

INSPECTION REPORT

BERWICK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Berwick-upon-Tweed

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122354

Headteacher: Mr Jack Thompson

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: March 2nd – 4th 2004

Inspection number: 259818

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9-13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	403
School address:	Lovaine Terrace, Berwick-upon-Tweed Northumberland
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Telephone number:	01289 306140
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Watson
Date of previous inspection:	September 21 st 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Berwick Middle School is an average sized middle school with 403 pupils on roll. There are 117 pupils with special educational needs, which is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average because the school has a designated special educational needs unit for 15 pupils which includes two pupils with hearing impairments. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not English is very low and none of these pupils is at the early stage of learning English. The school has four travellers' children on roll – none of whom was in school at the time of the inspection. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of households with children in high social class households is below the national average. The school is popular and attracts pupils with a wide range of abilities from Berwick and surrounding villages, many of whom live outside the catchment area for the school. However, overall the attainment on entry to the school is below the national average. There is a low mobility of pupils with only 24 pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of admission. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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32330	Ann Behan	Team inspector	Mathematics
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32537	Linda Doyle	Team inspector	Science
32855	David Farrant	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
15163	Eric Deeson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Design and technology
32334	Martyn Groucutt	Team inspector	History and special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The standards achieved by pupils when compared with national standards are in line with national averages and, in relation to their prior attainment, most pupils are making good achievement. Teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are good and the leadership provided by the headteacher is good. Most parents are very supportive of the school, as are most pupils. The school has a strong ethos and a particular strength of the school is the high quality of relationships between adults in the school and pupils, which enables all pupils to feel valued within the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is very inclusive and effectively meets the needs of all pupils both academically and pastorally.
- There are very effective strategies to improve pupils' standards of reading.
- The school demands and receives very high standards of behaviour and pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive, which enables them to achieve well during their time in the school.
- Teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6.
- There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- Links with parents are good and links with the community are very good.
- Attendance is below the national average.
- Not all marking indicates how pupils can improve their work.
- The low use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum to support teaching and learning is a weakness and there is a lack of technician support for ICT, design and technology, science and the library.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards in the National Curriculum tests for English, mathematics and science have increased. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Much progress has been made to improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school. During the last two years significant improvements have been made in improving the school's assessment procedures but work remains to ensure that all staff consistently implement the policy. There have been improvements in the staff development programme. An effective whole-school programme has been established to improve pupils' personal development. Attendance has not increased since the last inspection. The number of pupils excluded has decreased.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	C	D	D
Mathematics	C	C	C	C
Science	C	C	B	B

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

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are below the national average and in line with national averages when they leave. **Pupils achieve well** during their time in school, especially in Years 5 and 6. Results in national tests for all subjects at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were in line with national averages. They are also in line for schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2 tests before starting at the school. Standards are high in art and design, French and physical education. Achievement is higher in Years 5 and 6 than it is by the end of Year 8. Pupils make very good progress in improving their reading ages. In English pupils are achieving well. Standards are good in speaking and listening and in reading; standards in writing are in line with the national average.

Standards in mathematics and science are satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is higher in Years 5 and 6, where pupils are making good progress, than it is in Years 7 and 8, where their progress is satisfactory. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. Pupils enjoy learning and willingly take on responsibility. Pupils display high standards of behaviour in and out of class and show respect for adults in the school. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum meets pupils' needs and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good as are the support, advice and guidance given to pupils. The school is very good at seeking and acting on pupils' views. There are good links with parents and the school's links with the community are very good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. In this task he is well supported by his deputy headteacher. The leadership by other staff with posts of responsibility is good. **The management of the school is good.** There is a strong commitment to developing an inclusive school and in meeting the needs of individual pupils. The lack of identification of measurable targets for the school's priorities for improvement is a weakness. School policies are of a high quality, but not all teachers are consistently implementing them. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are developing their role as 'critical friend'. However, in one respect, governance is unsatisfactory, as the school does not meet statutory requirements, in that it fails to provide a daily act of collective worship, which was also an issue at the time of the last inspection.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There was very good support for the school from a very high return rate to the questionnaires, which was confirmed at a very positive and well-attended parents' meeting. Parents believe the school is well led; expectations are high; staff treat children fairly; and they believe the school encourages children to become mature and responsible. They believe teaching is good, that their children make good progress and that behaviour in the school is good. A small minority have concerns about homework and about the school's seeking the views of parents. The strong views that parents have in support of the school are mirrored by the comments that pupils made both in discussions with inspectors and in their written answers to a questionnaire. Younger pupils tend to be more positive than the older ones.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Give greater prominence to promoting good attendance within the school and work more closely with parents to reduce the number of pupils missing school to go on family holidays.
- Ensuring that all teachers mark work regularly and that marking indicates clearly to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Increasing the use of ICT across the curriculum to support teaching and learning.
- Increasing the amount of technical and administrative support for design and technology; ICT; science and the library.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.
- Include within the prospectus a statement that lets parents know that they can withdraw their children from religious education as well as collective worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Pupils' standards on entry to the school are below the national average and in line with national averages when they leave. Pupils achieve well during their time in school, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress. Results in national tests for all subjects at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well in line with national averages. They are also in line for schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2 tests before starting at the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in art and design, French and physical education.
- Achievement is higher in Years 5 and 6 than it is in Years 7 and 8.
- Pupils make very good progress in improving their reading ages.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (27.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.2 (27.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.4 (28.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 108 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 4 and above in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at the end of Year 6. In 2003 only science showed an improvement on the 2002 results. Science results were above the national average, mathematics results were a bit above and results for English were below. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Girls outperform boys in English. However, boys outperform girls in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects between 1998 and 2002 was broadly in line with the national trend.
2. Standards judged from the work seen during the inspection indicate that standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average for physical education. Standards are above average in mathematics, science, design and technology, art and design and French. In all other subjects standards are in line with national averages. By the end of Year 8 standards are well above average for art and design. Standards are above average in French and physical education. In all other subjects standards are in line with national averages.
3. In relation to their prior attainment pupils by the end of Year 6 are achieving very well in French and design and technology. They are achieving well in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, physical education, religious education and citizenship. In all other subjects pupils are achieving at satisfactory levels. By the end of Year 8 pupils are achieving very well in French and art and design. They are achieving well in English, physical education, religious education and citizenship. In all other subjects pupils are achieving at satisfactory levels.

4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school and they are tracked with care. It is backed by the effective classroom support which underpins the ability of some pupils to gain full access to mainstream education where this would otherwise be very difficult. Pupils with a variety of learning and sensory disabilities are full members of mainstream classes and this is valued by teachers and pupils alike. They make good progress through the school, in line with any limitations that result from their particular needs.
5. There is no evidence of underachievement within the school. This is as a result of teachers' planning of lessons, which ensures that the activities set match the needs of pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress. They are fluent in English and are making progress in line with other pupils in the school. It is not possible to judge the standards achieved by traveller children as none of the four pupils was in school during the period of the inspection. Gifted and talented pupils achieve at a satisfactory level. Their achievements and the progress they make are carefully monitored. Whilst there are some extra-curricular activities which are targeted for gifted and talented pupils, less well developed is the identification of challenging tasks to meet their needs in all subject areas.
6. Standards in English as indicated in tests for 2002 are below those for mathematics and science. Girls perform better than boys, but the difference is the same as the national difference. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school in Year 5 with poor literacy skills. The school takes up this challenge with enthusiasm, and the literacy co-ordinator has introduced an effective whole-school strategy which has significantly improved standards since the previous inspection. Almost all subjects provide opportunities for purposeful group talk and class discussion. Pupils listen carefully to the instruction of teachers and to one another in their discussions. Standards in speaking and listening are good. The habit of reading for pleasure and for information is encouraged in almost all subjects - opportunities for silent reading of worthwhile material are provided. Standards in reading are good. Writing skills are taught well in English. Key subject words are displayed in almost all subjects and standards in spelling are improving. However, the policy on writing is not as rigorously enforced in all subjects as is required. Overall standards in extended writing, although improving, are average.
7. Standards in mathematics as indicated in the tests in 2002 are above those in English but below those in science. Boys perform better than girls. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is below the national average. The current attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is average, so their achievement is good. Year 8 pupils are attaining in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining Year 8 pupils are able to explore number patterns and sequences, formulate and solve linear equations, and calculate the probability of events. Lower attaining Year 8 pupils are able to add and subtract decimals to two places, work with simple equivalent fractions, and use and interpret co-ordinates to produce simple graphs.
8. Standards in science as indicated by test results are above those of English and mathematics. Boys perform better than girls. Since pupils are entering the school with generally below average attainment, their progress in science is good in Years 5 and 6. Year 8 pupils are attaining in line with national expectation and their progress in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils can draw and label their own diagrams, use scientific vocabulary accurately and display experimental results using suitable graphs. Lower attaining pupils can label scientific diagrams, insert scientific words into worksheets and draw simple graphs on given axes.
9. The improvement in standards since the last inspection is partly due to the emphasis placed by senior and middle management staff on improving the quality of teaching and learning and to the emphasis on raising standards of literacy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning and willingly take on responsibility. Pupils display high standards of behaviour in and out class and show good respect for the school.
- There is very little bullying in the school.
- Exclusions are very low.
- Relationships are very good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy school, are well motivated and show interest in their work. Most are confident learners, fully capable of independent study. They are attentive, listen carefully in class and respond sensibly. Pupils readily accept responsibility whenever it is offered and carry out their duties very well. The school council is a good example of this. This body operates very effectively and does a lot to improve life in school generally. Activities organised for pupils outside the normal lessons, such as in sport or music, are also very well supported.
11. The school has very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and measures to achieve this are implemented well by all staff, and fully supported by pupils. As a result, behaviour remains very good both in and out of class. There is a relaxed, harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils show good respect for school property. They treat its fabric and fittings with care, and there is no litter or graffiti around the site. Bullying is not a problem, but whenever it occurs it is usually handled well. Exclusions are also very low when compared with other schools nationally.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	393	6	0

