

INSPECTION REPORT

Walkwood CE Middle School
Redditch

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique Reference Number: 116987

Inspection Number: 184104

Headteacher: Mr P Garner

Reporting inspector: Mr D Oakley

Dates of inspection: 1 – 4 November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708142

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
Type of control:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Feckenham Road Headless Cross Redditch Worcs B97 5AQ
Telephone number:	01527 543361
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: [- where appropriate -]	Mrs S Rennie
Date of previous inspection:	30 January – 4 February 1995

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Denis Birdsall	Mathematics	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Jim Billington	English	Leadership and management The efficiency of the school The curriculum and assessment
Stan Hurst	Science	
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Tim Brotherhood	Design and technology	
	Information technology	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The ethos of the school promotes very good attitudes to work and very good relationships.
- The commitment of staff is very high.
- Teaching is good. In most lessons it is at least good; it is often very good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils' progress in ~~Y~~years 7 and 8 is good.
- The level of attainment by age 13 is high. Pupils who have left the school attain well above average results in English, mathematics and science in the national curriculum tests in the high schools at age 14.
- The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance provided by the school is very high.
- Provision for moral education is very good.
- The teaching of ~~IT~~information technology is very good, as is provision for the subject.
- The school provides good value for money.
- The level of parental support for the work of the school is very high.
- The school provides an exceptional programme of educational visits.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The ideas and aspirations of the headteacher and governors are not sufficiently well coordinated and documented to guide the work of the school beyond the current academic year.
- II. Progress is relatively modest in ~~year~~Years 5 and 6 when compared with ~~year~~Years 7 and 8.
- III. Subject specialists have insufficient opportunity to influence teaching through in-house training and joint planning.

The school effectively provides a secure, caring environment where pupils make good progress during their four years in the school and are achieving above average standards of attainment by the time they leave. The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Standards of attainment in the national curriculum tests at age 11 have risen since the previous inspection in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Improvement has been faster in science than the national trend, but slower than the national trend in English and mathematics. Standards of attainment have improved in design and technology, information technology and art. The proportion of teaching that is satisfactory or better has improved since the previous inspection as has the proportion of good or better teaching.

The school has made some progress on all key issues since the previous inspection. Aims and objectives have been defined, but have not been translated sufficiently well into a framework for longer term planning yet.

The loss of two senior staff, followed by consultation on an local education authority re-organisation plan which initially questioned the long term existence of middle schools in Redditch, have played a

significant part in the lack of momentum. Curriculum balance and length of lessons have improved. Training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has overtaken the staff development programme begun after the previous inspection. Training to support the co-ordination of subject teaching needs to be revived as soon as time permits. There has been improvement in the monitoring of teaching, curriculum development, data on pupils' performance and progress. Some evaluation of the information gained through monitoring has taken place, but this has yet to influence school development planning. The library is now a much more effective resource than it was at the time of the previous inspection.

The school has set itself ambitious targets for the year 2000, which it has the necessary systems and strategies in place to achieve.

· **Standards in subjects**

The following table shows standards achieved by 11 year olds in national tests in 1999:

Performance in:	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			well above average A
			above average B
English	C	D	average C
Mathematics	C	D	below average D
Science	C	C	well below average E

The first column shows that the performance of pupils in Key Stage 2 tests in English, mathematics and science is average when compared with the national average across all schools. The second column compares schools with a similar proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. Results are on an upward trend and have improved every year since the previous inspection in English and mathematics except 1998. The 1998 group of pupils has been identified as a lower attaining cohort since age 7. They have made good progress since 1998 and are on target to achieve above average results.

Standards of attainment have been maintained or improved in all subjects. Standards have improved in science at Key Stage 2 (an issue at the time of the previous inspection) and overall in English, mathematics, art, design and technology and [information technology](#). Standards of attainment are above average by age 13; pupils' standards of attainment on leaving the school are high compared with those typically found.

Pupils make good progress overall. Progress is generally better for older pupils than in the first two years. This is linked to the rather higher overall quality of teaching of older pupils resulting from more effective deployment of teachers' subject expertise.

· **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in:	9 – 11 years	11-13 years
English	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Satisfactory	Good
Information Technology	Very good	Very good
Religious Education	Very good	Good
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 96% of the 142 lessons and was good, very good or excellent in 60% of lessons overall. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 6 lessons seen (4%). More of the higher quality teaching takes place at Key Stage 3 and this is linked to the greater deployment of specialist teachers at this key stage. Teaching in French is inconsistent. It varied from excellent to unsatisfactory in the relatively small sample of lessons seen.

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Behaviour is good in class and around the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils arrive in school punctually and use movement time sensibly to arrive punctually for lessons.
Ethos*	Attitudes to learning are very positive and relationships are very good.
Leadership and management	The leadership of the headteacher motivates pupils, staff and governors very well. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff. The vision and ideas of the headteacher and the governors are not recorded as a co-ordinated, long term plan.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, successfully promoting pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It is enhanced by an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, trips, residentials, and by links with commerce, industry and other countries.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make sound progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Pupils' social, spiritual and cultural development is good. Moral development is very good and is reflected in pupils' conduct and their response in lessons to staff and each other.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Sufficient qualified staff are available, although there is scope for more effective use of the expertise available. Resources and accommodation are sound with the exception of accommodation for music.

Value for money

The school gives good value for money.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- IV. The school is approachable and encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school.
- V. It encourages pupils to get involved in more than just daily lessons.
- VI. Their children like school.
- VII. There are good opportunities for communication through the homework planner.

What some parents are not happy about

- VIII. Inconsistencies in the regularity and

The summary table above is based on a large number of responses to the parents' questionnaires (3430 received) and comments from the parents' meeting with inspectors that 30 parents attended.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. The school is welcoming, the high quality of relationships, support and guidance provided is a strength of the school and contributes positively to pupils' attainment and progress. Links with parents are good. Liaison with other schools is good. The school takes complaints seriously and the few incidents that occur are dealt with promptly and effectively. There are some inconsistencies in the setting of homework but the overall picture is a positive one.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to raise standards of attainment further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:-

- IX. Raise the quality of all teaching to the high levels that are already apparent in several areas, through:
- Increasing the opportunities for in-house training and planning sessions in order to give better guidance to the large number of teachers involved in delivering the subjects of the National Curriculum. [67, 97, 100, 106, 149, 158, 162, 184, 207, 233]
 - Improving lesson planning so that teachers' plans for what pupils are to learn are more specific in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills. [47, 48, 55, 157, 162, 191, 216]
 - Routinely sharing with pupils exactly what the teacher intends them to learn and reviewing these objectives during and at the end of lessons. [49, 156, 171, 206, 230]
 - Supporting non-specialist teachers better by incorporation in schemes of work guidance on learning targets for topics and methodology. [48, 55, 184, 207, 224]
 - Increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning and initiative. [46, 51, 146, 156, 230]
- Improve the quality of planning by:
- Extending the scope of the school's development plan to cover a three-year plan which explicitly incorporates the vision and ideas of the headteacher and governors for the future of the school. [100, 111]
- Clarifying and regularising the terms of reference of governors' committees. [114] ~~nb not clearly referred to in 6.1~~

Other, lesser issues for governors to consider for inclusion in their post inspection action plan are:

- The reduction of gaps between topics in the foundation subjects. [47, 52]
- Improvement in curriculum monitoring in order to identify and disseminate good practice and identify and set up plans to eliminate weaknesses. [96, 100]
- More consistent use of assessment information in order to support pupils' progress during topics. [50, 64, 65, 122, 147, 172, 184, 185, 198]

The numbers in brackets relate to the main paragraphs of this report where these issues are mentioned.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 The school is situated on a pleasant open site in modern buildings in Headless Cross to the west of Redditch in the Worcestershire local education authority area. It serves a residential area with mainly well-established housing. Many of the homes from which the pupils come are owner occupied and the socio-economic indicators for the wards in which most pupils live are favourable compared with national figures. Nevertheless, there are pupils who come from less advantaged homes. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is 6.4% which is below the national average and that for the local education authority. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals has not significantly changed from the previous inspection but can fluctuate from year to year.

2 The school is part of a three tier system of first, middle and high schools taking pupils from ages 9-13. It is much bigger than most middle schools and the number on roll has increased from 609 at the time of the previous inspection to 684 currently. There are now six forms of entry and the school is oversubscribed. The school was previously inspected from 30 January to 4 February 1995.

3 There are eight pupils for whom a statement of special educational need has been made by the local education authority. There are 139 pupils on the register of special educational needs, 37 at Stages 3-5. This is broadly in line with the average for similar schools.

4 The proportions of pupils entering the school with special educational needs, with below-average, average and above-average attainment are similar to the proportions found nationally. The number of pupils for whom English is an additional language is low.

1 The aims of the school are:

To provide a happy, supportive and safe learning environment, which will facilitate intellectual and spiritual development for every pupil, in a manner which ensures equality of opportunity for all, regardless of sex, ability, belief or colour.

6 The school's priorities for development are:

- consolidation of the literacy strategy.
- introduction of the numeracy strategy.
- continued development of information communication technology for staff and pupils.
- target setting in the context of raising standards of achievement.
- monitoring of teaching and of subjects.
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum to meet the needs of the whole child.

7 The school has set ambitious and challenging targets for the national tests at age 11 for the year 2000, of 83% Level 4 and above for English and 85% Level 4 and above for mathematics. Targets for 2001 are 84% and 84% respectively.

· 8 **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹
~~[data needed]~~

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	97	86	183

National Curriculum		English	Mathematics	Science
Test/Task Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	69	66	83
	Girls	67	60	75
	Total	136	126	158
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	74(75)	69(69)	86(87)
	National	71(64)	69(58)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	69	61	70
	Girls	67	57	66
	Total	136	118	136
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	74(74)	64(65)	74(74)
	National	67(64)	69(64)	75(70)

.....

1

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

• _____

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	5.1
	Absence	National comparative data	6.1
	Unauthorised	School	0.5
	Absence	National comparative data	0.4

-
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Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	2
	Permanent	0

• **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which was:		%
	Very good or better	24
	Satisfactory or better	96
	Less than satisfactory	4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

need for search and replace to regularise use of KS, D&T, D+T, IT

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 9 Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 2 and above national expectations at Key Stage 3. The proportion of pupils meeting the national standard of level 4 at age 11 is at the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. By the end of ~~year~~ Year 8 pupils are generally attaining standards above the national average. Pupils take Key Stage 3 tests at age 14 when they have been at the high schools for about two terms. They perform very well in these tests. In 1999 the pupils who transferred to about six high schools obtained results in the top 75% nationally in English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls perform similarly. The results of boys at Key Stage 3 in English in the high schools are very good when compared with the national picture. Standards of attainment have been maintained or improved in all subjects. Standards have improved in science at Key Stage 2, an issue in the previous report, and overall in English, mathematics, art, design and technology and information technology.
- 10 When pupils' results in the Key Stage 2 tests are compared with schools having similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, performance is average in science and below average in English and mathematics. Progress is relatively modest in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 compared with the progress of older pupils. Inspection findings suggest that this is related to rather more effective use of teachers' expertise and of specialist facilities and resources with these older pupils, and consequently to rather more effective teaching. Results are on an upward trend and have improved every year in English and mathematics since the previous inspection, with the exception of 1998. That year group had been identified since age 7 as a lower attaining cohort. This cohort has made good progress in subsequent years. Science results fell in 1997 and 1998 but increased in 1999.
- 11 Progress overall is good, accelerating in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 as a result of a greater proportion of higher quality teaching which consolidates progress over time more effectively. Boys make progress in line with the national pattern. Pupils of all abilities make similar progress. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall. When additional support is provided for them, their progress is good. In ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 pupils make better progress in lessons than over time. There are sometimes long periods between successive lessons in some foundation subjects; this contributes to the relatively modest progress
- 12 Attainment in English matches the standards typically achieved by pupils at age 11 and by Year 8 is above those expected nationally. Girls achieve slightly better than boys, in line with the national trend. Standards in speaking and listening are above average and reading shows steady improvement. Pupils are competent in writing and higher attaining pupils show maturity and high standards of technical efficiency by the end of ~~Year~~ Year 8. Standards of handwriting are too variable, however, and pupils do not use a joined style consistently. Standards of literacy are sound and improving.
- 13 Pupils make satisfactory progress in English in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 and good progress in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8. There are many examples of pupils using their literacy skills across the curriculum. Progress accelerates as pupils move through the school and progress in lessons is consolidated better over ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8. This is linked to a higher proportion of very good teaching at this key stage.

