

INSPECTION REPORT

Bredon Hill Middle School
Evesham

LEA area : Worcester

Unique Reference Number : 116956

Headteacher : Mrs J Adams

Reporting inspector : Mr M Patterson
2714

Dates of inspection : 29 November - 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708139

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Middle deemed Secondary
Type of control :	Community
Age range of pupils :	10 - 13
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
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Appropriate authority :	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Mr B Hancox
Date of previous inspection :	3-6 July 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Patterson, Registered Inspector	Design and technology	Attainment and progress
	Information technology	Quality of teaching
		Leadership and management
		The efficiency of the school
Mr M Adkin, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
		Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr A Hodges	Science	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Religious education	
	Special educational needs	
Mr E Wakeling	Mathematics	The curriculum and assessment
Mr S Wrigley	English	
Mrs J Campbell	Modern foreign languages	
Mr M Clay-Dove	History	
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- This is a successful school in which pupils' attainments by the end of Year 8 are consistently above national expectations in the vast majority of subjects.
- Pupils make good progress through their three years at the school, in the vast majority of subjects.
- Teaching is of high quality with many committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers providing interesting and lively lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good; their excellent personal development and ability to work independently are significant strengths of the school.
- The school makes very good overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The school has good procedures for promoting pupils' support, guidance and welfare.
- There is very effective leadership which achieves a clear and strong ethos and good climate for learning.
- The school's financial controls and day to day administration are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Monitoring of teaching and planned developments is not rigorous enough and criteria for the evaluation of progress and performance targets are often imprecise.
- II. The marking and feedback available to pupils is not consistent in helping them know what they need to do to set their own targets for improving their work.
- III. The school's timetable gives insufficient time to the teaching of literacy, numeracy, art, and religious education.
- IV. The current banding and setting system is not always effective in meeting the needs of all pupils.
- V. Multicultural education is given too little emphasis in some subjects.

This is a good school with many outstanding features. It is a credit to the community it serves. Its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis for 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

The school's progress with the 1995 inspection main findings and key issues is very good. The school has made very good progress with Key Issue 1: "Ensure that achievement levels continue to be raised across the curriculum and in the areas specified in the report". The school has continued to improve attainment levels across the vast majority of subjects. The weaker standards identified in history and religious education have been improved, especially in history where a significant improvement has been achieved. There remains scope for further improvement in French. The school has made sound progress with Key Issue 2: "Establish clear expectations and responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of curriculum delivery". The roles of subject managers have been successfully developed in terms of managing the learning, development and organisation of their subjects. The role of the senior management team in holding subject managers to account, evaluating the outcomes of the monitoring processes and then feeding this information into the annual cycle of school improvement is planned as the next stage for the school. This aspect forms the basis of a key issue of this inspection. The school has made very good progress with Key Issue 3: "Develop a curriculum policy for the school which establishes expectations for pupils' cultural and spiritual development across the curriculum". A good whole-school curriculum policy has been adopted by the governing body, which articulates the importance of development of the individual particularly in terms of social, moral, spiritual and cultural growth. The personal and social education programme (PSE) is now a strength of the school. There remains the need to ensure that the multicultural dimensions of the curriculum are fully implemented in all subjects. The school has made sound progress with Key Issue 4: "Review management roles to ensure clear tasks and an explicit focus on quality and achievement in all aspects of school life". Senior appointments have been made to undertake key roles in the school's accountability processes. However, there is a need to define the lines of performance management and professional review in greater clarity. The school has very good capacity to improve its performance.

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
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B
			<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E
English	B	C	
Mathematics	B	C	
Science	B	C	

Pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science is above the national average when compared with all schools and in line with the performance of schools in similar contexts. The numbers of boys and girls reaching above the expected standard are high, with the boys slightly outperforming the girls in English, mathematics and science. Boys achieve a much better level of performance than is found nationally. Compared with the 1998 tests, attainment has improved in English, mathematics and science, although the pupils, in 1999, made slightly less gains in mathematics than the rate of improvement found nationally. The trend in these Key Stage 2 test results over the past three years has been positive. This national testing is undertaken after the children have spent two terms in the school. The school works hard at ensuring a close partnership with its feeder first schools to ensure as seamless a transition as possible. The strength of this link has a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve.

