

INSPECTION REPORT

Olney Middle School

Olney, Buckinghamshire

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110352

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Waspe

Lead inspector: Mr David Speakman

Dates of inspection: 23 - 26 November 2004

Inspection number: 267431

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 primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 8 - 12
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 335

School address: Yardley Road
Olney
Buckinghamshire
Postcode: MK46 5DZ

Telephone number: 01234 711323
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body
Name of chair of Mr Rod Chaproniere
governors:

Date of previous 11 January 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized middle deemed primary school serves the local area, which is socio-economically advantaged. It provides education for pupils in the 8 – 12 years age range. An average proportion of pupils joins or leaves during the school year. Almost all pupils are classed as White-British, with a few pupils of other white backgrounds or of dual heritage. None speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is below average. Special educational needs include specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties. The attainment on entry to Year 4 is average. The school achieved the Investor in People Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	David Speakman	Lead inspector	English Information and communication technology English as an additional language
9577	Elaine Parrish	Lay inspector	
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education
10611	Martin James	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Special educational needs
21090	David Manuel	Team inspector	Science French
33647	Ann Jordan	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school with many very good features and with clear signs of further improvement. As a result of good teaching, pupils at all levels of attainment achieve well and attain above average standards. Leadership and management are good and the leadership of the headteacher is very good. The school has a very positive ethos and pupils have very good attitudes towards school and behave very well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is very effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. The senior management team, other staff with leadership responsibility and the governors make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- As a result of good quality teaching and learning at all stages of the school, pupils at all levels of attainment achieve well and attain above average standards, overall. However, the quality of writing, both in English and in other subjects, needs to be improved.
- The school's approach to the inclusion of all pupils is excellent and provision for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
- As a result of very good provision for their personal development, pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their behaviour is very good.
- Assessment procedures are good, and information is used well to ensure that all pupils are provided with challenging work. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is very good.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work varies and does not always show pupils how to improve.
- Opportunities for learning are of a very good quality and benefit from an excellent level of enrichment.
- The school looks after pupils very well, reflecting its very caring ethos. There is excellent provision to ensure the health and safety of pupils.
- Links with parents and the community are very good and the school has effective contact with other schools.

The school has made a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. In English, although standards in writing have fallen, good standards in reading and speaking and listening have been maintained. Attainment shows improvement in mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, music and physical education. Other aspects of the school which have shown improvement include the quality of learning opportunities, assessment, provision for pupils with special educational needs, provision and resources for ICT, attendance, support and guidance for pupils and partnership with parents. Very good leadership of the headteacher has been maintained and management systems are better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	B	C	D
mathematics	C	C	B	C
science	B	B	A	C

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.

Achievement is **good** for pupils at all levels of attainment. Pupils start in Year 4 with average standards overall, but with weaknesses noted in the quality of their writing. Although the test results in English last year were average when compared to all schools, attainment in Year 6 is currently above average. By Year 6, attainment in mathematics and science is currently above average and shows improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in art and design, music and physical education are above those nationally expected by the end of Year 6 and in ICT are well above. In Year 7, attainment in mathematics is above average, well above average in science and average in English. Attainment in art and design, music and physical education remains above that nationally expected; in religious education, it is above expectations and is well above in ICT. Pupils show good standards in numeracy and very good computer skills in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning and their behaviour are all very good in Year 6 and good in Year 7. Attendance and punctuality are both very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** with about 40 per cent of teaching seen during the inspection being very good or excellent. Most of the high quality teaching was seen in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves, become active learners and to have the skills to learn effectively. Teachers give very high levels of encouragement to do well, so that pupils become confident and enthusiastic learners. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can do and set challenging tasks. Lessons move on at a very brisk pace and pupils' attention is maintained at a high level through varied activities at a challenging and demanding level. Excellent teaching fully stretches pupils' skills and in these lessons pupils achieve standards well above those expected for their age and ability. Teaching assistants and other helpers provide valuable support and are effective in class. Teachers use assessment data well to plan work that matches pupils' individual learning needs accurately. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is very good, and pupils' achievement is very effectively tracked through the school. However, the quality in the marking of pupils' work does not always indicate how pupils might improve.

The curriculum is very good. The school provides a very rich range and quality of learning opportunities. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, particularly those linked with the arts and sport. The number of teachers and teaching assistants is good. The accommodation and the quality and quantity of learning resources are very good. The school shows a very good level of care for its pupils and its commitment to full inclusion of all pupils is excellent. The relationship with parents and the community is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is **good**, with very good features. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is very effectively supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. They have a very clear, shared vision of the needs of the school. Leadership of other key staff is good. Management is very effective. The governance of the school is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. Parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire indicated a high level of satisfaction, with some concern only about the school taking note of their views. However, during the inspection it was found that parents do acknowledge their views are valued by the school. Pupils like the teachers and the friendliness of other people.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing, including the standards of presentation where appropriate.
- Improve the consistency in marking of pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and above those expected nationally by Year 7. Achievement is **good** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in mathematics and science is above average by the end of Year 6. It remains above national expectations in Year 7 in mathematics and is well above in science.
- Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good throughout the school. There are some weaknesses in writing.
- Pupils achieve very well in ICT and standards are well above those nationally expected by the end of Years 6 and 7.
- Attainment is above nationally expected levels in art and design, music and physical education.
- Standards of numeracy in other subjects are good and in ICT are very good. There are weaknesses in writing and in the presentation of pupils' work in other subjects.

