

INSPECTION REPORT

**EDWINSTREE CHURCH OF ENGLAND VC MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

Buntingford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117554

Headteacher: M Knowles

Lead inspector: N A Pett

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th March 2004

Inspection number: 260087

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	9 -13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	438
School address:	Norfolk Road Buntingford Herts
Postcode:	SG9 9AW
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G Brook
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Edwinstree is a mixed co-educational comprehensive Church of England middle school located in Buntingford. Its pupils are aged between nine and 13 years and come from the immediate area of established housing, although a significant minority live in local villages. There are 438 pupils on roll and this makes the school similar in size to other middle schools nationally. There are more boys than girls. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and although pupils come from the full range of socio-economic backgrounds a significant minority experience some advantage. Only a very small number of pupils come from ethnic minority heritage and rarely is there the need for support for English as an additional language. Attainment on entry shows the full range of capability, although it is slightly above average overall. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and the percentage holding statements to address their specific needs, are below average. The main categories of need are for severe learning difficulties and for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17331	N A Pett	Lead inspector	Citizenship
9092	R Elam	Lay inspector	
12003	A Marfleet	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, Religious education
30597	R Howells	Team inspector	Mathematics, Special educational needs
4922	M Driver	Team inspector	Science
21825	E Kelly	Team inspector	Art and design, Design and technology
31879	D Rhodes	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)
4361	R Boatman	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
32382	J Bryan-Williams	Team inspector	Geography
30297	G Spruce	Team inspector	Music
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with a very positive ethos and in much of its work there are significant strengths. It is effective in providing a good quality of education for its pupils, which supports their development as well-rounded young people because it is very well led and effectively managed. Standards are above average by the age of 13 overall and pupils achieve well through the good, sustained teaching. Pupils' all round education benefits from the improved and improving facilities and resources. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good ethos, which encourages learning and ensures that pupils are well cared for so that they are confident to seek support when needed.
- The significant use of investigations in pupils' work which develops their thinking and overall standards.
- Gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported.
- The very good relationships between pupils and their very good attitudes and good behaviour.
- The good links with other schools which support learning opportunities and relationships.
- The use of assessment needs further development especially in the foundation subjects.
- Better use needs to be made of ICT across the curriculum.
- Some aspects of the accommodation still need improving.
- Statutory curriculum requirements are not met for school publications and for design and technology.

Since the last inspection in 1999, overall improvement has been good. There has been very good improvement in accommodation and resources, which are benefiting pupils' progress. Issues still remain to improve accommodation and resources in design and technology and the quality of the changing rooms. Good progress has been made in improving assessment in English, mathematics and science, but more work is needed in other subjects.

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	B	B	D
mathematics	C	B	B	D
science	A	A	A	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' attainment on entry is broadly average. Their **achievement is good**. Results at the end of Year 6 are above average in the core subject tests, although in comparison with similar schools they are average overall. Over the next two years pupils make good progress so that by the time that they leave in Year 8, standards are above average overall. Pupils have above average skills in literacy and numeracy, brought about by the good support for these skills in subjects across the curriculum. Standards are well above average in science and above average in discrete skills in information and communication technology, although the use of their skills across the curriculum is underdeveloped. Standards in religious education are average. Overall, girls have done better than boys, although higher attaining boys and girls do equally well. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritage achieve well, as do pupils with special educational needs and those who are identified as being gifted and talented.

Pupils' personal development is very good. They enjoy school and their very good attitudes have a positive effect on their learning and most enjoy very good relationships with each other and with adults in the school. Behaviour is good. Pupils respond very well to the effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching and this is a strength of the school. Excellent teaching was seen during the inspection. There is a good balance between experienced and newly qualified teachers. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress. Procedures for assessment are good in English, mathematics and science but are underdeveloped in other subjects. However, teachers generally mark well and this supports pupils' progress. The provision for pupils who are gifted and talented or who have special educational needs is good. There is good equality of access and inclusion. The curriculum is well based on the National Curriculum and national guidance and effective planning enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Good improvements are taking place for information and communication technology, but statutory requirements are not met for resistant materials and computer work in design and technology. The personal and social education course is good and citizenship is being effectively addressed. Extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum well. The accommodation is very good and good resources are well used to support learning. Pupils are well supported on a personal level; they are well known and are appreciative of the support that they are given. Parents make a very effective contribution to the life of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a very clear vision, which is well shared by staff and governors. He leads the school very well and is very well supported by his senior staff. Staff, with responsibility for subjects and pastoral care, manage effectively. Procedures for evaluating the school's work are good and have the potential to improve further with even more use of assessment data to support pupils' achievement and attainment. The school development plan is well structured and strategic. Procedures for the induction and professional development of staff are very good overall. Governors are supportive, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and work hard to enhance the overall provision for the pupils by ensuring best value. They take their duties seriously but fail to fulfil their statutory responsibility for published information and design and technology. Financial affairs are very well managed and general school administration is very effective.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school, recognising the good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are proud of their school, which they feel is a happy place in which they are well supported and are making good progress in their learning.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- To further develop assessment procedures, especially in the foundation subjects and to make reports more comprehensive.
- To continue to develop pupils' use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Continue to address the shortcomings in accommodation with special reference to changing rooms and facilities for aspects of design and technology;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- For design and technology.
- For school publications.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' attainment on entry at the beginning of Year 5 is broadly average. By the time that they leave the school **at the end of Year 8 their standards have improved and are above average overall**. This shows that pupils achieve well because they are well taught and the school has a very good learning ethos. Results for previous pupils who have taken their tests at the end of Key Stage 3 show considerable added value.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were well above average overall.
- Standards by the end of Year 8 are above average overall.
- Pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented achieve well overall.

Commentary

1. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science and overall. At the higher levels, results were average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The average points score was above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In relation to pupils' prior attainment in tests taken in other schools at the end of Year 2, results were below average in English and mathematics but above average in science and average overall. In comparison with results in similar schools, results were average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Girls generally perform better than boys. The trend line for improvement is broadly similar to that found nationally. The challenging targets set for the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were achieved in mathematics but not achieved in English, although they were close to the target. Targets set for 2004, and also in conjunction with the local upper school when pupils are aged fourteen, are high. Results have shown sound improvement over the last two years but performance in science has been significantly and constantly better than in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (27.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.0 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.7 (30.3)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. Standards for the current cohort of pupils at the age of 11, the end of Year 6, are average overall and achievement is good. In science, standards are above average with good achievement but whilst achievement is good in English and mathematics, standards are average overall. Standards are above average in ICT. In other subjects, standards are above average except for design and technology, geography and religious education, where standards are average.
3. By Year 8 when pupils have been in the school for nearly four years, standards have improved, reflecting the continuing good achievement overall, although a significant minority of pupils have very good achievement. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritage do as well as their contemporaries. Standards are well above average in science and ICT and

above average in English, mathematics and in citizenship. In other subjects standards are above average. Standards improve in geography to become above average but decline in history to being average by the end of Year 8. This is because pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Standards remain average in design and technology and religious education. In design and technology, standards are adversely affected and not as good as at the last inspection, reflecting the fact that the curriculum is not wide enough because of limitations on accommodation and resources.

4. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, achieve well overall. They make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans. Pupils are in mixed capability classes in English and in teaching groups set by prior attainment in mathematics. Teachers organise effective group work in English to ensure that these pupils are successful in their work, often supported by classroom assistants who are deployed well to support achievement. In mathematics, teachers plan very well for the differing needs of the groups and progress and attainment are good. In addition to having more demanding work set in lessons, the gifted and able pupils benefit from additional programmes of study in the form of extensive topic work, which they pursue as a group. However, in a small minority of mainstream classes, for example, in science and in design and technology, the support for pupils with special educational needs requires improvement so that work set meets their needs more effectively.
5. Pupils' language and literacy skills are above average overall. The effective use of national strategies and the overall support in subjects across the curriculum leads to good opportunities for speaking and listening. For example, in history, pupils in Year 5 made very good progress in their lessons in which they had to use questions and answers to deduce facts about life in Tudor times. There is a good emphasis in most subjects on ensuring that pupils use and understand specialist vocabulary. Written work develops well overall and the highest attainers write with style and accuracy. Pupils read well, with expression and confidence. Older pupils can converse with interest and speak fluently. They thoroughly enjoy discussions with visitors. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress in their language and literacy. Standards in numeracy are above average by Year 8. As with literacy, good opportunities are taken to use numeracy in subjects across the curriculum, for example, in science, physical education, geography and ICT. The work undertaken builds pupils' basic skills so that they improve on work in data handling, graph constructions and calculations. Pupils' competence in ICT is very good overall and they are able to use their ICT skills, when required, across the curriculum. It is seen to good effect, for example, in the use of word processing, PowerPoint and use of the Internet. However, because of resource issues in design and technology and music, specialist opportunities are limited and this has a detrimental effect on standards.
6. Evidence shows that results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have improved and that standards by Year 8 are above average overall. Pupils' achievement shows that there is considerable added value to their performance. Since the last inspection, standards have been well sustained with examples of improvement in standards at the end of both Year 6 and 8.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are very good and their behaviour is good. The school is an orderly community. Attendance is satisfactory. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good ethos.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- Relationships are very good and most pupils behave well.