- 14 In mathematics pupils' attainment is in line with the standards expected nationally by age 11. Pupils are on course in ~~Year~~ Year 8 to exceed national expectations by age 14. Pupils' numeracy skills are sound both mentally and in written calculations. Their understanding of space and shape is well developed by the end of ~~Year~~ Year 8. They use their ~~IT~~ information technology skills well in mathematics lessons. Numeracy is well developed across the curriculum. Pupils draw and interpret graphs in science and geography and interpret numerical data in the form of spreadsheets in information technology, geography and science.
- 15 Pupils of all abilities make at least sound progress in mathematics over the key stages. Progress in lessons is good and is consolidated better in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 than ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 as a result of a higher proportion of very good or outstanding teaching in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8.
- 16 Standards of attainment in science are at least in line with and generally above national expectations for the subject. Standards have improved in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6. At both key stages, pupils are secure and confident in their scientific knowledge and understanding. They are less secure in the application of scientific ideas to new situations or in the skills needed to investigate those ideas.
- 17 Progress in science is at least sound in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 and mainly good in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8. Pupils' positive attitudes to the subject have a positive impact on standards achieved, as does the high proportion of very good teaching in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8
- 18 Standards of attainment in art are in line with national expectations and show an improvement since the previous inspection. By age 11, pupils handle materials with confidence and are keen to experiment with them. Work on collage is good. By the end of ~~year~~ Year 8, pupils show graphic ability in their observational drawings and constructional skills in three-dimensional work.
- 19 Progress in art is satisfactory overall at both key stages in skills and knowledge, but development of the techniques of drawing and painting is limited and at times unsatisfactory, as practical work lacks breadth. Pupils need more time to plan and research through direct observation.
- 20 Overall attainment in design and technology is high. Attainment by age 11 is now above average, an improvement since the previous inspection. High standards are maintained by the end of ~~year~~ Year 8 on transfer to the high schools. Pupils successfully use a range of research methods including the Internet to refine their designs and plan how to make products. Pupils' attainment is below average in design and technology when they enter the school and they make good progress through ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6. Progress is still good overall, although not quite so rapid in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 as a result of gaps between successive topics.
- 21 Most pupils attain standards in line with national expectations at both key stages in geography. Pupils develop their observational skills well using fieldwork in the school grounds. In ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 pupils make proficient use of maps and can interpret population data.
- 22 Progress by most pupils in geography is steady and satisfactory, but long gaps between geography lessons makes it difficult for pupils to make good progress. They struggle to recall work done in the summer and will not study geography again until January. Higher attaining pupils are constrained from exploring issues in depth. Few pupils excel, though use of spreadsheets and the Internet is an area in which some pupils have made good progress in comparing climate data.

- 23 Standards of attainment in history at both key stages are in line with national expectations. This was the case at the time of the previous inspection. In ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6, pupils can understand the effect of natural events on civilisations. In ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 pupils can comment on the usefulness of sources to historians and are beginning to understand the tentative nature of evidence. Pupils talk confidently about their ideas when challenged to justify their views.
- 24 All pupils make satisfactory progress in history over time and in lessons in the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to communicate their findings through extended writing. They make slower progress in their awareness of chronology and in the skills of interpretation. Long gaps between history lessons makes it difficult for pupils to make good progress.
- 25 Overall standards of attainment in information technology are high, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Levels of attainment of pupils entering the school in ~~year~~ Year 5 are below average, but by age 11 they attain above the national expectation. Attainment is above average at the end of ~~year~~ Year 8. Pupils can combine text and pictures, research information and manipulate numbers and other data. They also use computers in science to gather data and control devices in design and technology. There is good use of pupils' ~~IT~~ information technology skills in most other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils design books for young children in English, chart the height of pupils in mathematics, use the Internet for research in geography and design and technology, use spreadsheets in geography, create newspaper pages in history for homework and use control technology well in mathematics (LOGO).
- 26 Pupils make good progress in information technology at both key stages. By age 11 they can input, manipulate and present information in a variety of forms. These skills are enhanced at Key Stage 3 and in addition pupils learn to take account of the target audience, modifying content and layout of their work accordingly. All pupils gain thorough grounding in skills and knowledge through use of appropriate software. Extension activities enable high attaining pupils to progress well.
- 27 Pupils begin their education in modern foreign languages in Year 7. The majority of pupils are on target to achieve the national expectation in French by age 14. In line with the national trend, girls attain higher than boys. Some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching hamper more pupils achieving higher levels of attainment. Pupils have sound listening skills. Most are able to respond to simple questions and use basic vocabulary. Many pupils have a good accent and pronunciation and some make confident use of the language. Written work is generally accurate but the range of writing is limited. Most pupils are able to understand simple written phrases and texts.
- 28 Progress in French is generally sound, with progress made in both learning and consolidating new language in lessons and over the longer term.
- 29 Pupils by age 11 demonstrate skills in line with those expected nationally in music. They can compose and perform. The majority of pupils can use a series of structured sounds to create a musical effect. Pupils perform confidently and evaluate their performances, develop their listening and singing skills. By the end of ~~year~~ Year 8 pupils are attaining in line with the national expectation. They perform well with others in a group, develop sensitivity to their audience, control the sounds that they produce on percussion instruments well and explore a variety of ways to produce sounds of varying texture and tone.
- 30 Pupils make satisfactory progress in music, in lessons and over time at both key stages. Higher attaining pupils including those learning to play musical instruments are not sufficiently

challenged in class lessons.

- [31](#) At the time of the inspection the programme of study for physical education was predominantly athletics and dance. Standards of attainment by age 11 are in line with national expectations in athletics. Pupils understand and can apply the basic principles and techniques. By the end of ~~year~~[Year](#) 8, attainment is in line with or above that expected nationally for pupils of this age in athletics and boys' dance. Highest attainment is seen in girls' dance, where the movement quality, control and interpretative skills of most pupils are good. In all year groups however, pupils lack knowledge and understanding of the basic principles and techniques involved in warming up exercises and of the skills of planning and evaluation.
- [32](#) In ~~year~~[Years](#) 5 and 6 pupils of all levels of attainment make sound progress. In ~~year~~[Years](#) 7 and 8 progress is mainly good. Progress is most noticeable in dance and it is also good in gymnastics and athletic activities. Pupils' good attitudes have a positive effect on progress.
- [33](#) Overall standards of attainment in religious education are in line with and sometimes above those expected in the Agreed Syllabus. By age 11 pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Sikhism and Islam. They can identify basic beliefs and can compare and contrast aspects of more than one faith. Important concepts can be related to their own values and experiences. By [Year](#) 8 pupils are able to identify and talk about the basic beliefs of Christianity, use specialist terms confidently and handle difficult concepts well.
- [34](#) Progress in religious education is good and sometimes very good, an improvement since the previous inspection. Prior learning is consolidated by the structure of lessons at both key stages and understanding is extended in the context of a different faith. Pupils are able to identify the progress that they make themselves within lessons. They develop skills in comparing one faith with another and with their own lives.
- [35](#) There is a link in a range of subjects between levels of good and very good teaching, the deployment of subject expertise and the levels of attainment and rates of progress across the school. Increasing the levels of good and very good teaching particularly in ~~year~~[Years](#) 5 and 6 and developing further the specialist knowledge and confidence of staff, using specialist staff to have a greater influence in ~~year~~[Years](#) 5 and 6 would all contribute significantly to raising standards of attainment and improving the rate of progress of ~~year~~[Years](#) 5 and 6. Very positive attitudes on the part of pupils and very good relationships in the school contribute positively to pupils' attainment and progress as do very good standards of behaviour and very good levels of attendance.
- [36](#) The use of a range of standardised test results in enabling the school to set well informed, ambitious targets for its pupils.

• **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

- [37](#) Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. Pupils respond positively to the school and to their work in classrooms. They are involved and interested in their work, concentrating well and generally sustaining that concentration well.
- [38](#) There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Pupils continue to demonstrate respect for all staff, the environment and each other. They show respect for the property of others and for the display work throughout the school. Pupils are very willing to work together, and they collaborate very effectively whenever teachers provide the opportunity. Since the previous inspection, the school's code of conduct has been simplified, and the statement of 'Walkwood Values' is easily understandable by all pupils.

- 39 The school continues to maintain a high standard of good behaviour. Parents at the parents' meeting and through parents' questionnaires endorse this view. Pupils respond positively to the praise and encouragement freely offered. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Older pupils respond well to the clearly structured policy of assertive discipline, are clearly aware what is expected of them and the consequences of misbehaviour. The school works effectively and constructively with the staff of the Pupil Referral Unit when necessary. There were two fixed period exclusions during the last year and no permanent exclusions. This is well below average.
- 40 Behaviour at lunchtimes has continued to improve. Although there is, at times, boisterous behaviour in the playground areas, there are also quiet areas provided, and pupils are able, with permission, to use computer facilities and the library. There is a good level of supervision in the recreation areas, ensuring appropriate intervention when problems do occur.
- 41 Pupils respond well to opportunities to take initiative, for example, organising their own small fundraising events and undertaking independent research, for example, in using the library, but generally these opportunities are limited. In areas such as music and geography, for example, opportunities to extend their own learning are limited.
- 42 Pupils respond very positively to the opportunities offered to take responsibility. Year 8 pupils appointed as prefects play a very useful part in assisting the orderly movement of pupils, and computer prefects are particularly capable when supervising the use of computer facilities. Pupils perform class duties and assist with assembling resources and equipment, though opportunities throughout the school for pupils to take responsibility could be greater.

Attendance

- 43 The level of attendance of most pupils continues to be very good, with overall attendance figures and the figure for authorised absence broadly in line with those nationally. For the last reporting year, unauthorised absence was slightly above the national average, but during the first half term of this academic year, there have been few unauthorised absences. During September there were substantial levels of absence due to pupils taking holidays with parents during term time. This has a detrimental effect when pupils miss the introduction of new areas of work at the important start of a new academic year.
- 44 Registers are marked in accordance with statutory requirements, and there are appropriate procedures in place to establish reasons for pupils' absence. There is regular liaison with the education welfare officer, whose intervention is timely and effective.
- 45 Most pupils arrive in school punctually, and there are appropriate procedures to identify the few pupils who regularly arrive late. Once in school, pupils move around the school in a sensible manner and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 46 The quality of teaching is good overall. High standards have been maintained. The proportion of lessons where teaching was seen to be satisfactory or better has risen to 96% from about 90% at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching in 60% of lessons seen overall was good, very good or excellent. More of the higher quality teaching takes place in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8.

This pattern is reflected in the majority of subjects and is linked to the effective deployment of specialist teachers to this key stage. Where staff are secure in their specialist subject knowledge they are able to match work more closely to pupils' abilities, in particular in stretching the more able. Teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils with special educational needs. Strategies to deal more effectively with the range of problems present are being increasingly used. Teaching supports pupils' progress well at both key stages, but pupils make more sustained progress at Key Stage 3, showing above average attainment and this is linked to the effectiveness of the greater degree of specialist teaching. Staff with secure subject knowledge have the insight and confidence to try out more imaginative activities and give pupils more independence.

