

INSPECTION REPORT

REDDITCH CHURCH HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116974

Headteacher: Mr P Hume

Lead inspector: Mrs W Hola

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th November 2003

Inspection number: 261418

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	405
School address:	Wood Piece Lane Church Hill Redditch
Postcode:	B98 9LR
Telephone number:	01527 585580
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Stanley
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Redditch Church Hill Middle School is a mixed middle deemed secondary school for pupils aged 9 to 13. The school has 405 pupils (214 boys and 191 girls). The size is average for middle schools. The school is situated on the north side of Redditch in Worcestershire. It serves an estate built in the 1970s, an area of mixed housing and light industry. The school is part of a local cluster of schools: first schools, middle schools and a high school.

Pupils' socio-economic circumstances are less favourable overall than those found nationally on average. Pupils enter into Year 5 with a wide range of abilities, and some have above average attainment. For many pupils, however, their attainment is well below average on entry, particularly in language and literacy and, to a lesser extent, also in numeracy.

The vast majority of pupils has a white British heritage. Five per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups; most of these are from a mixed black and white Caribbean background. There are no pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is broadly average and the proportion with statements of SEN is below the national average. Most pupils who need support beyond action which can be taken by the school itself have moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are a few who have either hearing impairment, visual impairment, are autistic or have another specific difficulty, such as dyslexia or problems with speech and communication. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4359	Mrs W Hola	Lead inspector	
8992	Mr J Vischer	Lay inspector	
32362	Mr K Warburton	Team inspector	Mathematics
19913	Mr R Garrett	Team inspector	English
19043	Dr D Lewis	Team inspector	Science
33913	Ms V Bergersen	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
20533	Mr D Rogers	Team inspector	Art and design Special educational needs
31034	Mr N Zanker	Team inspector	Design and technology
22849	Mr R Catlow	Team inspector	Geography
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31332	Mr J Marshall	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
18846	Mr P Priest	Team inspector	Music
17233	Mrs G Yates	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Redditch Church Hill Middle School is a good and improving school that provides good value for money. Leadership and management are good overall. Pupils are taught well and learn well. They benefit greatly from the very good support, advice and guidance provided that enable them to grow in confidence as learners from a weak start in many cases. Academic standards are currently average overall. Pupils are friendly and helpful. During their time at the school they mature into confident young people. They are proud of their school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in the school's secure and nurturing environment.
- Staff know the pupils very well and relationships are good.
- Procedures for promoting good behaviour are good and applied consistently by most staff.
- Science is a strength; pupils achieve very well because teaching makes science so interesting.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are provided for well and make good progress.
- The school works very well to gather and act upon parents' and pupils' views.
- Not all teachers are fully trained to make use of the school's good collection of assessment information to maximise and evaluate pupils' progress across the curriculum.
- The school has yet to develop formally its provision for more able pupils although such pupils achieve well in some lessons and particularly in science and mathematics.
- Deployment of staff does not always allow for the best use of their experience or expertise.
- The extent to which pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are being developed across the curriculum is inconsistent and limited overall, although some sound work exists for literacy.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in October 1998. The quality of education has improved from satisfactory to good, particularly teaching. Assessment processes have been improved. The school now makes very clear its commitment to providing high quality education and raising pupils' achievements. Some good but only recent improvements have been made to provision in ICT; these have not yet had an impact on raising pupils' attainment in ICT to at least satisfactory levels. Most subjects contribute reasonably well to developing pupils' skills in literacy but not so well for numeracy. Pupils' learning skills are now developed adequately. The provision of homework is satisfactory. There is a reasonable range of out-of-lesson activities. Specific targets are identified for pupils with SEN. The school is now in a good position to move forward even further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in the 2002 National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Overall, in Years 5 and 6 and also in Years 7 and 8, **standards are average and pupils' achievements are good.** Many pupils' attainment is well below average on entry. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been rising in line with the national rate of improvement. Standards are above average in science in Year 6 and well above average in Year 8. In design and technology, they are above average in Year 8 and well above average in Year 6. Standards are below average in

English in both Years 6 and 8, in ICT and geography in Year 8 and in religious education in Year 6. They are average elsewhere. In the core subjects, current achievement in science is very good, in mathematics it is good and in English it is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. The school works effectively to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the learning opportunities provided and to keep exclusions to a minimum. The anti-bullying provision is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall and results in good learning in most lessons and in all years. The curriculum is good overall. Educational provision is excellent in science, good in mathematics, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and citizenship. Elsewhere it is satisfactory, with signs of improvement because of good leadership in some of these areas. In just a few lessons, teaching and learning are unsatisfactory mainly because tasks do not engage pupils' interest resulting in some poor behaviour. Pupils are very well cared for and this contributes greatly to their sense of well-being and self-esteem so that good learning can take place. The school generally works effectively to include all pupils in appropriate learning activities. Good links exist with partner schools. Accommodation is pleasant but limits the range of some activities. There are too few opportunities to learn about the culturally diverse society of Britain.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the senior staff and of subject and year co-ordinators is good because all have a clear vision for how the school should be developed. Management is satisfactory; the school runs smoothly and efficiently but not all procedures are checked for consistency of application. This reduces the school's capacity to share good practice and raise all aspects of provision to the same level as the best. Governors are supportive and well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they need to ensure that a closer check is kept on pupils' standards and achievements in all subjects so as to maximise pupils' rates of progress.

WHAT PARENTS AND PUPILS FEEL ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel that their children are taught well, are making good progress, are treated fairly and are encouraged to become mature, and that the school is led and managed well. Parents also appreciate greatly the school's swift and appropriate responses to any concerns expressed and in dealing sensitively with some difficult pupils. Pupils are very positive about the school. They feel they are listened to, trusted, treated fairly, taught well and expected to work hard. Many recognise that there is some bullying and bad behaviour that is dealt with suitably.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Strengthen teachers' use of assessment information so that all teachers: are fully aware of what can be expected from each pupil; help pupils to assess their own learning; evaluate clearly the achievements of individuals and groups.
- Ensure that policies and agreed practices are implemented as the school intends, particularly in relation to promoting pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.
- Develop further and implement the school's policy for the provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Refine, where possible, the deployment of staff so as to make better use of their skills and expertise, particularly in Years 7 and 8.

In addition, governors should ensure that the school provides a daily act of collective worship as it has planned to do.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, in Years 5 and 6 and also in Years 7 and 8, **standards are average and pupils' achievements are good**. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 have been rising in line with the national rate of improvement. In Year 6 and by the time pupils leave Year 8, the standards they have reached are broadly in line with those expected for their ages in most subjects except in English, ICT and geography where standards are below and in science and design and technology where they are above.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well over the four years taking account of the weak starting points of many pupils.
- Pupils are currently achieving very well in science.
- Standards are above average in science in Year 6 and well above average in Year 8. In design and technology they are above average in Year 8 and well above average in Year 6.
- Standards are below average in English in both Years 6 and 8, in ICT and geography in Year 8 and in religious education in Year 6.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- Boys' attainment is lower than that of girls, particularly in writing.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities. Some have above average attainment. For many pupils, however, their attainment is well below average on entry, particularly in language and literacy and also, to a lesser extent, in numeracy. The school has some, but only very limited, information about pupils' attainment in other subjects.
2. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, results from 1998 to 2002 show a generally rising trend in each of the core subjects although English and science results dipped in 2001.
3. Compared with all schools nationally, the 2002 tests results for pupils in Year 6 were below average for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together. Standards in English and mathematics were below average and they were in line with the national average for science. In science in 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5) was above average reflecting the school's excellent provision in science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in English was below average and in mathematics it was well below average.
4. Recently published information on the 2003 test results shows that English and mathematics results are again below average and those for science are in line with national averages. Value-added tables for the 2003 test results show that pupils achievement is good overall and satisfactory for the higher attainers.
5. Taking account of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, results for pupils in Year 6 in 2002, showed average progress in English and mathematics and well above average progress in science. Progress in the three core subjects together was above average overall. This shows that pupils' achievements are good.