The main indicator of the school's contribution to the attainment of pupils is the standards they achieve by the end of Year 8, the time they leave at the end of their three years in the school. Upon entry to the school at the beginning of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations and above expectations in English and science. Overall, attainment upon entry to the school is slightly above expectations for the age group. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 8, the vast majority of pupils achieve standards that are above the national expectations for their age group. In art, French and religious education standards are in line with expectations for the age group. Whilst the attainment levels, by the end of Year 8, are above expectations for the age group, there is some underachievement in aspects of some subjects. However, pupils' attainment is generally high enough, and particularly good in information technology, music, history and geography. This is a significant improvement upon the 1995 inspection findings, especially for history.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Year 6	good	the vast majority of subjects	French
Years 7 - 8	very good	the vast majority of subjects	French
English	good	-	-
Mathematics	good	-	-
Science	good	-	-

The overall quality of teaching is very good and has clearly improved since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 96% of lessons. In 75% of lessons it is good or better and in 32% it is very good. There are examples of very good teaching in almost all subjects. Teachers know their subjects well, establish very good relationships with pupils, plan effectively and teach with enthusiasm. There is teaching of high quality which readily engages pupils' interest and leads to high standards. In 4% of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. Shortcomings in these and in some lessons otherwise competent include inadequate planning in terms of learning styles and resources for the full range of needs and abilities, and marking which does not consistently give pupils a helpful indication of how they can improve their work. In some French lessons, teachers do not sufficiently develop pupils' skills in speaking in the language.

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	Very good overall - pupils display very mature attitudes; they are responsible and behave very well both in class and during break times.
Attendance	Good - above the national average. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection.
Ethos*	Excellent. The climate for learning is extremely positive. Relationships are very good. Pupils display personal development of an exceptional quality and are well set to achieve at an even higher level of attainment.
Leadership and management	Good overall. The very clear leadership of the headteacher and governors is providing an appropriate framework for building upon the school's good standards. Monitoring and evaluation are not yet sufficiently rigorous. Developmental planning needs more measurable targets for improvement.
Curriculum and assessment	Good breadth and balance. Range, quality and quantity of extra-curricular activities are a particular strength of the school. The use of assessment to set targets for future teachers' work and to inform pupils as to how they might improve is in need of further development.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good progress with effective support in classrooms. Good management of procedures and assessment.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good - a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Moral and social education are particularly strong. Some subjects do not give enough emphasis to the contribution made by other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Well qualified and deployed staff are well supported by effective non-teaching staff. Technician support has increased but more needed. Sound accommodation, good improvement in design and technology and plans for enhancement in other areas. Adequate resources for learning.
Value for money	Good - the school has relatively low income per pupil but has improved and now achieves good standards, progress and quality of education.

* 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	What some parents are not happy about
VI. Their children achieve well at the school. VII. The very good attitudes promoted by the school and achieved with their children. VIII. Good range of information from the school. IX. Homework - quality and quantity. X. The school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school. XI. The school is easy to approach with questions or problems, which it deals with promptly and professionally. XII. The school is well liked by its pupils and parents.	XIII. In a few cases, their children are XIV. Homework is not set consistently in Year XV. Some uneven teaching strategies. XVI. Some parents would like clearer ve the progress they are making.

The inspectors agree with the parents' comments. The headteacher and staff work hard to develop very positive relationships with parents and the wider community. Children like coming to school. The school has built upon its strong reputation for promoting good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Standards of work are above average, but could be higher overall, especially in French and with some groups of pupils in some subjects. Inspectors agree that teachers need to give clearer guidance as to how pupils might improve their work. The reported differences in teaching strategies and homework are being addressed by the review of teaching being undertaken by all subject managers. The school provides a broad outline of what is taught which helps parents understand their children's progress through the school.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further the existing good standards and enhance the development of the school, the headteacher, senior management team and governors should give attention to the following:

1 Enhance the monitoring and evaluation role of all managers, particularly subject managers, by:

- a) requiring an annual review of standards for all subjects;
- b) setting clear measurable targets, with both staff and pupils, for the next review;
- c) supporting staff to enable appropriate progress to take place in meeting these targets;
- d) and ensuring that spending decisions are reviewed for their impact upon standards.

(paragraphs: 15, 20, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79)

2 Improve teachers' use of assessment by:

- a) developing a new whole-school assessment policy that provides clear guidance for all teachers;
- b) ensuring a consistent application of marking throughout the school;
- c) making closer links with National Curriculum assessment criteria;
- d) and giving regular, very clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work.