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

12. Pupils' spiritual development is well promoted throughout the curriculum, particularly art and design, music and English, as well as in assemblies. Pupils' moral development is good. Teachers are good role models and foster caring attitudes. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, show due respect for each other's feelings and for their school environment, and accept full responsibility for their own actions. Pupils' social development is good. They are polite, work well together in class, and have very good relationships with each other and the staff. Generous support for charity raises their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils' cultural development is also good and well promoted through subjects such as art and design, music, English, modern foreign languages and the humanities. Pupils are well prepared for living in a multicultural society.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.4%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6	School data	0.0
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.

13. Attendance is below the national average and has been for several years. Despite this, not enough is being done to improve the situation. There are no active schemes to promote or encourage better attendance. Many families taking their children out of school during term time for family holidays worsen attendance. The school recognises the added problem that many parents who work in the tourist industry have no opportunities to take their children on holiday during normal school holidays. Lateness, on the other hand, is not a problem and punctuality to lessons during the day is good. Registers are marked properly. They are monitored regularly and suitable measures are in place to investigate unexplained absence or absences that raise concern.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum meets pupils' need and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are good as are the support, advice and guidance given to pupils. The school is very good at seeking and acting on pupils' views. There are good links with parents and the school's links with the community are very good. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The quality of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in Years 5 and 6.
- There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Work is not always thoroughly or regularly marked.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 80 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	22 (28 %)	34 (42 %)	22 (28 %)	2 (2 %)	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.

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is very good in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. The overall quality of teaching and learning is higher than at the time of the last inspection, when only 85 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or

- better. Improvements have been made in increasing the level of challenge for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
15. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in French and design and technology. Teaching is also very good in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and in art and design in Years 7 and 8. Teaching is good in most other subjects. However, teaching is satisfactory in music, history and geography and for mathematics and science in Years 7 and 8.
 16. As a result of the improved planning of lessons most pupils make appropriate gains in their learning. Most pupils try hard in lessons to acquire new knowledge and skills. Teachers always tell pupils what they are going to learn, and display the information at the front of the class. All lessons follow a clearly-defined structure, often involving short activities at the start, a main activity at the heart of the lesson, and a summary at the end.
 17. Teachers' expectations are high for appropriate behaviour and teachers are consistent in demanding and receiving high standards. Most teachers set challenging tasks for pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6. Occasionally in some geography lessons, which are otherwise satisfactory, the level of challenge does not always meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
 18. Teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards in ICT and digital projectors are used in design and technology, but in other subjects the only presentational methods teachers use are with an overhead projector or by handwriting on a whiteboard. The use of ICT by pupils to help them to learn is underdeveloped across the curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities in most subjects. Only design and technology and French effectively use ICT, while there is occasional good use made in English, mathematics, physical education and science.
 19. Teachers work hard to develop positive relationships with pupils. Lessons are taught with enthusiasm, patience and firmness, often balanced with good humour, resulting in a good climate for learning.
 20. There were only two unsatisfactory lessons seen. In one lesson a significant minority of pupils were not on task and in the other the skills and knowledge of the teacher were not sufficient for the demands of the lesson.
 21. The specific needs of pupils who have special educational needs are known and addressed through their Individual Education Plans. As a result teachers are able to make good provision for teaching pupils with additional needs. There is no evidence of discrimination against pupils who have special needs in lessons. This means that teaching is good and effective learning takes place. There is evidence that the parents of some children with special needs use their right to express a preference for a school to seek places for their pupils in this school. This does have the effect of inflating the special educational needs numbers above those that might normally be expected, but it is also a tribute to the school's commitment to providing an effective, inclusive education for all pupils in the school. In some classes there is a general need for ensuring that the tasks set for pupils and in the outcomes expected are sufficiently demanding. The specialist teachers for special educational needs provide targeted support that goes beyond the formal classroom, for example in running clubs for pupils who need help to develop their fine motor skills, as was seen in the lunchtime Skittles Club, which was fun, yet also developed skills of co-ordination for those to whom this is a real problem.
 22. The assessment of students' work is satisfactory. Work is not always thoroughly or regularly marked. There is a very clear and helpful policy for marking but not all teachers are consistently applying it. Similarly there is a very detailed and comprehensive assessment policy. A comprehensive audit of assessment practice indicates that there is still some inconsistency by subjects in ensuring that the policy is fully implemented. There is an exciting initiative being developed by some teachers in compiling digital portfolios of pupils' achievements. Most teachers, but not all, mark pupils' work conscientiously and effectively use

marking as a method to raise standards by indicating clearly how pupils can improve their work.

The curriculum

Overall the curriculum in Years 5 to 8 is satisfactory. It provides a sufficiently broad range of opportunities to meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements except for the provision of a daily act of collective worship. There are very good opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests outside of the school day. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good extra-curricular provision, which promotes sport, the arts and other interests.
- There is an insufficient number of computers to enable all pupils to use ICT to support their learning.
- The personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, especially those who are hearing impaired.
- There is insufficient technical support for learning in ICT, technology, science and in the library.

Commentary

23. The curriculum provides a worthwhile range of opportunities for all pupils. Most lessons in Years 5 and 6 are taught by class teachers, whereas mainly subject specialists teach those in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the advantage of learning French, which gives them a broader curriculum than would be found in most primary schools. Pupils in Years 5, 7 and 8 are taught in mixed ability groups but there are some setting arrangements in Year 6 which help to improve standards in maths and English. One disadvantage of the timetabling arrangements is that several subject specialists are the only teachers teaching the subject in Years 7 and 8, which leads to a lack of collaborative approaches to teaching and the sharing of good practice.
24. The provision for improving literacy standards across the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. The use of form registration time is effectively used to promote reading. However, not all subjects are implementing the literacy policy fully and consistently. The opportunities for using ICT to support learning across the curriculum are limited. Pupils' personal development is promoted through the well-organised programmes of personal, social and health education and citizenship. The programme includes appropriate aspects of sex, drugs and health education and the school has worked hard to gain the Healthy Schools Award. There is good provision for careers education in Year 8, where all pupils experience the world of work as part of a 'careers week'.
25. The special educational needs teachers keep up to date by attending courses relevant to meeting the needs of pupils who are entering the school – for example, attending recent accredited courses in Dyslexia and on the education of pupils on the Autistic Spectrum. They also provide, or facilitate, training for teachers and support workers, in particular when teachers are going to have a pupil with a specific need in their class. Outside support for training has come, for example, from the LEA's Hearing Impairment team, education psychology service and county advisers. This has been invaluable in supporting teachers to help them meet the aim of providing an effective mainstream education for all the pupils in the school.
26. Many pupils of all ages attend the very good variety of activities, which take place outside of the school day. The school organises a wide range of cultural events and visits to extend pupils'

experiences and very good provision is made for extra-curricular sport. Recent events include drama productions and fieldwork in geography; a residential outdoor pursuits course in the Lake District is provided for all pupils in Year 8. Some 25 per cent of all pupils are going on a school ski trip at Easter.

27. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory. Teaching assistants are especially effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs. Because there is no technician support in the science, ICT and design and technology departments, teachers' time is taken up in doing this work at the expense of their teaching. Similarly, there is no clerical or administrative support for running the library and the success of the library owes much to the team of Year 8 pupil librarians. Accommodation overall is satisfactory. It is good in physical education, where pupils benefit from extensive hard areas and playing fields. Resources are satisfactory, except in science, where there is only one laboratory containing basic science equipment, and in ICT where pupils have to share computers in the one small computer room.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The school has very good arrangements for involving students in the work of the school. Support and guidance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well looked after.
- Child protection arrangements are secure.
- Suitable health and safety arrangements are in place.
- Internet security is unsatisfactory.
- Arrangements for seeking pupils' views and acting on them are very good.
- Induction arrangements for Year 5 pupils are good.
- Careers education is very good.

Commentary

28. The school continues to take good care of its pupils and puts a lot of effort into ensuring their general welfare. A notable example of this is the recent accreditation from the local authority for successful completion of its Healthy Schools programme. Child protection arrangements remain secure. The headteacher has designated responsibility for liaising with outside agencies, is properly trained to carry out the duties associated with this role and follows the correct procedures whenever it is necessary to do so. Suitable health and safety measures are in place and all necessary risk assessments are carried out as a matter of routine. Nevertheless, during the inspection a few concerns were identified and discussed with the headteacher. Most had already been recognised by the school and arrangements already in place to rectify them. However, procedures to prevent pupils viewing unsuitable websites on the Internet are causing a problem at the moment because existing LEA filters do not work properly on the new broadband system. This is a matter of urgent concern.
29. The quality of support and guidance offered to pupils remains effective. Teachers know their pupils well and have very good relationships with them. As a result, pupils find it easy to approach staff and are confident to discuss any problems or concerns with them. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are good and work well. The school's system for checking pupils' academic progress and achievements is satisfactory but their personal development is well monitored. Praise and rewards are used well to encourage effort, and achievements are recognised and celebrated in assembly and through displays. Good opportunities are also provided for all pupils to build up their own record of achievement files as they move through the school. Pupils value these and are formally presented with them at the leavers' ceremony at the end of Year 8.

30. The school values pupils' views about the way it operates and regularly seeks them through various forms of questionnaire and particularly through its school council. This body functions very effectively and works hard to improve life in school generally. Recently, for example, it has successfully persuaded the school to buy a range of playground games to suit the different ages and these are proving very popular.
31. Statutory responsibilities, such as maintaining statements of special educational needs, calling reviews and sustaining Individual Education Plans (IEPs), are all fulfilled. IEPs are monitored and reviewed regularly and the use of IEP-writer software enhances their development. They are working documents for teachers, who showed a good understanding of the needs of the pupils with special educational needs whom they teach.
32. Careers education is well planned and delivered through discrete lessons in the curriculum for personal, social and health education. The Year 8 careers week is a particularly strong feature of this and provides excellent opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experience of the world of work through activities organised for them both in and out of school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents. Links with other schools are satisfactory. Links with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of information provided for parents is generally good.
- The prospectus does not fully meet requirements.
- Links with the community are used very well to broaden pupils' learning.

Commentary

33. Parents receive good quality information about their children's progress and other areas of school life. Pupils' annual reports are thorough, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and parents like what the school provides. They give a clear indication of achievement and identify areas where improvements could be made. The governors' annual report is now a well-written document and fully meets requirements. The prospectus, however, lacks a statement that lets parents know that they can withdraw their children from religious education as well as collective worship.
34. The school continues to enjoy a good relationship with its parents. Most take a keen interest in their children's education and provide good support for their learning, particularly at home, although a few do provide regular help in school. Many other parents also support plays, concerts and various fund-raising activities and events. The once thriving Parent-Teacher Association is currently not active but new members are being sought.
35. Links with the local and wider community are now very good and have a significantly beneficial impact on learning. Educational visits and visitors to the school widen and enrich the curriculum as well as providing good first-hand experiences for pupils. There is good participation in local sport and excellent links have been established with various outside organisations. These are used to great effect during Year 8's careers week and give pupils a very good insight into the world of work. Pupils also continue to give generous support to a number of charities. This helps to raise their awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves.
36. Links with other schools are satisfactory and transfer arrangements operate smoothly, thus ensuring the smooth passage of Year 8 pupils to their next phase of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

In most areas governance of the school is good but, because the school is in breach of a statutory requirement, it is at present unsatisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. In this task he is well supported by his deputy headteacher. The leadership by other staff with posts of responsibility is good. The management of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management provided by all staff with posts of responsibility are good.
- The strong commitment to developing an inclusive school and in meeting the needs of individual pupils.
- The academic and pastoral leadership provided by the year heads is good.
- The identification of success criteria for the school's priorities for improvement is a weakness.
- School policies are of a high quality, but not all teachers are consistently implementing them.

Commentary

37. The headteacher has a good understanding and knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. His strong leadership has earned the respect of teachers, governors, parents and pupils. He is very prominent around school and pupils feel very comfortable in approaching and talking to him during break and lunchtimes. He has a senior management team consisting of six other senior staff. Consideration should be given to expanding the roles of the senior management team by devolving some of the current responsibilities undertaken by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This would give senior staff the opportunity to develop leadership for their areas of responsibility and contribute further to raising standards in the school.
38. The headteacher is committed to running an inclusive school and considerable leadership time and effort are invested in ensuring that all pupils feel valued. The provision for special educational needs, described as good in the last inspection report, has continued to move forward and is seeking to become ever more inclusive. This is a team effort by the whole school, but it is given effective leadership by the two specialist teachers and is supported by the headteacher and governing body. Inclusion is becoming a living reality, but more needs to be done in terms of physical adaptation of the buildings to promote better wheelchair access if this is to be maintained – plans for which are underway. A good start has been made and it is a very positive development to see pupils with quite severe sensory and learning difficulties being fully integrated into mainstream classes.
39. The headteacher sets very high standards for teachers and pupils within the school. In particular the standards of discipline demanded from pupils are high but the response from pupils is equally positive. For example, when the bell goes for the end of break-time pupils respond instantly by stopping what they are doing and moving swiftly to their next lesson.
40. Subject and pastoral leadership is good. Heads of year have a particular strength in producing good quality development plans. Leadership of all subjects is good. In a school of this size subject leadership is difficult to provide. Many subject co-ordinators are often the only subject specialist teacher and some are isolated professionally as they are often the only teacher teaching that subject in Years 7 and 8. This isolation could be reduced by creating teams of teachers with more class-based teachers in Years 5 and 6 teaching subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science in Years 7 and 8 and the specialist teachers predominantly teaching in Years 7 and 8 taking classes in Years 5 and 6 for their specialist subjects.
41. Management is good. The school development plan, supported by department action plans, is good. Appropriate issues for improvement are identified and for each issue there are detailed strategies. However, there is a weakness in planning, in that measurable targets to indicate success are not always identified. The school day runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and

are generally followed. Performance management and appraisal are properly established and there is an improved link between performance management and the individual teacher's professional development needs, especially as a result of collaborative involvement with other local schools. There is a very detailed analysis of data, which contributes to setting targets for individual and groups of pupils. There has been an improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school; a weakness at the time of the last inspection. However, whilst the school policies are of a high quality, not all teachers are consistently implementing them. Subject co-ordinators are also effectively monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility. The administrative staff provide good quality support to teachers and pupils. The site manager ensures high standards in the maintenance of the site and its grounds.