6. Boys' performance in tests is significantly below girls' in English but the difference is not significant in mathematics or science. The school has correctly identified the need to work at improving boys' performance in English and particularly in their writing.
7. From the school's own statistical information, pupils' good achievements over Years 5 and 6 are maintained over Years 7 and 8. The school has good links with the high school and the schools share attainment information so that Redditch Church Hill can evaluate pupils' progress over Years 7 and 8, taking account of the results these pupils achieve in Year 9. Such information shows that pupils' achievements are good and, moreover, that more able pupils achieve well in mathematics and science but not yet in English.
8. Standards seen during the inspection mirror to a large extent national test results in recent years in the core subjects. Standards in English are currently below expectations in both Years 6 and 8, those in mathematics are in line with expectations in both Years 6 and 8 and in science they are in line with expectations in Year 6 and above in Year 8.
9. In Year 6 in other foundation subjects, standards are as expected in ICT, French, history, geography, art and design, music and physical education but below expectations in religious education. In Year 8, standards are as expected in French, history, art, music, physical education, religious education and citizenship. They are above expectations in design and technology and below in ICT and geography.
10. The school enables pupils with SEN and those from minority ethnic backgrounds to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in reading, writing, spelling and number work. The achievement of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall and could be better if the school's policy for the gifted and talented was more fully implemented. The extent to which pupils display and use their basic skills across the curriculum is very varied; pupils' competence in mathematics is satisfactory but their skills in literacy and ICT are unsatisfactory overall and related both to the standards attained in English and ICT and to the ways in which teachers do or do not promote them in all lessons.
11. The school has a robust and reliable approach to target setting. Targets include an element of challenge and are generally met. In 2003, challenging targets were met for science but actual results fell short in English for Level 5 and above and for mathematics for Level 4 and above.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (24.8)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	25.7 (25.4)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.7 (27.5)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 123 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good attitudes** to school and their **behaviour is also generally good**. Punctuality to school and to lessons is very good and **attendance overall is satisfactory**. Pupils' **moral and social development is good** and their **spiritual and cultural development is sound** although there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about life in culturally diverse Britain. Pupils' personal development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are self-confident and they are interested in school life and the range of activities provided.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and the staff of the school; the school fosters these good relationships well.
- The school sets very high expectations for pupils' conduct and deals very well with all forms of unacceptable behaviour.
- The school stimulates in pupils a desire to learn.
- Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and carry them out positively.
- Opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development across the curriculum exist but the sound provision could be extended.
- There are too few opportunities for learning about cultural diversity.

Commentary

12. Pupils are friendly and generally exercise good self-control. They respect their teachers, each other and the environment. They show initiative, take responsibility and are helpful when opportunities occur. During their time at the school, pupils mature into confident young people.

Attendance

13. The improvement in attendance figures, from being just below the national average fairly consistently to being in line, reflects the success of the school's efforts to manage bad behaviour and to ensure pupils are better included in school activities; the school has worked on behaviour rather than any direct programme on promoting good attendance. The consistent use of pupil planners promotes attendance well, through stamping attendance at every lesson. Pupils and parents appear to appreciate this strategy. The school does not, however, raise the importance of good attendance through a structured system of attendance awards, for example. Punctuality is very good. At the start of day and in arriving at lessons, pupils are prompt and do not tarry.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.9
National data	6.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.3

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

14. The fact that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good overall is brought about by the school's very determined efforts to make it so. A broad range of behaviour can be seen both in and out of lessons. Many pupils are very well behaved but others need little excuse to drop their self-restraint and become cheeky in the corridor, for example, or deliberately flout playground zoning rules and exhibit quite challenging behaviour until checked. In lessons, if the subject is not made engaging enough, some pupils will quickly begin to chat, fidget or rock on their chairs. The school sets very high expectations for pupils' conduct via a coherent and clear behaviour code but not every teacher applies it consistently. The anti-bullying provision is very good. It has involved pupils closely in consultation, and money has been spent on a specific unit which is successful at tackling the causes of bullying and encouraging those pupils to retrieve their positive attitudes. The result has been that the level of bullying is now at a reasonable level. The high number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen markedly, although the proportion of exclusions amongst mixed white and black Caribbean pupils (29 per cent) is significantly higher than from white pupils (12 per cent).

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	390	46	1
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	14	4	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0

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

15. Most pupils are patient and considerate. Pupils develop well their social skills through paired and group work, for example, and in most subjects. They build good relationships with other pupils and members of staff. The school is racially harmonious. Pupils with SEN participate fully in lessons and work co-operatively with others. The school promotes good relationships well through its caring focus on the individual, and by the approachability of staff. Pupils feel well looked after and are proud of the school. Many pupils want to attend after-school activities and several are proud to represent the school in sport fixtures. In science, they display very positive attitudes to their work because lessons are so interesting and engaging. The school stimulates a desire to learn, particularly through subjects such as science and physical education. Pupils carry out their responsibilities well with very good attitudes and clearly enjoy the responsibility of tasks such as the running of the tuck shop or clearing up at lunchtime.
16. Assemblies provide worthwhile opportunities for considering moral and social issues and include an act of worship. The school does not, however, comply with the regulation to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils. This is because, in some classes, the 'thought for the day' activity does not always take place as planned on those days when the class does not have an assembly in the hall. There are few opportunities across the curriculum except in religious education for reflection on the meaning and purpose of life. The school develops well pupils' understanding of right and wrong.
17. There are too few opportunities to learn how people in other parts of the country live or to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain. Opportunities to learn about other European cultures occur through activities such as the study of French and visits abroad.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good because teaching, learning, and the curriculum are all effective and enable pupils to achieve well. There are no major shortcomings in provision but some inconsistencies exist in and between subjects, primarily relating to the quality of teaching, to the use of assessment information and, to a lesser extent, to limitations in accommodation. Some good links with other schools, parents and the community enhance provision. The support, advice and guidance provided for pupils is very good and helps them to feel secure, encouraged and to mature over their four years at the school.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are interesting and engaging so that pupils build well on their previous learning. In just a few lessons, tasks set lack interest and pupils' attention and behaviour slip. **Assessment is generally good.** Teachers make accurate assessments of pupils' attainment and mostly use these well to plan pupils' next steps in learning. Pupils have a reasonable overall understanding of their own achievements and how to improve but this varies greatly between subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in science.
- Most teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and display good class management skills.
- Brisk pace and variety of approaches in most lessons ensure that pupils' interest and concentration are maintained.
- Subject co-ordinators support and develop teaching and learning well in most subjects.
- Overall assessment in lessons is good but pupils are not always helped to understand what they need to do to improve; teachers do not routinely evaluate the achievement of the class as a whole.
- The use made of ICT for teaching and learning across the curriculum is insufficient.
- Teaching promotes soundly the development of pupils' skills in literacy but skills in mathematics are not developed across the curriculum to the same extent.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 75 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3%)	13 (17%)	36 (48%)	21 (28%)	3 (4%)	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.

Commentary

18. Very good or excellent teaching and learning were seen in a fifth of lessons and this is a slight improvement on the figure given in the previous report. Such teaching and learning occur in all years and in a range of subjects; the excellent lessons were seen in science. In the best lessons, teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, design tasks that fully engage pupils' interest and set high expectations of work. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and work with good pace and concentration and also with great excitement.
19. Teaching in most subjects is satisfactory or good overall and is linked mainly to individual teacher's own confidence and expertise but also to the work of the subject co-ordinator who, in most cases, provides considerable support and advice to colleagues; this is necessary in a middle school such as this where teachers often teach outside of their own specialist area. A particularly fine example of the impact of a co-ordinator's work is in science, where teaching and learning as a whole have been inspired by the enthusiasm and skills of the subject leader; lessons contain much material of interest and relevance to pupils who find the contents exciting and learn avidly.
20. Subjects where a high proportion of good and very good lessons were seen include: design and technology, history, mathematics, physical education and science.
21. The good overall quality of teaching and learning was observed not only in lessons but also through the scrutiny of pupils' exercise books. These show a diligent approach to work on the

part of both pupils and teachers. Work is mostly well presented and generally complete. It is marked, sometimes with helpful comments about how to improve, although not generally giving pupils an indication of their levels of attainment. The contents also indicate that a reasonable range of teaching and learning styles are used but little use of ICT across the curriculum is visible in pupils' books. Pupils do not keep music notebooks and hence miss an opportunity both to develop their understanding of music and to use their literacy skills. Homework is consistently used in geography, history and mathematics but not to the same extent in other subjects.