Commentary

1. In the last three years, results for pupils at the end of Year 6 in the National Curriculum tests have shown an improving trend in both mathematics and science with results now being well above average in science and above average in mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared to results at Year 2 (not in this school), achievement of last year's Year 6 is satisfactory in both subjects. However, this school's assessment data shows average attainment on entry to Year 4. In addition, a significant proportion of higher attaining pupils leave at the end of Year 5 each year to take another route through their secondary education. This means that the comparison of Year 6 with Year 2 data is not reliable and should be interpreted with some caution. School assessment and tracking data show pupils to be achieving well in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in mathematics and science are currently above average in Year 6. In Year 7, standards in mathematics remain above expectations and are well above in science. The interpretation of results in English is even less reliable. Assessment on intake into Year 4 highlights significant weaknesses in pupils' writing, although standards in speaking and listening and in reading are good. Scrutiny of pupils' writing in Year 4 confirms this. There has been a downward trend in Year 6 results in English and the school is very concerned. This has been a priority for improvement, and the school's action, including very close monitoring of individual pupils' progress, has been effective. Although results indicated average standards in test results in 2004, standards in the current Year 6 are above average overall and average for pupils in Year 7, reflecting their average test results in 2004. Achievement is good at all stages of the school and for all groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving their targets due to well-targeted support.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (27.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.3 (26.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.2 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 95 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In English, pupils have good listening skills and they generally listen politely to other pupils and their teachers, although a few older pupils in Year 7 sometimes show disinterest and appear to switch off. As a result, standards for these pupils are depressed because of their slower than usual pace of working. In class discussion, pupils show a very good vocabulary and they speak confidently. Pupils at all levels of ability use a good range of words expressively and are clear, keen and confident in their speech. Pupils at all levels of attainment and at all ages read accurately and with understanding. Older pupils are good at interpreting hidden meanings, such as in newspaper headlines. Standards in writing in Year 6 are showing signs of more accuracy and it is evident that the school's actions to improve writing are having an effect. Writing produced by higher attaining pupils is well structured and conveys meaning well, with generally accurate punctuation and spelling. Pupils at other levels of attainment are also showing improvement in their writing, although there is more scope for improving the accuracy of spelling and punctuation. These standards are not always reflected in other subjects, however, and some writing in the humanities, for example, lacks accuracy and attention to detail. The presentation of work, including the quality of the writing, also has weaknesses generally.
- In mathematics, pupils throughout the school are confident in tackling all aspects of mathematics and the oldest pupils show above expected levels of understanding and skills. As pupils get older, they develop good problem-solving skills and most are competent at tackling problems that involve more than one step to find the answer. In science, there is clear emphasis on practical work. Pupils perform a wide range of experiments and investigations and use this method of learning effectively to extend their knowledge and understanding in other areas of science. Pupils have a very good understanding of fair testing and they know how to design experiments to investigate specific situations, predict results and then test out their predictions, clearly recording results and evaluating outcomes. From the time they join the school, pupils are encouraged to use and further develop their computer skills and become familiar with a good range of more complex procedures. This enables pupils to achieve very well and attain well above nationally expected standards in ICT for their age. Standards of numeracy seen in other subjects are good and very good in ICT. Standards in speaking and listening and reading in other subjects are good, and those in writing are satisfactory.
- Standards in music improve steadily through the school until, by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7, they are above expectations. Music is given a high profile in the school and the school's practical, skills-based approach to learning gives all pupils the opportunity to develop a secure grounding in the core music skills of singing, listening, performing and composing. In art and design, pupils show skills that are consistently above those expected in all aspects of their work. They produce good quality work in two and three dimensions, using a good range of different materials

effectively. They work well from their imaginations and this adds quality to their work. Pupils show good levels of co-ordination in gymnastics, in dance and on the games field. They are able to effectively evaluate their own and others' performance, leading to improvement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are **very good** in Years 4 to 6 and are **good** in Year 7. Provision for their personal development is **very good**: for their spiritual development it is **good** and **very good** for their moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are both **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's approach to including all pupils in learning opportunities and school activities is excellent.
- The very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships support learning very effectively.
- Pupils take and fulfil responsibility for learning well.
- The pupils become active participants in the school community as a result of very effective provision.
- Attitudes to learning in Year 7 are not as good when teaching is less effective.
- There are very good procedures to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually.

Commentary

5. This is a very happy school. Pupils cannot wait to talk about their pleasure in learning and find it difficult to think of anything that they would want to change. School is a very friendly place where pupils never feel alone. There is a calm atmosphere within the school, pupils move in and out of lessons in an orderly way. Playtimes are pleasant and relaxed, and pupils care for each other. If someone falls over there are always many offers of help. Pupils behave very well when not directly supervised, as seen when organising themselves into an orderly queue for biscuits sold by Year 7 at playtime. They really enjoy the school reward system. They think it is very fair and it encourages them to try hard. They feel that if they do not get to the next level they should try harder. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
6. Pupils enjoy working and their attitude towards lessons is very positive. Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons lack pace, and in a few interactive activities some Year 7 pupils are less engaged in their learning. Where the quality of teaching and learning is good or better, pupils are fully involved and are active learners and achieve well and sometimes very well. All relationships are very good quality. Most Year 7 pupils are confident and show high levels of maturity. They speak very highly of the support of adults in the school to help them deal with any difficulties that they may have had. They feel well prepared for moving to the next stage of their education.
7. Parents have a positive view of behaviour. They say that pupils are taught to be respectful and polite. On school visits, pupils are a credit to the school. Parents like the recognition Year 7 gets for responsible behaviour, when pupils can choose special privileges, which encourages them to be mature and good role models for the rest of the school. The school has an effective 'anti-bullying policy'. Pupils say that the school

is a friendly place but if someone does start to bully them they know it will be dealt with promptly.

- There is a clearly laid out process for dealing with issues of inappropriate behaviour, with exclusion used as the last resort. The number of exclusions for the year prior to the inspection is shown in the table below.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

<i>Categories used in the Annual School Census</i>	<i>No of pupils on roll</i>	<i>Number of fixed period exclusions</i>	<i>Number of permanent exclusions</i>
White – British	319	2	1
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	25	0	0

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

- The school is an outstandingly inclusive school. Pupils have good opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility by undertaking jobs such as acting as lunchtime monitors or taking the register to the office. The school council is new but already plays an important part in the life of the school. Classes elect representatives on the merits of their election speeches. The council is already considering matters of importance to the pupils and the school as a whole, such as cycling to school and floodlights for the path used by pupils to go to after-school clubs. Activities to raise money for charities and extended residential visits for pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 all contribute effectively to pupils' personal development, which is of very good quality.
- The school has developed an ethos in which pupils grow and flourish, where they are respected and give respect. Spontaneous applause for the efforts of others is a regular part of lessons. Assemblies contribute effectively to the provision for pupils' spiritual development. All pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They know about their local community and gain a sense of the wider world through planned activities such as Caribbean Day and Black History Week which enable the pupils of this mainly white British school to understand the cultures and traditions of people in other parts of the world.
- Attendance and punctuality are very good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are particularly keen to take part in the Brain Gym activities at the beginning of each day, promoting very good levels of punctuality. Pupils are allowed

to come into the classroom between 08.30 and 08.45 and this ensures a very calm and orderly start to the day.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	3.8	School data:	0.1
National data:	6.0	National data:	0.3

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The assessment of pupils’ achievement is **good**. The curriculum is **very good** and benefits from **excellent** opportunities for enrichment. The school provides **very good** levels of care, guidance and support for its pupils. It has **very good** links with parents and the community and **good** links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers’ expectations of pupils are very high and tasks are challenging and stimulate pupils to learn effectively; learning is generally an enjoyable experience for pupils.
- The level of encouragement for pupils to do well and improve is very good.
- Teachers enable pupils to develop good skills in both independent and collaborative learning.
- The pace of lessons is generally very brisk and pupils’ learning moves on quickly.
- Teachers adapt their teaching styles to effectively meet the learning of all pupils.
- The quality of marking pupils’ work is inconsistent.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and in all subjects in which sufficient observations were made to make a reliable judgement. Although teaching was judged to be good at the time of the previous inspection, the quality has improved, as there is now a greater proportion of good and very good teaching. It is effective in enabling all pupils at all levels of attainment to achieve well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are given appropriate targets for improvement, which are used by both teachers and teaching assistants to provide a suitable range of activities and tasks. This particularly applies to the small groups set up for the teaching of English and mathematics. Pupils are keen to participate, they are given much well-directed support by adults, and this helps them to achieve well in relation to the targets set for them.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 60 lessons

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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5 (8%)	18 (30%)	29 (48%)	8 (13%)	0	0	0
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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.

13. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are very high, and consistently so in Years 4 to 6, although not in all lessons for pupils in Year 7. Tasks set are challenging and keep pupils fully engaged and on task. In ICT lessons, for example, tasks such as using spreadsheets to cost a party or exploring Olney census data from the past use fully pupils' knowledge and understanding from previous learning and move their learning forward at a quick pace. This type of activity gives meaning to learning, as pupils are able to see the use of what they know and use it effectively in research. This type of learning is typical of this school and pupils are encouraged to think and use their knowledge and understanding in a wide range of subjects. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' ability to be able to work both independently and in collaboration with other pupils. This enables pupils to work well within their own capability and consequently time in lessons is used very effectively and pupils produce a lot of work. Occasionally, this aspect of pupils' learning is too controlled for Year 7 pupils and this slows down their progress in these lessons.
14. Teachers expect high standards of behaviour. These are made clear to pupils, who respond well and their behaviour is very good. Very good attitudes towards learning are established in lessons. This enables teachers to add humour and a high level of challenge in lessons, such as changing the cost of items on the party list to keep pupils thinking about the total cost limitations, in a way that they enjoy. This has the effect of enriching learning and making it enjoyable and fun.
15. Teachers encourage pupils to do well and give them confidence to work both independently and collaboratively. In physical education, pupils were learning complicated Salsa steps. The teacher, who had good skills herself, was able to lead very effectively through demonstration. Together with positive comments of encouragement and using pupils themselves to demonstrate, she gave pupils confidence to move forward. Pupils are grouped into teaching sets according to their attainment in mathematics and English. Teachers are good at using different teaching styles, which match the groups' learning needs. Setting also enables teachers to focus closely on the similar learning needs of pupils in their sets. They do not take the capability of their pupils for granted and plan different tasks for pupils according to the range of ability within sets.
16. The school has recently developed an effective system to assess and monitor pupils' progress in mathematics and English. As a result of this, the progress of different groups of pupils can be tracked and set targets for individual improvement. Through this system, pupils are beginning to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their work and what they need to do to improve. Staff keep informative records of pupils' progress through the use of individual assessment books where pupils' assessment tasks and test results are recorded. Assessment for ICT and foundation subjects is still in the developmental stage, where tasks have been devised to monitor progress but have not been fully implemented yet. A focused marking system is in use in English, where pupils are clear about the purpose of marking and how they might improve their work. However, although work in other subjects is corrected, not all marking usefully informs pupils how they might improve.

Consequently, marking does not sufficiently inform pupils of where they might improve, including writing across the curriculum and in the general presentation of their work.

The curriculum

The provision for pupils in Years 4 to 6 is **very good**, as it is in Year 7. Extra-curricular provision is **excellent**. The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes every effort to develop pupils' skills in areas such as thinking, researching and using and applying their knowledge.
- The school is exceptionally inclusive, and all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and succeed.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is a good number of teachers and teaching assistants, and they complement each other well in supporting the pupils.
- The school is very well resourced, and resources are used very well for the benefit of all pupils.

Commentary

17. Curriculum provision is very good and this represents an improvement on the good provision reported at the time of the previous inspection. The curriculum in all subjects is carefully planned, and all statutory requirements are met, including the requirements to provide a modern foreign language and citizenship in Year 7. The school currently makes good overall provision for the development of English and mathematics, and very good provision in science and ICT, both as subjects in themselves and, in the case of mathematics and ICT, in their use in other subjects. This has contributed to the good achievement being made by pupils. Planning for practical and enquiry activities in science is a particularly strong feature, and this has added significantly to the pupils' overall understanding in the subject. The school also makes particular allowance for the development of a range of creative and performing skills, in subjects such as art and design, music and dance, and this again has encouraged the development of high standards. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of interesting and varied information. In addition, it provides pupils with the opportunity to develop important cross-curricular skills, such as the ability to think for themselves, to question what they have heard and to find information independently. This in turn allows pupils to learn independently. The school makes excellent provision for the equality of opportunity for all pupils, and in so doing allows them to achieve as well as they can.
18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Clear procedures are in place, and staff closely follow the Code of Practice on identifying and assessing pupils' needs. Statutory requirements with regard to this provision have been carefully and effectively implemented by the school. Individual education plans are provided for pupils, and these are of good quality. They provide pupils with challenging targets for improvement. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils

is closely matched to their needs, and particularly good use is made of the setting arrangements in English and mathematics for this purpose. This allows pupils to be taught in small groups, where they receive most appropriate support and advice. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together, and they complement each other well in their support of these pupils. Pupils are fully involved in the full range of school activities, and they are most happy and confident to participate.

19. The school provides an excellent range and variety of extra-curricular activities for its pupils. All pupils are encouraged to take part and a very high proportion does. Activities include football, netball, rugby, choir, percussion, computers and the popular wildlife club. These activities are very well supported by all teachers, teaching assistants and members of local clubs, with most pupils being involved. Pupils enjoy many educational visits (including residential) and visitors, which add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning experiences. These activities make a most significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as enhancing their understanding and skills in different curriculum subjects.
20. The school's accommodation, although it is housed in three separate buildings, is very good. A number of significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection, such as to the entrance hall and the offices, and these have greatly enhanced the appearance of the school and its site. Classrooms are more than adequate in size, with some additional rooms also available for practical activities and small-group work. The ICT suite, hall, music studio and art and design rooms are first class facilities, with excellent resources. Outside play and learning areas and facilities include activity and quiet areas to suit the needs of different pupils. Resources and accommodation contribute very well to the quality of teaching and learning and to pupils' achievement. The school is well staffed, by a dedicated and well-informed group of teachers and support staff. They complement each other well in providing for their pupils. The teaching assistant working with pupils in ICT makes a particularly significant contribution to their progress, with her technical expertise and extensive knowledge of the subject.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care and for their guidance and support is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision ensures pupils' welfare, health and safety at all times.
- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent.
- Very good relationships between pupils and adults mean that pupils are always well supported.
- This is a very caring school that encourages pupils to look out for one another.
- Pupils feel valued and know their views matter.
- Although procedures to assess what pupils know and can do are very good in the core subjects¹, this information is not always used effectively to help them progress further in the foundation subjects².