42. The professional development of staff is good. There has been a concerted effort since the last inspection on raising the standards of teaching and learning. The evidence that this has been successful is reflected in the improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
43. The special educational needs teachers keep up to date by attending appropriate in-service training - as well as providing or facilitating effective support for other staff to ensure that they are able to cater for the needs of the special educational needs pupils in their classes. This applies to teachers and support workers, whose positive contribution was commented on by members of the inspection team. The specialist teachers of pupils with special educational needs have been given strong support by the headteacher and governors, who are equally committed to making inclusion a reality – this includes ensuring equitable funding arrangements while the local education authority introduces a new pupil needs-led formula funding arrangement across the authority.
44. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely and well with the headteacher and senior staff. Governors play a supportive role in planning for the school's improvement and are developing their role as 'critical friend'. However, in one respect, governance is unsatisfactory, as the school does not meet statutory requirements, in that it fails to provide a daily act of collective worship, which was an issue at the time of the last inspection. The governors are aware of this and they have determined not to increase the number of whole school assemblies as this would have an impact on standards by reducing the amount of time for teaching.
45. Since the last inspection the school has effectively tackled all the leadership and management weaknesses which were identified in the previous report.

Financial information

46. In planning the budget for the previous financial year the governors set a budget which eliminated the deficit from the previous year. The governing body accepted and implemented all the recommendations from the last auditor's report in March 2003.
47. Finances are regularly monitored by governors. The finance committee meets regularly and is well informed. The school implements the principles of best value effectively. The planning for improvement, evaluating school performance, and managing the performance of staff are good. Resources for subjects are allocated according to need. However, allocating resources to priorities and setting measurable targets are less well developed. A further example of applying the principles of best value was the decision taken by the governing body to end the grounds maintenance contract and this work is now very efficiently done by the site manager. The additional grants the school receives, such as additional special needs funding are effectively used.
48. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1095901
Total expenditure	1080872
Expenditure per pupil	2508

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-10525
Balance carried forward to the next	4504

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 consistently good.
- Pupils achieve well; their attitudes are positive and their behaviour is good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
- There are, however, insufficient opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop their interest in drama.
- Although attainment at Level 4 in the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 was close to the national average, attainment at the higher Level 5 was below the national average.
- The use of ICT to support learning is very limited.

Commentary

49. Although attainment at Level 4 in the national tests in 2003 at the end of Year 6 was close to the national average, attainment at the higher Level 5 was below the national average. However, achievement was good bearing in mind the significant proportion of pupils who had entered the school in Year 5 in 2002 with poor attainment in literacy.
50. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 5-6 indicates that attainment is rising. Pupils are taught to pay attention to accuracy in their writing. They speak with increasing confidence and clarity. Pupils enjoy reading. Good quality books are provided and pupils are eager to gain 'reading challenge' awards. Achievement is good when the low levels of literacy of a significant number of pupils entering the school in Year 5 are taken into consideration.
51. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are in line with national expectations. The majority write confidently for a variety of purposes – for explanation, narrative, script writing, autobiography and for poetry. However, a minority do not always develop their ideas fully and clearly in extended writing. Standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils are becoming progressively more 'exact' and accurate in their reading of more complex material, drawing inferences and forming sensible judgements from texts. Achievement in all Years, 5-8, including that of pupils with special needs in English, is good.
52. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 was seen to be consistently good and often very good, with pupils learning essential literacy skills through worthwhile, interesting activities. In one lesson very good teaching fired pupils' imagination and led to animated discussion on the life of a character they were to describe in their writing; the teacher even produced a tin box of his belongings – little mementos from times past. In another very good lesson pupils researched independently for information for a class debate.
53. Teaching in Years 7-8 was observed to be consistently good; planning is thorough and the momentum of learning is maintained. Careful discussion of ideas extends pupils' ability to respond appropriately to poetry and to Shakespeare, and prepares them well for written tasks. Recently a visiting poet encouraged pupils to produce interesting original writing of their own. Behaviour is very good and pupils work well in orderly classes. Although marking is helpful and targets for improvement are set, teachers do not always ensure that pupils correct their spelling mistakes. Expectations across all year groups are good; levels of challenge are

appropriate; pupils respond well because they know they are making progress. Class teachers liaise well with support staff to ensure that pupils with special needs reach their potential. Good use is made of very limited ICT resources – more frequent access to ICT facilities would improve pupils' word processing opportunities.

54. Very good provision is made for enrichment activities. For example the 'Chatterbox' group meets regularly with a neighbouring middle school to discuss books. Theatre visits enlarge pupils' cultural horizons. Last year large numbers of Year 8 pupils demonstrated their enthusiasm for drama in the school's successful musical version of 'Twelfth Night'. Year 5 pupils participate in Christmas drama productions. However, time for regular drama lessons is not available within the school day.
55. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department works closely with the LEA literacy consultant and with the English department in the senior high school. He has provided effective schemes of work which have improved standards in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The department's use of assessment shows pupils how to improve their levels of attainment – and the vast majority are eager to make an independent effort to do so. Although the head of department has very little non-teaching time, he also runs the school library and he has trained a resourceful group of pupil-librarians who ensure the library functions at lunchtimes. The head of department's sure faith in the value of his subject, and in the potentialities of his pupils, creates an ethos of co-operation and trust between pupils and teachers.

Literacy across the Curriculum

56. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school in Year 5 with poor literacy skills. The school takes up this challenge with enthusiasm, and the literacy co-ordinator has introduced an effective whole-school strategy which has significantly improved standards since the previous inspection. Almost all subjects provide opportunities for purposeful group talk and class discussion, thereby developing pupils' powers to express themselves unselfconsciously and easily. Pupils listen carefully to the instruction of teachers and to one another in their discussions. Standards in speaking and listening are good.
57. The habit of reading for pleasure and for information is encouraged in almost all subjects - opportunities for silent reading of worthwhile material are provided (for example, in registration time), reading merits are awarded and the school has its own 'book fayre' with interesting titles for sale. Standards are good with pupils becoming more 'exact' and 'efficient' in their reading.
58. Writing skills are taught well in English, French, religious education and history, for example, where pupils are trained to handle language in various ways for various purposes. Key subject words are displayed in almost all subjects and standards in spelling are improving. However, the policy on writing is not as rigorously enforced in all subjects as is required; for example, the approach to the correction of technical errors in writing is not always consistent. Overall standards in extended writing, although improving, are average.

FRENCH

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching and learning in all years result in above average levels of attainment, especially in listening and reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

- Very good leadership and management contribute significantly to the high standards within the department.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their French to communicate with native speakers.

Commentary

59. Pupils benefit significantly from starting French in Year 5. By the end of Year 6 they are able to understand and can use a range of words and phrases when heard and written. Many can hold a simple conversation in French about themselves and their families. They are, thus, well prepared to respond to the increased pace and challenge in Years 7 and 8.
60. In both Years 7 and 8 pupils continue to make good progress and, as a result, levels of attainment are above average. Pupils take pride in their written work and many can use a good range of structures and vocabulary to describe aspects of their lives. The display of pupils' work in the classroom and on the main school corridor celebrates their achievement in a very positive way. There is no difference in regard to standards between boys and girls. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a notable strength; they are well supported and participate actively in lessons, which results in achievement in line with their capabilities.
61. Teaching and learning in all years are very good. Particular strengths include: planning of a very high order, clear schemes of work, the skilful sequencing of learning activities and an excellent range of resources to support learning. Lessons are very well structured and maintain an appropriate pace; this ensures that all pupils are on task and work with interest and enthusiasm. In a Year 6 lesson pupils demonstrated a good command of the numbers 1-100 as they practised diligently in pairs saying a list of telephone numbers. Some used the laminated data sheets to support them in this activity. Pupils with special educational needs received help and encouragement from a teaching assistant. In this lesson the pupils also enjoyed singing a French song about the months of the year. The variety of purposeful activities involving a good balance of challenge and support helps to build pupils' confidence and to increase their skills and understanding.
62. In most lessons the teacher gives pupils the opportunity to develop their independent learning skills through using a wide range of resources, such as extensive reading schemes, audio tapes, ICT programmes and the Internet, a variety of games, glove puppets and other props to encourage role-play. This rich provision of resources and the element of choice that pupils can exercise in using them promote high levels of interest and motivation. Pupils act very responsibly whether working alone, in pairs or in small groups. In all lessons observed pupils' attitudes and behaviour were exemplary as they responded well to the high expectations of the teacher and to the established routines of the classroom. They show respect and consideration towards one another.
63. The effective use of assessment contributes to the good progress that pupils make. Their work is marked regularly and more extensive pieces of writing in Year 8 are graded according to national curriculum levels. Through completing a record of achievement twice a year pupils are helped to reflect on their own progress and to set learning targets. Homework is used regularly to consolidate and extend work done in class. However, additional challenge for higher attaining pupils is not always built into the homework tasks. This contrasts with the provision made in lessons where the learning needs of all pupils are effectively met.
64. In the course of learning French, pupils are helped to develop their literacy skills. In one Year 8 lesson the teacher discussed how to take notes whilst watching a video. As a result, the pupils were better prepared to extract the main areas of language from a video of a French boy talking about a typical school day. The follow-up activity involved sorting a group of sentences about his daily routine into an appropriate chronological sequence. By giving some