(paragraphs: 40, 51, 52)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- a) review the timetable to give adequate allocation of time to literacy, numeracy, art and religious education lessons (paragraphs: 16, 20, 44);
- a) review the current setting and banding arrangements to address the underperformance of some groups of pupils (paragraphs: 17, 47);
- a) review subject policies and practice to ensure sufficient reference and involvement in multicultural education (paragraphs: 57, 80).

INTRODUCTION

1. Bredon Hill School is situated on an extremely attractive site overlooking the Vale of Evesham. The site is large and provides ample space for sports and informal as well as curriculum-based activities. Built in the 1960s as a secondary modern school, it became a middle school in 1975. This large middle school has 454 pupils on roll (national average 382) and numbers have steadily increased since the previous inspection. The growth in numbers has led to the LEA providing a number of mobile classrooms on site. The school is in the process of a building programme, phase 1 of which had been completed in time for this inspection. It caters for one year, Year 6, in Key Stage 2 and two years, Years 7 and 8, in Key Stage 3. The pupils are drawn from a wide rural and semi-rural area. The school population represents the full range of ability, but testing in feeder first schools indicates that the intake is above average when they start school in Year 6. In comparison with all shire schools, the majority of the pupils come from homes with little or no socio-economic disadvantage. The attractive immediate locality masks the fact that the school does draw a significant number of its pupils from less favoured areas. The overall socio-economic background of the area has declined slightly since the previous inspection, but overall is still good.
2. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (4.6%) is well below the national average (16.7%). The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (0%) is very low. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (1.1%) is below the national average (2.5%), but the overall percentage of pupils identified as having special needs (21%) is in line with the national average (21.2%).
3. The aims of the school, published in its prospectus, are:
 - to encourage all pupils to achieve to the highest levels of their ability;
 - to promote in pupils a sense of personal worth;
 - to promote in pupils an enjoyment of learning and discovery;
 - to promote in pupils a respect for others and their surroundings;
 - to promote in pupils a growing awareness of the community and society at large.
4. The headteacher took her position in 1997. Together with the governors and staff, she identifies the following priorities for the school:
 - to develop literacy in both key stages;
 - to develop numeracy in both key stages;
 - to raise pupils' achievements in information technology;
 - to raise pupils' achievements in the arts;
 - to promote self-discipline amongst pupils;
 - to develop the school's environment;
 - to continue to work upon the key issues identified in the 1995 inspection report.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 2¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	87	60	147

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	74	68	76
	Girls	48	42	53
	Total	122	110	129
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	83(75)	75(67)	88(79)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	75	70	82
	Girls	53	45	56
	Total	128	115	138
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87(83)	78(73)	94(84)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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 Absence	School	5.1
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year :

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	31.5
Satisfactory or better	96.3
Less than satisfactory	3.7