¹ Core subjects include English, mathematics and science

² Foundation subjects are the other subjects of the National Curriculum

Commentary

21. The way that all pupils are cared for in this very happy school is a significant strength. The good findings of the last inspection report have been improved still further. The very good efforts the school makes to guide and support pupils ensure that they enjoy school and learn effectively.
22. There are very good child protection procedures that are reviewed regularly and understood by all teaching and support staff. Health and safety procedures throughout the school are excellent and the site systems manager ensures that risk assessments and safety procedures are scrutinised with meticulous care.
23. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful and help pupils feel at ease in the school. Staff make every possible effort to get to know their pupils well so that each child receives the help it needs. Teachers and support staff are very good role models: they are unfailingly kind and work together well to nurture their pupils and to protect them from harm. Pupils learn from their good example by supporting each other in class and looking out for one another in the playground. As a result, there are very high levels of trust between pupils and all the adults who work in the school. Teachers clearly value pupils' opinions and a school council has been set up recently to seek pupils' views about the way the school is run. In lessons, pupils are always encouraged to express their thoughts and they do this very well because they know their opinions will be taken seriously.
24. There are systematic and well-managed assessment procedures which enable teachers to track their pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and in their personal development very closely. Pupils have individual targets to help them to improve their work and raise their awareness of how well they are doing. However, in other subjects, assessment procedures are not yet fully implemented. Good use is made of outside agencies to support pupils' learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils with special educational needs well and have a real concern for their welfare.
25. The school takes great care to acknowledge pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. Pupils told inspectors how much they liked their system of star rewards and how these encourage pupils to work well and do their best.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** relationship with parents and the community. Relationships with the feeder first school are also **very good**, and they are **good** with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works very effectively with parents to support pupils' learning.
- Good links with other schools and very good links with the community impact very well on the life of the school.

Commentary

26. The school works very effectively with parents to support pupils' learning. The good picture found in the last inspection report has been further improved. Parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the quality of education it provides. The information provided by the school, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good. In addition to a comprehensive annual report in the summer term, parents also receive reports of their children's progress in numeracy and literacy each term. All teachers have their own published e-mail address and many parents use this to contact the school with questions, comments and reasons for absence. In addition to a very good website, containing current curriculum reference materials, there are weekly newsletters and termly curriculum information and consultation evenings which are very well attended. Coffee mornings give an informal opportunity to meet the staff and a very popular Fathers' Day is held each year. Some parents make a regular commitment to help in classes, on outside trips and with extra-curricular clubs. Parents know that the school values the contribution they make. There is a very active Parents' Association, which organises a programme of social and fund-raising events to support the school's work and which cements very good relationships between home and school.
27. The school closely involves parents of pupils with special educational needs. The school involves parents and their children in their annual review of individual education plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator attends parents' meetings and is always available for consultation.
28. Although the school has not formally consulted parents by a questionnaire, parents have many opportunities to express their opinions, for example in the homework diaries, on the tear-off slip in the annual reports, and at the many consultation evenings held throughout the year. The school has been quick to respond to many suggestions from parents, such as their request for termly progress reports.
29. Links with the community are very good. The school prides itself on its knowledge of the locality and capitalises very well on local expertise and resources to improve pupils' learning. These have a direct impact on the progress pupils make through links with football, netball and tennis clubs, with local community arts groups, with a market research company, with senior citizens and with the local church. The school is very involved in community events, from the town's famous Pancake Race to the Dickens of a Christmas event held in the centre of town. Teachers make very good use of the local community for outside visits to enrich the curriculum. Strong links have also been established with other schools, particularly the feeder first school to establish continuous procedures for the assessment of pupils' work and make pupils' transfer smooth. The school works closely with the secondary school to ensure supportive transition and induction arrangements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Leadership of other key staff is **good**. Management systems are **very effective**. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and guidance for the staff.
- The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher very effectively.
- The school has an exceptionally high level of commitment to the full inclusion of all pupils in all activities.
- Staff are very well trained to take on positions of responsibility and to create effective teams.
- Governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are successfully involved in shaping its educational direction.
- Some members of the leadership teams are very new to their role and have not yet had time to impact upon standards.

Commentary

30. The headteacher has a strong vision for the future of the school which is fully shared by staff and governors. She sets a clear agenda for school improvement in terms of delivery of the curriculum and in her expectations of pupils' learning. She has developed a very efficient and clear structure for leadership and management. Although only very recently appointed, the deputy headteacher has already had a major impact on the school. She provides very effective support for the headteacher in leadership and management issues. As a leading mathematics teacher she not only provides a very good teaching role model but also gives a valuable viewpoint from the perspective of the classroom. She has responsibility for the development of the new curriculum leaders and is very effective in this role. Last year, subject leaders worked in teams, developing the necessary leadership and management skills to effectively lead and improve provision in their subjects. This proved to be very beneficial and now new subject leaders have made a very promising start in leading and managing their subjects.
31. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher form the core of two senior management teams. Senior Management Team 1 includes all year group leaders. All staff with responsibility for focus areas of the current school improvement plan are included in Senior Management Team 2. Monitoring the progress of the school improvement initiatives provides valuable development of the management skills of this young staff whilst giving them the necessary support of more experienced managers.
32. The headteacher has been most perceptive in recognising the leadership capabilities in her staff. She has nurtured them very effectively and provided them with very good curricular opportunities to develop and extend their experience. She has given them exciting, interesting responsibilities as curriculum leaders in areas of their own preference. Last year, these new curriculum leaders supported each other in teams but now, under the guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they are taking ownership of responsibility for their own areas. The ICT subject leader in particular is now really leading his subject, as are the leaders for music, art and design and assessment. The headteacher builds effective teams by putting together people who work well together and offset each other. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and middle managers together form an increasingly effective team for the improvement of standards.