pupils the choice whether to do the simpler version of this exercise or the more difficult one, the teacher ensured that all were appropriately challenged and supported. Lesson content, resources and methodology enable all to work according to their ability.

65. Leadership and management are very good. The department handbook illustrates how skilful planning is at the heart of the very good teaching and learning. There are clear policies about how pupils' learning in French supports literacy, numeracy and ICT. Through effective self-evaluation the department reviews standards and the quality of learning. Good links exist with the high school and other local middle schools, especially in regard to standardising the assessment of pupils' work. These links could be extended further to facilitate a collaborative approach to department evaluation and review.
66. The department has maintained the very good provision and high standards identified in the last inspection report. It has continued to introduce new approaches to learning, including elements of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, and more resources to develop pupils' skills as independent learners. Significant improvement has been made in boys' attainment, especially in Years 7 and 8. The challenge for the future is to make more use of the different forms of ICT to enhance further pupils' acquisition of French and to give them more opportunities to use the language to communicate with native speakers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are very good.
- Attainment in national tests in Year 6 has improved.
- The use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.
- Marking of written work in Years 7 and 8 is inconsistent.

Commentary

67. In the 2003 National Tests for 11 year olds, results were average, when compared to all, and to similar schools. The results in mathematics were better than those in English but not as good as those in science. Results have improved in line with the national trend. Boys performed better than girls.
68. Pupils enter the school with attainment in mathematics that is below the national average. The current attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is average, so their achievement is good. From work seen during the inspection, Year 8 pupils are attaining in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. Higher attaining Year 8 pupils are able to explore number patterns and sequences, formulate and solve linear equations, and calculate the probability of events. Lower attaining Year 8 pupils are able to add and subtract decimals to two places, work with simple equivalent fractions, and use and interpret co-ordinates to produce simple graphs.
69. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 5 and 6, and satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. When teaching is good or better, teachers show good knowledge of the subject, plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of all pupils in the group, and vary activities. These lessons often begin with mathematical games which give practice in mental arithmetic, and end with class or group work which gives pupils the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learnt. Relationships in these lessons are very good and pupils enthusiastically meet exacting and challenging targets. Teachers of Year 5 provide activities which promote the development of reading, speaking and oral skills. This is particularly important, as a significant number of pupils enter the school with poor literacy

skills, and this restricts their achievement in mathematics. In a Year 5 lesson, where pupils were experimenting with shape, the pace of the lesson was brisk, pupils were keen to use correct mathematical terms, and they spoke with confidence about their work. They were eager to succeed and learning was very good.

70. In lessons that are broadly satisfactory, there are some weaknesses. Too much time is spent on teacher-led activities, pupils are not given enough opportunity to experiment and investigate ideas, and the work is not designed to meet all pupils' needs. In these cases a minority of pupils are not motivated, they become restless and concentration is lost. In a Year 8 lesson, where pupils were drawing graphs of linear equations, pupils of different levels of attainment were given the same activities. A significant minority of pupils did not understand the work, whilst higher attainers were not sufficiently challenged by the activities. This led to restricted progress by both groups of pupils.
71. Teachers generally make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning. Oral feedback on how to improve during Year 5 and 6 lessons is very good, and satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. However, the quality of the marking of pupils' written work varies significantly. In Years 5 and 6 marking of written work is satisfactory, but in Years 7 and 8 there are examples of unsatisfactory marking, where incorrect work and unacceptable presentation are marked as correct by the teacher or the pupil, and there is much written work that is left unmarked. The limited access to ICT resources means that pupils do not have opportunities to use ICT to support their learning.
72. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Leadership and management for teachers who teach in Years 5 and 6 are good. The co-ordinator of numeracy for Years 5 and 6 has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this area, and has a clear vision of how he can improve teaching and learning, and raise standards. He has worked closely with staff to implement the national strategy for numeracy. He has recently introduced a good system for using assessment information to set individual, challenging targets for pupils. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory for those teachers who teach in Years 7 and 8. Although there are plans to develop schemes of work in line with the national strategy for mathematics, these are still in the developmental stage and lack detail and rigour. Similarly, monitoring of teaching and learning, and the use of assessment data to set targets for pupils in Years 7 and 8, are underdeveloped.
73. There has been satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6, have improved. Levels of attainment in national tests have increased significantly. Pupils are given the opportunity to work independently and generally respond well to this. Marking in Years 5 and 6 has improved, although it remains unsatisfactory in Years 7 and 8. Links with local feeder first schools, and the local high school have improved through regular meetings and joint projects.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. The school has recently put a numeracy policy in place, and opportunities for pupils to practise mathematical skills are identified in department schemes of work. However, these opportunities are not consistently applied. There are opportunities for pupils to use number skills in some subjects. In art, pupils use measurement and proportion, and are aware of different shapes and symmetry; in science, pupils perform calculations for various measurements, and use formulae and graphs to solve practical problems, and in English, geography and religious education pupils interpret data from graphs. There are missed opportunities to develop numeracy skills in ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 has improved.
- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good.
- Leadership and management of the subject area are good and there are strategies in place to raise standards further.
- Teachers and pupils need more access to modern technology.
- Pupils need opportunities to learn more about science than the basic curriculum.
- The science facilities need to be updated and the subject needs technician support.

Commentary

75. The 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 produced good results when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. This showed an improvement on the previous two years' results. The results in science were better than those in mathematics and in English. The proportion of pupils achieving higher National Curriculum levels was also above the national average. The attainment of the boys is a little better than that of the girls.
76. Since pupils are entering the school with generally below average attainment, their progress in science is good over the first two years. From work seen during the inspection, Year 8 pupils are attaining in line with national expectation and their progress over the second two years is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils can draw and label their own diagrams, use scientific vocabulary accurately and display experimental results using suitable graphs. Lower attaining pupils can label scientific diagrams, insert scientific words into worksheets and draw simple graphs on given axes.
77. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress and teaching assistants in most lessons ably support them. In one good lesson, the class was looking at anagrams of words connected with rocks. The teaching assistant gave less able pupils a set of work cards to make the task accessible. For higher attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented, achievement is at least satisfactory. In one good lesson the pupils, who had set up their seed germination experiment quickly, were asked to carry out research on the Internet in class. They reported back at the end of the lesson on how plants cope with extreme habitats. There are examples of extension work to help pupils reach higher levels but sometimes all pupils are carrying out the same task and progress is restricted.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in Years 5 and 6. The teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are planned to maximise learning. Pupils show interest in the subject and collaborate well in groups. They know the National Curriculum level of their work and their target standard. Tests at the end of each module illustrate the progress made. The activities are more varied in good lessons and there are opportunities at the end to bring together what they have learnt. Both teaching and learning would benefit from more use of modern technology. Access to computers is limited in the science teaching rooms and the computer suite.
79. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision of how to move the subject forward. She is working with a local education authority adviser on strategic planning and implementation. A new system of assessment has been introduced as a tool for raising standards. Collaborative links with science staff in local schools have now been strengthened.

