is paid to developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy.

### **Leadership and management**

103. The co-ordinator leads this subject to an excellent standard. Two highly experienced teachers work very closely as a team ensuring that the graphics, electronics and resistant materials components are fully integrated with food technology and textiles. Consequently, there is consistency and continuity in learning between groups of pupils and as pupils move from Year to Year. Continuity is further ensured through the teachers' links with the local Upper School.

104. The scheme of work is exemplary and offers a broad and interesting course. There are many interesting elements designed to capture the pupils' imagination. This is the feature that underpins the outstanding learning seen in this subject. ICT is used particularly well in this context. Pupils are assessed regularly and they are fully aware of how they are progressing and what they need to do as individuals to improve their work. However, there has been consistent underestimation of the pupils' national curriculum levels of attainment when compared to national expectations. The department now has a revised model for grading, which will be applied in the next assessment cycle.

105. Since the last inspection, standards have risen still further and there is an extensive use of ICT, which further enhances the quality of learning.

### **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

## Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**, with outstanding features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils respond with considerable enthusiasm and enjoy their work in art and design.
- Subject leadership is very good and its management is outstanding.
- Improvements since the last inspection have been very good.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Outstanding	Outstanding

Leadership	Very good
Management	Outstanding
Progress since last inspection	Very good

### Commentary

#### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

106. At the end of the 2003 Year 6, the National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results were well above the national expectations. By the end of Year 8, pupils are well on the way to maintaining their well above national average performance as is shown in the Teacher Assessment results at the end of Year 9 in the upper school.

#### Standards and achievement

107. Pupils' attainment is well above the national expectations in all years. Pupils are able to discuss their work well using subject specific vocabulary accurately and with confidence. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the concept of proportions and can give examples of what they mean. They can talk about artists' work and give a clear idea of what each piece represents. By the end of Year 8, pupils can use colour contrasts and shapes in three-dimensional work, as well as in painting. Pupils invariably make very good progress and achieve very well whilst enjoying themselves. Pupils gain significantly in self-confidence. They also make considerable progress in gaining skills, such as observational drawing, painting and making three-dimensional figures.

#### Teaching and learning

108. The quality of teaching is outstanding and it is due to this quality that the pupils make very good progress. The teacher is enthusiastic, passionate and patient. She also prepares lessons well. She has established excellent relationships with the pupils who respond well to her questioning strategies and to her suggestions. The pupils' confidence grows quickly on joining the school and they are able to cope with some fairly challenging work. They respond well to being given opportunities to work independently and they can discuss their work well with each other, although slightly less so as a whole class. The teacher gives a very high level of individual attention to pupils in a way that empowers them to work effectively and independently. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own work, which they do effectively. Plenaries are very good and often outstanding. Pupils are made to explain what they have learnt during the lesson and to talk about what they should do next to improve, although many are somewhat reluctant. Assessment is effective and assessment data are well used to plan further lessons.

## Leadership and management

109. Leadership and management are very good. The art and design area is well organised, attractive, colourful and with outstanding displays of pupils' work. The art and design handbook and schemes of work are very good. There is good liaison with the upper school to enhance achievement in Year 8 and to aid transfer to Year 9. Good liaison with the feeder lower school is effective, especially in using assessment data to set targets for each individual pupil.
110. All three issues arising in the last report have been successfully addressed. Painting skills are no longer a weakness. There are successful, specific efforts to focus on enhancing painting skills by linking to the partner upper secondary school. This has significantly helped in enhancing the pupils' achievement. ICT is regularly and effectively used, by both teacher and pupils. Groups are now of a size that allows effective individual attention and a considerable variety of activities.

## Music

Provision in music is **good with some very good features**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- Pupils enjoy their music.
- The scheme of work is comprehensive and well written.
- A third of the pupils receive lessons from the visiting instrumental teachers.
- Links with other schools are strong and productive.
- Accommodation is improving but still limits the practical activities of pupils, both in terms of high noise levels and lack of space.

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

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since last inspection	Satisfactory

## Commentary

### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

111. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations.

### Standards and achievement

112. Pupil's attainment is at the level expected for Year 6 and Year 8. This represents satisfactory achievement. A significant number of pupils attain at a higher level in performing skills, supported by very good teaching from the visiting instrumental teachers, and singing is tuneful, secure in two-part songs, and enthusiastic.

### Teaching and learning

113. The quality of teaching is good overall, and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are very well prepared and make excellent use of a variety of stimuli, including DVD-RW. Due to the

cramped teaching space, which requires better soundproofing, and the lack of adjacent areas suitable for group work, pupils occasionally have difficulty hearing one another and progress, as a result, is adversely affected. Where pupils are working with visiting teachers, or where the main focus is listening, the learning improves significantly. The pupils are not yet sufficiently engaged with their learning.