33. The leadership and management, by the special educational needs co-ordinator, of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, is good. The Code of Practice has been carefully and successfully introduced. Pupils are identified quickly, through a variety of procedures, and placed on the special needs register, which the school has chosen to retain. Pupils are provided with individual education plans, which set suitable yet challenging targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed regularly, with new targets being set when appropriate. The co-ordinator, who has only recently taken over the role, also keeps extensive and detailed records, and the progress made by the pupils is carefully checked. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs carries out her work efficiently and helpfully.
34. The school's improvement plan gives clear guidance for school development and is effectively linked to the school's self-evaluation and staff performance management. Through clear equal opportunities and racial equality policies the school sets high value on giving all pupils equality of treatment and opportunity.
35. The management of the school is confident, well informed and innovative. Information technology plays a large part in the efficiency of the school. All teachers have a laptop and the site manager provides effective assistance when needed. Laptops provide immediate communication between teachers, parents and pupils and increase the speed and efficiency with which staff work and plan together. The school has developed good management systems. It reviews its performance and sets clear statements of targets for pupils' achievement. A detailed tracking system for pupils' progress in mathematics and English has been in place for two years but has been increasingly used in the current academic year to indicate accurately where pupils achieve the best progress over the year. This provides a very valuable monitoring document and is useful in indicating where the most effective teaching and learning are taking place.
36. The governing body influences the work of the school through its questioning yet supportive approach. The good governance of the last inspection has been maintained. All statutory requirements are now met. The governors work well as a group and are effectively organised within committees. They are active in the development and work of the school and take their responsibility very seriously. They make significant decisions, such as supporting the drive to increase the level of ICT within the school. Although the chair of governors is new, she knows the school well and receives good support from the previous chair. Governors are fully involved in monitoring and keep in close touch with the school. There is a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision. The governing body improves its own performance through training and an increasing involvement with the school at all levels.
37. Very good financial management helps the school to achieve its priorities. The carry forward for the year 2003-2004 reflects a small surplus from the final funding settlement in addition to a substantial sum earmarked for specific building projects. The school resources are managed very well, including both public and private funds, to ensure that staffing, learning resources and premises are used very effectively to improve educational provision.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

<i>Income and expenditure (£)</i>	
Total income	909,925
Total expenditure	963,530
Expenditure per pupil	2,867

<i>Balances (£)</i>	
Balance from previous year	228,265
Balance carried forward to the next	174,660

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

ENGLISH & MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of good teaching, pupils achieve well, particularly in improving the quality of their writing.
- Subject leadership and management are good and the co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done.
- Assessment procedures are good and pupils' achievement is tracked carefully.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing, which the school is addressing as a priority.

Commentary

38. When pupils enter the school in Year 4, standards in reading and in speaking and listening are good, but in writing there are weaknesses. The school has clear assessment evidence to show that attainment in writing is barely in line with that nationally expected for pupils of this age. A scrutiny of pupils' written work in Year 4 confirms this. Even in the work of higher attaining pupils, punctuation has flaws, such as the misuse of capital letters and simple punctuation marks. There is some confusion in the use of words such as 'there' and 'their'. Pupils occasionally write as they would speak, using phrases such as 'could of' instead of 'could have'. Past and present tenses are occasionally mixed. Spelling is often a weakness and some words are unintelligible. The school has information relating to the test results for Year 6 in 2004, which affected the performance of a significant number of pupils. In addition, some higher attaining pupils leave each year to take an alternative route through their secondary education other than the one offered by this school. For these reasons, results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 were not as good in 2004, and are average, a decline from recent years. Assessment data, in the form of targets for the current Years 5 and 6, show a recovery in standards. Although there are weaknesses in writing, the school has recognised the need to focus on the development and improvement of pupils' writing skills. They have been effective in this and there are definite signs of improvement, following lower standards than usual in test results for last year. Inspection evidence confirms this, with standards in the current Year 6 being above average overall and average for pupils in Year 7. This indicates good achievement at all levels, including that for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' achievement is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection.
39. Good achievement is a result of good teaching and learning. Planning is very good and teachers ensure that pupils get very good opportunities to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Furthermore, in the vast majority of lessons,

activities include opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate learning, thereby making activities meaningful and raising pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are grouped for English lessons by their prior levels of attainment and this helps teachers focus closely on their capabilities and plan challenging tasks, so pupils are confident in their learning. Additionally, lesson planning clearly shows that teachers take individual learning targets into full account, and even within the teaching sets, activities are planned for the different learning needs. This means that all pupils are fully stretched and achieve well.

40. Many oral activities are included in lessons and pupils are encouraged to play an active part throughout. In lessons, pupils of all ages show a good range of vocabulary, which they use effectively to convey their thoughts clearly and confidently. Similarly, their reading skills are good and pupils read fluently and with expression and understanding. Standards in both of these areas of literacy are above average throughout the school.
41. Leadership and management are good and the subject leader has worked closely with the headteacher and the assessment co-ordinator to identify areas for improvement. In response, she has developed a very relevant action plan, consisting of a range of initiatives to maintain and further improve what the school already does well and to improve where the outcomes are less successful. This includes focusing on writing, boys' interest in reading and changing the school's approach to improve spelling. Assessment procedures are very good, and standards and achievement of all pupils are carefully monitored to ensure pupils stay on track and make the best progress they can. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection, but bearing in mind pupils' achievement and levels of attainment, the improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. The use of literacy skills is a priority focus in the school's attempts to raise attainment in writing. Pupils make good use of key skills to record notes for other subjects, and are now developing their writing skills well within extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English. Standards are satisfactory overall with signs of improvement in Years 4 to 6. The co-ordinator recognises this is an area for further improvement. She is working to ensure that pupils have a range of writing experiences in all subjects, including the use of ICT, to improve the quality of their work. However, there are some weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects, particularly in the use of punctuation and in spelling. Although pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects, they do not always apply them accurately.

French

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good command of the French language and accent.
- The pace of some lessons slows and pupils are not involved as fully as they might be.

- The school provides a limited range of good quality experiences in Years 4 to 6 in other languages.

Commentary

43. Evidence gathered from lesson observations and from pupils' written work shows that standards in Year 7 are at the nationally expected level for pupils at this age and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 7 are taught French, within the National Curriculum requirements for Year 7.
44. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although some good teaching was seen during the inspection. Strengths within teaching include the good command of the language and accent and the provision of good modelling for pupils to imitate. Teachers use a good range of resources, including games, to make learning interesting and, as a result, pupils understand and use a range of simple phrases accurately and adapt them to meet the needs of communicating with their teacher. Pupils listen and respond adequately with correct phrases and answers, using generally accurate recall of memorised words and phrases and passages of short dialogue. They also learn aspects of grammar, including the emphasis on gender within French, and use this generally accurately in their responses. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows due to the time spent in changing activity. There is insufficient planned opportunity for pupils to practise conversation with each other and this limits the chances to consolidate learning.
45. The subject leader provides a satisfactory level of leadership and management. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and information is passed on to the relevant secondary school at the end of Year 7. There are satisfactory links with other subjects. Pupils learn about the French culture, considering and comparing similarities and differences with their own. On parents evenings, pupils provide refreshments in the style of a French café. Good links with literacy and numeracy provide opportunities for pupils to cost a family holiday in France.
46. Although not a statutory requirement in Years 4 to 6, the school plans 'taster weeks' in different foreign languages in the summer term. These weeks are planned to reinforce the school's policy to give pupils experience of language diversity within modern day life. Provision involves school staff and help from a local language tutor in teaching French to Year 4, German to Year 5 and Spanish to Year 6. Pupils have good attitudes to these experiences and enjoy them. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because all pupils achieve well, standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and above the expected level at Year 7.
- The role played by the subject co-ordinator is very good, and she has contributed very significantly to the current improvements.