80. The science curriculum in the school is satisfactory but lacks any extra-curricular or enrichment activities. Literacy in science is encouraged with key words, work cards, sheets and games to make pupils familiar with new vocabulary. Pupils answer questions using new words in sentences and in longer pieces of writing. Numeracy in science is addressed via simple calculations, graphical work and processing experimental results.
81. The science laboratory is inconvenient for teaching and the equipment is inadequate for some topics. The total lack of technician support unreasonably increases the co-ordinator's workload and diverts her energy and time towards inappropriate tasks.
82. There has been satisfactory progress overall since the last inspection. Results in the national tests for the lower school have improved significantly. The subject co-ordinator's role has been developed to allow her to effect change.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In most lessons, pupils work hard and enjoy the challenge; as a result they become unusually skilled in a wide range of aspects of computing.
- Pupils in some years do not meet these special lessons often enough and in all years they do not have much opportunity to consolidate and extend their work - so their standards are overall no better than average.
- Though the school is quite well resourced, few teachers and pupils find it possible to have enough access to computers to meet their needs.

Commentary

83. The pupils' skills with computers are often high or very high in comparison with national standards. However, their knowledge of how computers work, what people use them for, and why they are used in the way they are used is much less good (though most children develop fairly well as regards the subject's specialist vocabulary). Also, comparatively few develop such a good understanding of computer software that they can apply what they have learned to new situations. Overall, therefore, their National Curriculum levels are average by the end of Year 6 - showing that the children have achieved well since they joined the school with below average standards in Year 5; they are above average by the end of Year 8 - showing achievement is good in Years 7 and 8 as well. In most ICT lessons throughout the school, therefore, the children are effectively challenged and meet the challenge by achieving well and learning fast. All this applies equally to boys and to girls; however, in classes with a number of pupils with additional needs the teacher cannot always get round to work with everyone, even with additional support. And in classes too large for the number of computers in the ICT room, it is extremely hard to ensure that everyone has the chance to learn as he or she could.
84. The children generally work hard and focus well on what they are doing in all years; however, on the whole, they develop a grasp of the subject more quickly in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8. Classes in the former group are larger but meet weekly; in Years 7 and 8 the ICT lessons 'rotate' with technology in such a way that the pupils have three lessons a week for a while and then a long gap before meeting the subject again. There is also a difference, understandably, between the rate and quality of learning in classes whose teachers are very experienced in working with computers and those with teachers who are not: the specialist teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how to put it across, can cope well with problems, and better know how to assess pupils' learning.

85. Overall teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, though even if teachers have learning objectives they do not always use them effectively so do not always meet individuals' needs. They also proceed at a good pace with plenty of different things for the pupils to do. It is rare, however, for children to receive homework able to extend what's done in lessons and, because marking is a huge load in this subject, it is not done as frequently and as thoroughly as would best help learning - so most children are not clear how they can improve.
86. The ICT co-ordinator faces a number of competing time pressures in other subjects, has no technician, and has insufficient opportunity to meet the team of ICT teachers formally or provide the training that the non-specialists need. Even so, leadership is satisfactory, and there is clear vision of and plans for how the school's provision should develop to overcome the various current weaknesses. The school meets National Curriculum requirements in ICT in lessons satisfactorily but not well: members of almost all classes have to share computers, pupils in Years 7 and 8 meet lessons irregularly, and there is too little use of computers and communications in the other subjects for the children to develop a solid grasp. Good management, otherwise, has helped resources and schemes of work to improve since the previous inspection, and there are plans to extend the network to the whole school within a few weeks and set up a full-sized computer suite within a few months.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. While the ratio of classroom computers to children is probably not far off the average for middle schools, the only computer room - which is in any event very small, strangely shaped, fitted with over-narrow work tops, and supplied with too few computers for almost all classes - is booked for ICT lessons most of the time; it is therefore hard to access by teachers in other subjects. All teachers have at least one computer in their classrooms (several have four or more) and most (but not all) have laptops; however, few are yet confident enough with ICT as a tool for improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects to use the systems very much.
88. The school is moving towards a full-size computer room for the ICT lessons, which will release the existing small one for classes in other subjects. There are also now two well-used data projectors and an interactive whiteboard. These changes may encourage teachers of all subjects to make greater use of computers and communications in their lessons. As it is, only technology does much with ICT, while there is occasional good use made in English, French mathematics, physical education and science. The subject co-ordinator is aware of what needs to be done in this direction, but is very short of time.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are productive because working relationships between pupils and teachers are good and teachers manage classes well.
- Some higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to produce their best work.
- The department is in the early stages of setting targets for pupils so they are not always sure how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Teaching is always satisfactory, sometimes good.
- Lessons are well planned and structured, so no learning time is wasted.
- The range of resources used to support learning in Years 7 is not sufficient.

Commentary

89. Standards attained by pupils in Years 5 to 8 are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.
90. Pupils in Year 5 understand and use geographical words to pose questions about, for example, traffic problems in Berwick-upon-Tweed. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well by working in groups and sharing information sensibly. Boys and girls in Year 6 gain a clear understanding of other places, for example, Cairo, by watching interesting video extracts. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory because they receive constructive individual help from teachers and classroom assistants. Most pupils in Year 8 describe basic geographical patterns and processes accurately. Higher attaining pupils can explain their ideas clearly and use geographical terminology confidently to write longer answers, for example, about the effects of flooding in Ganges delta. Through their studies pupils gain a good understanding of the social and cultural differences between countries such as Bangladesh, Egypt and Italy that are more or less economically developed than Britain. Pupils are given good opportunities to improve their fieldwork skills in all years.
91. Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes it is good. Teachers plan and structure their lessons well so that little learning time is wasted as pupils move smoothly from one task to the next. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are good and lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Pupils are given the confidence to answer questions and take part in discussions, which assists their learning. In some lessons, where the task set is over long or not sufficiently challenging, the pace of learning, especially for some higher attaining pupils, slows down. In Years 7 and 8 teachers could make use of a wider range of resources, including the use of ICT, which would motivate pupils and encourage them to think for themselves.
92. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Schemes of work are clear and detailed. Appropriate priorities have been identified for further development, including the consistent assessment of pupil attainment. Data collected from assessments is not yet used to plan learning or to set targets for individual pupils so that they know how to improve their work. Some monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place but this is an area which can be further developed.
93. Improvement since the previous inspection is good, because teaching is now at least satisfactory and sometimes good. After a period of staff changes the department is now stable and poised for further improvement.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The appointment of a new subject co-ordinator last year has brought a sharper focus and clarity to the organisation of the subject.
- There is support in the planning and delivery of lessons, and for assessment, for non-specialist teachers in the lower part of the school.
- The involvement of pupils in negotiating their targets, based on a clear understanding of the level at which they are performing, helps to engage and motivate them.
- There is a need to offer a greater access to the use of ICT in lessons.
- A greater variety of teaching styles, particularly in allowing pupils to play a greater role in lessons, would encourage more open discussion and involvement.

Commentary

94. Pupils make satisfactory progress during both key stages. They enjoy the study of history and their standards are in line with those expected nationally.
95. In Years 5 and 6 the subject is taught by class teachers, some of whom are not history specialists. They are supported by good lesson planning documentation and schemes of work, which have been developed by the subject co-ordinator. This is a positive development. In Years 5 and 6 pupils worked together well in small groups, undertaking their own research on recent developments in 20th century history. They were fully involved and using a variety of ways of acquiring information, such as the use of the library or the internet.
96. In Years 7 and 8 teaching is undertaken by a subject specialist and lessons were observed in both Years 7 and 8. Pupils are acquiring historical knowledge effectively and demonstrated a good understanding of the topics they were covering. For example, they were fully involved in a lesson in Year 8 about interpretation in history and how differing opinions can be held about the same event. This is not an easy concept, yet it was well grasped by the pupils.
97. While the pupils do respond well to their teachers, in Years 7 and 8 consideration should be given to using a greater variety of teaching styles, particularly those that lead to a greater direct involvement in the lesson, such as the use of role play or group presentations. At the moment, pupils respond well to questioning, but there is limited opportunity for extended discussion. There is also a need to enhance the ability to use computers to promote individual or small group study and this is an issue for the whole school.
98. Behaviour seen in lessons is always excellent and a high level of concentration is maintained throughout. There is no obvious difference in the performance of boys and girls. Some pupils with special educational needs are given additional and effective help by support assistants and this increasing ability for pupils with a range of differing needs to play a full part in ordinary lessons is a positive feature.
99. There is a good focus on developing historical skills, and pupils are all aware of the level at which they are performing. Individual targets for progress are set out and this involves an element of negotiation between pupil and teacher that encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Marking of work is good overall and helpful comments enable pupils to see what they have to do in order to improve. Individual pupil achievement is recorded and progress is tracked throughout an individual's time in the school.
100. The leadership of the subject co-ordinator is effective and there have been good developments, such as the introduction of lesson observations, which will help him to improve teaching and learning in history throughout the school, though at the moment this does not extend to taking responsibility for the professional development of teachers' historical expertise.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching fosters independent learning.
- The majority of pupils achieve well.
- The subject contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership is inspiring and management is good.
- The assessment of pupils' work should be more regular and consistent.