- 47 The impact of much good and very good teaching in particular lessons is limited by teachers' plans not always giving enough attention to making pupils use what they already know and can do at the start of new topics. This is particularly important when, as in geography, history, art, and design and technology, there are at times long spells between topics.
- 48 The school is relatively well off for subject specialists and subject co-ordinators organise and support the teaching of the subjects of the National Curriculum well. With the exception of literacy and numeracy, opportunities for formal joint planning and training sessions are too few, but a great deal of informal support and advice are given by co-ordinators to individuals. This helps to share good practice. Staff are highly committed. Specialist and non-specialist staff work hard to make good use of the time available. There are clear guidelines in the schemes of work, which include objectives for what pupils should have learned during each topic. With the exception of the schemes for literacy and numeracy, these are often too general for non-specialist teachers to be able to translate into specific learning objectives which they can use to plan lessons, share with pupils and match activities to pupils of different abilities. In the guidance, the progression in knowledge, understanding and skills is not always as clear as it needs to be in order to support non-specialists. There is often lack of guidance on the best ways of teaching particular ideas and skills, which results in teachers tending to fall back onto didactic teaching of factual content rather than helping pupils to develop new ideas. These factors have a particular impact at Key Stage 2, where though progress in individual lessons is usually good, by the end of the key stage attainment is still average.
- 49 Teachers manage pupils very well. Good relationships are a feature of the vast majority of lessons and have a positive impact on standards of attainment. Standards of discipline are high. Time and resources are used well. In the best lessons, learning objectives are routinely shared and reviewed, an outline of the lesson is given as part of the introduction and time targets are set in order to promote pace. Homework is usually used productively to extend and consolidate the work in lessons. There are sometimes inconsistencies in the regularity and quantity set, and ~~RE~~religious education is not included in the homework timetable, but overall the picture is a positive one.
- 50 Assessment of pupils' work is generally thorough and constructive, though the quality of marking varies across and within subjects. Books are conscientiously marked, often with supportive comments confirming that pupils have successfully completed tasks, but guidance on what pupils need to do to improve is less frequent. The new policy, moving towards a target setting approach for improvement, has yet to become established.
- 51 Teachers' expectations are high and they recognise the need for provision of work matched to the abilities of the pupils that they teach and work planned for sets illustrates this. Work in mixed ability classes is also planned to take into account the range of ability in the class, often by the provision of a variety of teaching and learning activities. For teachers teaching outside their main areas of subject specialism, lack of specific learning objectives in schemes of work

makes it more difficult for them to plan work that adequately challenges all pupils in a class. There is still also a need to challenge all pupils on a more regular basis however, in particular by providing them with opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning to become more independent learners who can show initiative and think for themselves.

• **The curriculum and assessment**

- [52](#) The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. It is meeting the statutory requirement to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 also study French. Personal, social and health education is taught to all year groups. The shortage of time for art and the lack of coverage of aspects of history and geography identified in the last inspection have been rectified. The school is implementing the National Curriculum programmes of study, although time allowed for delivery of the programme of study for design and technology is short. The school needs to review whether the first schools adequately cover the swimming provision for ~~key stage~~ [Key Stage 2](#). The arrangements for art and for the design and technology areas of food and textiles make it difficult for pupils to build on previous experience in those subjects. There is a similar lack of continuity of pupils' experience in history and geography.
- [53](#) The school is successfully implementing both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies.
- [54](#) The statutory requirement to provide sex education is met through the subject areas of science, religious education, personal, social and health education, food technology and occasionally in English and humanities. Parents receive a letter giving outline details of the topics and detailing those areas where pupils may be withdrawn if desired. Drugs education is also included in this provision.
- [55](#) Long and medium term curriculum planning is generally good. Short term planning is based on what pupils are intended to learn in particular topics, but objectives in many subjects are not sharply focused and appropriate, particularly in view of the organisational framework. In many subjects this involves several teachers teaching the same course, some of whom are not a specialist in that subject. This results in teaching that is not sufficiently focused on exactly what particular groups of pupils should learn as the result of the tasks they are given. This contributes to the relatively slower progress in ~~year~~ [Years 5 and 6](#), where non-specialist teaching is more prevalent.
- [56](#) Effective links with both first and high schools exist, pastoral links with first schools are effective, curriculum links less so. Curriculum continuity is better across Years 8 and 9 than across Years 4 and 5. Regular curriculum liaison meetings for subject specialists in middle and high schools take place, chaired by headteachers and attended by local education authority subject advisory staff. These meetings secure agreement on which aspects of subjects are to be covered by pupils to prepare them for the transition to high schools and the national tests at age 14.
- [57](#) Overall the school gives all pupils full access to the curriculum and the opportunity to make progress, although there are deficiencies in the equality of access of boys and girls to dance and games. Also the withdrawal of pupils from the foundation subjects for the Successmaker mathematics booster project has some negative impact on these pupils' work in these subjects. However, this is well managed on a rota to minimise the effects on pupils' progress.
- [58](#) Pupils are set for English and mathematics throughout the school and for science and French in Years 7 and 8. Setting is a proving to be a strategy which is contributing towards improved

results. The ability grouping of pupils is given careful consideration and based upon information from first schools, National Curriculum and other standardised test results, internal examinations and judgements of staff. Teachers regularly discuss the need to provide an appropriate curriculum for pupils of all abilities. Schemes of work and pace of working are adapted for different ability groups in sets and mixed ability classes

- [59](#) The school meets the needs of pupils on the special educational needs register. All pupils are being provided with a broad and balanced curriculum and the requirements of the Code of Practice for statemented pupils are being met. Pupils with special educational needs are identified efficiently and individual education plans are provided. All pupils with special educational needs have access to the National Curriculum.
- [60](#) The school meets the statutory requirements for the annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational needs. The reviews are comprehensive but reports from teachers too often describe how pupils respond in their lessons rather than indicating how they are developing their understanding, gaining knowledge, acquiring new skills and making progress.
- [61](#) Many individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs lack sufficient detail to ensure that precise targets are set, support strategies are identified and how monitoring of progress is to be carried out.
- [62](#) There is a review programme in place for curriculum subjects, which involves discussions between the deputy headteacher, heads of upper and lower school and subject leaders to an agenda based on the subject's contribution to the school's development plan. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the area of co-ordination and monitoring, but these have yet to lead to an improvement in the quality of teaching in ~~year~~ [Years](#) 5 and 6 to the levels in ~~year~~ [Years](#) 7 and 8.
- [63](#) The school continues to provide a good range of extra curricular activities, which enhance the quality of the curriculum, particularly in sport, information technology, drama, music and visits. This is recognised as a positive feature of the school by the parents.
- [64](#) The school has a comprehensively detailed policy on assessment, recording and reporting which provides a framework for individual subjects. The extent to which this is being implemented in practice is variable. Although the policy provides very informed and useful guidance for assessment as an integral and continuous part of teaching and learning, this is not being adequately followed in most subjects. Much of the current assessment is summative, with a strong emphasis on tests and the grading of pupils' work. This aspect of assessment is satisfactory, but there is insufficient emphasis on the use at the end of topic of day-to-day assessment, particularly in mathematics and science to help pupils to know what they need to do to improve.
- [65](#) Teachers' marking is conscientiously carried out and their comments are often positive and encouraging. Teachers do not, however, always link their assessment with precise ideas about what pupils are intended to learn and, except in a few cases, they do not sufficiently clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work. There is still inconsistency both across and within subjects. There has consequently been little improvement in this aspect since the last inspection.
- [66](#) Assessment and recording are in line with National Curriculum requirements and previous shortcomings in physical education, art, information communication technology and design and technology have been resolved. The arrangements for carrying out key stage assessment are effective and pupils are well prepared for assessment at age 14 in the high schools.

67 Data from a range of standardised tests is used to track pupils' progress and set targets. At present it is limited to literacy and numeracy in ~~key stage~~ [Key Stage 2](#), and to English, mathematics and science in ~~key stage~~ [Key Stage 3](#), largely because of the availability of national test data. From this data, prediction factors are used to set targets for future performance in key stage tests and pupils who are not making good progress towards their targets can be identified. This alerts staff to potential problems. Half termly interviews with pupils causing concern are used to track their progress and also to generate reports from which common issues emerge and actions can be taken. Although in its initial stages, the project has considerable potential. The school recognises that this process needs to be extended to all foundation subjects and religious education eventually. It also recognises that the process needs to go hand in hand with staff development so that teachers know clearly what they have to do in each subject if they are to enable children to improve, whatever stage they are at.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

68 Pupils' spiritual development is good. The school's ethos is very good and continues to be based on Christian values. Collective worship continues to make a contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are frequently encouraged to participate in school assemblies and they enjoy this involvement. Subjects make a contribution to the pupils' spiritual development but sometimes opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other people's lives are missed.

69 As this is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school, an inspection of collective worship was carried out under section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996 at the same time as the section 10 inspection and reported separately.

70 Pupils' moral development is very good and a strength of the school. Parents are aware and supportive of the strong moral code that permeates the school. They are also pleased that the code is applied very sensitively and sensibly in relation to the pupils. This was seen to be the case during the inspection. There were ample occasions seen in lessons where the pupils had the opportunity to discuss with each other and with their teachers the rights and wrongs of current moral issues. A good example was seen in a Year 8 personal, social and health education lesson, where the pupils had to make decisions for themselves regarding the way drugs are misused by some people in present society. The school's personal, social and health education programme is well constructed and managed and provides a comprehensive experience for the pupils which prepares them for adult life.

71 Pupils' social development is good. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. There are opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or in groups across the subjects. Good opportunities to develop the pupils' social skills are provided in music and physical education. For example, in ~~PE~~ [physical education](#), pupils in ~~year~~ [Years 7 and 8](#) are encouraged to assist with the organisation of Key Stage 2 extra-curricular activities. A number of extra-curricular activities promote social development. The Hobbies Club, for example, enables the pupils to share and talk with each other about their own interests. Community involvement is encouraged through inter-school activities and an excellent residential visits programme.

72 Pupils' cultural education is good. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to gain an awareness and understanding of their own culture. For example, through subjects like music and religious education pupils have a wealth of opportunities to become aware of other cultures and customs. The school's exceptional programme of educational visits also provides opportunities for developing cultural awareness. For example, the programme includes visits to

museums, places of worship, local commerce and residential European visits. It also includes visits from local clergy, visiting actors, exchange visits with teachers from Finland, exchange visits with teachers and pupils from Hungary and a visit from the local Member of Parliament.

73 Since the last inspection the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. It matches the school's overall aims and the headteacher's personal vision for the pupils.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

74 The school continues to be successful in creating a caring environment in which pupils feel secure. Pupils' support, welfare and guidance are very well provided for through the clear pastoral structure. This provision is a strength of the school. The headteacher, teachers and support staff provide caring and thoughtful support to pupils, which continues to be acknowledged and appreciated by parents. All pupils with special educational needs receive very positive support and encouragement in lessons from teachers and support staff. Pupils with statements of special educational needs value the support they receive from the support assistants and teachers. They feel valued and are accepted as full members of the school community.

75 The very good relationships within the school have a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

76 The school's procedures for monitoring the academic progress of pupils in mathematics, science and English are very good. The heads of upper and lower school use a range of tests and statistics very effectively to identify pupils who are perceived to be under achieving and to provide additional support. Records of work covered and progress made by pupils in specific subjects kept in subject areas are being increasingly used to identify pupils needing extra help. Teachers know their pupils well and there are effective procedures, led by the heads of school, in place to monitor the pupils' social development, in conjunction with heads of year.

77 The school successfully creates a climate of good behaviour by having high expectations, and pupils react positively to the praise and encouragement freely offered. The school's code of conduct and structured merit award system are effective in promoting good behaviour. Pupils respond very positively to the system, but parents' concerns that merits are not always awarded consistently by all staff is confirmed by pupils. The structured system of assertive discipline gives clear guidance as to what is and is not, appropriate behaviour. Pupils are well aware of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. There is effective and constructive liaison with the Pupil Referral Unit if unacceptable behaviour persists. The school continues to deal well with the rare cases of bullying. Pupils confirm that any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively, and that they know who to approach for support should bullying occur.

78 The requirements for recording and reporting pupils' attendance are met, and the school's procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Regular weekly liaison meetings are held between the education welfare officer and the heads of school.

79 The school ensures that the reasons for authorised absence are known. The school makes good provision to support pupils who suffer long-term illness and to assist their gradual return to full time education as necessary.

80 There is a well-structured programme of personal, social and health education, which contains the necessary elements of health and sex education, together with drug awareness. Child protection procedures are in place and meet statutory requirements. The child development co-ordinator provides very effective support for pupils in need of extra help, advice and

counselling, liaising with relevant external agencies when necessary.

81 The health, welfare and safety of pupils are given very high priority, but fire drills are not carried out regularly enough. Risk assessments have been carried out in all departments, and all electrical equipment is checked regularly.

82 The school successfully endeavours to minimise the risk to pupils leaving the school premises to cross the busy road and catch buses by ensuring a high level of supervision.

• **Partnership with parents and the community**

83 Liaison with parents continues to be good. The response to the parents' questionnaire was very high. Parents are very supportive of the school, confirming that they are welcome in school. They feel able approach the school with any problems. Parents appreciate the extra curricular activities available to their children and confirm that their children enjoy coming to school.