22. Examples of excellent or very good teaching and learning occurred in:
 - A Year 7 history lesson in which the teacher conducted an interesting role-play activity in which pupils of all abilities engaged in the problem of how mediaeval monarchs kept control. The teacher generated an atmosphere of excitement in learning and very effectively included all pupils in the discussions.
 - A Year 8 science lesson on investigating the amount of salt in peanuts in which the science technician also acted as a learning support assistant to provide outstanding support to pupils. The teacher achieved a very good balance between giving clear instruction and giving pupils freedom to determine how to tackle the task in their own ways. Pupils grew in understanding of experimental methods, in the salt content of peanuts and also about the reasons why salt in our diets should be kept at minimal levels. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed their work.
23. Just a few unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The shortcomings in these lessons were related to either weak subject knowledge, weak lesson planning with tasks lacking in interest or relevance or to poor management of pupils' behaviour.
24. In some other lessons, not judged unsatisfactory, there were nevertheless some relatively minor shortcomings. In such lessons, pupils' achievements were found to be satisfactory but they could have been better. In these lessons:
 - the tasks set did not always fully extend the most able pupils;
 - some lower ability pupils needed more help to develop their literacy skills and to build more useful note records of their work;
 - Verbal and written feedback was not always as explicit or helpful as it could be.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, and very good in science. Teachers understand well the particular needs of individual pupils. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils with special educational needs can achieve. This awareness is translated into a variety of successful teaching strategies with good learning outcomes in science, music, physical education, history, art and design, ICT and design and technology. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils in how to think and to learn for themselves and not to rely on others to do the work for them. In English and religious education, approaches to matching tasks to pupils' needs are sound but could be more effective overall.
26. Assessment is good overall but, in places, includes shortcomings of various kinds resulting from limited clear support and guidance about exactly what the school expects from individual teachers and subject leaders in this whole area; as a result, the levels of confidence and expertise vary greatly across teachers and subjects. Assessment is very good in science and history. It is good in mathematics, design and technology and physical education. In most other subjects it is satisfactory except in ICT where assessment is weak. In history, for example, pupils understand well what they have learned and how they can improve their work; they can explain what levels they are working at in the National Curriculum. In English, as another example, practice varies widely from teaching that is clear about what can be expected from each pupil, based on a good knowledge of their prior attainment, to teaching which takes very little account of this and where there is a lack of challenge for some pupils as a result. In most lessons, day-to-day assessment is good and teachers gauge well how much pupils have learned in a lesson and use this information to plan subsequent work. Retrospective analysis to examine if pupils did indeed achieve well is not generally undertaken well across the

curriculum. The school should provide further guidance to teachers on assessment.

27. The school has quite rightly identified the need to improve pupils' attainment in English and ICT. The contribution of all subjects to improving standards of literacy is satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory for ICT. More can be done through teaching and learning in all subjects to ensure that literacy and ICT skills are developed consistently. The school has taken account of the national strategies and benefited from local education authority support in this respect and now, through further support and monitoring, the school must ensure that all teaching applies effectively the advice given. These points apply also to promoting pupils' skills in numeracy but most crucially they apply to literacy and ICT since those are currently the weakest skills.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **good**. It is broad and balanced and generally meets the pupils' needs throughout their time in the school. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but space for some activities is limited and non-specialist teaching impedes pupils' good progress in some areas. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, with strengths in sport.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in science is excellent.
- Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.
- Pupils' participation in sport is very good.
- While the policy for gifted and talented pupils is in place, provision for these pupils' needs is unco-ordinated and patchy.
- The provision in ICT has improved and curriculum plans now meet requirements but the plans have yet to be fully embedded in practice.
- The planned use of pupils' numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum is less than satisfactory overall.
- Deployment of staff does not always allow for the best use of their experience or expertise.
- The school plans to meet the statutory requirement to have a daily act of worship but this is not fulfilled in every case as intended.

Commentary

28. The curriculum is interesting and fulfils the National Curriculum requirements. It is systematically evaluated by the senior team. As a result, the school is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses in terms of meeting the needs of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls and higher or lower attaining pupils. Science is a strength. ICT was a weakness but recent improvements have resulted in satisfactory overall provision.
29. Arrangements for arriving at teaching groups are sound. All pupils are placed in mixed-ability tutor groups in Years 5 to 8 and pupils are taught in these groups for most subjects. Pupils are taught in ability groups for mathematics and design and technology throughout the school and for French in Year 8. French is introduced in Year 6. As pupils progress through the school ability groups are refined appropriately to take account of pupils' abilities.
30. The school has worked hard to implement successfully the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in Years 5 and 6 and the National Strategy for Key Stage 3 in Years 7 and 8. As a result, the impact of the strategies is visible in many good lessons and results in good teaching and learning overall. The strategy is not, however, implemented consistently across all subjects, particularly in respect of mathematics and ICT across the curriculum. Plans to promote literacy across the curriculum are more fully developed than those for mathematics and ICT and these two subjects are insufficiently woven into others. In English, teaching has

adopted the many good strategies being promoted nationally but, because some teachers lack confidence in delivering the subject-specific contents, the full benefit of the strategies is not yet being felt. The school has rightly identified the need to continue to work at developing teachers' skills in teaching English so that the good programmes can be delivered effectively and consistently.

31. A well-constructed and coherent programme of personal, social and health education, closely integrated with citizenship is taught. It addresses drugs, sex and other issues pupils regard as relevant to them.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall and very good in science. There has been significant improvement in the effectiveness of individual education plans in recent years and much work in creating a strong team approach to in-class support. The recent addition of the learning support centre is a very good provision, well organised and clearly focused on improving learning and behavioural outcomes.
33. The school's provision for gifted and talented pupils is inadequate. The school recognises that some pupils, who are either very able generally, or who have particular talents, need special support. There is a good, whole-school policy which helps teachers to identify such pupils but the policy is not yet being enacted. In the classroom, support is patchy. Many teachers recognise the highest attaining pupils in their classes, and some give them more demanding work or questions to make sure that they are challenged fully. In dance, for example, inspectors saw a performance which demonstrated very high standards. In other areas of performing arts, such as music, and for those pupils of high general ability, too little is done to support pupils consistently across the curriculum, or to ensure that they progress as rapidly as possible.
34. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory overall. There is strength in physical education and pupils' participation in sport is very good. It includes dance competitions. Extra-curricular provision is good in mathematics, ICT and science and satisfactory elsewhere. Very good clubs exist in ICT and science. Mathematics booster classes have had a positive effect in raising standards. A homework club takes place. Art and design, as well as running a club, has also had an artist in residence in the past. Field trips are a good feature in geography and the foreign language department runs trips to France. Clubs also exist for chess and gardening. School concerts and drama productions occur but their scale is very limited by the small school hall.
35. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school endeavours to match teachers' expertise to subject specialisms. There are, nevertheless, some areas, most notably in English, French and art and design where the deployment of non-specialists does reduce the overall effectiveness of provision and some pupils, particularly those who have high abilities, are not always sufficiently challenged. The deployment of non-specialists is not uncommon in middle schools and subject co-ordinators and specialists in this school are working hard to support their colleagues. The school's timetabling arrangements do not always make the best use of each teacher's expertise.
36. Accommodation and resources are good overall and meet the needs of the curriculum in most respects. Accommodation is pleasant, well maintained and clean. There is sufficient specialist accommodation for most subjects. Some science lessons are taught in carpeted classrooms, restricting some activities. Some teaching rooms are small and also limit the range of teaching and learning styles, in history for example. There are still few music practice rooms and the hall is small for the size of school. In ICT, there is a need to develop further the range of hardware and software for use across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety is **good**. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive is **very good**. Involvement of pupils through seeking and acting upon pupils' views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- The quality of advice and support pupils receive on bullying is very good.
- Induction arrangements are very good.
- Tutors and heads of year know their pupils very well and provide them with very valuable support over their personal development.
- Some teaching staff lack expertise and confidence in the use of assessment information to analyse pupils' achievements and set targets.
- The school council is well established and valued but not as effective as it might be.

Commentary

37. Pupils are supported by very good procedures for child protection and good health and safety procedures. First aid is covered well. Child protection is led by an experienced member of staff who receives even the slightest concern willingly; careful notes are kept. There is additional support from the school nurse. Health and safety monitoring procedures are frequent and well organised. Checks by outside agencies have been made as required. Risk assessment routines for school trips are fully in place and well detailed. Levels of supervision in the playground are satisfactory.
38. Pupils receive very good advice and support about bullying through various different channels. Circle time, a forum where pupils may share their views and concerns, is one such effective strategy; this is also used for discussions of other matters important to pupils' well-being. The very effective learning support centre has recently been established to cope with pupils whose behaviour is a continual concern and in an attempt to include pupils and tackle their problems within school. It also acts as a haven for pupils who are upset. Mentoring of some pupils has also been introduced to meet specific needs.
39. Induction arrangements are very good. In addition to standard liaison features there are close staff links between the feeder schools within the 'pyramid group and also with the high school. There is an effective 'buddy system between pupils in Years 5 and 8. Some Year 5 pupils are also paired with some Year 4 pupils from the actual schools they attended and together they give a PowerPoint presentation in the various feeder schools' Year 4 assemblies.
40. Pupils are positive about the school. The school values pupils' views very well through such targeted exercises as the anti-bullying drive in which a task force, including pupils and parents, was established. The school carried out a pupil survey and initiated several improvements as a result of the task force's work. The school council is well established and pupils feel free to discuss any issue they please. Feedback presentation to classmates is well-integrated. However, there is no pupil chairperson, which would encourage a greater sense of ownership. The large number of representatives makes the machinery of discussion cumbersome, and the frequency of meetings, once per half-term, could be improved. This means that the council is not as effective as it might be.
41. Relationships between pupils, their tutors and heads of year are very good. Pupils are well known to these staff and know who to turn to if in difficulties. The strength of these relationships is endorsed by pupils themselves in interviews and by the fact that pupils often return after leaving the school to visit the adults who looked after them very well.