Commentary

101. Standards seen in Year 6 are average. Taking into account pupils' below average standards at the time they enter the school, this represents good achievement. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the individual topics that they study, such as the different titles used for Jesus and the nativity and Easter stories. They are able to compare different accounts in different gospels. Some philosophy work in Year 6 about the nature of God is especially challenging and pupils have responded well to it.
102. Standards in Year 8 are average and most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Higher attaining pupils' written work is accurate with some good extended research into the five pillars of Islam. Pupils can reflect upon what they have learned and begin to apply it to their own lives. For example, pupils have adapted Martin Luther King's famous freedom speech to issues which they feel strongly about. Pupils are beginning to find ways of explaining difficult concepts such as the nature of God and have produced some impressive 'letters to God'. Much of their work is imaginative, creative and thoughtful. Lower attaining pupils can write simple accounts of why ceremonies of rites of passage are important to believers. They do not always see how the various topics they study link together. There is no significant difference in the achievement of girls and boys.
103. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Planning is thorough and ensures that there is a good balance between learning about religion and making a personal response to what has been learned. Teachers have enthusiasm and commitment. Many creative strategies are used, including music, meditation, videos, artefacts and role play to fire the imagination of pupils and develop their thinking skills. Independent learning, research and investigation are encouraged at every opportunity. In one lesson seen pupils were looking at the story of holy week through the eyes of all the different political groups in Israel. Many had conducted Internet research and were developing a scholarly understanding of the complex issues involved. Other groups were developing their creative and artistic appreciation, working on entries for a 'Spirited Arts' competition. The subject content, learning experiences and the ethos in which it is taught ensures that the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Good assessment procedures are in place but homework is used inconsistently and not always marked quickly.
104. Leadership of the subject is inspiring and management is good. Schemes of work are constantly reviewed and improved. The subject leader provides enthusiastic and effective support for the non-specialist teachers involved in religious education and ensures consistency. Lack of time, however, means that thorough monitoring of lessons and subject delivery is not possible. The subject leader is outward-looking and ambitious and has raised the profile of religious education throughout the school. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching marked by good pace, variety and subject expertise challenges the pupils to work hard and achieve well, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- The school provides a wide range of experiences within design and technology, although the

children do not gain a good grasp of the subject as a whole.

- The children's work in the subject is very well led and managed, and is supported by good use of resources of all kinds in and out of lessons.

Commentary

105. Children enter the school in Year 5 with a grasp of design and technology - technology for short - that is below the norm. However, in Years 5 and 6 they make very good progress and, by the end of that time, reach above average standards in the subject. By the end of Year 8 the children's standards in technology are higher, with most on target to reach or pass the national standard of Level 5 by the end of Year 9. Throughout their time in the school they achieve particularly well in developing quite advanced skills in food technology, control and mechanisms, working with wood, and textiles technology. Their achievements are satisfactory or better as regards their under-pinning technological and science knowledge (the properties of different materials, for instance, or the nature of food handling processes).
106. However, not many have a good appreciation of technology as the core human activity of problem-solving or a good understanding of the design cycle and its stages. Much of this is because the staff, despite their great strengths, find it hard to put in place an integrated view of and an integrated approach to the subject, as opposed to a more traditional style.
107. Even so, the pupils are generally well stretched and challenged, and motivated by interest and enjoyment to work hard. Teachers are sometimes tempted to spend too much additional time and care on children with additional needs, so that the other pupils do not progress quite as well as they would.
108. Almost all the pupils work very hard and produce a lot of good material while learning at a great rate, especially in Years 5 and 6. All the technology teachers have a very good knowledge of at least their areas within the subject and a good understanding of how best to teach those areas. Topic and lesson planning are very good too, an extra strength being the use of a variety of strategies to meet the needs of different groups of children; on the other hand, learning objectives in lessons are not always specific enough to allow the children and the teachers to assess strengths and weaknesses in learning and take appropriate action on a day-to-day basis. Otherwise the quality of the assessment of what the children do is very good, and the way the children work with the teachers to check where they are and devise targets to improve is often outstanding.
109. Work in this subject is developed and managed very effectively by a close-knit team of dedicated teachers (there is, unfortunately, no technician). The teachers all have other responsibilities and many calls on their time, but still have a clear view of the way they would like to go, and why, and work hard to achieve that. Even so, efforts to develop an integrated 'house style', with language, posters, worksheets and so on shared as fully as possible would make the teachers' work more efficient and effective and also help the children understand better what technology is about.
110. The schemes of work throughout the school are very well thought out and provide plenty of challenge while matching National Curriculum requirements. In Years 7 and 8, however, the 'triple rotation' style of the timetable - while introduced for very good reasons - causes a lot of problems with some children. What is done in the subject is very well supported by a range of enrichment activities, such as visits and visitors, the annual technology day for each year group and trying out exciting new initiatives. The use of computers, including to help the children design and make products, more than meets requirements; the department is also piloting the use of digital portfolios and developing the use of the Internet to collaborate with other schools. Technology has improved well since the previous inspection.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average on entry but rise to well above average by the end of Year 8, proving very good achievement.
- Teaching overall is very good and secures very good learning.
- Leadership is very good and the pupils receive a well-balanced art curriculum.
- Assessment is good and ensures pupils achieve their potential.
- Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good and they behave very well in lessons.
- The department has made very good progress since the last inspection.
- The department has only one computer and a limited range of software, which prevents much ICT access in lessons.
- Pupils should be made more aware of standards and levels in order to set their targets.

Commentary

111. Results of the teachers' assessments in 2003 show that a high proportion of pupils in Year 6 attain Level 3 and above and a very high proportion of pupils in Year 8 are on track to attain well above average standards by the end of Year 9.
112. In work seen during the inspection, standards in art are above average by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement, as pupils enter school with average skills in drawing, painting and clay work and little knowledge of art and artists. Drawing skills are good. Pupils' sketches of local scenes are easily recognisable and have correct perspective. Tudor portraits show good attention to facial proportion and correct placement and detail of features. Painting is above average. Pupils mix paint effectively, choosing and using their brushes carefully. Many pupils paint finely, as shown in their William Morris wallpaper designs. Imaginative work is developing well, seen on pupils' chimera monochromes. Clay work is above average. Pupils understand how to keep clay workable and they are inventive when creating, for example, tiles of buildings they observed and drew on location. They are used to looking at the work of real artists, and can recognise works of people from different lands and cultures, but are relatively unsure of how to look at and describe paintings critically.
113. In work seen during the inspection, standards in art are well above average by the end of Year 8. Pupils build on to the skills and knowledge gained earlier in school, showing very good achievement. Sketchbooks often contain careful pencil drawings. When drawing shoes, for example, most pupils depict light and shade and show texture. They successfully translate initial drawings into three-dimensional works in full size and colour, using materials imaginatively. Pupils with special educational needs often produce surprisingly good models, although their initial researching is less successful. In mixing paint, pupils match colours well and persevere until they obtain the mix they need. Painting, printmaking and printing skills are all above average. Pupils are adept at producing multi-overprinting to gain best effects. Stencil making and plant drawing, where pupils manage to gain a good degree of realism, are also well above average. Pupils study the works of real artists and many are clever in emulating how artists put colour on to paper. They are less good at criticising the works, but all can say what they like about the pieces. Owing to lack of equipment, computer-aided art is relatively new to most pupils, although many of them use the Internet for research and word-process their findings.