- Pupils respond very well to the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The level of attendance has deteriorated since the last inspection.

Commentary

- The school has a very good ethos in which it supports and respects all its members and this is a strength of the school. Pupils work well together and the very few pupils from minority ethnic heritage are very well included. Pupils give very good support to their classmates who have special educational needs or disability, including them in their games and activities.
- Pupils are very interested in what happens in school and they enjoy their work. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and settle quickly to the tasks given. They have confidence in their own capabilities and are eager to contribute their ideas. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities built into the lessons. The pupils' personal development is good and parents value the way in which their children grow in confidence and maturity as they progress through the school. Pupils demonstrate they can act responsibly when undertaking the variety of duties in the classroom and around the school and through the support that they give to extra-curricular activities.
- Their good spiritual development is enhanced by the sense of community developed through the whole school assemblies. Discussions in the classroom help pupils to appreciate their own worth and the merit system raises their self-esteem. Opportunities occur in subjects across the curriculum to consider other's values and beliefs. Assemblies add to the sense of community and the acts of collective worship are very well structured, reflecting the Christian status of the school; pupils pay good attention when their peers are presenting them. Class assemblies follow a 'Thought for the Week' approach and tutors' practice varies. The requirements of collective worship are met but the time for reflection is not always well enough structured or adequate.
- The provision for the moral development of the pupils is good and they are aware of how their behaviour affects others. The great majority show good self-discipline resulting in an orderly school. They are polite to adults and to each other and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way even when not supervised. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour and they are used consistently by all the staff. Nevertheless, a few pupils show extremes of behaviour or may bully others, but parents and pupils confirm that the school has effective and appropriate procedures to deal with the occasional unacceptable behaviour that may take place. Pupils with special behavioural needs are well supported by learning support staff. The school has taken a clear stance by using exclusions as a last resort to ensure that the high expectations it sets are met. Pupils have responded well and the number of exclusions in the current school year has already reduced significantly from the number shown in the table below.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White - British
White - other
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
Mixed - White and Asian
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British - other
Other ethnic group
Preferred not to say

Number of pupils on roll
423
4
1
3
2
1
1
1
2

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
18	1
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

11. Pupils' social development is very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work, paired discussions and monitor such tasks within each class. The school council and the house system enable pupils of all ages to work together. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced by entertaining pensioners, the wide range of visitors and inter-school sports matches. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults have maintained the high level at the time of the last inspection and contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make. Pupils from different ethnic heritage relate well with each other.
12. The provision for cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Many subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. Art and music help to develop aesthetic awareness. Pupils appreciate the western cultural background from work on myths and fables and, for example, the Greeks and Tudors in history and European artists and composers. Pupils' awareness of other cultures develops from the extended work in subjects such as geography and the study of world faiths in religious education. Nevertheless, although there is broadly satisfactory provision, the references to life in multicultural British society are much more limited.
13. At the time of the last inspection, attendance was very good. It is now only satisfactory. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons but a significant number of families insist on taking holidays during term time. Punctuality is good with pupils rarely arriving late. Parents are reminded in the newsletters of the importance of their children coming to school regularly and excellent attendance is rewarded with certificates.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year [%]

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.9
National data:	6.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.1
National data:	0.3

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good and pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them. Teaching is good overall, so pupils learn effectively and make good progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this is an inclusive school. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall with some good practice. The curriculum is good overall and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Links with other schools and extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum. The accommodation is very good and good resources are well used to support learning. Pupils are well supported and parents make a very effective contribution to the life of the school.

Teaching and learning

Inspection evidence shows that **teaching and learning are good**, with examples of very good teaching over time, which is a strength of the school. This ensures that pupils learn effectively and consistently make good progress. The procedures for assessment are satisfactory overall with examples of good practice.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good, with a significant amount of very good teaching, which supports pupils' good achievement.
- National Strategies are being well used.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' skills in literacy, and numeracy are well supported in subjects across the curriculum but more use of ICT is required.
- Good progress has been made since the last inspection in assessment but procedures are not yet fully developed in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This is a very good achievement when taking into account the recent staffing changes brought about by promotions and retirements. A significant proportion of the teaching staff is newly qualified, some having joined the school this academic year and some in the second year of teaching. Evidence from the lessons observed and from the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them supports this overall judgement. Parents also express the view that their children are well taught. The table below shows that, in lessons observed, over a third were very good or better and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teaching was best in Year 5 although it was consistently good across the four year groups and it was only in lessons with older pupils where more satisfactory teaching occurred.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (8%)	16 (27%)	26 (43%)	13 (22%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. The good quality of teaching is characterised by teachers' good expectations, with examples of high expectations. These expectations support pupils' learning well and enhance their good achievement. Pupils' positive attitudes are also very important and this helps teachers in their work. Over time, teaching is very good in science, ICT and physical education across all year groups. Consistently good teaching is found in all other subjects but there is some variation in English, where it is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. In geography and religious education, teaching is better for older pupils whilst in history it is better for younger pupils. This reflects the quality of challenge. In design and technology, the quality of teaching is good although learning is only satisfactory in Years 7 and 8 because there is insufficient progression. This is because art and design, and design technology have been amalgamated in these two year groups. The teaching of the personal and social education programme and elements of citizenship are well done.
16. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning supports pupils' personal development well, as pupils are given responsibility for their own learning and teachers manage their classes well. Teachers implement the behaviour code well and use rewards and sanctions effectively. However, there are some pupils who present challenging behaviour and this disrupts the learning of others in a minority of lessons, but it is generally well handled. Teachers use group and pair work effectively; pupils collaborate very well sharing their ideas in a sensible manner. Good use is also made of problem solving and investigations to develop responsibility and thinking skills. Where pupils are involved in problem-solving, teachers give them good advice as to how to approach their work, as seen in ICT and music. However, work can occasionally be too over-directed by teachers, as in science and geography and thus the impact is reduced on learning.
17. In the best lessons, pupils' learning benefits from teacher enthusiasm and subject expertise. This is well seen in modern foreign languages, ICT, physical education and science. The overall quality of planning ensures that activities are well matched to lesson objectives and motivate pupils very well. Overall, subject expertise is good and teachers use it well to extend pupils' understanding as they develop questions and set work that meets pupils' differing needs. Non-specialist teachers are well supported, although they show occasional lapses in specialist knowledge and this lowers the quality of learning in English and history, but it always remains at least satisfactory. Good use is made of resources and very good use is made of the time available.