84 Many parents of pupils with special educational needs make effective contributions in the review meetings and assisting the school in helping their child with homework. The school has well established links with external services that provide support for pupils with special educational needs and this makes a very effective contribution to the provision the school is able to make.

85 The quality and extent of information available to parents is good. The prospectus is in loose-leaf form. It contains the necessary range of information, but is not user friendly. Parents' evenings are well attended, and parents have had the opportunity to explore the work covered in science and design and technology, as well as to experience a literacy lesson. Pupils' annual reports effectively inform parents concerning the work their child has done. In some subjects there is also information regarding the progress that has been made and what needs to be done to improve. Newsletters effectively keep parents informed regarding pupils' achievements and activities, as well as encouraging involvement in the fundraising activities organised by the Walkwood School Association.

86 The pupils' planners are used very effectively to enable parents to be involved in the work their child is doing. Homework is regularly recorded by all pupils in their planners, and parents are required to sign the planners regularly. Some parents use the planners effectively as a means of communication between home and school.

87 Liaison with the high schools to which most pupils transfer is good, and there are sound procedures, such as meetings to discuss curriculum matters in place to ensure a smooth transition. There are curricular links in subject areas, and plans to develop and extend these curricular links are well in hand. Pastoral liaison with first schools is well developed and enables pupils to settle in to the school well.

88 The school choir and orchestra perform locally. Links with the local parish church continue and school's links with the local community are effectively used within the curriculum. The local area is effectively used for field work. There is a good link with a local sheltered garden centre and adults with learning disabilities working at that garden centre are regular visitors into school to tend flower beds and the water garden. Pupils and staff also support the centre by purchasing plants grown there.

89 A wide range of residential visits affords very good opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and social experiences. The school has a good link with a school in Hungary and following a visit to Hungary by a group of pupils and staff, a reciprocal visit by Hungarian

staff and pupils was made possible through financial support from a range of local businesses. The school also communicates regularly with a similar school in Finland.

90 There is good use of the school premises by community groups, both for sporting and other activities. An independent club operates on school premises before and after school, and provides activities during the school holidays.

• **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

• **Leadership and management**

91 The school has a set of aims and objectives linked to a statement of vision prepared by the headteacher. The leadership of the school is effective in ensuring that the aim of providing a happy, safe and supportive environment is reflected throughout its work and in appointing committed teachers of high calibre, to strengthen the quality of teaching across the school.

92 The headteacher provides leadership that is particularly effective in encouraging staff in their work and in creating a climate for effective learning. The leadership of the school is less successful in maximising the impact of much of the resulting good work, particularly in identifying and disseminating the best practice, identifying weaknesses and setting up plans and timetables to eliminate them. These findings match those reported in the previous inspection and reflect the need to use monitoring procedures more effectively.

93 The ethos of the school is very positive. The school is a strong community in which the pupils are well behaved, respecting each other and property. The supportive pastoral care and the very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development indicate how well the school's aim of encouraging tolerance, self-discipline and pride in themselves is fulfilled. Relationships are good and values such as honesty and fairness are fostered. Parents appreciate the guidance provided by the school and its impact upon the pupils.

94 The school has begun a programme of monitoring of teaching together with an effective analysis of National Curriculum test data and other information in order to improve the quality of provision further. There are also termly meetings held between members of the senior management team and heads of department. Pupils' academic targets set at these meetings are then monitored by class teachers. Groups of pupils in each year are tracked by the senior management team in order to chart their progress and the standards that they are achieving. This process is beginning to improve the help and guidance given to individual pupils to help them to improve.

95 The arrangements for meeting the special educational needs of pupils are well managed. The governing body receives reports each term on the implementation of the policy for special educational needs, but monitoring of provision needs to ensure that there is greater consistency in its quality across all subjects and teachers.

96 Monitoring procedures are beginning to provide important and useful information in identifying areas for improvement. As yet, they are not fully effective in providing the improvements in standards that are intended. This is partly due to the fact that they have not been in place for a sufficient period of time, but also there are no clear procedures for how managers and teachers take action on what is found, so that weaknesses can be appropriately addressed. Within subjects, leadership is generally good, with effective support being provided for staff in planning and delivering the curriculum. Subject leaders offer good advice through teaching schemes and regular advice on resources and activities, but in some areas of the curriculum,

such as English, art and music, development has been restricted because of limited resources.

97 Support for teaching has recently been largely focused on two major initiatives, the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. The result is that professional development in other areas of the curriculum has been relatively neglected. There is a need for the school to carefully analyse training needs within subject areas and draw them into a strategic development plan. Overall, support and monitoring of teaching is reasonable but has yet to raise the standard of teaching in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 to the levels in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8. The previous inspection commented on the need for training for middle managers and progress has been made in this area.

98 The school's aims emphasise the importance of developing lively enquiring minds and of enabling every child to fulfil his or her potential. The school effectively addresses these by providing a broad curriculum where pupils have access to a range of specialist teaching facilities, enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' individual talents, special educational needs and personal development are nurtured and they are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

99 Governors are well informed by the headteacher about the life and work of the school. Members of the governing body are also linked to curriculum subjects and to other aspects of the school. Governors gain direct first-hand knowledge about teaching and learning by visiting lessons and by working with subject leaders in preparing bids for resources enables them to test out their plans with critical friends. They are closely involved with monitoring the state of the buildings and facilities. They acquire relevant information about projections of pupil numbers and the progress of the review of educational provision in Redditch currently being carried out by the education authority.

100 The school's development plan is used to address the implementation of curriculum initiatives, policy development and general school maintenance. It does not identify in sufficient detail how standards are to be improved. Some aspects project beyond the current school year, but in general the plan does not show clearly how the school will develop over the next few years. This was identified as an issue to be addressed in the previous inspection and little progress has been made in this respect by the headteacher and governors. Progress in implementing the plan is evaluated but the criteria to judge success do not explicitly emphasise the impact on pupils' learning experiences. The school needs to improve development planning to ensure that monitoring and evaluation of policies explicitly emphasise the impact upon pupils learning.

101 Relationships between staff and pupils are good and this makes a significant contribution the quality of learning in lessons and to the progress that pupils make. Pupils show commitment to the work they are set and collaborate well with each other. All staff have an important sense of shared purpose and this has a very positive effect on the learning environment.

102 Values such as honesty and fairness are fostered and parents appreciate the guidance provided by the school and its impact on pupils. Relationships between governors and staff are very good and make a strong contribution to the effective working of the school.

103 The governors worked closely with the headteacher and staff to address the key issues raised in the previous inspection. Most of the key issues have been addressed. The school library has been re-located a library assistant has been appointed for 25 hours per week to administer it. The system is working effectively. The balance of the curriculum in terms of time has been reviewed and amended to ensure compliance with the recommendations of the previous inspection. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are fully met. Progress has also been made in considering the effective use of time in respect of lessons. Less progress has been

made in longer-term planning and in establishing management training for curriculum leaders in all subjects. Since the previous inspection progress has been made in developing the process of target setting, assessment and in beginning the collection of portfolios of work. Documentation on these issues needs to be drawn together in the development plan. Though appropriate systems and strategies are in place to promote improvement, criteria by which the school might assess itself are not yet sufficiently coherent to be used to secure improvement effectively.

• **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

104 The school has an appropriately experienced and well-qualified staff to teach the required curriculum. Through the careful planning of the management of the school, there is now a good gender balance within the teaching staff. Teachers' expectation and very good classroom management are making a positive impact on the learning of pupils and the raising of standards.

105 The teaching is well supported by an appropriately qualified team of non-teaching staff. Their support has a positive effect on the learning of pupils. Support assistants make an effective contribution in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The amount of technical support time for design and technology, information technology and science is limited. Administrative, catering, supervisory and premises maintenance staff are all effective and play an important role in maintaining the orderly and welcoming school environment.

106 Arrangements for staff induction, appraisal and development are all in place. The school has responded well to the recent and current demands of the core curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are well in place. The school has also improved the provision for information technology. Teachers' in-service training in these core subjects is improving the learning in classrooms. In order to maintain their positive contribution to the learning of the pupils, the teachers in the other subject areas such as geography, religious education, modern foreign languages, art and music need more time for in-house training and joint planning. This is needed to improve teachers plans, making them more specific in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills, and include evidence on learning targets for topics and on methodology.

107 The accommodation is well maintained and provides a suitable learning and teaching environment for the pupils, with the exception of accommodation for music. There are no suitable practice rooms and the temporary classroom used is in poor condition. In classrooms and throughout the school the environment is enhanced by good use of display. Pupils' work is sensitively displayed so that the pupils can take pride in their successes. Since the previous inspection, the school library has been established and is now a provision of good quality. Accommodation is generally well used, particularly the rooms allocated to information technology and laboratories in science. Indoor and outdoor physical education facilities are also well used. Shower facilities, although adequate, are in need of refurbishment. The school has an attractive and well maintained outdoor environment. This gives the pupils access to good sports, environmental studies and recreational facilities. A senior member of staff (the premises manager) has responsibility for the management of the premises and carries out his role effectively. In conjunction with governors he has produced a list of improvements required or desired.

108 There are sufficient resources to deliver the National Curriculum and religious education. Provision is, however variable. The school continues to develop and improve its resources for pupils with learning difficulties, particularly in English and mathematics. Resource banks for history and geography are also being developed. Resources to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory and these pupils have good access to ~~FF~~[information technology](#) provision. Resources for mathematics, science and religious

education are satisfactory. Further resources are needed to enhance current adequate provision in some subjects. For example, percussion instruments in music, visual resources in French, reference books for art, geography and music are all in need of replacement. Further stocks of fiction and non-fiction books are needed in the library to support the English curriculum. The provision of resources within the school has improved since the last inspection.

· **The efficiency of the school**

109 The school receives income per pupil that is below that found nationally for middle schools. As a larger middle school, it has been able to take advantage of some economies of scale, and to supplement its basic budget by income from facilities and services.

110 The senior management team of the school carefully handles the process of setting the budget, led by the headteacher and the governing body through its finance committee. Subject leaders prepare submissions for the senior management team, who then review these and the other non-curriculum expenditure proposals. Through this process they are drawn up into a draft submission which is presented to the finance committee of the governing body by the headteacher.

111 Overall budget priorities are decided by reference to the school development plan and generally the process is satisfactory. Financial planning would be improved by clearer documentation linked to priorities covering a longer-term strategic programme. The current development plan covers only one financial year, yet the school has a number of large-scale projects, which it wishes to undertake in the future. This rather limits the impact of a generally effective process for setting the budget. The previous inspection report also indicated that there was a need for a longer-term development plan; changes in this respect have been relatively modest. The school has begun to evaluate how its plans and priorities are proceeding but this has not yet led to long term planning. There have been major staffing changes in the school over the last two years, both in the appointment of senior managers and in junior staff. Following a period of change, the school is making generally effective use of teaching and support staff.

112 Available resources are used effectively across the school. Where major items of expenditure have been made in equipment, for information technology and for the National Literacy Strategy, for instance, the school has monitored its use and this has helped to provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of expenditure. In this respect the school has made progress since the last inspection.

113 A survey of teaching accommodation and a projection of future numbers on roll has resulted in some long-term proposals for improving teaching facilities. The process has helped to give a picture of the effective use of staffing, accommodation and resources. These policies need to be strengthened further by drawing them together into a longer-term plan in order to provide clearer focus for future expenditure.

114 There are some shortcomings in the school's financial controls. The finance committee does not have sufficiently clear terms of reference. Controls regulating virement between budget headings have not been set. In addition, the minutes of finance committee meetings are not always recorded as accurately as they need to be. Nevertheless, financial control is generally satisfactory and governors focus effectively on school needs. This process is supported by links between the finance committee and other governor committees such as the curriculum resources review committee. Linking individual governors with curriculum subjects has enabled better informed decisions to be taken. Day-to-day administration of the school is very effective and efficient. Teaching and non-teaching staff work effectively to ensure that the school runs smoothly and administrative matters are handled well.