42. The school has very well-established systems in place to provide pupils with advice, support and guidance. Strong links exist with feeder and receiving schools so that academic and personal information is transferred between them effectively in most respects. Information about some aspects of academic performance is available to tutors and heads of year so that pupils' progress can be checked through individual tutorials, targets and records of achievement. These arrangements generally contribute well to pupils' overall good achievement but not all teachers are fully trained to make use of the school's good collection of performance data and, in some cases, the data are not exploited to maximise pupils' progress.
43. The arrangements to secure a smooth transition to and from the school are very good. They include parents' evenings, visits, staff exchanges and meetings to discuss pupils. A popular feature is the opportunity for six first school pupils, from each of the three feeder schools, to visit Redditch Church Hill, spend the day there on a 'fact-finding mission' and then report back to their peers. Parents and pupils alike feel that pupils settle very well into the school as a result.
44. Some good work is done on raising awareness of opportunities beyond school through a 'world of work' unit related to different aspects of industry and commerce.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents on the whole. Links with the community and links with other schools are also **good**. Parents who express a view have a high degree of confidence in the school. A significant minority of parents, however, does not make its views known and the level of interest in their children's education is uncertain.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision of information to parents is good overall although curriculum information is limited.
- Procedures to deal with concerns and complaints are very good.
- Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils are good.
- Structured opportunities to gain parents' views are very good.
- The school has good links with other schools and the community.

Commentary

45. Parents are provided with a good range of information concerning the school generally; the governors annual report is a valuable source of information. Half-termly newsletters are also informative. Reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory. They contain useful descriptive detail of achievement and a good section on personal development written largely by the pupil. Clear indications as to what pupils should do to improve are not given systematically or consistently. The pupil planners are a useful link between school and home because they are used often and stamped and signed regularly by staff. Although parents are kept generally well informed, they are given only sparse information on what their child is learning. This means that, as the year progresses, opportunities for parents to be more involved in their children's learning are limited.
46. The parents' very positive views of the school are well illustrated by their views on how well the school deals with their concerns and complaints. The school's procedures for dealing with these are very good. They stem principally from the headteacher's conscientious determination to give them priority. As a result parents have few concerns. They are also consulted regularly and their views are valued and acted on very well. For example, the initial trigger for the school's anti-bullying work was as a result of a parents' questionnaire organised by the school. The school is aware of the fact that a significant minority of parents expresses little interest in school activities and is seeking to extend the ways in which to engage their interest and support so that these parents can more fully contribute to their children's learning.

47. The school has good links with the community. One of the governors is a local vicar who visits often and who has been instrumental in involving 12 members of his congregation to help regularly with reading in the school. The community policeman is also a regular visitor who not only gives formal talks, but also chats to the pupils and they know him well. There are other good links through the local football team, Redditch dance group, a local bank, a local nursing home and the shared use of the school's multi-activity play area with the Borough Council. Small sums of money are raised by the school but there is no parent/teacher/friends association.
48. Links with other schools and colleges are good. There are good lines of communication between the schools within the 'pyramid group of eight first schools, four middle schools and one high school. For example, there are regular half-termly meetings between subject leaders in the middle schools and high school where transfer issues such as common assessing tools are discussed. As a result, mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to the designated high school, where most pupils go, are good. Some joint projects are pursued, providing opportunities on a scale greater than the school could manage on its own: the video-conferencing initiative linking schools, for example, is planned to enable a wider range of learning to be offered to pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The leadership provided by the headteacher and other key staff is good overall. Management is sound. School governance is sound overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the further development of the school.
- Middle managers are generally effective. They plan and organise their work well.
- The monitoring of the work of the school is not as effective nor as consistent as it might be.
- Some good structures are in place to evaluate the work of the school but, again, these are not always applied consistently.
- Governors work with real commitment to the school but are not yet fully holding the school to account for the educational standards it achieves.
- The overall quality of provision is good, based on lower than average funding; the school provides good value for money.

Commentary

49. The headteacher has devoted the whole of his professional life to the school and is very well placed to know its strengths and weaknesses and also to understand extremely well the nature of the school community and all the blessings and challenges it brings. He is respected by staff, pupils and parents. The school functions as an orderly and harmonious community.
50. In response to criticism made at the time of the last inspection, the school now gives greater prominence to raising academic standards and levels of achievement without in any way compromising the central plank of its philosophy of a caring and supportive school community which values all its members, both pupils and staff, and celebrates their individual achievements.
51. Strategic planning is good and the school improvement plan, which is the result of wide consultation, sets clear priorities and the means of accomplishing them. Its progress is monitored regularly and modifications are made where necessary. An area which can be improved is evaluation of the plan's success in terms of how far actions in it bring about measurable improvements in pupils' standards and achievement; this is not currently being undertaken thoroughly by senior managers and governors.

52. The leadership of subjects, including special educational needs, is mostly good and never less than satisfactory; it is very good in mathematics and ICT and excellent in science. The co-ordinators share the headteacher's vision; planning and organisation are good and they work hard to support non-specialist colleagues. Similarly the pastoral care leaders are well organised and provide good levels of care and guidance to their pupils. Subject co-ordinators are not given enough guidance, however, on what the school expects from them in relation to assessment of pupils' achievements, neither have they been given enough training in the management and use of assessment information.
53. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy and the co-ordinators for Key Stages 2 and 3. Between them they act as line managers for the subject co-ordinators. The system functions reasonably well as part of the sound performance management system although some lines of accountability are not entirely clear and this does not lead to secure monitoring arrangements through which the school can be assured that all policies are being implemented as required. Some subject co-ordinators are monitored closely and regularly, others feel that they are allowed to get on with the job and that any monitoring is with a light touch; whilst such an approach may be appropriate at times, it has not addressed some important inconsistencies in provision, such as in the use of assessment data, in providing for gifted and talented pupils or promoting pupils' ICT skills across the curriculum.
54. As part of a deliberate policy to empower those holding subject or pastoral responsibilities, the emphasis has been changed from evaluation and monitoring by the senior management team to self-evaluation by subject or year co-ordinators. Co-ordinators produce an annual review, which also forms the basis for the development plan for the following year. The reviews are discussed with the headteacher, who is prepared to involve external consultants or the local education authority where it is thought necessary. It is clear that co-ordinators take the task seriously. Some of the reviews are very frank but they are not of a uniformly high standard, particularly in relation to evaluating pupils' achievements.
55. The school has built up a wealth of assessment data against which to measure the school's own academic performance and this is generally used well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Beyond, and even within, these subjects, the use made of the data is patchy, as subjects and teachers vary in their ability to interpret the data in order to set targets and monitor progress.
56. Internal communication is good, from the daily briefings and clear well thought-out policy documents to the regular meetings of different management and interest groups, ensuring that all teachers have a forum in which to express their views and help to shape future policy.
57. Governors work with real commitment to the school and many provide considerable levels of support. Governors are not yet holding the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and ensuring that intended improvements occur swiftly enough to impact positively on pupils' achievements. For example, the improvements required in ICT, raised as a key issue in the previous inspection report, took rather too long to implement and, although ICT provision is now satisfactory, improvements have been too late to have an impact on some older pupils whose attainment in ICT is low.
58. In many senses, the school works in some challenging circumstances related to many pupils' own prior attainment and backgrounds, and also related to some difficulties in recruiting staff. It is to the school's credit that a positive climate for learning has been established and pupils learn well in an ethos that includes pupils well, encourages high achievement and celebrates success. Taking account of pupils' attainment and personal circumstances on entry to the school, the good quality of education provided from a lower than average level of funding, resulting in pupils' good overall achievements over their four years at the school, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	965,059
Total expenditure	1,001,844
Expenditure per pupil	2,403

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	52,275
Balance carried forward to the next	15,490

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership is developing a team with the capacity to improve further.
- Schemes of work provide effective guidance and support for teaching.
- Teachers' commitment and the good relationships they foster help pupils learn what they need to know.
- Some teaching, whilst satisfactory, lacks confidence and this reduces pupils' progress.
- Teachers lack opportunities to share good teaching practice in the department and in the school.