18. National Strategies are well used to support planning and to make teaching and learning effective, as seen in literacy and numeracy, but also in the use of the three part lesson. Those with most impact and leading to very good achievement, are where teachers use introductions very well, structure activities to support the objectives and then check at the end how well the pupils have learned. The well structured learning activities hold pupils' interest so that they concentrate and learn well. However, where occasionally the final part of the lesson is too short, it does not allow teachers to focus sufficiently on outcomes of learning. There are good and effective cross curricular links with many subjects such as music, geography and history. Overall, homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. This is generally completed well, reflecting pupils' good attitudes to learning.
19. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. The provision also encompasses those pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented. All these pupils have individual education plans (IEPs) which advise the pupils and the teachers of what their needs are and how they should be met. Teachers generally adapt the lesson content or their teaching well and some pupils are given the support of teaching assistants, who are deployed well. However, not all teachers make good use of the IEPs to ensure that the pupils make good progress so that they can achieve the learning objectives and their own personal targets. Further improvement is needed in setting tasks at different levels of difficulty to enable pupils of all levels of capability to achieve their maximum progress in lessons. Teaching arrangements in mathematics are by capability and this enables pupils to make good progress. In English, pupils are in mixed ability classes but teachers organise effective group work to ensure that all the pupils achieve well. However, in science, the teachers do not always ensure that work set meets the pupils' differing needs. In addition to having more demanding challenges set in lessons, the gifted and talented pupils benefit from additional programmes of study in the form of extensive topic work, which they pursue as a group. Overall, the pupils with special educational needs are taught well in all subjects and most make good educational and personal progress.
20. Most subjects make good provision for the teaching of literacy skills, which are well included in schemes of work. The use of discussion and some very good question and answer sessions support pupils' speaking and listening skills very well, for example, in history and in mathematics. Pupils are given good opportunities for writing in a range of styles and teachers work hard to ensure that the correct vocabulary is used and that it is understood. Similarly, pupils' numeracy skills are well developed in mathematics but also in appropriate subjects across the curriculum, for example, in design and technology, French, geography, physical education and science. A recent audit of provision shows how the school values constant review of its practice to maximise pupils' achievement. The teaching of ICT in discrete lessons is very good and pupils achieve well and attain well. However, in subjects across the curriculum teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils' competence in ICT is very good overall and they can use their ICT skills, when required, across the curriculum. Teachers do not always use IT well although there are good examples in mathematics for data handling and in history where desktop publishing software is well used. Resource limitations undermine the quality of teaching and learning in music and in design and technology. Staff are beginning to make better use of resources for presentation and demonstration purposes and this shows pupils how well they can use technology as a learning tool.
21. Assessment procedures are good in the core subjects where there is a comprehensive bank of data used in tracking pupils' progress, identifying underachievers and target setting. There has been good progress in this work since the last inspection. The data is well used in supporting teachers' planning and pupils' awareness of their progress. Outside of the core subjects, however, there are weaknesses. Assessment information is not yet used consistently by teachers to plan to meet the needs of all pupils and provide consistently high levels of challenge. The school is aware of the need to strengthen assessment in foundation subjects. Feedback to pupils on how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve is satisfactory overall yet with some very good individual practice. Sometimes pupils are

involved in self-assessment and target setting which encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum overall is **good. It provides effectively for the next stage in pupils' education.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good breadth and relevance although statutory requirements are not met for design and technology.
- Provision of a second modern foreign language (German) for all pupils in Year 8 is a strength.
- Personal, social and health education programmes are good and citizenship is developing well.
- Enrichment opportunities are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Staffing, accommodation and resources are good overall with some very good improvements.

Commentary

22. The curriculum has good breadth and relevance. National Curriculum requirements are well met for almost all subjects and overall the curriculum provides pupils with a good preparation for the next stage of their education. French is taught from Year 5, where it is not compulsory in the National Curriculum. In Year 8, German is introduced as a second language and this is very good provision and a strength of the curriculum. Curriculum balance is good overall even though statutory requirements are not met for design and technology in Years 7 and 8, lowering pupils' standards. This is because of the limitations in resources for computer aided design and computer aided manufacture (CAD/CAM) and accommodation for resistant materials, although food technology has been improved. The provision for ICT as a discrete subject is good but subjects across the curriculum are not using it to its maximum potential as a learning tool. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is followed with modifications agreed by the governors in the context of the school's religious status.
23. Where the curriculum is good or very good, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed in a clear, interesting and systematic way, based on secure schemes of work that are effectively employed by teachers. This occurs in English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and modern foreign languages. In these subjects, the curriculum allows for and specifically encourages effective reinforcement of skills so that pupils build well on prior learning.
24. The comprehensive programmes for pupils' personal, social and health education ensure very good coverage of sex education, drug and alcohol abuse and anti-smoking. It also includes good coverage of topics related to anti-bullying and relationships and elements of careers. Visitors from the community are well used in the programmes to enhance pupils' understanding, with good links into citizenship, for example, the police force. The citizenship element is being effectively developed and it is very well supported by the overall ethos of the school. The high expectations and the responsibilities given to pupils are valuable experiences adding to their personal development.
25. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum and inclusion is good. Provision for pupils who are gifted and talented or with special educational needs is good, with some very good features. All pupils who have a learning difficulty have an individual education plan and the curriculum is generally well designed to meet their needs, for example, in mathematics and English. There is good support from learning assistants. The pupils have the same access to the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, as all other pupils in the school. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities and school visits and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Participation in sports and in a range of other

activities is good. These include competitive fixtures with other schools. There is a wide range of musical activities on offer and participation rates are high. Drama does not feature as a separate subject on the taught curriculum, but there are opportunities for participation in annual productions and events. Enrichment activities, which include booster groups, special days and visits, are good and are well supported by pupils who enjoy the opportunities to further their personal development and extend their learning. There is good use of visitors from the local community to support personal, social and health education and the local area is used as a resource for learning. Opportunities also exist for fieldwork and school journeys.

26. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good. Staff are generally well deployed, although there is a policy of using non-specialists in some areas, such as in English and religious education. A significant proportion of the teaching staff is newly qualified, some having joined the school this academic year and some in the second year of teaching. There is also a good match of support staff to the curriculum and they are well deployed. They are well trained and make a positive contribution to the needs of the curriculum.
27. Resources have been well developed since the last inspection. The school is now very well resourced in ICT, both hardware and software and provides the opportunity to remedy shortcomings in the use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils with special needs have access to a good range of appropriate literature and benefit from the increased availability of computers for their use. The improvement in resources is also linked to the massive improvement in accommodation since the last inspection. Overall, the accommodation is good with some very good purpose built facilities especially in the new buildings. Pupils in all year groups now have access to specialist laboratory accommodation for science, there are new computer rooms, art rooms and humanities has new classrooms. A new food technology base has just been opened, but facilities for resistant materials are unsatisfactory. The older buildings are well looked after, being clean and generally well decorated. Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in some areas such as cracked windows, hatted classrooms still in use, a small noisy gymnasium and poor changing facilities. The school is planning to upgrade or replace all these areas and has already obtained funding for some of the work. Outside, the large sports field enhances the teaching of physical education but the hard play area is small for the numbers of pupils using it at break times. However, whilst the new buildings are easily accessible by wheelchair and ramps have been constructed in older parts of the building where there are steps, some rooms are not easily accessible to pupils with more complex needs. An access plan is well structured.

Care, guidance and support

The overall care, support, guidance and welfare of pupils is good and has been sustained since the last inspection overall. The basic care is very well supported by the senior staff. Pupils are well involved in the life of the school and contribute well through suggestions and they are listened to well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction of new pupils is very good, as are links for transfer to the upper school.
- The pastoral system gives effective support to the pupils.
- The school values the views of pupils.
- Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good.

Commentary

28. Through the effective links which exist through the local pyramid of schools, there are very good arrangements for the induction of pupils when they arrive in Year 5. Pupils are very well supported by pastoral staff but also through relationships with older pupils. For example, they are involved in paired reading, clubs and activities and house captains have a role in preparing for house sports competitions and quizzes. Additionally, the links ensure that

pastoral and academic records are transferred so that pupils quickly become well known. Parents value the way in which their children settle quickly into school and younger pupils expressed their appreciation and early enjoyment of school. Similarly there are very good links with the local Freman College, to which the majority of pupils transfer at the age of 13.