115 The school operates on a below average income per pupil. Standards match results nationally at age 11 and are generally higher than those expected nationally by age 13. Progress in lessons is good overall and pupils are well prepared academically for transfer to high school. Most teaching is good; pupils experience an appropriate and broad curriculum and demonstrate good behaviour and personal development. The school has made improvements since the last inspection. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

116 Overall, attainment in English matches the standards typically attained by pupils by age 11, and by Year 8 is above those expected nationally. Attainment in English has shown some improvement since the previous inspection in 1995. Although results at age 11 are below the averages found in similar schools, over time, the trend of standards in English is rising,

117 At age 11 in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the standards expected of them was average in the National Curriculum tests. Girls achieved slightly better than boys. Attainment by the end of Year 8 is above standards typically found at this stage. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils were achieving above, or well above the expected standards in the majority of lessons. In only two lower attaining groups were standards below those expected nationally.

118 Since the previous inspection pupils have maintained above-average standards of speaking and listening. Most pupils are able to effectively articulate suggestions and ideas; they can express personal opinions and explain their reasons. They are able to discuss meaningfully with each other and talk confidently with adults.

119 Reading standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and over time the trend of reading standards shows steady improvement. The majority of pupils are able to understand literary texts and other reading materials. They are well able to extract relevant information from texts in response to teachers' questions. By age 11, pupils understand concepts of plot, characterisation and setting. They are able to read for information and extract relevant facts independently. They understand the terms simile and metaphor and can identify them in texts. In ~~year~~Years 7 and 8, pupils read a wide range of texts. When reading the poetry of Ted Hughes, they can discuss the imagery used and compare it with other work.

120 By age 11, pupils are able to write in a range of forms for different purposes and audiences. Higher attaining pupils show maturity in their writing style. Most pupils are able to write at extended length, though opportunities to do so are somewhat limited. They are able to organise their writing effectively with competent use of paragraphing. In ~~year~~Years 7 and 8, pupils possess high standards of technical efficiency and are able to use different forms of writing very effectively. Drafting is used extensively and to good effect, enabling pupils to refine their writing. Standards of handwriting are too variable and pupils do not consistently use a joined style.

121 Standards of literacy are satisfactory and are rising. The school has adopted the literacy hour, recommended in the National Literacy Strategy, throughout ~~year~~Years 5 and 6. This is having an increasingly positive effect on the English curriculum. The school is also developing the ~~year~~Year 7 and 8 curriculum to take account of the National Literacy Strategy. The close focus on lesson objectives is having a beneficial effect on standards and the school is planning to link the programme with other subjects.

122 The available evidence suggests that the ability of pupils arriving in Year 5 is average. Related to their prior attainment, pupils make satisfactory progress in ~~year~~Years 5 and 6 and good progress in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8. Progress in consolidating previous learning or in extending knowledge was observed in all lessons during the inspection. Progress accelerates as pupils move through the school. It was good or very good in just over a quarter of lessons in

year Years 5 and 6 and half of the lessons in year Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons.

123 Pupils continue to be well motivated, as reported in the previous inspection. Their responses during the inspection were good or very good overall. In the vast majority of lessons in year Years 5 and 6, pupils' response is good or very good. In year Years 7 and 8, response in all lessons seen was good or very good and occasionally excellent. Pupils are attentive and settle quickly to their work. They respond willingly to teachers' questions and instructions and work well with each other when required. Pupils behave very well during lessons and offer their ideas when invited to do so. Pupils with special educational needs also respond well. There is no significant difference in the level of response between boys and girls.

124 Overall the quality of teaching observed was good. The standard of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and in some respects has improved. The previous inspection report commented that a wider range of techniques would enhance teaching, and, that less successful lessons lacked pace and had little discussion. These aspects of teaching have been rectified. The effective planning by teachers, which focuses on specific lesson objectives, makes an important contribution to pupils' attainment and the progress that they make. Planning is done corporately and the range of teaching techniques and the important role of discussion in English lessons are included at this stage. Considerable time has been spent not only on training for the National Literacy Strategy, but also in planning the teaching programme and monitoring its delivery. Although the teachers of year Years 5 and 6 are not all English specialists, the school has ensured that they have the necessary skills to carry out the task of implementing the National Literacy Strategy effectively by training and joint planning sessions.

125 Teachers' relationships with pupils are excellent; teachers and pupils treat each other with mutual respect. There were no discipline problems observed during the inspection. These strengths are contributing to standards of achievement by ensuring effective learning environments and by causing pupils to be well motivated. At both key stages, teachers clearly identified what they intended pupils to learn, lessons had clear purposes. The best literacy lessons were those in which the key section of the hour, the whole class shared reading or writing led by the teacher, had clear links with subsequent elements, particularly those parts of the lesson where pupils work independently and where the teacher works with one group intensively.

126 In both key stages, teachers use a variety of approaches, make good use of the time available and their expectations are generally good. They often set challenging tasks, as for example, when pupils in Year 5 examined the structure of the language in a Roger McGough poem and when pupils in Year 7 looked at the role different parts of speech play in text. Teachers are generally meeting the needs of the range of abilities within their classes. Although there is a school policy for homework, on some occasions it is not set when scheduled, while on others it takes longer to complete than it ought.

127 More development is needed to enable the department to maintain the momentum for improvement. Future training is needed to focus particularly on their knowledge of the range of texts outlined in the National Literacy Strategy *Framework for Teaching*. The school has identified writing as an area of focus; the process of modelling writing outlined in the *Framework for Teaching* will provide guidance to enable pupils to have a deeper understanding of the process of writing. During the inspection, where teachers did not model writing effectively, progress was less good.

128 The requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are being met and the

literacy hour is effectively implemented in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs are being given full access to the National Curriculum. Pupils are receiving relevant and valuable experiences.

129 Assessment is effective. In addition to corporate planning, completed work is reviewed and test results analysed. Teachers in English are developing an increasingly clear picture of pupils' performance across a range of activities, over a period of time. The aim of making the identification of strengths and weaknesses more effective is being fulfilled. Marking is variable. The best marking is effective in identifying pupils' achievements and also in providing guidance for improvement, in some cases however it consists of ticks and brief comments which do not indicate to pupils how they can improve their work or what features made it an effective piece.

130 The subject is well managed. The subject leader has held training sessions with staff during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Initial training for the literacy hour has been comprehensive and has equipped the teachers to face the initiative with confidence. Detailed and supportive written guidelines have been produced and a new programme drawn up for ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 to replicate the structure in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6. The subject leader is closely involved with the planning process and guides and supports the process in all year groups.

131 Generally, book resources are inadequate to fully match the teaching programme. Teachers are having difficulty in meeting the demands of the curriculum. The subject leader is aware of where the major gaps are to be found and has development proposals to remedy the shortcomings when funds permit.

132 Since the previous inspection, standards and quality of provision have been at least maintained and, in some respects, improved.

• **Mathematics**

133 Overall pupils' attainment is in line with the national standard by age 11. Attainment seen in lessons was in line with the expectations of pupils of this age group. Only in the lower attaining sets were standards slightly below national expectations, whereas in the higher attaining groups standards were above and occasionally well above.

134 In 1999 Key Stage 2 tests for 11 year olds, the performance of pupils was in line with the national average. Results indicate that there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. When compared with schools with pupils of similar backgrounds, pupil performance was just below average. These results indicate a significant improvement from the previous year. The school's positive commitment to the introduction of the numeracy hour is having an impact on the performance of the pupils. The school has set challenging targets for the year 2002 based on maintenance of this improvement.

135 Attainment by age 13 is in line with standards typically found nationally. At the end of Year 8, standards are typical for pupils of this age group; pupils are on course to meet national expectations by the age 14. Analysis of the performance of pupils when they reach the end of Key Stage 3 in the high schools, indicates that many pupils exceed national expectations. In the higher ability sets, the standards being achieved were higher than expected nationally. Only in the lower ability sets were standards below national expectations.

136 The school has maintained standards and made some improvement since the last inspection.

- 137 Attainment in both key stages is matching or exceeding national averages because of the good quality teaching, the support of classroom assistants, the positive attitudes of the pupils and the very constructive relationships found in all classrooms.
- 138 Pupils' numeracy skills are sound both mentally and in written calculations. By age 11, most pupils, for example, are secure with multiplication facts up to ten, can add and subtract mentally using three digit numbers, work confidently with equivalent fractions and decimals to two decimal places. Pupils in ~~year~~Years 5 and 6 also know the properties of shapes, have an understanding of the concept of area and understand the terms reflection, translation and rotation when using different shapes. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were able to create their own, often interesting, patterns using these different movements.
- 139 Pupils in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8 can count and subtract mentally using numbers with three digits, make a three digit number by using any combination of the four rules and a set of numbers, work with positive and negative numbers and can divide decimals to two places. Similarly work on shape and space is well developed. For example, pupils in Year 7 were able to calculate the internal angles of polygons to find out which would tessellate.
- 140 Pupils in both key stages listen carefully to the teachers and are able to follow instructions. They are keen to articulate their ideas and generally record their answers carefully. Their information technology skills are well developed, for example, pupils in Year 8 when using LOGO, were able to form instructions using their computers and follow these instructions to make their turtle move. They were also confident at printing and saving their information.
- 141 The available evidence suggests that the ability of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. In both key stages, related to their prior attainment, pupils of all abilities make sound progress. In the lessons observed progress was good overall and never less than satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Progress observed in lessons is better than the overall progress achieved so far in books. This partly results from some weaknesses in teachers' use of information about pupils' abilities and previous attainment. Some teachers are unclear on what particular pupils are to achieve in a lesson. Although the lesson goes well, it does not always in these cases reinforce pupils' prior learning sufficiently. Where lessons have specific learning objectives and these are achieved, progress is very good. Lessons built on previous learning enable pupils to further extend their understanding of the work being covered.
- 142 Pupils are extremely interested in their work and work hard. When required to they can work independently, co-operatively and on occasions collaboratively. They respond readily to teachers' questioning. Relationships are good between adults and pupils and between the pupil themselves. The pupils have good attitudes to their work and this has an impact on the standards achieved.
- 143 The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- 144 In ~~year~~Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching in nine out of ten lessons seen was good. In just over a quarter of lessons the quality of teaching was very good. The quality of teaching in two-thirds of lessons observed in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8 was good. In a third of lessons the quality of teaching was very good or excellent.
- 145 Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. Good direct teaching takes place. In these lessons the teacher addresses the whole class and often uses a black/whiteboard to illustrate their teaching. This approach is having a positive effect on raising standards. There is good

pace in lessons as a result of the introduction of the three-part lesson in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. In all lessons there is a planned sequence to the learning that enables the objectives to be met. In the better lessons learning objectives are specific and the planned activities engage the pupils and are differentiated to meet their needs. Teachers have high and often very high expectations of the pupils. These expectations are not always reflected in the recorded work in books. In lessons pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Homework is well used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning

146 Activities to develop pupils' mental strategies are well planned. Occasionally pupils need more time to explore their mistakes in order that they can learn from them. Although pupils undertake investigations they have few opportunities to use their mathematical skills in real life situations. They also lack opportunities to organise their learning and make decisions for themselves.

147 The curriculum offered meets National Curriculum requirements. The numeracy hour is well in place. Assessment procedures are also in place. But there is room for improvement in the extent and use of day-to-day assessment. The school has good systems to track the progress of pupils. Information from assessment of pupils' performance is not systematically used when planning subsequent lessons. The school has identified there is now a need to create a bank of exemplars of pupils' work. In creating this, teachers will become even more aware of the standards expected of the pupils.

148 Within the subject pupils have the opportunity to work together and find out about the number systems of other countries, therefore the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development

149 The head of department is effective and has been influential in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject benefits from her expertise and the support and expertise of other teaching staff. There is a large number of staff who teach the subject which means co-ordination is a difficult task as joint planning and evaluation opportunities are limited.

150 Resources are well used and are of satisfactory quality and quantity to meet the needs of the curriculum.

151 Since the previous inspection, there has been an overall improvement in the quality of teaching. This good teaching and the effective management of the subject are improving the standards achieved by the pupils.

• **Science**

152 Standards of attainment in science are at least in line with and generally above national expectations for the subject. In both key stages, pupils are secure and confident in their scientific knowledge and understanding, but not always quite as secure in their ability to apply those scientific ideas to new situations or in the skills needed to investigate those ideas. The progress evident in all years is at least sound and at times good; with good consistency across teaching groups. This is largely a consequence of good teaching and effective management of the science courses in the school.