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Attainment

5. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science is above the national average when compared with all schools and in line with the performance of schools in similar contexts. The numbers of boys and girls reaching above the expected standard are high, with the boys slightly outperforming the girls in English, mathematics and science. Boys achieve a much better level of performance than is found nationally. Compared with the 1998 tests, attainment has improved in English, mathematics and science, although the pupils, in 1999, made slightly less gains in mathematics than the rate of improvement found nationally. The trend in these Key Stage 2 test results over the past three years has been positive. This national testing is undertaken after the children have spent two terms in the school. The school works hard at ensuring a close partnership with its feeder first schools to ensure as seamless a transition as possible. The strength of this link has a positive impact upon standards that pupils achieve.
6. The main indicator of the school's contribution to the attainment of pupils is the standards they achieve by the end of Year 8, the time they leave at the end of their three years in the school. Upon entry to the school at the beginning of Year 6, pupils' attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations and above expectations in English and science. Overall, attainment upon entry to the school is slightly above expectations for the age group. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 8, the vast majority of pupils achieve standards that are above the national expectation for their age group. In art, French and religious education standards are in line with expectations for the age group. Whilst the attainment levels, by the end of Year 8, are above expectations for the age group, there is some underachievement in aspects of some subjects. However, pupils' attainment is generally high enough, and particularly good in information technology, music, history and geography. This is a significant improvement upon the 1995 inspection findings, especially for history.
7. In English, by the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is above the national average with some outstanding examples. Many pupils' personal and critical writing is inventive, powerful and sustained in a number of genres. Understanding of the bias and persuasive power of the media is well developed. Breadth of vocabulary is frequently impressive. Pupils often bring outside knowledge to bear in making sense of what they read. Role-play is well developed amongst all ability groups and makes a major contribution to the standard of reading. Research skills are good though note-taking needs more support amongst lower ability pupils. More able pupils can readily identify literary devices, such as metaphors and rhyme patterns, and although not always certain how these contribute to overall meaning, they are beginning to orchestrate these to perceive irony in the works of established writers. Average ability pupils do not successfully use discussion, drafting or collaborative planning to improve their writing. Spelling errors too frequently impair the better work. Overall, by the end of Year 8 standards in reading, speaking and listening are above expectations for the age group. Standards of writing are slightly above average with considerable variation.
8. Oracy and literacy skills are developed in a sound manner across the curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities across the curriculum to learn through talk and standards are well above national averages. They frequently discuss in small groups and explain their opinions and reflections orally. They listen extremely well to each other, habitually adapting their thoughts in the light of others' observations. When given problems to solve in physical education, they can ask focused questions to advance their learning. In geography, history, religious education and English pupils are regularly encouraged to argue a case from a particular point of view. They can do so with intelligence and sensitivity thereby deepening their understanding. They are able to hypothesise at high levels and make confident, articulate, reasoned contributions to whole-class debate. They are keen to read aloud and can do so with very good expression and understanding. Standards of reading and writing are generally good. Recent staff training has had positive benefits in helping pupils acquire the necessary subject-specific vocabulary. Information technology and

library resources are well organised and well used. Skills of researching, analysing and evaluating a broad range of material are frequently reinforced and extended across the curriculum. Pupils are well able to detect bias and distinguish fact from opinion, particularly at Key Stage 3. In geography and music, teachers focus on how written work may best be organised according to the particular subject purpose. In information technology, religious education, humanities and science pupils are taught how to compose in a range of written forms and standards are high in these areas. They make good progress in finding evidence to support their written opinions across the curriculum. They learn how to improve their writing in design and technology. However, there is less than the recommended time for literacy teaching at Key Stage 2 and there is limited time for extended writing. Word-sheets exist to support pupils' vocabulary and spelling but these are not systematically used and standards of spelling are lower than in other aspects of literacy.

9. In mathematics, at the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is above expectations for the age group. Thinking and reasoning skills are good across both key stages with ample opportunities for this to be developed. Algebraic skills are much improved since the last inspection. For example, in Year 8 some pupils use algebraic formulae in a spreadsheet activity with confidence and accuracy. Work on shape and space is generally of a good standard. Pupils can recognise and name a range of 2D and 3D shapes, and can identify nets for cubes. Some pupils show facility in visualising from 2D to 3D. Data-handling skills are good with pupils having the opportunity to experience spreadsheet and database opportunities using information technology.
10. Numeracy skills are developing well across the curriculum. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to apply numeracy skills in a number of subjects, and in many cases they demonstrate good levels of accuracy. For example, in science pupils are able to calculate and measure with accuracy, use bar charts, plot graphs showing the relationship between variables and use scales and measuring instruments effectively. They apply their skills with competence in the context of scientific activities. There is evidence of good numeracy skills in both history and geography, usually in data handling activities such as using tables and charts for historic timelines or geographic travel timetables. They use bar charts for facts about climate, and graphical skills using co-ordinates in a variety of contexts. In design and technology there is good use of decimals and percentages in project work, and good levels of accuracy in measuring activities for length, weight and capacity. In food technology, pupils read scales such as in weighing machines. The use of statistics in information technology lessons is of a high order. Other subjects of the curriculum gave evidence for the development of numeracy. Much of this has resulted from the whole-school approach to numeracy and the training that has been provided for all staff.
11. In science, at the end of Year 8 attainment is also better than expectations for this age group. Pupils know that an electric current passing through a wire causes heating and magnetic effects, can describe the structure and function of the main organs of the digestive system and can explain the process of dissolving. They also show good practical skills, can recognise and control the most important variable in an investigation and give good verbal responses to questions but find the production of extended written answers to written questions and explaining results using scientific theories a little more difficult.
12. In information technology, by the end of Year 8, attainment is well above expectations for the age group. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of independence and use a wide variety of information technology equipment, such as CD-ROMs, and systems such as the Internet, to research and analyse information in support of their work. The Year 7 geography field work based upon a study of a local town resulted in much high level data handling and impressive results being displayed in a variety of graphical and chart- printed formats. However, whilst there are many good examples of pupils developing their information technology in some subjects, pupils' skills are not systematically developed or used across the curriculum.
13. In religious education, by the end of Year 8, attainment is in line with the expectations for the age group of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
14. In history, by the end of Year 8, attainment is well above expectations for the age group. Pupils can use their analytical skills to accurately predict the likely outcomes to their research projects. By the end of Year 8, in design and technology, geography, music and physical education, pupils' attainment is above expectations for the age group. In design and technology pupils design and make products which are very well made and the