29. The arrangements for pastoral care are well managed and structured; procedures for promoting pupils' personal and academic development are good. Staff know the pupils very well. Support staff and lunchtime supervisors also make valuable contributions in caring for pupils. Good use is made of assessment procedures in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but it is not as well developed across the curriculum. Nevertheless, pupils' personal and academic development is tracked and appropriate action is taken where necessary. Record of achievement booklets are generally well used although not all staff respond to them quickly. There is a good system of rewards and sanctions which are well understood and well used. Pupils take pride in receiving accolades which they wear with pride. They enjoy the responsibilities that they are given. Form tutor time is used well to provide pupils with guidance and support and in the best practice supports the development of very good pupil-staff relationships. Most pupils say that they can turn to staff if they are worried or upset. Teachers listen to pupils and value their comments. The school conducts regular surveys of pupils' opinions and acts upon their views and the school council operates well. The policies for promoting good behaviour are applied and pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Good attention is paid to child protection and health and safety. Child protection procedures are well known by adults working in the school and effectively implemented. Risk assessments have been undertaken and appropriate arrangements are in place for testing electrical equipment and emergency evacuations. Staff and governors are appropriately trained for health and safety. The arrangements for first aid and dealing with pupils who are ill are satisfactory. Procedures to promote good attendance are satisfactory. The school recognised the need to improve procedures and now makes effective use of certificates to encourage pupils. Parents are now being contacted on the first day of any unexplained absence and receive regular reminders through newsletters. The school still approves the vast majority of term-time holidays even though one in six absences are for that reason.
30. Pupils with particular difficulties are given good support and the Code of Practice is effectively implemented to support pupils' progress. Staff, including the learning support assistants, know and understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well and work to ensure that their needs are met. Some pupils are identified as having special educational needs because they are gifted and talented and need additional challenge. Whatever their need, all these pupils have individual education plans which are prepared by the school's special educational needs coordinator and/or educational psychologists which supports these pupils' educational inclusion. The very experienced learning support assistants are an integral part of this process and use their considerable skills to provide high quality support. For example, they mentor pupils who may be experiencing difficulties and monitor the progress of pupils towards their targets on learning and behaviour. There is effective support for pupils having emotional or behavioural difficulties and this is supported by the encouraging and helpful manner of the teachers. This results in the pupils' sufficiently improved self-control and self-esteem for them to make progress. Pupils at any capability level who are underachieving visit the school's learning mentor who encourages the pupils and attempts to find means of addressing the pupils' difficulties. She confers with teachers and the special needs coordinator to plan alternative approaches to addressing the pupils' difficulties. Very good links with a range of outside agencies are well used where necessary to augment the provision and for specialist advice. There are very strong links with the lower schools and the upper school which promote continuity of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are good, containing suggestions for parents to help to support their child and are regularly sent home. However, although all parents of pupils with statements, including those in the area support class, are invited to their child's annual review, too few of them attend.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good overall. Links with other schools are good and with the local community are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The school provides an extensive range of information about school life.
- The annual reports provide limited information on their children's progress.
- The contacts with other local schools extend experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

31. In the meeting with the inspectors and in the exceptionally high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents indicated they are very pleased with the school. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they make good progress. These views are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
32. The school sends home attractive newsletters and other information about general matters and, from each head of year, an outline of what is to be taught. The school website contains extensive information. The record of achievement diaries provide a useful record of merits and the pupils' targets and, each week, the homework that is set. They are also used, albeit infrequently, for communication between parents and tutors. The quality of the information in the annual reports on pupil progress is variable. For Years 6, 7 and 8 it helpfully provides graded attainment levels for all subjects. Nevertheless, subject reports do not consistently provide sufficient information on what the pupil knows and can do, concentrating instead on attitudes or work covered. Additionally, governors do not fulfil their statutory duties by ensuring that all of the information contained in the school prospectus and their annual report complies with statutory requirements.
33. Overall, parents' involvement makes a good contribution to the work of the school and to the achievement of the pupils. Parents help in the school or on trips out and the active school association is effective in organising social and fund raising events. Parents or carers are invited to attend annual review meetings for pupils with statements of special educational needs and give good support. At home parents help their pupils with homework or, at least, ensure it is completed. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term time causing some disruption to their education. Such absence also affects the learning of others as the teachers have to spend time helping them to catch up on the work they have missed. Each year, the governors send out questionnaires to parents enabling them to influence what happens in the school.
34. The links with the local upper school, to which the great majority of pupils transfer, prepare them very well for the move. The staff have joint training sessions and the subject co-ordinators meet to discuss their curriculum areas. These contacts help to maintain continuity in the teaching of the different subjects and, together with similar meetings with staff in other middle and primary schools, enable staff to develop their expertise. Discussions between staff on the pastoral side and the special needs co-ordinators help to ensure pupils are put into appropriate class groups in their new school. Pupils' social awareness is enhanced by the wide opportunities to play matches against pupils from other schools. The school is planning to build upon the similar, though less extensive, contacts with staff in the first schools that send their pupils to Edwinstree. Pupils benefit from a variety of visitors such as police, overseas speakers, drama groups and from the different trips out both locally and further afield. The opportunities to meet other people in the community are more limited though the pupils entertain older people at a tea party and they are active in the annual town arts festival.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The effectiveness of the leadership, management and governance is well reflected in the good quality of provision and improvement. Some statutory requirements are not met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has a clear educational vision which is well implemented.
- Leadership by other key staff is good and overall management is good.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
- Professional development and performance management are very well managed.
- Induction of new staff is excellent.
- Governors are very supportive and challenge for best value.

Commentary

35. The headteacher has sustained the school's performance very well since the last inspection through his very good leadership and has brought about very good improvement. He has a very clear vision and works effectively to implement it through effective management strategies. The aims of providing the best possible educational experience for the pupils in the context of middle school education, where pupils transfer during the relevant Key Stages at the ages of nine and 13 years, are well met. This is evidenced by the achievement and academic and personal standards that pupils reach by the time that they leave the school. These aims are well shared and understood by staff and governors. The support of the senior management team is very good and the overall team approach ensures that the high expectations are maintained. Staff morale is high and the potential exists to drive up standards further. The leadership and management for subjects and pastoral care are good overall, with some very good practice. The special needs coordinator has established good procedures, reflecting the Code of Practice well and these are effectively implemented. However her current timetable allows too little time for the monitoring and liaising roles. The school governor with responsibility for special educational needs supports the coordinator exceptionally well. Overall, the staff work very well together and are good role models for the pupils.
36. Procedures for evaluating the school's work are good. National test data is well analysed as is data from assessment and from local authority analysis. For example, the school recognises that it needs to focus even more on the achievement and attainment of some boys of middle and lower capability. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored. An annual target setting review is well used to shape priorities. The school development plan is strategic and well structured, with clear priorities linked to the budget. Through the effective planning there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards and achievement have risen overall. Good progress has been made in improving assessment in English, mathematics and science, but more work is needed in other subjects. Citizenship has been effectively introduced into the curriculum. The improvement in ICT has been good. There has been very good improvement in accommodation and resources, which is benefiting pupils' progress and health and safety issues have been resolved. However, issues still remain for parts of design and technology and changing rooms and statutory requirements are still not met for school publications.
37. Performance management and staff professional development are very well managed. The support for new staff is excellent, brought about through very effective mentoring and support structures. Its positive influence is easily seen through the quality of teaching. The school contributes very well to initial teacher training. There have been significant changes in staffing in the last two years, reflecting retirements and promotions but also issues of recruitment and retention. The headteacher has managed this situation very well.

38. The governors are very supportive and work well through their established committees. The chair of governors is very well informed and has a very clear professional relationship with the headteacher. The governors challenge the school's performance well and have a good approach to being a critical friend. Whilst they take their duties seriously they fail to fulfil their statutory responsibilities for design and technology and for school publications. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and work hard to enhance the overall provision for the pupils. The principles of best value are well in place and financial affairs are very well managed. The amount of funds held on contingency is quite high at over eight per cent but this is partly the result of careful budgeting to meet the costs of recent developments. General funds and specific allocations are well monitored and evaluated for the benefits of the spending. Taking the pupils' overall good achievement and standards, the good quality of teaching and the effective way that the school is managed and governed, it is giving very good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,409,277
Total expenditure	1,311,629
Expenditure per pupil	2,969

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,667
Balance carried forward to the next	121,315

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

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Assessment is well used to support planning and inform pupils about their achievement.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The quality of provision has been at least maintained since the previous inspection.