- Teachers make very good use of assessment to provide pupils with suitably challenging work.
- The attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils are usually very good.
- Marking of pupils' work does not always indicate how pupils can improve.

Commentary

47. Pupils throughout the school are confident in tackling all aspects of mathematics and the oldest pupils show above the expected levels of understanding and skills. At Year 6, pupils confidently undertake work in all four aspects of number, including those involving decimals and fractions. Their knowledge and understanding of other aspects of mathematics, including shape, measures, statistics and probability, is good and matches that in numeracy. The good achievement made in Years 4 to 6 is continued through into Year 7. Pupils throughout the school tackle challenging practical and problem-solving activities with confidence and secure knowledge. Older pupils are competent at working out strategies to solve problems that involve more than one step to find the answer.
48. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some excellent teaching observed. Lessons are well planned, resourced and implemented, although some teachers do not always fully involve pupils in discussing aspects of their work during the early part of the lesson. This sometimes leads to an initial lack of understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge, they explain clearly different methods and processes, and they make very good use of assessment to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs. The use of setting, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, enables teachers to closely target work to pupils' capability. This supports the quality of pupils' learning well as pupils feel confident to tackle new work and develop previous learning. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make good gains in their overall mathematical knowledge and understanding. Teachers are enthusiastic, and they provide pupils with a worthwhile range of learning activities, including regular use of computers, which makes learning enjoyable. Consequently, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and this helps create an effective learning environment in lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. When given the opportunity, they are ready and very willing to answer questions and offer opinions. They settle to their written and practical tasks with great interest and enthusiasm. They work well with other pupils, when required, and they make good, and usually successful, attempts to find answers and provide solutions. Where the teaching is excellent, expert and inspirational delivery of most challenging activities ensures that pupils make outstanding progress.
49. The subject co-ordinator has only recently joined the school, but she has already made a very significant contribution to improving the overall provision for the subject. A good level of improvement has been made since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were reported to be broadly average. Her leadership and management are very good. She is an excellent practitioner, and she has supported her colleagues with both advice and demonstration. She regularly monitors the work being produced by pupils, and she has observed lessons to see for herself the standards being achieved in class. She is fully aware of the many strengths of the subject, and in her action plan she has identified the marking of pupils' work as an

area for improvement. Most pupils take care with the presentation in their books, although some are less careful. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some provide helpful and encouraging advice for them, to help them improve their work further. However, this policy is not carried out consistently in every class and some marking does not sufficiently inform pupils of the most important areas for improvement. The initiatives put in place are already being effective.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Standards in numeracy across the curriculum are good. Teachers make good arrangements for pupils to use and further develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design and technology. There are very good links between numeracy and ICT, especially in relation to data handling, and this is very effective in enabling pupils to use, apply and consolidate their good numeracy skills, knowledge and understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective in raising pupils' confidence in learning and consequently pupils at all levels of attainment achieve very well.
- Very good emphasis is placed on the pupils learning through investigation.
- The very good leadership and management have established very good targets for development.
- Assessment information is used very well to guide whole-school development.
- Very good use is made of resources to support and enrich pupils' learning.

Commentary

51. The most recent national test results of 2004 indicate that pupils' attainment in science is well above the national average. Evidence gathered during the inspection confirms that standards in the current Year 7, those pupils who took the 2004 tests, are well above national expectations, and in standards in Year 6 are currently above expected levels. Pupils of all ages and capabilities achieve very well and gain increasingly good levels of knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
52. Pupils' learning is very good and a very strong feature is their ability to use their knowledge very well to plan and carry out investigations. Lessons begin with a mental starter which is focused on a review of previous activities or extending thoughts to tackle new challenges. As a result of these strategies, pupils are confident about making predictions, planning their work, recording their findings in different ways, and making careful observations. By the time pupils reach Year 7, all are keen to set up their own investigations and make informed hypotheses based on their existing knowledge. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a very good range of scientific knowledge which is enhanced by the many very good quality learning experiences that are provided. This high quality of learning was observed when Year 7 pupils

investigated their weekly diet records and classified different food groups and nutritional input.

53. Teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers place very good emphasis on the pupils solving relevant and meaningful problems and finding information for themselves. Very good use is made of questioning in discussion sessions to extend the thinking of all pupils and to check their levels of understanding. Resources are used very well to illustrate important teaching points, and to help the pupils to understand new ideas. These resources include the use of ICT and enable teachers to safely demonstrate to pupils tests such as the effects of steam from a boiling kettle, which in reality would be dangerous. Pupils' work is very helpfully marked by teachers, acknowledging successes, challenging ideas and also showing pupils how they can improve. Pupils of all ages and capabilities have very positive attitudes to science. Most pupils show high levels of imagination in their work as they set about finding solutions to problems through the processes of investigation and exploration. They try different approaches and thoughtfully change variable and constant factors in tests to ensure the evidence is accurate. All pupils work hard in lessons, achieve very well and conscientiously complete homework tasks.
54. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership of the subject which ensures that there are clear and relevant whole-school targets for development. Very good monitoring of teaching and learning has led to very good improvements since the previous inspection. Assessment information is used very well to support teachers' planning for what pupils should learn next, and to highlight areas of relative strength and weakness in the school's overall provision. The school grounds are used very well as a learning resource. Cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are effectively promoted and successfully support pupils' learning in science, through research and the presentation of graphs and charts to present evidence.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are well above expectations by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7.
- The very good use of ICT in other subjects supports pupils' achievement well.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject set a very clear agenda for further development in addition to the already excellent level of improvement since the previous inspection.
- Assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is currently underdeveloped.
- The very good resources for the subject are used very well by both teachers and support staff.