attention to finish is of high quality. However, they are not so practised at creating structures, or using computer-controlled systems. In geography, pupils use their analysing skills well to produce high quality presentations of their findings, but some of the higher attaining pupils could work at higher levels. In music, pupils sing well, and their ability to perform with confidence and enthusiasm their own compositions leads to some high quality work. In physical education, pupils have well-developed practical skills, but insufficient opportunities to develop their self evaluation capabilities. By the end of Year 8, in art and French, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for the age group. In art, they have a well-developed sense of artistic vocabulary, but too few opportunities to develop an appropriate range of artistic skills in sufficient depth. In French, pupils are not challenged to use the language confidently and extensively in the classroom.

15. The school has set itself appropriate targets for improvement, both in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, and for the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8. The school analyses carefully the results of standard assessment tests to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils. Support is effectively targeted at specific groups of pupils, such as pupils with special educational needs, and the school has evidence of improvement. The school has yet to set targets for all subjects on the basis of an annual review and this forms part of a key issue for the school to address.

Progress

16. The overall progress of pupils is good at all stages of their school life. Pupils enter the school at attainment levels slightly above expectations for the age group. They leave the school, at the end of Year 8, with attainment in the vast majority of subjects very securely above expectations for the age group. This represents a good degree of progress for pupils over the three years of their time at the school. This is a result of the significant amount of high quality teaching and the very positive attitudes pupils have to their learning. Within this positive picture there are some exceptions. The following are opportunities which, if addressed by the school, could improve on the current good situation. The progress made by pupils in art is restricted by the limited amount of curriculum time allowed and the current timetabling system which links the subject with design and technology. The progress made in religious education and French is only sound. In religious education, this is due to a wide range of staff teaching the subject, some of whom are less secure in their subject knowledge. The majority of teachers do not have a specialist background, and with the limiting effect of the current timetabling arrangements, pupils' progress is constrained. In French, progress is hampered by ineffective management of the subject and the pressures upon staff who teach in more than one subject area.
17. There is some slower progress made by particular groups of pupils. In mathematics, the middle and lower attaining groups of pupils do not always make sufficient gains. In some classes of English, lower and higher attaining pupils do not always make sufficient gains. In both cases, the current system of setting is not used effectively to appropriately target work at the right level for pupils of these ability groupings. Some higher attaining pupils in science are not pushed hard enough, because the work is not sufficiently challenging for their needs. Higher attaining pupils are restricted in their gains in French by some unsatisfactory teaching. In some art lessons, higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress due to the tasks set not matching their interests and abilities. Higher attaining pupils in history do not make sufficient progress. The gains made by pupils in the creative and aesthetic aspects of physical education are less because they are not given sufficient emphasis in the taught curriculum.
18. In the national tests, boys in English and science have made better gains than that found nationally. In science, this is due to the work being more closely matched to the interests of boys and the motivation provided by the extensive use of information technology within lessons. In English this is due to teachers good knowledge of the boys and the matching of work to their interests.
19. The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs is good. They are helped by individual education plans that are sufficiently specific. Their progress is monitored carefully and future targets set. The good quality of gains made is due to the good quality of learning support given and the effective partnership between the learning support assistants with teachers.
20. Within the context of generally high achievement and good progress, there are issues for the school to work