Commentary

39. Results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were above average, although in line with those in similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels was average. Reading skills are better than those in writing, as are speaking and listening skills. Results in English were similar to those in mathematics but lower than in science. Pupils arrive in the school with average attainment levels and by the end of Year 6 the current cohort of pupils attain above average standards. This represents good achievement. There is also good achievement in Years 7 and 8. Standards in Year 8 are improving, in that pupils' writing has improved. Attainment in Year 8 is above average and in some cases even better; there are pupils who can write at great length with considerable accuracy and flair. Data received shows that pupils are doing increasingly well in national tests after they have left the school.
40. Pupils make good progress and achieve well because they are well taught. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 7 and 8, where the very good subject knowledge of specialist teachers stands out. Lessons are very well planned and pupils very well challenged throughout the school overall. Tasks are set which engage them. Pupils are grouped within lessons, sometimes with boys and girls together, so that they can learn better. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as gifted and talented pupils, benefit from the effective deployment of support staff who work with individuals or groups at an appropriate level. In one lesson, higher attaining pupils were withdrawn for 'booster' work. Pupils with special educational needs were seen receiving one-to-one support. Some very good resources are available, particularly in Year 6 where classrooms are equipped with laptops and ceiling projectors, enabling teachers to present work more effectively. Pupils use wireless laptops for writing and these enable them to take a greater pride in their work, leading to the kind of extended writing that Years 7 and 8 pupils assume is expected. Non-specialist teachers are well supported, although they show occasional lapses in specialist knowledge and this lowers the quality of learning, but it always remains at least satisfactory. All teachers assess work well, spoken or written and use this knowledge to inform their teaching and to help pupils improve their work. There is a wealth of assessment data to help them do this. Because of the good teaching, the attitudes of the pupils are always positive; by Year 8 they are very positive.
41. There is good leadership and management. Although the subject co-ordinator has other senior responsibilities, she has a very clear vision for English and is a very good role model in the subject area. Subject information, planning and data are all well managed and the quality of teaching is monitored effectively. The requirements of the National Curriculum, including ICT,

are met thoroughly. Some drama is taught within English; it does not appear on the timetable as a discrete subject and pupils in Years 7 and 8 have only limited time for drama, although the quality of their experience is good.

42. English makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, both through the way it is taught – with so much effective group work – and through the content, involving a rich diet of poems, fiction and plays, including Shakespeare. The good provision has been well maintained since the last inspection. Standards have risen at least in line with those nationally and there has been an increased use of ICT. Overall improvement has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. Pupils show above average standards of literacy across subjects. Most pupils have the appropriate skills to enable them to work effectively. National strategies for improving literacy are well embedded in the way subjects are taught and the fact that so many of the staff teach English is a huge advantage. By Year 7, pupils are producing extended writing in many subjects and the evidence from reading records is that many read widely. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. Literacy is well co-ordinated by the head of English.

Modern foreign languages

The provision for French and German is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards at the end of Year 8 are above average.
- Pupils' achievement is good because of their very positive attitudes and the good quality of teaching and assessment.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the spoken word but are less confident when speaking in front of the whole class.
- The plenary at the end of the lesson is often too short to evaluate whether the objectives of the lessons have been met.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

44. Pupils take French from Year 5 and German is introduced in Year 8. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made a good start to their language learning and respond to short phrases in writing and speaking using short memorised phrases. The standards in French are above average and by the end of Year 8 many pupils are working at the target grades expected for pupils at the end of Year 9 in their secondary education. In German they have made a good start in Year 8 and some are able to talk about their likes and dislikes and they are encouraged to produce full sentences which they do for example when they talk about what they eat and drink. Pupils' oral work is good in relation to their understanding in conversations but they are less confident about speaking in front of the whole class. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the more able are appropriately challenged. They do well in their writing and by Year 8 some use a range of tenses, thus attaining the expected level for Year 9 by the end of Year 8. There are some very good examples of the effective use of ICT, including PowerPoint. Some displays of pupils' work are also impressive in their use of Clipart and word processing.
45. Pupils achieve well in French across all year groups and also in their one year of German. This is because both boys and girls have very positive attitudes. Also the quality of teaching in both languages is good. Teachers have a good command of their subject and are successful in imparting their enthusiasm to their pupils. They use the foreign language for most communication in the classroom and have high expectations. There are, however,

occasions where they do not check whether all have understood and this can slow down the learning. Lessons are well planned and the work set is well designed to meet the differing needs of the pupils' capabilities. Teachers use the three-part lesson recommended in the national framework with great skill and enthusiasm. However, the final part of the lesson in which they check how well pupils have understood their work is often too short and does not focus sufficiently on the lesson objectives. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum levels and assess their pupils' work regularly, agreeing a target with the pupils who are asked to say how they are going to progress to the next level. They use the assessments to help them to plan future work. However, marking is not always sufficiently constructive and does not always show pupils how they can improve. Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils, most of whom are very well behaved, although a small minority of older pupils occasionally need to be reminded of the high expectations required. Pupils collaborate well when asked to work with a partner.

46. The leadership and management of the department are good. The subject leader who was recently appointed has nonetheless already made her mark and she provides a good role model for her colleagues. She has a clear vision and manages the staffing and resources well. She is assisted very ably by the deputy headteacher. Good use has previously been made of a regular visit to France which adds to pupils' personal and cultural development. However, this year's visit was not possible, but there are plans for shorter visits to France and for the reintroduction of a French club. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good because the assessment is now more secure and better linked to the pupils' progress and improvement.

MATHEMATICS

The quality of provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in all years with good achievement.
- Pupils work hard and want to learn.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

47. Results at the end of Year 6, 2003 were above average and, in terms of the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels, they were average. The percentage gaining the higher levels was above average. Results in mathematics were similar to those in English but lower than in science. Compared with schools whose pupils are of similar capability, the results were below average. Boys gained slightly better results than girls. There has been improvement in test results since the last inspection.
48. For the current groups of pupils, standards by the end of years 6 and 8 are above average and reflect good achievement. A significant proportion of pupils achieve above average standards. The pupils' work reflects their increasing confidence and competence in all areas of mathematics. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' extend their knowledge of number, shape and handling data. Their mental arithmetic is good and they tackle a range of increasingly difficult calculations to solve problems. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have already coped well with linear equations and graphs. Lower attaining pupils capably meet the demands of the programmes of study that apply to their age groups and make good progress. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 do a variety of exercises to continue practising mental and written calculations, problem solving and investigating. They become adept at managing fractions, decimals and percentages. All pupils are introduced to algebra and, by Year 8, they can solve equations with confidence. Practical work helps pupils understand patterns and the mathematical properties of shapes.

49. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Some lessons are very good. They begin with 'starters', which allow pupils to practise mental arithmetic, reinforce basic-skills or to focus on new skills. Each lesson includes a variety of activities to help pupils achieve their learning objectives. The teachers challenge pupils and are skilful in eliciting their thought processes. They continuously assess the pupils' progress and adjust questions, explanations and activities to match the needs of individuals who need extra help or extra challenge. Mini whiteboards are sometimes used to help the teachers to assess the pupils' level of understanding as the lessons proceed. Teachers are generous with praise for effort, which encourages the pupils to work hard. At the end of most lessons the teachers inform the pupils of the extent of their success but the recording of this information is not yet a regular practice. The quality of marking is variable but overall, it is good and comments of encouragement and advice are included. Sometimes pupils are involved in self-assessment and target setting which encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning. The lowest-attaining pupils are taught well in smaller classes and are sometimes given valuable support by teaching assistants who enable them to make good progress. However, in a minority of classes where such support is not available, these pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in relation to the targets in their individual education plans, although there are some cases where insufficient use is made of the plans. Enrichment opportunities such as summer schools, Saturday lessons and mathematics club offer extra support or challenge. Pupils' literacy, particularly speaking and listening and skill development is good because the teachers encourage them to explain how they have solved problems. Teachers explain key mathematical words, which pupils use with confidence. While the teachers use ICT well to improve the presentation of their lessons, the pupils do not have enough use of computers to support their work and only some teachers make good use of the computer suite.
50. The head of department, appointed only last year, provides good leadership. He has a clear vision of how the department should develop to bring about the raising of standards. His rigorous analysis of data is used as the basis for his development planning and target setting. In his management and supported by a strong team of conscientious and effective teachers, he focuses on improving the quality of learning. Assessment procedures are good as pupils are tested following each module of work. The department recognises that it can make even more use of assessment to enhance pupils' shorter-term progress. Good teacher-pupil relationships and strong teamwork create a positive working environment for pupils and teachers. However, the contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or to citizenship is not planned adequately. Improvement since the last inspection has been good as standards are higher. The department has the capacity to raise standards and improve test results further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. The pupils' skills in number allow them to enhance their learning in a variety of subjects across the curriculum and their use of numeracy in other subjects supports their work in mathematics lessons. For example, in science the pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to collect and interpret data and to take measurements. Skills are well used in orienteering in physical education. In geography, pupils utilise data to interpret their findings and construct graphs, making use of ICT.
52. Subject curriculum leaders are aware of the need to prepare or revise policies on numeracy. The mathematics department has already provided training in the use of numeracy across the curriculum. An audit of the extent of the use of numeracy in other subjects has taken place to identify where and when particular topics are being taught. It is the aim of the head of mathematics to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics in all subjects. Such initiatives have the potential to inform the department's planning to provide reinforcement work or to avoid unnecessary repetition.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 and Year 8 are well above average.
- Very good teaching leads to pupils learning and achieving very well.
- There is a strong emphasis on investigative work.
- Leadership of the subject is very good and management is good, promoting high standards.
- Assessment procedures are good but some aspects are not fully implemented.