Commentary

55. Pupils' achievement is very good throughout the school, and standards by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7 are well above those expected nationally. This is as a result of very good and often excellent teaching, which challenges pupils to produce work of a

high quality. Very good leadership and management have ensured excellent quality resources, which support teaching exceptionally well. Provision, pupils' attainment and achievement, and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved significantly. This has transformed provision and outcomes and therefore represents an excellent level of improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were in line with nationally expected standards, pupils' progress was satisfactory and the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.

56. The quality of teaching and learning varies from excellent to satisfactory, and is very good overall, with the majority of lessons being of an excellent or very good quality. In the majority of lessons, expectations are very high, and the work is challenging and interesting. This is because the teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching ICT and their full use of the potential offered by resources in the computer suite is of an exceptional quality. For example, the suite is designed so that the teacher in charge of a class is able to superimpose a teacher's screen on all monitors, enabling them to gain pupils' full and immediate attention. This is extremely effective in maintaining good discipline and in ensuring that lessons progress at a quick pace. It is also very useful for demonstration purposes, so pupils are able to follow the teachers' guidance on their own screens, whilst listening to the commentary. The set up throughout the school enables pupils to continue work started in the suite in classrooms at other times of the week, especially using their developing research and practice skills. This ensures the pupils' skills are effectively consolidated.
57. Tasks are very challenging and pupils respond with enthusiasm and take their work seriously. When Year 5 pupils were using spreadsheets to plan and calculate the cost of holding a party, for example, the teacher planned price changes at different stages of the lesson to reflect 'market trends'. This meant that the pupils had to remain alert, concentrate fully and constantly re-assess their calculations so that they remained within the set cost limits. This task, together with pupils' response to the challenge, reflected excellent learning and achievement and standards that are expected from much older pupils. These standards are generally reflected in other ICT lessons with other classes, where pupils show very good skills in filtering out and accessing data from 'Census' databases to find out about people who lived in Olney in the past. A strong feature of teaching and learning is that pupils are enabled to work at a rapid pace, with excellent levels of support from both their teachers and the site systems manager, who has an expert knowledge and understanding of ICT and is fully involved in both planning and supporting pupils. Occasionally, whilst the quality of teaching is still satisfactory, pupils are over-directed, which slows their progress, and the potential of the resources is not effectively used to gain pupils' attention.
58. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully involved in all lessons and make equally very good progress. Tasks are well targeted and these pupils are given good levels of support from teaching and support staff who have had appropriate training in using the range of ICT equipment. They are watchful in lessons to ensure that all pupils are learning effectively, that they understand clearly what they are doing and receive the necessary assistance. Higher attaining pupils are provided with challenging extension activities to ensure they make the best possible progress.

59. The very good leadership given by the subject leader has been particularly effective in raising the confidence of teachers and pupils alike. As a very well skilled and knowledgeable teacher, the subject leader has managed events very well in the short time since he took over the responsibility. He works very closely with the site systems supervisor, who offers high quality support in this area of leadership and management. Together they ensure that all teachers have training in using computers and new software as it is made available. They have made sure that equipment is up to date and set up extremely well to make teaching very effective. Although systems for the assessment of pupils' work and achievement are not yet implemented, arrangements are in hand and the subject leader plans implementation at a very early date.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. ICT supports learning across the curriculum very effectively. Pupils use their skills very well to support learning in other subjects and there are very good links established between ICT and other subjects. In the samples of work seen, pupils used the Internet effectively to gain information to support their work in history and geography. They use word-processing skills to present their writing and topic work in attractive ways, including the use of art programmes and pictures downloaded from the Internet. Spreadsheets are used very effectively to support the reinforcement of pupils' numeracy and develop their problem-solving skills. Standards in ICT in other subjects are very good.

HUMANITIES

61. Geography and history were not a focus of this inspection.
62. From the two **history** lessons observed and the work in pupils' books, standards seen are satisfactory. Two history lessons were seen in Year 7 and one in Year 6. Although planning was the same for the Year 7 lessons, the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of pupils varied. In one lesson, pupils' achievement was satisfactory but long periods of listening to the teacher dampened the pupils' enthusiasm. In the second lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good. Expectations were high and very good relationships, combined with good opportunities for pupils to organise themselves and become independent learners, meant that pupils achieved well. Samples of pupils' work show standards by the end of Year 6 to be in line with national expectations. In the one lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher's enthusiastic style and good pace ensured that all pupils were interested and achieved well. Very good relationships contributed positively to the learning atmosphere as pupils used their skills of historical enquiry effectively to research arguments for and against the railways in Victorian times. Although good links with literacy are planned in lessons, scrutiny of books shows that pupils' literacy skills are not sufficiently applied in writing in history.
63. The quality of teaching and learning in **geography** in the lessons seen in Year 4 and in Year 5 was good. Teaching was planned effectively to match pupils' learning styles. This enabled pupils to achieve well as they used reference materials to identify types of work in St Lucia. In Year 4, pupils explored conditions experienced by people living in the 'Flower Garden' of Bangalore. Pupils in all groups made good progress and achieved well because the work was effectively planned to meet the learning needs of the pupils. The curriculum is effectively enhanced by well-planned events such as 'St Lucia Day' and by good use of the local environment. As in history, good links with literacy are planned in lessons but scrutiny of

books shows areas for improvement in writing. Scrutiny of planning and conversations with pupils and teachers indicate that standards match national expectations at the end of Year 6.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching promotes an active learning style.
- Good cross-curricular links encourage pupils to make good connections in learning.
- Well-planned activities consolidate first-hand experience effectively.

Commentary

64. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end Year 6. Standards are above expectations in Year 7. Achievement is good at all stages due to the good quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum is effectively planned in line with the locally agreed syllabus and planning for the subject is becoming more meaningful because topics are planned so that they link in with and enhance learning in other subjects. For example, Hinduism is studied alongside the geographical topic of India and is, therefore, set in context and is more meaningful. Effective links are made with literacy within lessons through good opportunities for discussion.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Well-planned, interesting activities meet the learning needs of all pupils and, as a result, all pupils achieve well. Where the quality of teaching and learning is very good, pupils are totally engrossed in their learning and creative approaches capture the pupils' imagination, bringing excitement to their learning. Learning is relevant to pupils' own experiences and, as a result, achievement is high. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of a good range of faiths and the impact on the lives of followers. They use subject specific vocabulary well and have a positive attitude to the subject.
66. Teachers assess pupils at the end of each unit of work; assessment, however, is satisfactory because it does not yet sufficiently address learning, charting coverage of the topics more. Visits to different churches provide pupils with good first-hand experience and the opportunity to compare and contrast different places of worship within Christianity. Visits from representatives of the Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist religions enhance the curriculum and pupils' understanding. ICT is used as an effective tool for learning through research. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the post and does not teach the subject. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in order to further raise standards. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. No **design and technology** lessons were observed during the inspection. Photographic evidence, displays and work scrutiny show work to be in line with expected standards. Year 4 pupils make pop-up books, researching commercially produced examples before designing their own. Year 5 pupils make bread and then a suitable package for it. Year 6 pupils research shelters suitable for parents to shelter in while waiting for their children at the end of the day, identifying suitable materials for the construction. Year 7 pupils link their project on siege machines with history. Planning shows evidence of a detailed food technology unit of work.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are above those expected by both Years 6 and 7.
- The standard of pupils' observational drawing is a particular strength.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good, with teachers providing clear advice and demonstration for pupils.
- Pupils show very good attitudes towards the subject, and they take pride in their work.