on: setting annual targets for each subject area; reviewing the timetabling issues which have a negative impact upon pupils' depth of learning and the continuity of their experiences; and reviewing the school's setting system to ensure that all pupils make appropriate progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes to learning and life at school are very good. Their response was sound or better in 99% of lessons, a rise from 80% during the previous inspection in 1995. In 86% of lessons response was good or better and in 40% very good. Across all age groups the great majority of pupils are highly motivated, keen to learn and proud of their achievements. Their generally positive attitudes to school life and the opportunities it offers are reflected, not only in the classroom, but in the enthusiasm with which they take up the very wide range of extra-curricular activities and sports available.
22. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are also very good. Pupils enjoy working together in groups in science, music, drama or at assemblies. Pupils are generally friendly and helpful towards each other. During the inspection a boy who fell and injured his ankle was quickly assisted by fellow pupils who fetched assistance and helped take him to the medical room. As in many schools minor instances of bullying occur from time to time but they are invariably dealt with swiftly and effectively. A strong personal and social education programme that is regularly timetabled for all pupils fosters supportive relationships. There is no racial tension, and the small number of non-white children is readily accepted into the school community.
23. Behaviour in the great majority of lessons is very good with an atmosphere of eagerness to learn. Pupils are invariably courteous, friendly, keen to please and obviously happy at school. Serious distracting behaviour is exceptional and usually occurs when classroom management is poor or the pupils are bored. No pupils have been excluded from the school in the last reported year. However, there have been some occasional instances of poor behaviour on the buses that bring most pupils to school. The bus journeys are long for some children and there is no adult present apart from the driver. The school has recently introduced seating plans for the buses, which is proving helpful. The great majority of parents feel that good behaviour is one of the strong points of the school. They were particularly pleased with the way the pupils behaved on a recent trip to France. The standard has improved since the last inspection.
24. Personal development is exceptionally high. It is a major strength of the school that is greatly valued by pupils and parents. Pupils show a willingness to take responsibility for their own independent learning, and all show great enthusiasm for taking part in the exceptionally wide range of social activities available across the year groups. The school ensures that the opportunity is there for every pupil to take on responsibilities, develop initiative and confidence. Each year group has a school council and environmental council and hold weekly assemblies in which all can participate. A 'Rock Ballet' production takes place every year that gives 120 pupils from across the whole school the opportunity to perform. Pupils appreciate the opportunities provided by the house system for competitions and taking on of responsibilities such as form captains and prefects. Field trips in history and geography, concerts, drama productions and visits to Paris or Calvados are all examples of the rich variety of activities that foster and enhance pupils' personal development. The emphasis the school places on competitive sports, the keenness with which they are taken up across the age groups and the success of school teams, play a key role in achieving pupils' loyalty, team spirit and confidence. Pupils' talents are recognised at each age group with merit awards and special awards for such activities as service, example and leadership. The importance of helping others is developed very successfully through in the wide variety of charities that pupils support.
25. In combination the pupils' positive attitudes, very good behaviour and relationships coupled with excellent opportunities for personal development have a very positive effect on standards.

Attendance

26. The high level of attendance, at almost 95%, has been maintained over a number of years and has a very positive effect on learning and standards. This level is well above the national average. The level of authorised absence is lower than the national average, although this would be even lower if fewer children went on

holiday during term-time. The school is taking steps to ensure that pupils' authorised absence is shown on their annual reports as well as unauthorised. There is no variation in attendance of pupils on the special educational needs register when compared with the rest of the school.

27. Lateness is not a problem except when buses are delayed. However, the school has taken steps to lessen the impact on teaching time when this occurs. Lessons invariably start on time. When occasionally they do not it is usually due to overruns of assemblies or other similar activities. This loss of teaching time has been considerably reduced, but not eliminated, since the previous inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