Commentary

53. Results in the end of Year 6 tests have been consistently above average in recent years. Results in 2002 were well above those in similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels was well above average. Results in 2003 were above those in similar schools and were higher than those in English and mathematics. Standards of work in Year 6 are well above average, for example, in terms of pupils' skills in making predictions based on scientific knowledge, making accurate observations and explaining their results using scientific knowledge and in understanding and applying concepts such as resistance when looking at the effect of the length of a wire on the brightness of a bulb. Standards in Year 8 are also well above average, for example, in understanding the use of particle theory to explain changes of state and in understanding genetic crosses.
54. The quality of teaching is very good, leading to pupils' very good achievement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of activity. This includes quality practical work, frequent investigations, data interpretation, use of skills sheets, card sorts, modelling and some role-play. ICT is used effectively for Internet research, data-logging and plotting of graphs, but the use of ICT is an area for further development. In particular, as a result of a lack of resources, there is no use of modelling software to illustrate abstract concepts and to model situations which are difficult to examine practically - such as the relationship between numbers of organisms in a food web. Questioning is used to check pupils' understanding and in some lessons good questioning was used to make pupils think and speculate. In a Year 5 lesson the teacher made pupils speculate about the structure of a seed, for example. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They respond very well to the challenge of the tasks set and make very good progress. In Year 5, as a result of an effective demonstration and explanation, pupils, including those with special educational needs, had developed an understanding of displacement of water and the density of materials. In Year 6 pupils had developed an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the pondweed elodea and daphnia. Whilst there is a very good emphasis on investigative work sometimes teachers give too much of a lead and do not give enough scope for pupils to choose from a wide range of variables and choose their own equipment. There are helpful criteria sheets to help pupils appreciate the demands of different levels of investigative work but these are not used consistently. Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is well supported through the use of 'word mats' and the structuring of tasks to meet their needs. Even though the quality of teaching is very good there are aspects that can be further improved. Pupils' work is marked regularly but there is some variation in the depth of marking. Self-assessment is not yet used routinely. In a small number of lessons the progression from earlier work is only satisfactory. The clarity in some instructions was not as effective as in the best lessons.
55. Leadership and management are very good and are the main reason for the quality of provision and standards. Standards have been consistently high in recent years and improvement since the last inspection is good. The schemes of work set out high expectations and are currently being revised taking account of national guidelines. Assessment procedures have been improved and although pupil tracking is effective further improvement is required in

marking and self-assessment to inform pupils even more clearly as to how they might improve their work. Teaching is monitored and feedback given. The development plan identifies appropriate priorities; for example, improving the use of ICT and the quality of challenge in work set.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching by an enthusiastic team of teachers which leads to highly motivated pupils who learn very well.
- Pupils' achievement is very good leading to pupils attaining well above average standards.
- Leadership and management are good and have raised standards and provision well.
- Very good resources support the imaginative, innovative and challenging schemes of work.

Commentary

56. Teaching and learning are very good overall with some excellent lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well. Planning is good and lesson aims are clearly stated and displayed and pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils are given good quality support material that helps them to become more independent. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Teachers are enthusiastic with pupils, making sure that they are involved in lessons and have high expectations. As a consequence, pupils are well motivated and enjoy their ICT lessons. Homework is consistently well used. The work set is relevant and marked regularly. The open-ended nature of the tasks set in lessons enable more capable pupils to extend their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into their ICT lessons and with appropriate deployment of support staff, make very good progress in their basic computer skills.
57. Standards are now well above average overall, with all pupils following challenging and stimulating schemes of work. There are discrete ICT lessons for all pupils enabling them to acquire a very good level of ICT capability. Pupils use desktop publishing and presentational software to communicate information and achieve very well. They are familiar with the Internet and make good use of the available material, the older pupils designing and managing their own web pages. Pupils use appropriate spreadsheet software to create simple models of real situations, which they then use to answer "what if?" questions. Teachers make good use of the wireless network of laptop computers and PowerPoint software to enhance lessons.
58. Leadership and management are good. At the time of the inspection the ICT subject leader was absent on maternity leave, but the arrangements for her replacement are adequate and continuity has been achieved. Good support is provided for the non-specialist teachers and the schemes of work have been reviewed to embrace the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Professional development for ICT teachers is continuing to ensure that they are all confident in the subject and how to assess pupils' standards. Appropriate measures are in place to prevent misuse of the facilities and to protect pupils from exposure to unsuitable materials. The school is now well resourced in terms of ICT equipment, the computer to pupil ratio is approximately one to five, considerably above the national average. The main teaching room for ICT is well laid out and used in such a way that pupils always prepare for their practical sessions by working away from the keyboards. The computer network is well maintained by an experienced and efficient computer technician. The operating software is up to date and a good range of application software is available. Good features are the provision of a set of portable computers connected to the network via a wireless link and the provision of data projectors in most classrooms. Pupils are assessed regularly and accurately; they are all aware of their current levels and what they need to do to improve. However the aggregation of pupil assessments is not used at a whole school level to inform planning of the curriculum.

59. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. National Curriculum requirements are met in ICT as a subject, although the opportunities for pupils to learn “*how to use ICT to measure, record, respond to and control events by planning, testing and modifying sequences of instructions*” are not yet developed fully. All pupils now make very good progress in the acquisition of ICT skills.

ICT across the curriculum

60. Provision of ICT across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. Pupils’ competence in ICT is very good overall and they are able to use their ICT skills, when required, across the curriculum. Use of ICT in mathematics and history is particularly good: the use of desktop publishing software to produce Year 5’s Tudor newspaper, for example. In most subjects, ICT is planned for in the schemes of work and provision is improving, but in design and technology and in music provision is still inadequate. Staff confidence and competence in their own ICT skills have developed well and teachers use ICT well in lessons for presentation and demonstration purposes.

HUMANITIES

Geography

The overall provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- The teachers have a good subject knowledge and use it well to promote pupils’ learning.
- Planning and assessment procedures require improvement.
- There is good support for newly qualified staff.

Commentary

61. Standards on entry are close to the national average. Pupils in Year 5 can create simple maps and use a key and scale. Most of the work at this age is descriptive and pupils can describe geographical features by using a variety of formats including photographs, simple statistics and maps of different types. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 have developed a deeper understanding of geographical relationships which they can both describe and explain to some depth. In Year 7 pupils can evaluate conflict in national parks, they have a good sense of place and many can produce pieces of extended writing on current issues such as the expansion of Stansted airport. Many pupils in Year 7 and Year 8 are working at a level above the national average which represents substantial achievement and progress over time. They can distinguish between different levels of development in Italy, account of the differences and explain the consequences for the people that live there. Boys and girls achieve equally well and those pupils with special needs make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Provision for fieldwork is satisfactory.
62. Overall the teaching is good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They have created a stimulating environment for their pupils and set a brisk pace to the lessons giving a strong focus to the key learning points. Most of the successful teaching uses methods that make pupils active participants in the lesson; such as in a group activity in a lesson on pressure and winds which required pupils to apply their new learning in a practical situation so reinforcing their understanding. This was a challenging activity with higher attaining pupils being set a more demanding task. In less successful lessons pupils tend to be over-reliant on their teacher with tasks very closely centred on the text book where description rather than analysis is required. The marking of work is up to date with pointers for improvement. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning. The

relationships are good; pupils are cooperative, generally eager to learn with a respect for the teachers, each other and their work.