114. The quality of teaching is very good overall and secures very good quality learning. The teachers are skilled and enthusiastic about the subject, which in turn motivates the pupils and helps to raise standards. Expectations are high, as teachers insist that pupils persevere and concentrate hard in lessons to produce the best work they can. Teachers plan and prepare very thoroughly for lessons, and choose good quality resources and support literature to ensure pupils learn what they should in a supportive atmosphere. Relationships are very good and pupils respond well to the teachers, enjoy the challenge offered and try hard to do well and to please the teachers. Teachers are very patient in helping individuals and the lower attaining pupils benefit most from this as they gain in confidence. Assessment is good. Marking is clear and helpful, but many pupils need clearer guidelines about setting themselves targets for improvement.
115. Leadership is very good. The head of department is seen as a strong, sympathetic leader. The development plan includes clear intentions to raise standards, mainly by constantly updating the scheme of work, improving assessment and focusing tasks for pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented. Management is good. The teachers plan together to ensure the pupils have a well-balanced art curriculum. The department keeps records of pupils' progress but as yet does not fully analyse the results to compare boys' and girls' attainment nor the success of different modules. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Leadership and the qualities of teaching and learning have improved, standards are higher, display is extensive, and resources are better arranged. Although accommodation has improved, storage is inadequate and the kiln room needs refitting to make it a better ceramics studio. In order to extend the curriculum to include more ICT work, the department needs at least one more computer, better software programs and a digital camera.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department is enthusiastic and he works hard to involve large numbers of pupils in musical activities.
- Almost 25 per cent of the pupils take instrumental lessons.
- Many pupils are involved in musical productions and performances.
- Senior managers are not making best use of the school's performance management system to monitor and improve provision and to raise the levels of pupils' achievement.

Commentary

116. On entry to the school, pupils' prior experience of music and their respective attainment levels are variable. Some have already started instrumental lessons, and there is a wealth of musical talent in the school. Pupils are in general very receptive to, and appreciative of, the opportunities for music-making. They enjoy taking part in productions, concerts and Christmas events, and their achievement in these activities is good. In class the achievement of boys and girls is satisfactory. Their levels of musical knowledge, understanding and skill are in line with national norms. However, many talented pupils, especially those in Years 7 and 8, are capable of higher levels of attainment.
117. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall; no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection. The teacher's cheery commitment to his pupils is clear to them, he makes good use of his musical skills in encouraging them to perform and he sets out a clear structure, building upon clearly stated

learning objectives and making good use of the equipment, for each lesson. Programmes of study are being thoughtfully re-written and there has been some development, with the assistance of the local education authority, in re-writing the assessment system.

118. Although all music classes contain pupils with a wide spread of ability and musical background, departmental planning does not at present take sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment and learning styles. Pupils are set the same work, regardless of their ability, and this uniformity of approach sometimes restricts learning, especially for the most able pupils. The teacher's use of the overhead projector for the introduction of new musical ideas and concepts is effective for those who learn primarily by visual experience, but less so for the greater number of pupils who need to *hear* the music in order to understand it.
119. In response to the teaching they receive, pupils like and respect their teacher, they are very well behaved and they try to make the most of the learning opportunities offered. However, there is a tendency for them to be over-compliant, passive learners. They are not good at asking penetrating questions, and they do not always have high enough expectations of themselves. Much of their learning in class lacks the depth that would enable them to internalise musical language and attain the highest standards of understanding and performance.
120. The high profile of music in the school community is indicative of good leadership. However, the management of the department has been less than satisfactory. In the five years since the last inspection, improvements in teaching have been both modest and tentative. The performance management processes are not presently securing the improvements that are necessary if this department is to realise its considerable potential for better teaching and higher quality musical attainment within the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject are a strength
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The commitment to extra-curricular and enrichment provision is a strength.
- Partnerships in the community with a variety of sporting clubs is a further strength.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject.
- Thoroughness and constructiveness of assessment is a weakness.
- Assessment used to inform planning is a weakness.

Commentary

121. The progress of most students is good. It is difficult to measure value added as no baseline or end of Year 6 data were made available. However, on the observations made and the standards of performance demonstrated by pupils, these are above national expectations, especially in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well.
122. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching methods lead to a high level of interest. Relationships with pupils are very good. Challenge is provided for all abilities and lesson planning and delivery show good progression. A range of methods is used to accommodate different learning styles. Behaviour management is very good. Some examples of very good teaching were seen in Year 7 boys' basketball, Year 6 girls' netball and Year 8 girls' Yoga. In these lessons, teaching was enthusiastic and energetic and differentiation was planned for. The team demonstrated very good subject knowledge in the activities observed and this certainly contributed to pupil progress and enjoyment. The very good subject knowledge of the

team allows them to give high quality demonstrations which pupils are then able to copy and so develop good techniques. Experienced staff have much to offer less experienced teachers, though this is within the context of making good teaching even better.

123. The new subject co-ordinator has only been in post since January and has already made a significant impact on the way physical education is led and managed. She is providing a clear direction for the subject and is aware of what needs to be done. There is much to do in terms of procedures to promote consistency and the use of assessment but she has, quite rightly, focused on the immediate teaching and learning issues, such as updating schemes of work to include national initiatives; introducing common lesson plans to promote continuity and encourage the sharing of expertise; introducing consistency with registers to ensure closer monitoring and has continued to maintain and extend the subject's excellent community links and enrichment programme.
124. The commitment to extra-curricular provision is a clear strength. Participation at lunchtime and after school is impressive. Outdoor facilities are very good and well maintained. They enhance the curriculum provision and the team use them to good effect. Indoor facilities consist of one small hall but this is also used well. There is an inclusive approach to physical education and the co-ordinator has worked closely with special educational needs staff and a local physiotherapist to devise an alternative programme for pupils who may normally be disappplied from lessons. This includes gentle activities to acquire better co-ordination, balance and basic ball skills.
125. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. High standards in teaching and learning have been maintained but constructive and consistent approaches to assessment are not yet fully developed. The subject is piloting an exciting ICT assessment system but this is still in the planning stages. If this becomes embedded in their practice it will be a great asset to the team and pupils. The previous inspection reported that the extra-curricular provision was a credit to the team. This remains the case.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for active participation in citizenship are extensive.
- The school council has a high profile and the students are proud of their achievements so far.
- The introduction of citizenship into the curriculum has been well managed.
- Good assessment systems are in place but some of the work is not sufficiently focused on citizenship programmes of study.

Commentary

126. Standards are average in Years 7 and 8. Knowledge and understanding of citizenship are developed well in a range of subjects across the school. The emphasis is on discussion and debate and independent research. Pupils know what citizenship is and have conducted effective research into the history of their local area, human rights issues across the world and the basic systems of British government. All pupils, including girls and boys and those with special educational needs, achieve well.
127. The school has developed many opportunities where students can explore their rights and responsibilities, especially through active participation. The school council is a powerful vehicle for change and fully develops the skills of participation and communication. Pupils' response to

the setting up and effectiveness of the council has been very positive. They feel it has added an important new dimension to school life and believe it has made them more confident and outward-looking. They say that it has made the school 'a better place to be'. All pupils feel themselves to be part of the school and wider community. They are already 'active citizens'.

128. There is an impressive range of activities which encourage participation in local and community projects. These include fund-raising and protection of the environment. The Year 8 careers week gives all pupils a valuable experience of life beyond the classroom. Many visitors such as the mayor, the Member of Parliament, the Sheriff and numerous others, come into school to share their experiences and raise the horizons of the pupils.
129. Teaching and learning are good. It was not possible to see any citizenship lessons during the inspection but an examination of the work done by pupils shows that the citizenship topics they cover within history, religious education and geography allow them to investigate and explore many aspects of the citizenship curriculum. Assessments need to be developed so that they better reflect precise citizenship topics rather than aspects of other subjects.
130. The leadership and management of citizenship are both good. The subject co-ordinator has done much research to ensure that the curriculum is appropriate and that there are many opportunities for participation and enquiry. Teachers work well as a team and are well supported by senior management. There is a clear vision for future development both medium and long-term and potential for citizenship to become a strength of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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