Commentary

68. Pupils show skills that are consistently above those expected in all aspects of their work and standards have improved since the previous inspection. They produce good quality work in three dimensions, working from their imagination, such as the 'dream' pictures produced in Year 4. They carefully produce work in the style of a variety of famous artists, such as Jean Miro, Holbein, Picasso and L S Lowry. They show particularly good skills in their observational drawing. Pupils take great care to study the subjects of their work very closely, before producing minute detail in their own work. They show great care in their use of different types of pencils and considerable skill in producing realistic and well-proportioned images. Pupils in Year 5, for example, have produced closely detailed drawings of plants and famous people. Year 6 pupils have drawn very accurate pictures of street scenes and buildings. The oldest pupils have produced work of good quality in their pictures of such things as castles and medieval weapons, relating to their work in history.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some excellent practice also observed during the inspection. Teachers' planning is good, their subject knowledge is secure, they are confident in the subject and their expectations of the pupils are high. Teachers provide a wide variety of activities and experiences for pupils, organise sessions well and provide them with much support and advice. A wide range of resources is available, together with a dedicated art room. Teachers give clear and helpful demonstrations of all the techniques to be used. This helps to ensure that all pupils, including those with special needs, achieve well. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher is particularly knowledgeable, instruction and demonstration are particularly enthusiastic, and the pupils show rapt attention. Pupils' attitude to the work is very good, and this contributes significantly to the good progress that they

make. Teachers all take pleasure in producing displays of pupils' work that greatly enhance the learning environment.

70. The co-ordinator has only recently taken charge of the subject, and leadership and management are satisfactory. However, she already supports her colleagues well with advice. She has not yet had the opportunity to work alongside other teachers to see for herself the standards being achieved, but she has studied samples of work and has drawn up a good action plan to outline ways to improve the subject further in order to maintain the school's high standards.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of teaching and learning is good, with teachers making good use of the excellent resources and accommodation available.
- Pupils enjoy their music making, and their attitudes are very good.
- The subject co-ordinator supports teachers effectively and there are clear plans for further development.
- Very good use is made of extra-curricular activities to enhance the overall provision for music.

Commentary

71. Standards at both Year 6 and Year 7 are higher than national expectations and pupils achieve well. Standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils show good skills in all aspects of music. They listen very carefully to a wide range of music, and they readily use correct musical terminology to describe what they hear. They play various tuned and untuned instruments with good skill, and they confidently work with others to develop compositions, which they practise and then play for other pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 produce good quality melodies, to suit words they are given, and pupils in Year 7 produce longer compositions, together with appropriate notation to follow when practising and improving their work. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 show good control over rhythm and pitch. When they sing, pupils in Year 7 sing their words clearly and tunefully. On occasions, they confidently sing in two parts, showing a clear awareness of how the parts fit together, and successfully finishing together. Pupils readily attempt to identify how all aspects of their work could be improved.
72. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned and brisk in pace, with an outstanding range of resources and accommodation being provided for pupils to use. Pupils are kept very busy, and this clearly benefits their achievement through quickly paced learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, enabling them to give clear instructions and demonstrations. This effective involvement of teachers enables pupils, including those with special needs, to make good gains in their musical knowledge, understanding and skills. As well as joining in themselves, teachers also make effective use of pupils to demonstrate different aspects of work to other

members of the class, as well as to act as conductors. This encourages all pupils to maintain their interest. Pupils join in the activities with enthusiasm and commitment, showing appropriate creative effort when required. Their attitudes are very good. They enjoy their music, singing well, playing instruments confidently and working happily with other pupils. They are keen to listen to music, and most are able to offer opinions about what they hear. Pupils are particularly appreciative of the work of other pupils, and they readily applaud their performances.

73. The subject co-ordinator is a very enthusiastic and skilful musician, and her leadership and management are good. She has not long had charge of the subject, but she supports both colleagues and pupils well by her example, and she has contributed very significantly to the enjoyment that is clearly apparent. She sometimes takes lessons in other classes, and helps to maintain good standards in singing through supporting her colleagues in singing lessons. She has recently produced a new assessment procedure, and her action plan identifies other possible areas for further development. Suitable use is also made of ICT, especially when pupils are encouraged to use a computer program to help them with their compositions.
74. The school makes very good provision for a wide range of extra-curricular musical activities, including choir and recorders, and many pupils benefit from expert peripatetic tuition provided in a range of stringed and wind instruments. These activities significantly enhance the overall provision for music, and are much appreciated by the pupils. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in teaching are good and motivate pupils well.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour support learning well.
- A very good range of clubs and sports opportunities enriches pupils' experiences.
- An effective system of assessment is not yet in place.

Commentary

75. During the inspection, gymnastics, dance and games lessons were observed. Provision for physical education is good and this reflects the above average standards and good achievement throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and work. When teaching is very good, it produces very good performances, such as in dance when pupils learn complicated dance steps very quickly. Lessons have a good pace, with a variety of activities to keep pupils motivated and interested. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate each other's performance in a constructive way, enabling them to make improvements.

76. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader is effective in organising good opportunities to enable pupils to use and further develop their skills through very good extra-curricular activities and competitions. The curriculum covers all aspects of the National Curriculum and is well organised. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. This term pupils can take part in football, running and badminton. There are inter-house sporting competitions and competitions between local schools. These support pupils' drive to perform well. Assessment systems to track pupils' progress are not yet fully in place, but there are plans to develop these soon.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. There was not enough evidence to report on provision in this area.
78. Two lessons were observed. In one Year 7 lesson, pupils following the Key Stage 3 citizenship curriculum were involved in a role-play situation illustrating human rights. Year 4 pupils discussed the school's SMART code of conduct as part of the community awareness strand of work. The levels of understanding in both lessons were satisfactory for pupils of this age. The newly formed school council provides pupils with a good opportunity to share thoughts and ideas with other pupils and staff. Year 4 pupils manage class council business with confidence. They respect and value each other's comments.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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