63. The leadership of the subject has undergone recent change and currently leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a plan for the teaching of each topic within a set order and with appropriate resources but there is little emphasis on how geography is to be taught and no plans for the development of teaching methods. Teachers assess the pupils' work and give feedback but few pupils can quantify how they are progressing, know their target or what they need to do to improve. Furthermore, the results from teacher assessment are not sufficiently analysed so that teaching plans can be altered to promote further improvement. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory overall. There is now very good support for newly qualified teachers. Standards have risen as has the organisation of the subject within the school curriculum. The quality of teaching has also improved, but assessment and the use of ICT have not been developed sufficiently.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Years 5 and 6.
- Motivated pupils show a concentrated willingness to learn.
- Pupils are strongly engaged by the range and quality of teaching.
- Pupils do not have the benefit of the use of ICT in class to support their learning.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

64. Standards on entry are at broadly average levels. By the end of Year 6, pupils are reaching standards that are above average. Test results show that this has been true for recent years. Year 5 lessons on Queen Elizabeth I involved groups of pupils co-operating to develop very high standards of questioning to make deductions about life at court. Their written work shows that over the first two years pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of history and of how to study it and achievement is good.
65. By Year 8, standards are average. Pupils' written work is good. For example, they make more than capable deductive links from information about life at the time of the Crusades. From inspection evidence, achievement and progress over time and that seen in lessons varied but are satisfactory overall. Some achievement is good, for example, that in Year 7 on Romans and Normans. Pupils are generally helped by materials which extend their thinking on sources and chronology, but these materials do not sufficiently stretch the most capable pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are helped by assistants, benefiting the quality of their written work. Setting of targets and much individual help in lessons support all pupils in improving their standards. There is no significant difference in standards or longer-term achievements between boys and girls.
66. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection where it was judged to be satisfactory. There is a wide range of teaching methods. Teachers who are specialists use their general teaching skills with a developing background knowledge and enthusiasm to succeed. This enables them to offer teaching of good and at times of excellent quality. All teachers aim their lessons at the needs of each individual as well as the whole class. There is sensible use of learning targets although this is still at a very early stage. Encouragement of pupils to enjoy and learn is excellent. Pupils in all years have good attitudes to their learning. They want to study. They behave and listen very well, showing a capacity to work together that is particularly strong in Year 5. In the best lessons seen, as on Elizabeth 1 in Year 5, dramatic approaches were allied to a very clear learning plan. No teaching seen was less than

satisfactory, and non-specialist teachers work hard to ensure that the quality of pupils' learning is at least satisfactory. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT as a part of their range of study skills. As a result, they miss chances for enriching their knowledge and understanding, so reducing opportunities for achievement.

67. Leadership is good as is management. Teachers work together regularly to evaluate and improve their work. Since the last inspection, there has been good progress, particularly in the developing quality of challenging teaching by non-specialists. Positive aspects of teaching and learning have been maintained. There is now the opportunity for pupils to show a wider range of achievements but this does not as yet involve the use of ICT in class.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average overall and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Teaching and learning are good although the use of assessment needs to be improved.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

68. Pupils reach average standards by Year 6, although the standard of their written work is not high. Standards improve in Years 7 and 8, but remain broadly in line with national expectations. The background of most pupils is not one of religious commitment and their limited experience of religious practices is apparent in some of their work. However they make gains in their knowledge and understanding whilst at the school, particularly in Years 7 and 8 and their achievement by Year 8 is good. This is mostly because of the good teaching although pupils' positive attitudes contribute well to their learning.
69. Teaching and learning are good. Although most teachers are non-specialists, their command of the subject is good and lessons are well planned and resourced. Good use is made of the Bible; pupils are expected to use the index to find references in the text. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher had the support of two teaching assistants, enabling more pupils to achieve well: one of the assistants helped several pupils whilst the other worked effectively with a pupil with severe learning difficulties. Pupils are managed well and relationships in lessons are good. Challenging work is set, including homework and teachers mark the work thoroughly. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory but there is room for better use of the information to ensure that pupils of all levels of capability achieve the maximum progress in some lessons.
70. The subject is well led and managed. The effects of the recent absence of a key member of staff have been minimised. The subject co-ordinator leads by example and is a very good role model for colleagues. There are detailed schemes of work for non-specialists to be able to teach the syllabus effectively, which provides good support for newly qualified and temporary staff. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored effectively and the co-ordinator has a good vision for development, which is being well implemented. The subject now has a higher status in the school than it had previously and a more appropriate share of curriculum time. The local agreed syllabus is followed, but, with the approval of the governing body, there is a greater emphasis on Christianity, as is appropriate for a Church of England school. The contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The subject is well resourced and there are impressive wall displays; new technology, such as the ceiling projectors and laptops, make some lessons more effective.

TECHNOLOGY

The teaching of design and technology and art has been combined, therefore overall provision for Years 5 and 6 has been modified since the last inspection and pupils no longer receive the same experience of a range of materials.

Design and technology

Overall provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average but show a rising trend.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is well supported.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils have good attitudes, especially in Years 5 and 7, because their interest in working and learning is engaged well.
- Assessment and monitoring are well developed but pupils need to be more aware and understand what they need to do to progress.
- Pupils do not experience a broad and balanced range of materials and National Curriculum requirements are not met.

Commentary

71. The current standards by the end of Years 6 and 8 are average overall. This reflects the fact that the teaching of design and technology and art in Years 5 and 6 has been amalgamated and as a result pupils' acquisition of basic skills is limited. In Years 7 and 8, curriculum coverage is inadequate. At the end of 2003 there is evidence of a slight upward trend in standards compared with the previous three years. Standards in Year 7 in some areas are slightly better than in Year 8. Pupils achieve well in Years 5 to 6 and Years 7 to 8, but there is little progression between Years 6 and 7. Pupils' basic practical skills in food technology in Years 7 and 8 are developing well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and achieve well alongside others and in relation to their targets. Overall achievement from entry to leaving is satisfactory for all pupils.
72. The quality of teaching is good in most areas of technology. It is good in Years 7 and 8, although learning in these years is only satisfactory because of the shortcomings in the curriculum. Teachers are conscientious and committed. Individual lessons are generally well planned and organised with clear objectives with a good variety of activities. Resources used in all areas are generally well chosen to suit the tasks set and ensure pupils have equal access. The teaching motivates and enthuses the pupils with a positive impact on their learning. For example, the good cross-curricular links with a humanities study of the life of Henry the Eighth occur in Year 5, where pupils were making pop-up cards using simple paper mechanisms and fully understood the workings of simple levers and pivots. In Years 7 and 8 lessons, there was good recap of previous work supported by effective question and answer techniques which aided the reinforcement of their knowledge. In a food lesson in Year 7, the work was well structured to suit and stretch all capabilities, as seen when pupils were working individually preparing a fruit crumble applying skills learnt in a previous lesson. In a minority of lessons, however, expectations of what pupils can do were not high enough and work provided lacked challenge for some pupils, as seen in a Year 8 lesson in resistant materials. Pupils were repeating the similar practical focused task of making a lap joint and using the identical materials covered previously in Year 7, making bookends and this year making shelves. The assessment and marking process is well developed and pupils benefit from the feedback but they need to be more aware and understand what they need to do to progress to the next level.
73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head of department has been in post since September 2003 and has successfully incorporated the new food technology studio. She is

well aware of the weaknesses and knows what needs to be improved but National Curriculum requirements are not met. The department is developing well but pupils only experience food technology and resistant materials in Years 7 and 8. They do not have the opportunity to experience elements of information and communication technology through work in CAD/CAM and control technology, or for electronics and textiles until they move to the next stage of their secondary education for Year 9, reflecting unsatisfactory accommodation and resources. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, overall. Although there has been a reduction in overall provision of design and technology, the new food technology facilities are already starting to contribute to an enhanced delivery of the subject area. The accommodation for resistant materials still remains a cause for concern, it is remote from the rest of the school and the building and equipment are tired and need replacing. Standards in aspects covered are rising.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average with a rising trend.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in response to the good teaching.
- Day-to-day assessment is used well with frequent feedback given verbally to pupils, but they are unaware of their National Curriculum levels.
- There is little use of ICT to develop artwork.
- Effective leadership and management.