Commentary

59. In national tests at the end of Year 6, results in 2002 were below average. Results in 2003 were higher but still below average, and slightly below the target set by the school. The proportion of pupils obtaining Level 5 or higher was well below average in 2002 and below average in 2003. Girls performed better than boys and the difference between them was greater than the national difference in 2002. The trend in test results, based on average points scores, is a rising one. As many pupils entered the school with well below average attainment, these results nevertheless represented satisfactory achievement in 2002 and good achievement in 2003.
60. Standards in work seen during the inspection were below average in Years 6 and 8, matching the picture of previous results. Pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory, reflecting the overall quality of teaching and learning, and the fact that new subject co-ordinators have not yet had time to affect standards substantially, despite steering the department well after a period of staffing uncertainty. No obvious difference between boys' and girls' achievement is apparent currently. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different types of text and styles of writing are being developed in a coherent and consistent way over the four years that they are in this school.
61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers plan and prepare materials thoroughly and develop good relationships with their pupils. The best teaching is marked by confident subject knowledge combined with interesting activities that move pupils' learning on at a lively pace. Learning is reviewed very well at the end of the best lessons. In one such lesson about poetry techniques, pupils were actively involved and motivated so that some pupils were achieving at a level above that expected. More often, however, teachers' uncertainty is apparent, arising out of lack of specialist subject knowledge, especially when dealing with poetry or a novel. Teachers adhere over-heavily to the department's schemes of work rather than make appropriate adjustments to suit pupils' needs and this results in some shortcomings (but no unsatisfactory lessons): too much is attempted; opportunities are missed to model or demonstrate how to tackle an activity; or insufficient small steps or stages are employed to ensure that all pupils can follow. This uncertainty is also reflected in scrutiny of pupils' written work, which reveals an over-reliance on rather mechanical reinforcement of basic skills. There is scope for teachers to cultivate in pupils a more personal response when they write. This would benefit all pupils, but particularly the higher attainers. Teachers would also benefit from more opportunities to share the good practice that exists in the department and in the school. Good practice should be shared in relation to teachers' assessment and marking, because practice ranges from giving reasons for the award of particular levels and guidance for

improvement, to brief comments and unchallenging targets. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in their writing with 'frameworks'.

62. The two new subject co-ordinators have quickly established a clear direction for further improvement through well-focused and supportive schemes of work. Their handbooks for each stage are thorough and helpful. After a period of uncertainty due to long-term staff absence, they are in the process of creating a consistent approach among a large team of willing teachers. Their leadership, though not yet having its full impact, is clearly good. Subject management is sound and must work to address fully the teaching weaknesses referred to. The department has good capacity to improve further. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. The contribution of all subjects to improving standards of literacy is satisfactory overall but, given the proportion of pupils who enter the school with low literacy skills, there is further work to be done to achieve consistency across subjects and raise overall standards in literacy which are below average. There is much effective support for literacy particularly in science, history, mathematics and personal and social education. In these subjects support goes beyond emphasis on important vocabulary to include opportunities for reading, speaking and writing. In other subjects, though literacy is clearly planned for in schemes of work, opportunities are missed to develop skills. In music, for example, insufficient attention is paid to developing pupils' writing.

Modern foreign languages

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of most pupils, particularly higher attaining pupils, is good.
- The co-ordinator is very effective and leads by example.
- The strong links which the co-ordinator maintains with the other middle schools and the high school, particularly in the moderation of standards, ensures that assessment is reliable and consistent.
- Pupils' progress in some lessons is too slow because of the limited language teaching skills of non-specialist teachers.
- A substantial proportion of pupils do not have enough opportunities to engage in realistic and meaningful communication in French.
- Not enough use is made of the school's assessment data to monitor progress and set targets.

Commentary

64. The standards reached by most pupils by the end of Year 6 are in line with national expectations. The highest attaining pupils achieve even higher standards, particularly in writing French. Pupils with SEN, who are well supported, reach satisfactory standards. Overall, achievement is good; for the highest attaining pupils it is very good. Where pupils are taught by non-specialist teachers, achievement is sometimes less than satisfactory.
65. In Years 7 and 8, standards are as expected and achievement is good. The extended writing of the most competent pupils in Years 7 and 8 is of a good standard. Using techniques borrowed from the National Literacy Strategy, teaching ensures that grammatical concepts are understood, and provides a model which helps the average and lower attaining pupils and encourages the higher attaining pupils to go further and add more complex language. Pupils

can describe their weekend activities, make plans for the near future and express opinions about their favourite pastimes. Less competent pupils can write two or three sentences with reasonable accuracy. Listening skills are strongest where the pupils hear French constantly in the classroom; this occurs with specialist teaching. The highest attaining pupils can express themselves confidently when talking about themselves, their families, their school and their pastimes, for example. They are, however, less confident when asking questions and their answers sometimes lack variety. Where the teacher is less confident in the command of French, pupils have fewer opportunities to take part in realistic conversations and standards are much lower.

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but they are unsatisfactory on occasion. The specialist teaching is good and sometimes very good; that of the non-specialists is affected by a lack of fluency and limited language teaching skills, which result in a slow pace and a low level of challenge. In these circumstances, pupils quickly lose concentration and make little progress. In the best teaching, the continuous use of French, planning to include tasks to meet the needs of all pupils, a brisk pace and a constant challenge to pupils to take risks in their language use, result in a higher level of commitment and attainment. Boys in particular respond well. Good use is made of audio-visual aids to reduce the amount of English that pupils hear. Opportunities to use ICT also enrich the teaching. Pupils use wordprocessing to redraft their work and improve its appearance. They use the Internet to visit French websites to find out about the weather and French pop stars and footballers. The annual visit to France is very popular and makes a considerable contribution to pupils' linguistic, social and cultural development.
67. Written work is marked regularly and helpful comments indicate how it can be improved. Progress is assessed regularly against National Curriculum criteria, and the co-ordinator checks the consistency of her assessments by comparing them with those of other middle schools in the town. Not enough is done, however, to inform pupils how well they are doing in relation to the National Curriculum levels or to set targets for the learning of individual pupils or groups.
68. The leadership and management of the department are good. The co-ordinator is very committed and has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the French provision and of what is needed to improve standards. Organisation and long- and medium-term planning are good and she goes to considerable lengths to support non-specialist colleagues. Unfortunately, staff who have been helped in this way are not deployed to best advantage by the school.
69. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. There has been some improvement in standards, particularly in writing, and in achievement. ICT is now used to good advantage. The school uses fewer non-specialist teachers but they still account for 50 per cent of the teaching, to the continued detriment of standards.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well so that standards are in line with expectations by Year 8.
- The department is very well led and managed.
- Assessment and target setting are well developed.
- Planning is well developed and the three-part lesson is a strong feature of all lessons.
- The use of ICT is insufficient, both in planning and in lessons.
- The use of mathematical skills across the curriculum is too limited.
- Not all lessons cater for the full range of abilities in order to challenge and extend all pupils present.

Commentary

70. Attainment of many pupils on entry to the school is well below that found nationally. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, national test results are in line with those nationally for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4, though they are still below for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. Achievement is good. The upward trend in results in national tests at the end of Year 6 had been maintained until 2003 when the proportion gaining Levels 4 and 5 dropped dramatically, especially for girls. Achievement is also good in Years 7 and 8 and standards here are in line with expectations.
71. The quality of teaching is good overall and in some cases, very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers are knowledgeable about their subject and have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are well planned with three-part structures in line with the National Numeracy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy. Appropriately challenging objectives are shared with pupils. Short-term targets ensure that pupils have specific goals to achieve throughout lessons and that a good pace of learning is maintained. Good levels of questioning ensure pupils remain focused throughout lessons. Pupils are encouraged and are confident to respond, even when unsure of the accuracy of their answers. Teachers use clear and concise terminology ensuring pupils fully understand the meaning and significance of new vocabulary. Each pupil is set curricular and personal targets to achieve every half term. These are listed in pupils' exercise books. Not all lessons, however, ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Where extension or support work was provided in lessons it proved beneficial to all pupils concerned. The quality of marking of pupils' work is generally good. Pupils are informed where mistakes have been made and what they should do to correct them. Pupils learn well because they generally have very positive attitudes to mathematics and exhibit interest and enjoyment in their lessons. They take a pride in their work and presentation is generally good. Pupils are attentive and well behaved.
72. The department is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has recognised the needs of the department and has initiated steps to ensure that any weaknesses are dealt with. She has a clear vision about the future of mathematics in the school. Results gained from using national tests are used to track pupils' progress, predict future performance and to set challenging targets for each year. Mechanisms for tracking pupils' attainment and achievement still need to be further developed and used by all mathematics teachers. The co-ordinator also acknowledges that ICT use in planning and teaching needs to be developed further. There is a very strong team ethos within the department with staff working closely and supporting each other.
73. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Assessment has improved and the department has clear records of pupils' progress. The department has successfully dealt with the issues of the last inspection with the exception of the use of ICT in lessons, which is still too low. The development of pupils' mathematical skills across the curriculum is still limited.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. Pupils' competence in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Too few opportunities, however, are taken to develop further pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. Some good, but limited examples, exist of mathematics being used but, in general, insufficient emphasis is made in lessons beyond mathematics to develop mathematical themes, ideas or concepts. This shortcoming needs to be addressed. In science, there is some good use of number, graphs and shape and space, for example, when using electrical circuits. In art and design, there is regular reference to proportion, perspective and pattern making. In geography, there was some evidence of use of graphs and co-ordinates in pupils' work and, in French, use was made of the 24-hour clock and counting. Some use is made of mathematics in physical education, especially in athletics where time and distance are considered.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, and the pupils' very good attitudes to the subject which stem from it, lead to very good achievement.
- Excellent leadership and a clear vision for the subject are an inspiration to teachers and pupils.
- Management of the subject area, including support for non-specialist staff, is excellent.
- The school has one very good laboratory with suitable technical support; however, some lessons are taught in ordinary classrooms and this is a real barrier to learning.
- Low levels in literacy, particularly in Years 7 and 8, inhibit less able pupils from expressing themselves clearly and in correct scientific vocabulary.