153 By age 11, pupils are achieving standards at or above those typically found at the end of primary schooling. This is largely reflected in recent national tests and teachers' assessments, which show results mainly at or above the national average. Pupils generally have confident knowledge and understanding of an appropriate range of scientific fact, terminology and scientific models, although their ability to apply these to new situations is less well developed.

Their practical skills are what would be expected of pupils of their age and their ability to undertake systematic practical investigations is sound. They have a good grasp of fair testing, are beginning to identify and control variables and apply their scientific ideas to experimental predictions and results. Pupils' written work is satisfactory within a fairly narrow range of styles, purposes and experiences. Their quantitative work is satisfactory, but limited outside of investigative work. There is limited evidence of progressive development of graphical or recording skills. The use of [information technology](#) skills within science at present is limited, although a good example was seen of [Year 5](#) pupils using computer software to research information on the function of different parts of a plant.

[154](#) In ~~year~~[Years](#) 7 and 8, a very similar pattern of strengths and relative weaknesses is apparent. Pupils' progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of facts, terminology and models is good, but application of that knowledge and understanding is less well developed. Progress in investigative work continues satisfactorily, with pupils gaining in confidence in predicting, analysing results and identifying patterns, based on their own science knowledge. ~~Year~~[Year](#) 7 pupils were seen predicting which temperature would cause the release of the greatest amount of dye from beetroot cells and some were able to use their knowledge of cell structure to suggest why. ~~Year~~[Year](#) 8 pupils were asked to evaluate critically their own investigations into the strength of different metal wires, and responded well. Standards are close to, if a little below, those of knowledge and understanding. The use of [information technology](#) skills is still limited, but opportunities are beginning to be identified in the scheme of work.

[155](#) Progress is consistently at least sound and sometimes good in ~~year~~[Years](#) 5 and 6 and mainly good in ~~year~~[Years](#) 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and generally make sound progress. Key features in the progress in all years are the positive and self-disciplined attitudes of pupils to their work. In particular they show positive involvement in the small group work that is a major component of science courses in all years. Pupils have good habits and routines of working in lessons and show good levels of organisational and practical skills, handling equipment in all years competently and safely. ~~Year~~[Year](#) 5 pupils were able to measure the ages of trees in the school grounds, while ~~Year~~[Year](#) 7 pupils were able to accurately measure temperature in preparation for an investigation. Other ~~Year~~[Year](#) 7 pupils were using microfilm slides in demonstrating how to use a microscope safely and skillfully when studying a topic on the variety of life.

[156](#) A large number of teachers are involved in teaching science, including both specialist and non-specialist. Teaching is mainly satisfactory or better at Key Stage 2 and mainly good or better at Key Stage 3, with some very good teaching at both key stages. Teachers' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding are generally secure, although there are examples of pupils' misconceptions not being recognised and imprecise use of scientific terminology at Key Stage 2. Teaching develops pupils' investigative skills across both key stages, but not always in a progressive way and not all opportunities presented in lessons to develop these skills are taken. In both key stages courses are tightly organised and managed. In all years, emphasis is put on a routine of group work with a strong emphasis on investigative activities. Teachers make good use of this system in providing help, encouragement and, at best, challenge and excitement to individuals and groups in all years. Pupils do not always have a clear understanding of the learning objectives for each lesson, but in the best teaching these are specific, appropriate, shared with pupils, consolidated and returned to at the end of the lesson as a reinforcement. In a ~~Year~~[Year](#) 7 lesson on forces, pupils were set clear learning objectives on what they were expected to know and understand about friction, which were assessed at the end of the lesson as a reinforcement. Questioning is only rarely used in a challenging way to make pupils think on a consistent and regular basis. The best teaching acknowledges and elicits prior learning and links what is new to what pupils already know. ~~Year~~[Year](#) 8 pupils reviewed their knowledge and understanding of reflection of light, allowing misconceptions to be cleared, in a lesson which

then went on to explore the concept of refraction of light.

157 All pupils at both key stages have access to a broad and balanced science curriculum. Teaching schemes are comprehensive, but lack sufficiently specific learning objectives to ensure effective differentiation. More sharply defined objectives would also provide a clear, consistent framework in order to support all teachers teaching the subject to challenges understanding of concepts rather than simply cover content. The course and assessment procedures meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Evidence of pupils' achievement is largely summative, based on a narrow range of evidence of achievement and does not inform future planning to any significant extent yet. Analysis of national test data being carried out at ~~key stage~~ Key Stage 3 is providing valuable information to track and support pupils' progress. Standardisation of pupils' achievements in investigative work is taking place but needs to be further developed.

158 The good management of the science department and the commitment and enthusiasm of the teachers contributes significantly to the consistency and good standards of pupils' experiences and work. Since the previous inspection there has been improvement in the attainment of pupils in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8, the context of investigations and the appropriateness and pitch of activities. Progress across the key stages is more carefully co-ordinated and monitored now to give a clearer picture of how pupils are progressing. Further in-service training is needed as is monitoring and review of consistency of teaching of the subject.

• OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

159 Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and show improvement since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment meet with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils handle materials with confidence and are keen to experiment with them. Work in collage is good and incorporates an awareness of imagery found, for example, in the work of graphic illustrators and Rousseau. Standards of attainment meet national expectations at Key Stage 3 up to ~~year~~ Year 8 and show improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils show graphic ability in their observational drawings and constructional skills in three-dimensional work, but the skills of painting and drawing are unsatisfactory.

160 Progress made in skills and knowledge are satisfactory at both key stages, both in lessons and over time. Pupils build upon their previous experience. Pupils listen and respond to instructions, and tackle challenges with enthusiasm. They show a respect for materials and processes, and relate well to each other and to their teachers. All pupils have opportunity to work in a variety of two and three-dimensional processes including the use of computers. Contextual studies need to have a greater input into the practical work from a wider range of references for greater progress to be made. Rather than restrict visual reference to say, Edvard Munch, the work of Picasso and Matisse could broaden their knowledge base about portraits. -More time should be given to pupils for planning and research through direct observation strategies, as some work elicits only a schematic response to familiar objects where colour, shape and texture are important.

161 Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in art.

162 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Staff work hard in lessons, which are often too long for young children to maintain full concentration. Staff relationships with pupils and with each other are good. They give time and energy to extra curricular work and organise residencies and visits to art galleries. The subject expertise of the subject leader is not fully

utilised and a total of six staff are used to deliver art education, putting considerable pressure on the management of the subject and having a negative impact on standards. Learning objectives in schemes of work need to be more specific to reduce the range of activities, enable higher quality responses and support the work of the non-specialists more effectively. Homework lacks a clear focus on skill and concept development.

163 The departmental handbook is well presented with appropriate aims and objectives and reference to health and safety issues. It does not address the issues of gender, equal opportunities or suggest how monitoring of projects can inform curriculum development. The programmes of study lack a structure to indicate progression and continuity of learning. Too many techniques are introduced in a short period of time, creating insufficient opportunity to consolidate important aspects of the study. The work in sketchbooks is insufficiently clearly targeted to develop skills such as observational drawing and project planning. Information from assessment is sound, but criteria for levels of attainment to be established. Pupils are able to evaluate their own work well.

164 Art is taught in rotation with information communication technology and design and technology, at the time of the previous inspection. The overall time allocation for art is insufficient in ~~year~~Years 5, 6 and 8 to meet the demands of the National Curriculum in a manageable way for both children and staff. The long blocks of time are too great to sustain adequate concentration for many pupils. These factors are limiting the progress that committed teaching and good response from pupils could allow.

165 Books in the studio and school library are limited in quality and range. A policy for visual reference materials is lacking, links between practical work and contextual references are insufficiently strong to assist research to support learning. The purpose-built studio has inadequate display and storage facilities. The project court is not used as intended, but for unsightly storage. Furniture in the studio is appropriate and well maintained. Consumable stock is well controlled and managed.

• **Design and technology**

166 Overall attainment in design and technology is high. Attainment by age 11 is now above average, an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are maintained at above average by the end of ~~year~~Year 8 on transfer to the high school.

167 Pupils of all abilities are supported to achieve their potential. Work of a good standard was seen in food and textile lessons where pupils were using a range of research methods including the Internet to refine their designs and to plan making. Pupils use technical language correctly and model their designs to develop ideas. Following a recommendation in the previous inspection, computer control has been introduced, creating a better balance in the subject.

168 There is evidence that a small number of pupils working with construction materials are not able to finish their work. A similar issue featured in the previous inspection report. This is partly due to the way groups rotate around specialist areas. The complexity of projects using construction materials and time planning should be adjusted to ensure that pupils are able to complete work set in the time available.

169 The attainment of pupils entering the school in ~~year~~Year 5 is below average. From this baseline pupils make good progress in ~~year~~Years 5 and 6 in lessons and over time. Although not quite so rapid in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8, progress is still good. Pupils with special educational needs are

well supported and make good progress in design and technology.

- [170](#) Pupils enjoy design and technology. They show interest and enthusiasm for the work and can concentrate for lengthy periods on extended projects. Pupils are well-behaved in practical areas and when working alone. No evidence of the disaffection mentioned in the previous report was seen. Pupils collaborate well when working on joint projects and when sharing resources. Initiative is evident in the range of pupils' design ideas but other opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are limited. The positive attitudes pupils bring to design and technology contribute positively to the progress made and standards achieved.
- [171](#) The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teaching seen was at least satisfactory with almost a third of teaching being very good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good even where they are not specialists in this subject. The success of non-specialist teaching is due to the conscientious way teachers apply themselves to the subject and the quality of support from specialist colleagues. A variety of teaching strategies are employed by teachers including individual and group tasks. These encourage pupils to extend their own understanding and take account of the views of others. The best lessons had clear objectives, used time efficiently and made high expectations of pupils. Where teaching was less good, objectives were not made clear to pupils and the pace of work was not maintained. Clear short-term objectives to maintain the pace and interest of pupils are lacking in these lessons.
- [172](#) Pupils of all abilities are well-supported in design and technology lessons. Teachers monitor pupils closely, offering encouragement and comments that help pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Day-to-day assessment and formal assessments at the end of each project are recorded in teachers' mark books and used when writing reports for parents. Currently the results of assessments are not collated centrally and there is no analysis to help identify areas for improvement.
- [173](#) Technicians are used efficiently in checking and maintaining equipment. The limited time available however, is restricting the effectiveness of teachers. They spend time on routine cleaning and organisation that distracts from more important issues to do with teaching and learning.
- [174](#) Design skills are being applied correctly through all material areas. The teaching of design needs to be better co-ordinated to ensure that pupils receive a balanced experience. A sharper focus on designing each time groups rotate is required to improve progression in pupils learning.
- [175](#) Current use of loose pages does not support the development of the design process well. Vital evidence of how pupils' design ideas develop is currently being lost or undervalued. Group work contributes well to developing pupils' social skills. Opportunities for pupils to compare and contrast products in other cultures exist, but are mainly in food and textiles and under represented in other material areas.
- [176](#) The design ~~and~~ technology department has access to a cluster of modern computers and pupils increasingly use these when designing. Lack of computer aided design software and computer controlled manufacturing equipment limits the ability of teachers to present a balanced view of modern manufacturing. Provision in this area should be reviewed as soon as the new orders for design and technology are finalised.
- [177](#) Management of design ~~and~~ technology is sound. Detailed schemes of work are in place and the range and balance of projects are well thought out. Resources are managed effectively although funding for consumable materials and the replacement of small tools is well below the

average figure found nationally. Only 6% of curriculum time is currently allocated to the teaching of design and technology. This is insufficient to teach all aspects of the programmes of study to the required depth, and is thus constraining further improvement in standards.

178 Statutory requirements for health and safety are being met with all periodic checks in place and recorded. Teachers place great emphasis on the safety of pupils in their care.

• **Geography**

179 Most pupils attain standards in line with expectations at both key stages.

180 Year 5 pupils can appreciate some of the relative advantages of different settlement locations. Year 6 pupils are attaining in line with expectations in most aspects of geography. Fieldwork using the school grounds sharpens pupils' observational skills admirably. Most can use small-scale maps to identify features. Year 8 pupils can describe differences between north and south Italy and use maps and graphs to say what numbers of people have moved within and out of the country. They make proficient use of maps to identify coastal erosion features and can write cogently as hotel managers in an area where there is a proposal to build coastal defenses.