Commentary

74. Achievement is good throughout the school and standards are generally above average by the end of Year 6 and Year 8. There has been a slight upward trend over the past three years especially in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are introduced to artists from a variety of cultures and how art has developed in different countries. This was emphasised by the display of work produced by pupils during a lesson on aboriginal art from a visiting artist. Pupils also have an understanding of the lifestyle and techniques adopted by such an artist as Matisse. Displays of quality artwork celebrate pupils' achievements and enhance the school environment. Girls are achieving better than boys in Years 6 to 8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their targets and make progress in line with their capabilities.
75. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers structure the work so there is a variety and it is carefully matched to pupils' capabilities especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils display good attitudes to learning, because the lessons are interesting, and organised. The teaching of art and design and technology in Years 5 and 6 has been amalgamated and the provision modified without affecting the development of skills in art. Sketchbooks are used for reference and to reinforce learning. There are good and effective cross-curricular links with many subjects such as music, geography and history. There are some shortcomings alongside these strengths. There was little evidence of the use of ICT to develop and enhance artwork and marking was not constructive enough.
76. Leadership and management are good; there is clear direction for the subject and good plans for further development. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Day-to-day assessment is used well and pupils receive good verbal feedback. However, not all pupils are aware of their National Curriculum levels and what they need to do to improve, which limits their awareness of what they need to do to raise their standards further. Links with

Hertfordshire and Cambridge good practice network enhances the professional development of staff by keeping them up to date with current practice. The new art accommodation and resources have enhanced teaching and learning.

Music

The overall provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and instrumental support.
- Computer based resources are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management are effective.

Commentary

77. Standards are above average by the end of Years 6 and 8. Pupils retain musical learning well. They can recall the structure of music they have listened to in previous lessons and, using appropriate terminology, can describe how musical effects are created. Pupils understand the characteristics of a range of musical forms and use this understanding in their own compositions. Singing is a particular strength in Years 5 and 6, with boys achieving especially good standards. Whilst there are a good number of keyboards, there is insufficient computer-based music technology and this limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their composing skills. Pupils' attitudes in music lessons are almost always good and in tandem with the good quality of teaching, leads to good achievement overall. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support in lessons and achieve well in all aspects of the work in relation to their targets. The very good provision of instrumental teaching ensures that pupils with a particular talent in music develop their potential to the full.
78. Teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Perceptive questioning and well-managed class discussions, remind pupils of previous learning and help them progress well. Group work is well organized. Group activities are demonstrated by the teacher before group work begins and pupils are made clearly aware what they are expected to achieve during time working in groups. Lessons provide worthwhile musical opportunities for the wide range of musical skills and attainment found within classes. Over 150 pupils receive instrumental lessons from visiting teachers. This is well above the national average. The music department organizes a wide range of musical groups at lunchtime including choirs and orchestras. These are attended by large numbers of pupils and the activities contribute extensively to pupils' cultural and social development.
79. The subject is well led and managed. Assessment systems have been developed which enable staff to monitor the progress of pupils' musical learning across both key stages. The department is now housed in spacious and generally well-resourced accommodation. Standards and provision have been well maintained and with this new accommodation there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Physical education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach above average standards in Years 7 and 8.
- Very effective teaching motivates pupils' intense and cheerful learning.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning.

- Learning is strongly supported by the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Changing rooms are too small for the numbers involved.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

80. Standards on entry at the beginning of Year 5 are broadly average. Inspection evidence and teacher assessments support this judgement. By the end of year 6, pupils' standards have risen and are above average and assessments show that standards have been rising for the last three years. Achievement is good. For example, in orienteering in Year 5, pupils display very good development in planning and carrying out tasks. Towards the end of Year 8, standards are well above average. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress over Years 7 and 8. Controlling, dribbling and shooting were at very high standards in Year 8 football. No significant differences were observed between the general standards of girls and boys.
81. Teaching is very good, with examples of excellence. Teachers' have very good subject and teaching skills. Explanations are very clear. Time planning is excellent. In a Year 6 basketball lesson, the coverage of sequential activity was very good despite the difficulties with the poor acoustics in the gymnasium. Teachers provide excellent challenges to inspire pupils to learn. Year 8 orienteering showed the strong support to learning provided by the school's outdoor space, very capably used by teachers and pupils. Pupils with special needs are always helped by their teachers and sometimes by teaching assistants so that their achievements and standards grow visibly in all lessons. Target setting strongly supports individual improvement. It includes all pupils as well as providing extra challenge to those who are gifted and talented.
82. Key factors in pupils' high standards and achievements are their own attitudes and self-motivation. Pupils arrive on time and change very quickly, despite the poor quality of the changing rooms. They use every minute, hating to waste time. Behaviour is very good. Extra-curricular dance, led by Year 7 pupils, gives younger ones thorough help in practising moves and increasing skills. Pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities including fixtures with other schools in netball, football and running. They are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A feature observed during the inspection was of Year 6 pupils being ably led by those in Year 8 during lunchtime dance practice sessions. These activities contribute well to their personal development and support their learning very well.
83. Leadership and management are good. A feature is the clear vision and the high expectations ensure that pupils are taught the right competencies and activities that characterise high quality physical education. Teachers share skills and thinking in an organised manner and understand how to achieve their aims. The last inspection was positive about the quality of physical education. Since then, there has been sound improvement in both standards and achievement especially for those at the end of Year 8. The fabric and layout of the changing rooms however have not been improved although the school is working hard to establish a planning process to address this issue.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are effective with a clear vision.
- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is well structured and citizenship is being effectively developed.
- The school council plays a good role in school affairs.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment arrangements are at an early stage of development.

Commentary

84. Leadership and management have been effective in sustaining the PSHE course and incorporating elements of the statutory citizenship programme into Years 7 and 8. A recent programme of staff professional development has reviewed the way that the subject is taught. Contributions from subjects across the curriculum have been identified so that there is not repetition and that these cross-curricular activities can be effectively developed.
85. The comprehensive approach that is taken enables the school to teach a well-structured programme which incorporates elements of PSHE and citizenship. Tutorial time on Monday mornings serves as a very good introduction to the week, being well followed up in assemblies on other days. Tutors generally use this time very well to set the scene through a 'Thought for the Week' and overall this also incorporates collective worship. It allows for the consideration of aspects such as attitudes and relationships and feelings and values. Likewise, circle time sessions are well used to enable pupils to express their views and to heed the opinions that are expressed by their contemporaries. Thus, aspects of the citizenship curriculum are taught in this way although other subjects, such as English, religious education and history, make a significant contribution. The PSHE element is well linked into this structure as aspects of sex education, drug abuse, the use of money and bullying and relationships are comprehensively taught. Not least, the overall ethos of the school makes a significant explicit contribution to pupils' personal development through the high expectations set for behaviour and responsibility. Staff are good role models. The school council plays an effective role in ensuring that pupils' views across a wide spectrum of issues are heard. Pupils are proud to be elected by their classmates to the council and pupils report that they feedback well to their respective year groups. This is good development in citizenship through democratic awareness. Equally, older pupils have posts of responsibility and support younger pupils in activities such as paired reading.
86. From the limited evidence of teaching, gained from observation of tutorial sessions and PSHE lessons, the quality is good. Sessions are very well organised and teachers recap on previous work to ensure that there is continuity in learning. Pupils are very well involved in the lessons, which have good pace. The range of activities holds pupils' attention well so that they achieve well and learn well. Standards attained in oral work are above average, a reflection of pupils' above average language and literacy capability. Pupils show that they have a well-rounded view of life and that they are developing their opinions very well. The work supports the development of their self-esteem and learning support staff are particularly effective in giving support where needed. Written work is sparse and insufficient to judge standards, but what is completed is relevant and is an area that the school recognises for development. Good use is made of resources, not least from the community and contributing to the community. For example, visitors from the police and a group called 'Peace Child' have contributed to lessons and pupils contribute to charitable activities. Approaches to assessment to gain a definitive view about standards and achievement have yet to be developed, although the coordinator has designed a very good model. An 'Edwinstree Portfolio' has been established to celebrate the success and experience and pupils also have the records kept in their record of achievement.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).