Commentary

75. Pupils come into Year 5 with below average attainment. They make good progress and by the end of Year 6 they gain results in the national tests that are in line with national figures overall. These results are better than expected from their prior attainment and better than in English or mathematics.
76. In lessons in Years 5 and 6, pupils' work fully supports these good results and is often of very high quality. In an excellent Year 5 lesson, for example, the quality of explanation by a pupil of how a sundial works was a privilege to hear. Pupils with special educational needs showed a very good grasp of how the length of a shadow is a measure of the sun's height in the sky, and were able to comment in scientific terms on how this gives us information about the movement of the earth. In Years 7 and 8, the best work is of outstanding quality, but the school needs to do more to help lower attaining pupils to express themselves in correct scientific terms, orally and especially in their written work. Overall, pupils produce work which is much better than would be expected from their prior attainment: achievement is therefore very good. Teachers recognise and celebrate this high quality work. Pupils, in turn, have a real pride in their work. This helps to maintain the high standards which fully reflect the improvement over the last few years.
77. Teaching is very good. Nearly half the lessons seen during the inspection were either very good or excellent and all but one of the rest was good. The best teaching is characterised by an infectious enthusiasm by the teacher which communicates to the class really well. A buzz of academic activity shows that pupils are fully engaged with the subject, as they try to emulate their teacher's enthusiasm. In the laboratory, teachers make excellent use of the interactive whiteboard, but this facility is not available elsewhere in the school.
78. A feature of nearly all lessons is the clear way in which teachers define what their pupils should learn. However, in just a few classes, this information was not communicated to pupils clearly enough, and learning suffered as a result. Teachers make very good use of assessment, sometimes as a starter activity to remind pupils of what they learned in the last lesson. Using self-assessment and peer-assessment helps to motivate pupils, helps them to understand how they can improve, and gives them a real understanding of, and a sense of independence in, their own learning. Teachers and support staff help pupils with special educational needs to do well, so that they do not fall behind other pupils.
79. Very good learning results from a very good curriculum which is well matched to pupils' needs, supported by good extra-curricular activities. Very good use is made of ICT whenever it can enhance learning. However, this facility could be used still more, especially to provide the highest attaining pupils with the stimulus to make the best possible progress. The curriculum is supported by resources and laboratory accommodation which are very good. However, the

laboratory is fully used throughout the week and some science practical lessons have to be taught in ordinary, carpeted classrooms. This significantly limits what pupils can do, and is a barrier to learning for them.

80. Leadership of the subject is excellent. The curriculum co-ordinator has an excellent vision for the subject and manages a large team of largely non-specialist teachers very well. She monitors pupils' progress meticulously, and works with all teachers to achieve the highest standards for them and their pupils. She communicates a strong sense of purpose to all she works with, and is an excellent role model to pupils and teachers alike.
81. All the issues identified in the last inspection report have been effectively addressed, standards have continued to rise. Improvement since the last inspection has, therefore, been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good. The new ICT specialist teacher has made a very positive impact on teaching since her arrival this term.
- Behaviour management is very good.
- Lesson planning is very good.
- The full content of the National Curriculum has not been covered in the past but plans to rectify this are in place and very good so that requirements will be fully met this year.
- Assessment of work and the use of homework are both unsatisfactory.
- Use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

82. Standards are below average overall although pupils' work in the use of presentation software is good. Little database or control technology work has been covered by pupils in the last few years and their experience of spreadsheet work is uneven. There has been no recorded work on considering the impact of ICT on society. Low standards are mainly due to the historic lack of coverage of large parts of the National Curriculum, raised as an issue in the previous inspection. The school has been too slow in addressing this issue; the difficulties have been, in part, related to problems with staffing. Pupils in Years 7 and 8, in particular, have not been given the opportunities they should have had.
83. The new subject specialist, a newly qualified teacher, has a clear vision of where the school should be developing its ICT. Her good management and organisational skills have already made a significant impact on the school and she is leading the work very well. She has worked hard to develop provision and planning in all areas of ICT, supported by the local education authority consultant, including developing well attended lunch-time clubs. Assessment is currently unsatisfactory as pupils' attainments are not recorded, analysed, shared with pupils, senior managers and governors or used for target setting.
84. Pupils use the computer network competently and enthusiastically in lessons and at other times. They are making at least satisfactory progress overall. Achievement in lessons in Years 5 and 6 is now good and pupils attain standards as expected nationally. In Years 7 and 8, achievement is satisfactory in the elements of the National Curriculum they have experienced but standards are below expectations because these pupils have not yet caught up on work missed in earlier years.
85. Teaching and learning are good overall and include some very good work. In one Year 5 class seen, pupils were interrogating a database; they worked enthusiastically, and were able to

explain database definitions and the meaning of the bar charts and pie charts they produced. In Year 7 classes, pupils were confidently manipulating the software to add animations to their presentations, and edit the animations where they are not appropriate. Teaching makes very good use of prepared examples, projected on a screen, to demonstrate important features of the lessons and to provide a good focus for discussion and analysis. Pupils are given good opportunities to criticise each other's work and great emphasis is placed on the need to do this courteously and sensitively; such activity contributes well to pupils' personal development. The teacher uses skilled questioning to ensure all pupils are focused on their work and learning well. Her one-to-one assistance to individuals ensures that all abilities are achieving at least satisfactorily. In some lessons, there is an overuse of 'clipart' instead of using more informative materials to improve the overall quality of learning. Some activities are too open-ended so that some pupils spend too much time wandering around the Internet looking for material. Pupils have few formal ways of evaluating their progress as they have had no notebooks or portfolios of work.

86. Improvement since the last inspection has been barely satisfactory and, until relatively recently, the school has been unable to address the weaknesses in ICT identified in the previous inspection for reasons mainly associated with staffing. A school governor has assisted greatly in the last year to improve resources and the school has increased the number of computers and range of software available. Technical support is now good. Delivery of the full National Curriculum was not planned until the new co-ordinator took up post this term. She is enthusiastic, committed and talented; however, a lot still needs to be done to bring the schemes of work and assessment methods up to date. The curriculum, as planned to be delivered from this year, now meets requirements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

87. Pupils' competence in ICT and their use of ICT skills across the curriculum is less than satisfactory overall, although pupils in Years 5 and 6 have reasonable skills. There is some use of Internet research in English and religious education in some years and some appropriate learning activities using ICT in mathematics, design and technology and French. Little or no evidence of the use of ICT was seen in history, geography or music. A very good science lesson was seen where the teacher fully integrated her laptop computer and electronic whiteboard in animated demonstrations, a display of circuit diagrams and a word quiz which all supported learning about electricity in an exciting and powerful way. This was the only significantly good feature of ICT seen across the curriculum so, overall, progress in the wide use since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and leads to good achievement.
- Fieldwork extends the learning from the classroom.
- Resources are used effectively but the use of ICT is very limited.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment is generally satisfactory but does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve.

Commentary

88. Standards in geography are just in line with national expectations in Year 6 and just below expectations in Year 8. These outcomes represent good achievement for most pupils as many have some specific difficulties, primarily in literacy and numeracy, when they enter school. Higher attaining pupils generally make reasonable progress rather than good because they are not always challenged greatly, both through tasks set and in the texts they have to read in connection with them. Pupils in the main have a satisfactory knowledge of the physical and human environment, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on the effects of an earthquake on the population of a small area in Italy. Pupils show an increasing skill in their writing, drawing and the use of graphs, most displaying adequate levels of literacy and numeracy by Year 8.
89. Teaching and learning are good overall and slightly better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. A good feature of teaching is the interesting start to each lesson followed by a good range of activities using well-prepared resources. Pupils work diligently and most are willing to think about the effects and changes to the environment, for example, and can explain their ideas well to their peers or a visitor. Given the opportunity, pupils can write well on a given topic. The use of ICT to support learning in geography is very limited. Pupils work well in pairs to discuss their ideas.
90. The leadership and management of geography are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision about how she wants to develop the subject. The team approach to development indicates a good capacity to improve. Assessment and the use of self-evaluation, including the monitoring of pupils' performance data, are satisfactory; assessment could be developed further for target setting and to assist pupils in understanding their own learning gains and learning needs. The subject does not contribute as fully as it might to pupils' personal development and the subject team should include more planned activities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Fieldwork is helping well to extend what is learnt in the classroom. There are some good displays around the school. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, primarily because assessment has improved.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good.
- Teaching is of good quality. Good use is made of source material and discussion.
- Careful planning and very good assessment ensure that all pupils are fully involved in the subject.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Insufficient use is made of computers.
- The open-plan nature of the accommodation can effect some pupils' concentration.
- Occasionally, unchallenging tasks are set for some pupils.