181 Pupils who offer to read are confident, fluent readers. The subject contributes positively to the literacy strategy in providing a range of genres for reading and writing. Pupils talk well about their ideas in pairs or to the whole class. The frequency of use and pupils' competency with information technology has improved since the last inspection, but continues to be an area for development.

182 Middle and lower ability pupils benefit in all years from improved schemes of work that support methodical learning and steady continuous progress. Gaps between blocks of geography lessons makes it more difficult to make good progress. Year 6 pupils struggle to answer questions about the work they did last summer and they will not study geography again until next January. More able pupils are often constrained from exploring issues in depth or in accelerated learning. Year 8 boys and girls progress at a steady rate that ensures that all reach a sound basic knowledge but few excel. Examples of where good practice overcame this general trend occurred where pupils did Internet searches or used spreadsheets to generate comparative climate data. Pupils with low literacy levels and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress with help from their teachers or support assistants.

183 Pupils show interest in their geographical studies, especially when they participate in fieldwork, see visual resources such as photo packs or video and are stimulated by powerful ideas and questions. They sustain interest for the whole lesson where lessons are planned to have a sequence of stages. They work well in pairs and are often prepared to discuss their opinions and findings if asked to do so by their teacher. Levels of concentration and behaviour are generally good.

184 Teaching in both key stages is consistently at least satisfactory and in one in four lessons seen was good. In the most effective lessons teachers have good subject knowledge, draw heavily on pupils' personal experience and prior knowledge and use a wide range of vivid and relevant resources. In most lessons tasks are methodically planned and use a range of strategies, but the outcomes are too modest because all pupils in the class are expected to do the same thing at the same pace. Twenty-one teachers teach geography and only three are specialists. The subject co-ordinators work hard to ensure that all staff are briefed through schemes of work and have appropriate learning resources to hand. Even so significant points are missed or some teachers lack the confidence to go into an issue deeply. Co-ordinators recognise that training sessions are needed if geography teaching is to improve further. This is the key limiting factor on

further improvement in progress and standards. Homework is set regularly and the best pieces extend learning. Marking is done frequently with plenty of encouraging comments but relatively few words of advice on how to improve further.

185 There is a need to continue to develop assessment systems that monitor pupils' progress and attainment. The co-ordinators have begun to raise awareness of the standards required within the National Curriculum but the use of day-to-day assessment helping pupils to meet these standards is unsatisfactory.

History

186 Attainment in both key stages is in line with national expectations as it was in the last inspection.

187 Year 5 pupils understand the importance of the Nile to the Ancient Egyptians and can sequence the events in the process of mummification. Both boys and girls in Year 8 can use sources of information equally well to decide whether King Charles I had a fair trial. They can comment on the usefulness of sources to historians and are beginning to understand the tentative nature of evidence.

188 Most pupils can read the texts provided and many are keen to read to the class. The highest quality writing occurs in formats like diaries, letters or in investigations where able pupils can write at length. Pupils talk confidently about their ideas and the lesson on Roman villas was a good example of where pupils were challenged to analyse and justify their own ideas in depth orally. Most pupils can use tables and graphs to display data. The use of computers is improving and there are some good newspaper reports of the death of Julius Caesar produced at home.

189 All pupils make satisfactory progress over time in the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to communicate their findings through extended writing but make relatively slower progress in their awareness of chronology and in the skills of interpretation. The gaps between blocks of history lessons hampers pupils' progress. Teachers work hard to support pupils with special educational needs and those pupils make appropriate progress in lessons and over time.

190 Pupils' attitudes to history are good. They apply themselves well and generally enjoy their work. They listen attentively to the teachers and to each other. Within their history lessons pupils are asked to work in a variety of groupings where they co-operate well and form positive relationships with each other and staff.

191 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, good in one lesson in four and rarely unsatisfactory. Knowledgeable teachers can outline difficult ideas to pupils in readily accessible language. Where subject knowledge is less secure factual errors occur. Lessons are planned carefully with clear structures although information about pupils' prior learning should be used more systematically to plan lessons so that the higher attaining pupils can be more effectively challenged at a brisker pace. In all lessons pupils are managed well with firm but friendly discipline. Indications of strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve, need to be a more consistent feature of the marking of written work. Homework is set regularly and the best tasks match the needs of specific groups of pupils, as in the Roman Wall exercise. Examples of good teaching include enthusiastic teachers asking questions that consolidate knowledge but engage pupils to hypothesise, evaluate and discuss their ideas as well. Where teaching is less effective teachers concentrate too heavily on content at the expense of developing historical enquiry skills. They ask only restricted questions and set over directed tasks. In the rare example of unsatisfactory teaching, most pupils were not challenged.

192 All statutory and content requirements of the National Curriculum are covered in the subject schemes of work. There are very good arrangements between partner schools for ensuring an agreed coverage of subject content and a common assessment task. The subject is well led by a committed and highly organised subject co-ordinator but the large number of staff who teach the subject have insufficient meeting time to make a concerted effort to raise standards. There are sufficient resources and the improved text book stock is used selectively. More artefacts would enhance learning in some units. There has been a significant improvement in making visits that enrich learning. The areas for development identified in the previous inspection report have been effectively addressed.

• **Information technology**

193 Overall standards of attainment in information technology are good, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Levels of attainment of pupils entering the school in ~~year~~Year 5 are below average, but by age 11 standards are good. Pupils also demonstrate above average attainment at the end of ~~year~~Year 8. Thorough planning of the curriculum ensures experiences build on prior work extending knowledge and understanding. All requirements of the national curriculum are taught including combining text and pictures, researching information and manipulating numbers and data. Pupils use computers to gather data in science and control external devices in design and technology. Skills and knowledge developed in taught lessons are put to good use in other subjects, for example, pupils design books for young children and chart the height of pupils in different mathematics sets. Where information technology is being used in other lessons, teachers make appropriate use of resources and pupils apply their knowledge and skills effectively to support the subject focus. Eye-catching posters promoting Italy contrast with work using LOGO to draw complex repeating shapes. Pupils with special educational need particularly benefit from being able to use information technology. They are supported well by teachers who are sensitive to their needs. Learning support staff are effective and have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the lessons.

194 Pupils make good progress at both key stages. By age 11, pupils can input, manipulate and present information in a variety of forms. These skills are enhanced in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8 and in addition, pupils learn to take account of the target audience, modifying content and layout of their work. Computer based training software is used effectively to ensure children of all abilities gain a thorough grounding in skills and knowledge. Extension activities are used, extend pupils, allowing more able pupils to progress well.

195 Pupils are very enthusiastic when using information technology resources both in lessons and at other times. They are able to concentrate for long periods on lengthy tasks. When asked to work in pairs pupils co-operate well and show mature attitudes, respecting the views of others. Attitudes to learning contribute to the good standards achieved by pupils in information technology.

196 A system of prefects operates to supervise information technology rooms outside lessons. Prefects take this responsibility seriously ensuring all pupils can access the resources. They maintain discipline and are effective in helping pupils who experience problems.

197 Teaching in information technology lessons is very good in both key stages and has a very positive impact on standards. Teachers of information technology have very good subject knowledge, relationships with pupils are very positive, lessons are thoroughly planned and time is used efficiently. The skill and dedication of teachers contributes to the good progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.

198 During lessons, teachers use questioning very well to test knowledge and extend understanding.

Attainment is regularly assessed and reported to parents. However this information is not being used in a systematic way to further improve the quality of teaching and learning. Funding for consumables is restricting the amount of work printed. Printing pupils' best work for display is under exploited as a way of recording how their ideas develop. Currently there are limited opportunities for pupils to examine the applications and effects of information technology. These should be extended, for example, to include studying the effects of computer automation in manufacturing industries.

199 Strong leadership and thorough planning of the timetabled information technology lessons makes a significant contribution to the standards pupils achieve. Major hardware developments have occurred recently and the distribution of resources has been well planned. Management is very effective and there is a clear vision for the future including further development of information technology in subject areas. The computer network now includes curriculum and administration computers together with computers at the adjacent first school. Smooth running of this extensive system is due to careful planning and very effective technical support. This support is available for only part of the week and consideration should be given to increasing this to reflect the size and complexity of the network. This should reduce the occasions when the co-ordinator is distracted from his main role of teaching, monitoring and managing information technology developments.

200 Since the previous inspection major improvements have been made in the provision of resources and this has been done with care and thoughtful planning. Standards of attainment have improved and procedures are in place to extend the good practice in information technology lessons into other subjects.

Modern foreign languages

201 All pupils study French from ~~year~~ Year 7 in setted groups. It is taught by eight staff, few of whom have qualifications in the subject.

202 The great majority of pupils are on target to achieve the national expectations for an average pupil by age 14. In a small number of groups, both higher and lower sets, pupils are achieving particularly well in relation to their ability. Although some boys are attaining very high standards, overall boys are achieving less well than girls, in line with the national trend. Inconsistency in the quality of teaching hampers more pupils achieving higher levels of attainment. Pupils have sound listening skills and these are sometimes very good where the teacher makes full use of the target language. Most pupils are able to respond to simple questions and use basic vocabulary in oral exchanges. Many pupils have a good accent and pronunciation and some make confident use of the target language. For example, pupils in one lower set were able and eager to use the target language for classroom communication and could answer simple unexpected questions and occasionally ask a question in return. Written work is generally accurate but the range of writing is limited. Most pupils are able to understand simple written phrases and texts.

203 Progress is generally sound or better, with progress made in both learning and consolidating new language for use in all aspects of the subject. In the best lessons pupils use new language in conjunction with language previously learnt; for example, pupils in one Year 7 class were able to reuse a range of phrases to produce a dialogue about a birthday party. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported to make appropriate progress.

204 Pupils' attitudes and diligence have a positive impact on standards. Behaviour is nearly always good and pupils are attentive, work with interest and sometimes great enthusiasm. When they are given the opportunity to work in pairs, they work supportively of each other, remain on task

and in the target language.

205 Overall the teaching in three quarters of lessons is satisfactory or better. There are a number of good and occasionally excellent lessons. Some of the non-specialists lack subject expertise both in terms of linguistic competence and the use of appropriate teaching strategies. Planning is generally satisfactory. Nearly all lessons are characterised by good classroom management, good relationships and good support for pupils. The target language is used effectively in about half of lessons and in a few lessons there is virtually no use. In many lessons there is a good focus on accurate pronunciation and accent. The best lessons stimulate and challenge.

206 For example in one Year 7 lesson there was rich and extensive use of the target language enabling pupils to develop skills of understanding quite complex language. The pace was lively with frequent changes of activity and activities were well structured with opportunities for active participation. The teacher provided good modelling of a dialogue, language previously learnt was integrated with new language and pupils were challenged to respond to unpredictable questions. Unsatisfactory elements in lessons result from a focus on tasks rather than learning outcomes, lack of variety, inappropriate use of the textbook (particularly for introducing new language) and insufficient practice of new language. The almost total lack of visual resources limits teachers' strategies to introduce and practise new language effectively. Homework is given regularly and is appropriate.

207 The subject co-ordinator is able and enthusiastic and has carried out monitoring which has clearly identified areas for improvement. Professional development is, however, weak and the co-ordinator has very limited opportunities to support colleagues to improve practice. This is a particular issue where there are a number of non-specialists. A more detailed scheme of work, focusing on expectations for different groups, clear entitlements to aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and guidance on teaching approaches, would ensure greater consistency and improve practice overall.

208 Since the previous inspection there has been significant improvement in pupils' spelling and this is now good. There has been some limited progress in the use of ~~IT~~ [information technology](#). Provision of differentiated tasks remains an issue.

Music

209 Overall, pupils in ~~year~~ [Years](#) 5 and 6 demonstrate skills in line with those expected for pupils of their age. They make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

210 In ~~year~~ [Years](#) 5 and 6, pupils develop the skills of composition and performance. By Year 6, the majority of pupils are developing a clearer understanding of composition by using a series of structured sounds to create a musical effect. For example, pupils in a lesson practised and refined their compositions linked to high and low sounds, using a range of percussion instruments. The pupils perform confidently and are encouraged to evaluate their performances. In singing they explore the dynamics of loud and soft. The pupils' were encouraged to develop their listening skills by listening to the music of famous composers such as 'Autumn', from the 'Four Seasons' by Vivaldi.