28. The overall quality of teaching is very good. It is satisfactory or better in over 96% lessons and unsatisfactory in a very small number of lessons. In over 75% of lessons it is good or better and in 32% it is very good. Teaching is generally of a high quality throughout all year groups. Since the last inspection the percentage of satisfactory or better teaching has increased significantly. The rate of improvement and the overall quality of teaching is a strength of the school.
29. In the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, religious education and information technology teaching is always satisfactory, mostly good and sometimes very good. In English lessons teaching is sound in Year 6 and mostly good in Years 7 and 8. In these lessons, effective planning that includes a balance of reading, writing and discussion, very good management of pupils, carefully chosen resources and very clear objectives ensures that pupils of all abilities make sustained progress. In the small amount of weaker teaching, the questioning is of insufficient quality to enable all pupils to develop their understanding at an appropriate rate. In addition, teachers need to give clearer learning targets for pupils to know what they need to do to improve their future work. There has been a good improvement in the teaching of English since the previous inspection, with the exception of the need to continue to focus upon the pupils' written accuracy and spelling.
30. In mathematics, teaching is good in both key stages. The best mathematics teaching includes well-focused mental mathematics activities that challenge pupils and consolidate their knowledge and understanding. There is very effective assessment of pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. Learning objectives are clear and questions are targeted to stretch pupils effectively. In the small amount of less successful mathematics teaching, although the lesson plan is satisfactory, the structure of numeracy lessons does not fit well within the 45 minute Year 6 lessons, leading to lack of time to deal with errors and misconceptions. Overall, there has been significant improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection, especially in the development of a new scheme of work and the variety of teaching strategies applied.
31. In science, teaching is good in both key stages. The best lessons are well prepared, with good use of resources, and aimed at consolidating vocabulary and testing knowledge. In these lessons, subject knowledge is secure and expectations are appropriately high for all abilities. In the small amount of less successful science teaching, while some elements of planning are appropriate, practical activities are not planned effectively and there are weaknesses in managing the class plus a slower pace, leading to some pupils losing interest and concentration. In addition, teachers need to give clearer learning targets for pupils to know what they need to do to improve their future work. However, overall the teaching of science has made sound progress since the previous inspection.
32. In information technology, teaching is very good overall, although there is a range that includes some good teaching, and also some lost opportunities for the linking and extension of information technology throughout the curriculum. In the best teaching very secure subject knowledge and a very enthusiastic presentational style are major strengths and leads, for example, to high expectations where pupils are unusually confident and display a significant degree of autonomy, successfully taking charge of their own learning. There has been significant improvement in the teaching of information technology since the previous inspection.
33. In religious education, the teaching is sound. When taught by the specialist it is good; however, some non-specialist teaching is less secure, learning objectives are not clear, and leads to lessons of weaker pace and

challenge in some classes. The teaching of religious education has made sound improvement since the previous inspection. The teaching contribution to personal and social education (PSE) has made a significant improvement. PSE is now a strength of the school.

34. In other subjects, with the exception of French, the teaching is good overall. In French, lessons are insufficiently focused upon the learning objectives of the National Curriculum for modern foreign languages. Teachers do not make sure that the lessons are sufficiently linked to appropriate standards of work, especially in reference to pupils' ability to speak French with confidence and fluidity. The quality of teaching has made insufficient improvement since the previous inspection.
35. A common strength in successful teaching is very secure subject knowledge leading to very confident, enthusiastic and sometimes vivid lessons. This is particularly evident in design and technology, geography, information technology and physical education lessons. However, in some religious education lessons there are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge that affect their ability to give clear guidance. Whilst teachers of French have sufficient subject knowledge, they do not use it enough to develop pupils' skills in speaking.
36. Teachers' expectations of pupils is usually good. However, in some subjects they could be higher, leading to some groups of pupils underachieving in particular aspects of their work. In mathematics, teachers' expectations of some middle and lower attaining pupils are not high enough at Key Stage 2. In English, there has been some lack of sufficient examples of work for lower attaining pupils. In physical education, there is insufficient teaching focus upon creative and aesthetic work. In science, the range of teachers' approaches are not always stretching the higher attaining pupils. In art, the teaching doesn't always focus in sufficient depth upon pupils' work and this limits their achievement levels.
37. Lesson planning is mostly good, with teachers explaining learning objectives and giving pupils clear instructions. This is an improvement upon the previous inspection. There is some very good use of questioning to consolidate and deepen pupils' understanding, for example in literacy where questions and discussions enable pupils to review earlier work and lead them forward into new work. In information technology, lesson planning is very good in the 'core' lessons, but insufficiently linked to the work in all subjects of the curriculum. Planning is sound in English Year 6 work, and for science, religious education and music in all years. There is insufficient reference to multicultural education in the planning of English, French, history, art and science lessons.
38. Teachers generally use methods and strategies that are very appropriate to pupils' needs. The management of pupils is very good, and this aspect is a particular strength of the school, even in lessons where there are other weaknesses.
39. Teachers mostly make effective use of the time available, setting a brisk pace to lessons. There are some gaps in learning resources that make lesson planning problematic. This is particularly the case in information technology, where resources are inadequate to cover the National Curriculum requirements in all subject areas.
40. Teachers make satisfactory use of day-to-day assessment. This is developed best in information technology 'core' lessons, where teachers listen and respond well to pupils, assessing what they know, understand and are able to do. Although there are examples of very good use of question and answer activities and intervention by the teacher that reflect very good verbal assessment of pupils' progress, there are insufficient written comments explaining what pupils need to do to improve. This is a weaknesses and a key issue for the school to address. The staff of all subject areas need to be far more specific in setting appropriate targets for all pupils.
41. There is a good understanding of special educational needs issues amongst staff and teachers have a good awareness of individual needs, especially since the introduction of the literacy hour. Teachers write pupils' individual education plans, in co-operation with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This informs the weekly planning and ensures that class work is appropriate to pupils' needs and abilities. Learning support assistants have undertaken training to improve their knowledge and understanding of special needs issues and