Commentary

91. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 6 and Year 8 is in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievements, which are their gains in knowledge and skills during their time in the school, are good.
92. Pupils are introduced to the use of source material and the use of information from the earliest age and, in Year 6, they use them with confidence. They display an understanding of historical events and an ability to use historical source material. They can, for example, draw conclusions about the effects on people's lives of being an evacuee. By Year 8, higher attaining pupils can produce extended pieces of work, such as essays seen in Year 7 on medieval England and the

reign of King John. The achievements of lower attaining pupils are also good. The use of good quality resources and well planned lessons ensure that they understand the subject well. Occasionally, though, they are given tasks which are too basic and time-consuming, such as colouring-in pictures.

93. The teaching is good and pupils learn well. Discussion and group work are used well to enable pupils of all abilities to work together. Some teaching excites a lively interest and enthusiasm amongst the pupils, such as when the teacher played the role of King John to put the case for his achievements. The effective use of assessment enables pupils to understand well what they have learned and how they can improve their work. Some of the younger pupils can occasionally find concentration difficult in open-plan classrooms because of the audible and visible activity in other lessons nearby.
94. The history co-ordinator has made good and significant improvements to the subject because her leadership and management are good. The production of lesson plans for the non-specialist staff has improved pupils' achievements. Resources have been improved and the high quality of the books available results in pupils' increasing interest. Well planned opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through history are in place. The use of key words and help with extended writing improve the achievements of all pupils. Similarly, the introduction of opportunities for pupils to discuss and make judgements is a significant feature of the teaching. Assessment is now very good. There is good liaison with the local high school. The school is aware of the need to develop the range of ICT resources for history and to improve the use of ICT in lessons.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- Pupils' achievements are as expected in Years 5 and 6 and good in Years 7 and 8.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Assessment is satisfactory overall but pupils are rarely provided with suggestions on how they can improve.
- The subject lacks a permanent co-ordinator.
- The school lacks teachers with religious education as a specialism.

Commentary

95. Standards in Year 6 are just below national expectations for the majority of pupils. Their achievements are nevertheless satisfactory. They can explain, for example, how people are admitted to some religions but they are unsure what the joining rituals represent.
96. Standards in Year 8 are broadly in line with national expectations for the majority. They can explain the different forms of suffering, for example, and suggest how chosen actions can prevent some incidents. Pupils' achievements over Years 7 and 8 are good overall.
97. Achievement is good overall. Pupils join the school with attainment in English and mathematics below national levels and by Year 8 they have risen to national expectations in religious education. This achievement is due to satisfactory teaching combined with pupils' good attitudes to work. Boys present their written work less well than girls, and sometimes it is left unfinished. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well.

98. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Non-specialists teach their own class for religious education and work well together to ensure there is a common approach. Lessons can be over ambitious in their content and, although this keeps the pace of lessons brisk and uses all the time available, in many lessons it prevents sufficient attention being given to the main objectives of the lesson. Work is not always sufficiently differentiated to match the range of abilities in each class. Assessment is satisfactory and integrated into lessons so pupils can show their knowledge and understanding and teachers are aware of pupils' learning gains. However, pupils' work is not given a level and they are rarely provided with suggestions on how they can improve. Information and communication technology is just beginning to develop but does not feature regularly in lessons. Homework is regularly set but is usually only to finish off work started in class.
99. There are few opportunities for pupils to be independent learners and take responsibility for their own learning. Reasonable attention is given to developing pupils' spoken and written skills. More paired and group work, for example, is needed to enable pupils to practise these skills for themselves, consolidate their use of specialist vocabulary and to rehearse their answers before writing. Pupils' relationships with teachers are good. The views of pupils are respected and valued, helping to develop pupils' self-worth. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
100. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is currently an additional responsibility of the headteacher owing to the departure of the previous co-ordinator. Whilst having experience of leading this area in the past, the headteacher's time is limited for the development of the subject. The existing, detailed scheme of work provides a sound basis for the team to build upon. Since the last inspection, progress has been just satisfactory. Standards have been maintained; teaching continues to be satisfactory but now includes a wider range of styles and activities. Some aspects of assessment have improved but there is still no systematic monitoring of pupils' work or how it is taught. There is still scope for further improvement in all years.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recording and tracking of pupils' achievement provides clear and accurate indication of the National Curriculum attainment levels reached.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well.
- The good teamwork, managed and lead effectively by the subject co-ordinator, ensures that all staff have secure subject knowledge to teach across a wide media range.
- Implementation of computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM) and control technology is impeded by insufficient resources for this work.
- Pupils of above average ability need additional challenges to achieve the higher attainment levels.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy and ICT skills are not fully exploited during lessons.

Commentary

101. Overall standards are above average and achievement is good. In Years 5 and 6, standards are well above average because pupils are engaged in projects usually found in higher years and they achieve well. In Years 7 and 8, standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. In all years, pupils have a good understanding of the properties of materials they are using. They can select tools appropriately and use them accurately and safely. They can evaluate their work clearly as it progresses and modify their designs appropriately. However,

the quality of their finished outcomes is sometimes compromised by a tendency to rush their work. Pupils' folder work is well presented and shows ideas for their designs. For some pupils, their graphic design skills are not sufficiently developed to show their intentions clearly. As a consequence, these pupils find it difficult to translate their ideas into made outcomes.

102. Teaching and learning are good overall and include some very good work. Lesson objectives, always written on the board, have achievable outcomes with tasks related to deadlines. Pupils know and understand what is expected of them. They enjoy and show an interest in their work. They behave well, show respect for each other and listen carefully. The split of large groups into smaller teaching groups has allowed teachers to focus on pupils' needs. This has been to the advantage of less able pupils. Teaching does not always provide sufficient challenges for the more able pupils. Less able pupils are supported very well through the good use of the learning support assistant and individual education plans. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well, through the use of specialist vocabulary lists for example, and the encouragement of listening skills. Numeracy and ICT skills are not so well developed in design and technology. As a consequence, pupils are not able to mark out their work as accurately as they should and they do not identify how they can use computers to enhance their designing. The use of laminated grids for pupils to use under their design sheets boosts confidence by improving the layout and presentation of their work.
103. The systematic tracking of pupils' progress is good. It helps staff to plan their teaching consistently across the department. Marking of work and discussion with pupils results in accurate records of each individual pupil's attainment using National Curriculum levels. Pupils receive good feedback and they know what is required for each attainment level. They can describe well to others what they need to do to reach these levels.
104. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader monitors and co-ordinates teaching staff effectively. Team building is a priority. This has ensured competence, by non-specialist and less experienced staff, to teach food, textiles and resistant materials projects. Liaison with the high school is very good. Links with the local community and industry are good.
105. Health and safety is addressed thoroughly in all areas with clear risk assessments. Staff have appropriate health and safety accreditation to use machine tools. The specialist rooms are well equipped. There is good technician support, which has improved the effectiveness of the subject co-ordinator and teachers. Resources are good overall but insufficient for the implementation of planned developments in CAD/CAM.
106. There has been satisfactory and sustained improvement since the last inspection; standards have risen and staff skills have been developed further. The subject co-ordinator has identified areas in provision that need developing: these are, firstly, in CAD/CAM, which is being developed as a joint initiative with the high school and, secondly, in control technology, which will show good curriculum links to science and ICT. The development of these initiatives, which are still in the pilot stage, has been slow because resources are not in place.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching occurs in Years 5 and 6, including high expectations of pupils' work.
- In Years 7 and 8, teachers are enthusiastic and committed but insufficient specialist teaching exists.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.

- There is a good range of learning resources.
- Homework programmes are absent in all years.
- Assessment systems are satisfactory overall but assessments are not always used to respond to individual needs.
- Able pupils are not sufficiently catered for.

Commentary

107. Achievement overall is satisfactory. There is no data to establish pupils' levels of art and design on entry although standards in English and mathematics are well below average overall. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are generally in line with national expectations. In Year 8, pupils reach standards that are close to national expectations; progress over Years 7 and 8 is not as marked as in earlier years but is still satisfactory.
108. Good features of the pupils' work in Year 6 are their enthusiastic, hardworking approach to the manipulation of a range of two- and three-dimensional media inspired by ancient cultures and contemporary artists. Drawing skills and approaches to colour work are being effectively developed.
109. In Year 8, there is more emphasis on the development of observation and recording skills as well as tonal work in paint, but there is insufficient specialist expertise available at this stage. There is no homework programme to extend classroom practice and improve pupils' skills. These factors inhibit progress and a rise in standards in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in all years as the result of teaching strategies and the quality of learning resources. Pupils who are gifted at art and design are not given sufficient scope to develop their talent.
110. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 5 and 6. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. They are enthusiastic, thorough in their planning and hardworking. Work is regularly marked with helpful comments that tell pupils how to improve, although pupils are not usually informed of their levels of attainment using the National Curriculum descriptors. Literary skills are satisfactorily developed and provision for ICT is good. End of lesson reviews could be far more effective in assessing learning outcomes as well as contributing to the development of pupils' communication skills whilst evaluating their work in art and design. The majority of pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. They behave well.
111. Leadership and management are sound and have led to satisfactory improvements to provision in art and design since the previous inspection. Developments in assessment procedures and for monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes have moved forward too slowly and these still have some shortcomings. Art and design is co-ordinated by an enthusiastic, experienced specialist, who also co-ordinates another curriculum area. Support and guidance for all non-specialists who teach art and design are generally good. Schemes of work need to be further developed to contribute more overtly to all aspects of pupils' personal development. An attractive and well-ordered learning environment has been created. The good displays in the art room and public areas make a significant and positive contribution to the school ethos.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Pupils' attitudes are usually good.
- There is currently no use of computers for music and other resources are too limited.
- Extra-curricular work in music is very limited.