### Leadership and management

114. The subject leader has developed a very good scheme of work, is enthusiastic and works tirelessly in order to offer a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to the pupils. Timetable restrictions result in one Year 5 being taught by another member of staff who, fortunately, is a musician. The subject area has open access to all and boys are particularly welcome in the vocal ensembles.
115. The subject area has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. However, some of the improvements have been very good, a third of the pupils at the school now receive lessons on instruments from visiting teachers, the scheme of work is well thought out and comprehensive, the use of ICT is growing and the use of resources is excellent. Pupils still bring in their own instruments to enrich the lessons and enjoy their music. The subject leader has been appointed since the last inspection and has made successful links with first and tertiary schools, has brought an infectious enthusiasm to the subject and encourages all pupils to take part. There have been some improvements to the accommodation, most notably the two practice rooms.

### Physical education

Provision in physical education is **outstanding**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is outstanding.
- The quality of teaching is very good, with many outstanding features.
- Pupils learn very well and enjoy their lessons.
- The physical education curriculum is enhanced by a particularly excellent enrichment programme.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Well above average	Well above average
Achievement	Outstanding	Outstanding
Teaching and learning	Very good	Outstanding

Leadership	Outstanding
Management	Outstanding
Progress since last inspection	Very good

## Commentary

### National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results

116. By the end of Year 6, the National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results are well above the national average. By the time the pupils leave school at the end of Year 8, they are well on the way to attaining well above average National Curriculum Teacher Assessment results, as evidenced by the actual results attained at the end of Year 9 in the upper school.

### Standards and achievement

117. Standards of work are well above the national expectations in every year. Pupils make very good progress in each year. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have above average skills in gymnastics. They can show quite complex sequence of movement with considerable precision. By the time they enter Year 7 they are able to apply these movement tactics and basic skills in games, such as basketball. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and all are able sports players.

### Teaching and learning

118. The quality of teaching is at least very good and in Years 7 and 8 it is outstanding. Teachers invariably set clear targets for each lesson. They control pupils well and they effectively manage time, such as to ensure that every aspect of the lessons is carefully evaluated before moving on to the next task. Pupils respond well and take evident pleasure in their learning. Pupil teachers are invaluable in helping small groups perfect their skills and they show considerable skills in managing these groups. Teachers model each skill being learnt effectively, which leads to pupils willingly doing the same and evaluating each other's work. At the end of each lesson, the teacher leads a plenary ensuring that every pupil makes a contribution to evaluating the lesson and their learning. The result is that pupils can talk about their work skilfully. The outstanding enrichment programme allows pupils to enhance their sporting skills considerably. These activities also make a major contribution towards creating responsible and mature citizens who can work collaboratively and courteously.

### Leadership and management

119. Leadership and management are outstanding. The head of physical education has created an outstanding department wherein pupils feel happy and secure to learn. She has created an ethos of success where every pupil gets praised for their achievement and where each individual is challenged to continue improving. She has also created a strong learning ethos and a united and effective team, which includes some excellent provision from pupil teachers. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection when the subject was already described as being very good. The department's contribution to the enrichment programme has been outstanding.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

### Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision is significantly enhanced by the contributions made in other subjects as well as in the outstanding enrichment programme.
- The quality of teaching is very good.

- Pupils are given a very large of opportunities that enable to experience success in taking responsibilities and to behave as maturing citizens.

	Year 6	Year 8
Standards	Above average	Above average
Achievement	Very good	Very good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Very good
Progress since last inspection	Not applicable

## Commentary

### Standards and achievement

120. Standards are above the national expectations in all years. Pupils respond very well to opportunities for discussion, both in the classroom as well as outside. They are articulate and are willing to express their views fearlessly and with considerable confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand some environmental issues, have a clear idea of what constitutes basic responsibility towards maintaining healthy environment. Older pupils in Years 7 and 8 understand aspects of the British system of government at the national level and, to a lesser extent, at the local level. Pupils also understand other religions and cultures as well as some aspects of anti discriminatory legislation. There are some opportunities provided to celebrate British cultural diversity, particularly outside the classroom, through cultural events, enrichment activities and assemblies. Civic skills are exercised through the school council, the monitor system, opportunities to help in the library, involvement in community activities as well as charity work.

### Teaching and learning

121. The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils have a great number of opportunities to take part in discussions and to express their views. The school specifically encourages its pupils to speak freely. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons focus on citizenship issues including relationships, consideration for others, democratic procedures, systems of government and anti discriminatory strategies. Added to these, opportunities are those provided by the outstanding enrichment programme, which allows pupils to take on some major responsibilities for themselves and for those around them. Year 8 pupils mentor Year 5 pupils who need help with their numeracy or literacy work. These regular sessions are taken very seriously by the older pupils who talk about feeling privileged to have such responsibility and the younger who feel valued. Teachers carry out regular assessments, using both very good pupils self evaluation and more objective assessment strategies. They also set targets for pupils' further improvement.

### Leadership and management

122. Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good. A comprehensive audit was carried out two years ago, which allowed the subject leader to put together a very good scheme of work, along with effective assessment strategies. Teaching and learning are monitored through the scrutiny of pupils' work, occasional lesson observations and self-evaluation. A booklet is used by each pupil to self evaluate and the data is collected and used effectively in planning further lessons. The subject leader has succeeded in relating work done in citizenship in the classroom, to the pupils' participation in the very strong enrichment programme. The latter is assessed as part of the pupils' development as citizens.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement*

*Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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