211 Standards of attainment in ~~year~~ [Years](#) 7 and 8 are generally in line with what might be typically expected nationally. Pupils generally perform well with others in a group, developing sensitivity for their audience - the other pupils in the class. They control the sounds that they produce on percussion instruments well and explore a variety of ways to produce sounds of varying texture and tone. They plan, rehearse, direct and present their performances with confidence. Older pupils are beginning to understand the rhythm structure of a minuet and

some can use a wider range of percussion instruments, including glockenspiels, to produce compositions using this musical form.

- [212](#) Pupils in ~~year~~Years 7 and 8 make satisfactory progress over time and in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. However, the higher ability pupils, including those individual pupils who make good progress in learning to play musical instruments, are not sufficiently challenged in the class lessons.
- [213](#) During the week of the inspection, all aspects of the music curriculum were addressed.
- [214](#) The longer term planning indicates that the school has taken positive action in addressing the issue from the previous inspection to develop the pupils' listening skills. Over a period of time, all pupils have opportunity to listen to and evaluate the musical works of a wide range of composers from a variety of different cultures.
- [215](#) The planning for music is satisfactory in the longer term. This general planning clearly shows in which term the aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are to be taught. There is, however, no detailed mid-term planning which identifies the progressive development of specific skills in each element of the music curriculum. This results in unfocussed and irrelevant activities which are not well matched to pupils' abilities or what they already know and can do.
- [216](#) The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. The teaching reflects the hard work and enthusiasm of the staff. The musicianship and subject knowledge in both key stages is secure. The lessons are generally well supported by planning which identifies the activities that pupils will undertake. Learning objectives for lessons are the same for all pupils in the year group, are too general and do not identify the level at which specific skills are to be developed by different groups of pupils. This results in a lack of systematic progression for all pupils and often a lack of challenge for the more able pupils. The lessons are well organised and activities are well linked. Most lessons move at a good pace. There are occasions when the initial input from the teacher, preparing the pupils for their composition sessions, takes too long and leaves insufficient time for the practical activity. The longer term assessment and recording of pupils' progress is effective and the mainly efficient planning of time ensures that the pupils have the opportunity to listen to and evaluate each others' compositions. The teachers encourage the pupils to critically evaluate their work. They make constructive comments about their performances, including how to make improvements. This is a particular strength in the teaching.
- [217](#) The response of the pupils is almost always at least satisfactory and many pupils demonstrate good attitudes. They collaborate well in group work and are developing sound leadership skills when co-ordinating the group compositions. Relationships and pupils' behaviour are good in almost all lessons.
- [218](#) The resources for music are only just sufficient in number and adequate in quality. The percussion instruments are well used and many need to be renewed. The range of song books is very limited and they are old and out of date. The co-ordinator has identified these areas for development in her development plan. Accommodation in a temporary classroom is poor and there are no practice rooms. Another priority for development is the use of information technology and the purchase of further programmes to support the further development of composition skills.
- [219](#) The wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a choir, orchestra, various recorder groups, school carol concerts and musical productions, contribute significantly to the music

provision of the school. Pupils also have opportunity to learn to play a range of musical instruments including guitar, violin, cello, clarinet, flute, brass and oboe. The quality of instrumental teaching by the visiting staff is of a high standard.

220 Overall, the school has generally maintained the good quality of music provision since the last inspection.

Physical education

221 Attainment in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 is in line with expectations in athletic activities where all pupils understand and can apply the basic principles and techniques involved, for example, in sustained running. Attainment overall by age 13 is in line with or above national expectations. Attainment is highest in girls' dance where the movement quality, control and interpretive skills of most pupils are good. Attainment is in line with expectations in athletic activities and boys dance. In all years pupils' knowledge and understanding of the principles and techniques involved in warming and stretching are satisfactory, as are their planning and evaluating skills. Standards overall have been maintained since the previous report.

222 In ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6, carefully structured lessons, individual support and very positive attitudes result in pupils of all levels of ability making satisfactory progress. In ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8 progress is mainly good, often very good and never less than satisfactory. Progress is most noticeable in girls' and boys' dance. It is good in gymnastics and athletic activities. There is no evidence of significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls or of pupils of different levels of attainment.

223
responsibility for their own learning.

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maintained in ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and non-specialists are well-supported by the department. The best lessons are planned appropriately and learning objectives are introduced and frequently reinforced. Effective questioning and explanation result in gains in knowledge and understanding. Expectations are high and work progresses at a good pace. An appropriate range of teaching strategies and resources are used to good effect and excellent relationships are conducive to enjoyable learning. Particularly good examples are girls' and boys' dance lessons. Some teachers are more adept than others at providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning, at adapting tasks to suit the needs of pupils of different abilities and at developing pupils' planning and evaluating skills. In order to raise standards of attainment and progress further, the good practice which exists in these key areas should be shared more widely throughout the department.

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inform future strategies. The curriculum does not currently provide equal opportunity for boys and girls to achieve in dance and games as boys have fewer dance lessons. Clearer evidence of pupils' previous experience of swimming is needed to confirm that statutory requirements are met.

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Religious education

227 Overall standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with and sometimes above those expected in the Agreed Syllabus. In ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 pupils demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Sikhism and Islam. They can identify basic beliefs, for example, the Sikh belief in one eternal God, and explain

concepts such as the use of symbolism in a Muslim naming ceremony. Pupils are aware that there are many religions and can compare and contrast aspects of more than one faith, for example, comparing a mosque with a church, or the idea of God in Christianity and Sikhism. They can relate important concepts to their own values and experience, for example, during work on naming ceremonies pupils identified the kind of blessings they might want for their own children. Specialist terms are used with confidence.

228 In ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8, pupils are able to identify and talk about the basic beliefs of Christianity, and use specialist terms such as crucifixion, resurrection, Christ and Messiah. They handle difficult concepts well, for example, pupils were able to explain the idea of a creed in Christianity and to relate this to their own life by suggesting their own personal creed.

229 All strands and processes of the Agreed Syllabus are addressed at both key stages. There are no significant variations in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs attain satisfactory levels in view of the challenging nature of some of the concepts tackled. There is clear development of the depth and breadth of achievement from Year 5 to Year 8.

230 Overall, progress is good, sometimes very good, and this has improved since the last inspection. Lesson structure supports consolidation of prior learning and extension of understanding, sometimes in the context of a different faith. Pupils are able to identify the progress they make within lessons, for example, learning a new parable or exploring the idea of forgiveness. There is some provision of extension work for the more able, and where support was given to special educational needs pupils they developed confidence and made progress, but there is no systematic planning for differentiation. Pupils develop skills in comparing and contrasting one faith with another and with their own lives. They are challenged by the concepts they discuss, but not always by the tasks. Investigative approaches channeling pupils' keen motivation to stimulate deeper discussion of concepts such as eternity and sacrifice are lacking. Learning objectives are insufficiently focussed or shared often enough with pupils to promote better progress.

231 Pupils' attitudes are very good at both key stages. In ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6 pupils settle quickly to tasks and are generally fully engaged with the material. They listen carefully during teachers' expositions and in one Year 5 ~~six~~-lesson were captivated by a role play based on a Muslim birth ceremony. They offer thoughtful responses to questions and are supportive of each others' ideas and interests. They are eager to tackle tasks but work in exercise books is sometimes not of the high standard which might be expected. Behaviour is at least very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils are able to work individually or to co-operate effectively in pairs. There is evidence that pupils can take the initiative but opportunities to do so are not identified in a systematic way.

232 In ~~year~~ Years 7 and 8, pupils' attitude is equally positive. They are attentive and respond to questions with confidence. They remain engaged and on task, working well independently and co-operatively, sharing ideas appropriately. Some initiative was shown in the use of dictionaries to clarify unfamiliar terms, insufficient opportunities are offered where pupils might develop their skills in research, questioning and independent learning. As in ~~year~~ Years 5 and 6, pupils greater responsibility for the quality and completion of written tasks is needed.

233 Overall, teaching is at least good, with some very good aspects. Quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is good or very good and sometimes excellent in the context of the lesson. On one occasion lack of security in subject knowledge was turned into an opportunity for staff and pupils to learn together.

234 Expectations are high, for example, in the discussion of difficult concepts, such as purification, which was explored in a Year 5 lesson. Tasks sometimes however, lack the challenge to develop interest and extend learning. Lesson planning is very good, building in a range of activities and techniques. Teachers support groups well, making assessment of progress as pupils work. Teaching is very good where the pace is crisp, tasks are timed and clearly focused and offer variety to suit different learning styles. Discipline is a strength, and is firm but not intimidating, and pupils thrive in an atmosphere which offers clear, supportive parameters.

235 Use of the school's marking scheme is beginning to be effective in promoting progress and the setting of targets. Homework supports learning, and extends pupils' understanding, for example, in work on a personal creed.

236 A team of committed teachers maintains high standards. Opportunities for effective communication, professional and curriculum development and deployment of resources are all hampered by the size of the team. These remain issues from the last inspection. The department is well-managed, and revised planning is giving clear direction in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. Monitoring processes are in existence, but have yet to influence practice. Resources in the library do not support research and independent learning sufficiently well. Funds are currently inadequate for the development of a more effective bank of resources.

· **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

· **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

237 A total of 94 hours were spent observing classes, sampling pupils work and talking to pupils. Discussions were held with a sample of pupils from each class. This ensured coverage of each year group and the attainment range within each class. Discussion centred on the life and work of the school. Pupils talked about their work and achievements. This gave an indication of the standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 and age 13. Evidence from these discussions was used to inform the appropriate aspects and subjects. Pupils were heard reading, their mathematical, information technology and scientific knowledge were examined.

237

238 Teaching staff with posts of responsibility were involved in discussions with the inspectors. These discussions covered their particular areas of responsibility and the general work of the school. Some non-teacher staff were involved in informal discussions about their particular roles and responsibilities.

238

239 The inspectors examined the work of pupils in all classes and all attainment groups. In addition, a systematic analysis of pupils' work took place during the inspection. This involved a sample of pupils' work for each year for all subjects including those judged by the school to be high attainers, average attainers and low attainers. The work of statemented pupils was also scrutinised. Pupils also discussed their work with the inspectors and read to them. An examination of the books in the school and of the available resources was made.

239

240 DATA AND INDICATORS

240 Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y5 ➤ – Y8 ➤	684 ➤	8 ➤	130 ➤	44 ➤

240 Teachers and classes

240 Qualified teachers (Y5² – Y8²)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	31.8 ➤
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21.5 ➤

240 Education support staff (Y5² – Y8²)

Total number of education support staff:	14 ➤
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	182 ➤

~~Secondary schools~~

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	82% ➤
Average teaching group size:	28
	KSEY
	STAGE
	2
	KS3EY
	STAGE
	25
	3

Financial year:	<u>1999</u> ➤
	£
Total Income	<u>1,021,987</u> ➤
Total Expenditure	<u>1,073,098</u> ➤
Expenditure per pupil	<u>1,550</u> ➤
Balance brought forward from previous year	<u>38,734</u> ➤
Balance carried forward to next year	<u>-12,377</u> ➤

240 PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out: 684

Number of questionnaires returned: 343

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	<u>27.7</u>	<u>63.6</u>	<u>7.0</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>0.3</u>
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	<u>40.9</u>	<u>54.4</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>0</u>
The school handles complaints from parents well	<u>23.9</u>	<u>56.5</u>	<u>17.1</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>0</u>
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	<u>22.1</u>	<u>62.1</u>	<u>10.0</u>	<u>5.9</u>	<u>0</u>
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	<u>23.2</u>	<u>59.6</u>	<u>12.3</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>0.3</u>
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	<u>28.1</u>	<u>65.7</u>	<u>4.5</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>0.9</u>
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	<u>38.7</u>	<u>55.1</u>	<u>5.3</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>0</u>
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	<u>21.6</u>	<u>62.9</u>	<u>7.6</u>	<u>7.3</u>	<u>0.6</u>
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	<u>32.7</u>	<u>58.0</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>0</u>
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	<u>29.5</u>	<u>61.3</u>	<u>7.7</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>0</u>
My child(ren) like(s) school	<u>44.7</u>	<u>47.6</u>	<u>5.3</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>0.3</u>

240—Other issues raised by parents

~~—[A short comment should be included if applicable]~~

240—Summary of responses

~~—[Included when there are only a small number of returns]~~