Commentary

112. Standards in every year are close to national expectations. Enthusiastic and tuneful singing is evident in each year. Pupils in Year 5 sing complex rounds in up to three parts. Those in Year 8 can identify certain triads and use them on keyboards to compose riffs to accompany tunes.
113. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Confidence in participating in musical activities increases through the years. Most make good progress in identifying particular features of music heard, learning to use terms such as 'unison' and 'cyclic' and older pupils using stave notation appropriately. Pupils do not, however, have experience of using computers for music making and learning. Very few receive instrumental tuition, which limits achievement for all pupils since few pupils play their studied instruments in lessons.
114. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers are calm (even when some pupils are not) and patient in ensuring all pupils understand how to proceed, including those with special educational needs. They question pupils well, referring to previous learning and making pupils think hard. Tasks are matched well to pupils' needs in most lessons, but expectations are not always high enough for the more able who could both start and complete a learning task more quickly than others and move on. More attention should be given to listening, using every opportunity to broaden pupils' experience. While teachers' feedback in lessons shows pupils how to improve, pupils do not benefit from knowing the criteria for National Curriculum levels and hence lack this potential incentive to improve. Pupils in all years work well together in groups, most showing that they want to achieve and delighting in their success. Pupils do not build a written record of their work to prompt them to reflect on their progress and lack of this limits further achievement. Whilst some recording of work occurs, this is too limited and also impedes the raising of standards.
115. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator ensures good liaison between teachers. There is good awareness of areas needing development, made known through sound annual self-evaluation reviews. Resources still have important gaps, including shortages in computers running appropriate software for composition, instruments such as bass xylophone and bass guitar, and headphones for keyboards. There are also too few non-European instruments and not enough good quality recording equipment. Some limited extra-curricular work in music contributes to school concerts but, overall, pupils' experience of voluntary music activity is limited. The small size of the school hall limits productions of larger scale concerts.
116. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. Teaching is more uniformly good and accommodation has improved, though still lacking sufficient smaller spaces for group work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Management and organisation of teaching and learning activities and of pupils is very good.
- Lesson planning and use of ongoing assessment are good.
- Provision for extra-curricular opportunities and links with other schools and agencies are very good.
- The school has not checked thoroughly that all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have attained the expected competence level in swimming.
- Liaison with feeder first schools to ensure continuity and progression in learning is limited.

Commentary

117. In teacher assessments made at the end of Year 6 in 2003, the majority of pupils achieved results that were in line with the national expectations. Standards by the end of Year 8 were also in line with the national average. Pupils achieve particularly well in dance and soccer. Information about pupils' attainment in physical education on entry into the school is not compiled and it is by no means clear if all pupils are able to swim, for example. This fact should be of interest to the school as it does not provide swimming lessons and some pupils may well end Year 6 without attaining the expected competence in swimming. The school has, in the past, made special provision for pupils entering as non-swimmers; the current existence of such provision should be clarified. (A local agreement with feeder first schools has been made that swimming is provided there rather than in the middle school.)
118. Standards seen during the inspection show that most pupils' attainment in Years 6 and 8 is as expected for their ages. In Years 5 and 6, in dance activities, pupils are able to select from a range of ideas to create and share their own dances. They can suggest ways in which to improve the quality of their work. In games activities, they demonstrate, for example, satisfactory footwork, spacing and passing skills and are beginning to show basic tactical awareness in attack and defence situations. In Year 8 boys' gymnastics, the majority of pupils can perform a satisfactory range of skills although they are not always performed consistently with clarity and control. They co-operate well in groups to plan their movements into complex sequences both on the floor and when using apparatus. Standards seen in a Year 8 girls' dance club activity were well above expectations; the girls showed high levels of compositional skills and danced with excellent style and quality of movement.
119. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are challenged physically and expectations in using their knowledge and understanding of activities are high. This includes teachers' insistence on the correct use of key words and terminology when speaking about their work. High attaining pupils, including the talented, achieve well in a range of activities at county and district levels. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in physical education due to the good support given by teachers; this was highlighted in a Year 8 gymnastics lesson where the two support teachers, one from the partner specialist sports college, worked with groups of pupils to ensure they were challenged at their particular level.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work, kit, behaviour and contributions to lessons. This leads to pupils being well motivated, very well behaved and enjoying their work. Good feedback and encouragement to all pupils ensure they know what to do and how to improve. Relationships are good and lessons are very well planned and managed to enable all pupils to learn effectively and safely. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
121. Leadership and management are good and this has led to good improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum has been reviewed and new units of work put in place to address the issue of challenge to all pupils. Standards are now monitored satisfactorily across all four years. The use of a wider range of teaching approaches ensures that pupils recognise and understand quality in their work. The subject leader shows commitment and a clear direction for the subject to improve further. The very good provision of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and the strong links with partner schools and agencies have contributed to the school gaining the Sportsmark award.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Work in PSHE was sampled. There is a well-structured, coherent programme for PSHE that is closely integrated with the provision for citizenship. Each class has one PSHE lesson a week. Pupils

enjoy the active learning methodology used that provides opportunities to discuss and debate issues including drugs and sex that they regard as relevant. The subject is well led and has a clear direction. Despite collaborative working and a common approach to topics, the teaching and learning are variable and reflect the teaching and pupil management skills of the individual teacher. Closer monitoring of the teaching of the subject is needed to ensure consistency and raise standards.

Citizenship

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of citizenship has been well planned with teachers being supported by clear schemes of work and up-to-date resources.
- The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme makes a good contribution to citizenship.
- The school's enrichment activities successfully involve pupils in the wider and practical aspects of citizenship.
- The links between citizenship and other subjects are not stated explicitly enough nor are they clear to pupils.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure all pupils are making the expected progress has yet to be implemented.

Commentary

122. Citizenship has been introduced as a distinct National Curriculum subject in Years 7 and 8 and builds on the work already taught within PSHE lessons and some other subject topics throughout the school. In teacher assessments taken at the end of Year 8 in 2003, the majority of pupils achieved outcomes that were in line with national expectations. Pupils have a sound understanding, for their ages, of what citizenship is and the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens.
123. Standards seen during the inspection in lessons focusing on moral courage, indicate they are in line with national averages overall. Many pupils are developing appropriately their skills of communication and enquiry, though for pupils with below average literacy skills this presents a challenge. Many pupils were able to reflect on the experiences of Meip Geis during the German occupation of her country and relate it to their own very different lifestyles today. They listen well to each other's contributions and show good skills of discussion and feedback. The less able are more limited in the use of these skills and are not as socially aware as they should be at this stage.
124. The practical application of citizenship outside of lessons has been developing at the school for a long time and the opportunities for pupils to engage in responsible action are good, many and varied. These practical aspects are a strong feature of provision and very successfully support the citizenship programme. Through the school council, pupils make a genuine contribution to the running of the school; their views are listened to and acted upon. Pupils take part in fund-raising events such as the 'Macmillan coffee morning', which involves parents, members of the community and staff. They work in the library and the garden and develop responsibility by taking turns in answering the telephone at lunchtime and welcoming visitors to the school. Older pupils assist younger ones with their reading and help to organise clubs, teams and practices in physical education. All pupils are given these opportunities and are able to record their contributions in their record of achievement.
125. Achievement is satisfactory and currently matches capability and potential. Pupils are being challenged to apply the knowledge and understanding they have gained in other aspects of

learning across the school to these new topics in a very new subject.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and share objectives with pupils. Small group work is carefully managed and used successfully to engage pupils in discussion. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy discussion and feedback elements of lessons. They listen well to other people's opinions and contributions.
127. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear idea of the contribution citizenship makes to pupils' learning and the wider life of the school. She has successfully implemented the curriculum and has put sound assessment and recording procedures in place including pupil self-assessment. Citizenship opportunities in other subjects are not well developed or assessed and this is an area for development. The subject leader has very limited time to monitor teaching and to ensure all pupils are making the expected progress.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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