are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

42. A good range of homework is set. Pupils do take reading books home and keep their own reading records. The pupil planner and homework diary works well. Some parents would like a more systematic approach to the management of homework.
43. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is now a strength of the school and has a very positive effect upon the standards that pupils achieve.

The curriculum and assessment

44. The curriculum is balanced and offers all National Curriculum subjects and religious education together with a programme of personal and social education (PSE). The amount of time allocated to religious education is below national recommendations. The literacy and numeracy elements of the curriculum have been successfully introduced as part of the National Strategies. The time allocated to literacy is well below national recommendations affecting progress mainly in writing. The timetable in Year 6 makes it difficult to deliver the recommended three-part numeracy lessons and the overall time allocation does not fulfil national recommendations. Sex, health and drugs education is taught as part of the PSE and science curriculum and meets requirements. The timetable gives insufficient time to art and religious education and this has a negative impact upon pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects.
45. The teaching time of 25 hours per week is in line with national recommendations for pupils at Key Stage 3 and exceeds the recommendations for pupils in Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the increased time has helped to raise standards of attainment.
46. Liaison with the nine main feeder first schools and the local high school is strong in most curriculum areas and at management levels. There is an effective transfer of information about pupils' progress and achievements from and to the feeder schools. This helps teachers build on the strengths and competence of pupils and avoids duplication of curriculum experience.
47. There is equality of access and opportunity for much of the curriculum, with some constraints created by the banding system which lacks flexibility in several subject areas. Pupils with very specific strengths in some but not all of these curriculum areas are not always well served. The drawbacks of the banding system were raised at the last inspection, but insufficient progress has been made to ensure that pupils have work which is closely matched to their abilities in all lessons. The system results in some underachievement among pupils.
48. The special needs curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils on the special needs register are carefully monitored and those with a statement of special educational need are appropriately supported. Annual reviews are carried out according to requirements. The quality of the learning support assistants is good.
49. Subject development plans are helping the school to introduce curriculum change and to raise standards. The programme of in-service support for teachers and the introduction of new and effective learning resources are linked to these development plans and the school budget.
50. The provision of a wide range of extra-curricular activities is one of the school's strengths. These cater for the many interests of pupils in musical, sporting and recreational activities including some support for academic studies such as the daily mathematics clinic. The extra-curricular provision helps to raise standards and contributes well to pupils' attitudes and levels of independence. There is some careers advice as part of the PSE curriculum and this is linked to provision at the receiving high school.
51. There has been limited progress made with whole-school assessment issues since the last inspection. This has been insufficient to ensure consistent practice across and within subjects. The current assessment policy lacks specific and detailed guidance for teachers and this remains a significant area for development. Pupils do not fully appreciate their attainment levels and the progress they have made. In some subjects, such as

mathematics, history and physical education, assessment practices work well, and this helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Marking of pupils' work is variable in style and quality across subjects with no consistent whole-school approach. The levels of the National Curriculum are rarely used in subject areas to provide a benchmark of achievement for pupils except in the statutory requirement to report to parents at the end of Key Stage 2. This is a key issue for the school.

52. The school does not use data across the curriculum for monitoring the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum. The broader picture of pupils' achievements is not available for whole-school analysis and this limits the quality of curriculum planning and review. However, overall the quality and range of the curriculum have a positive impact upon pupils' attainment and progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

53. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall with some excellent features. It is one of the strengths of the school. The school has made and is making improvements to its provision in these areas which are leading to higher standards.
54. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Pupils are accustomed to having a time of reflection in class assemblies in relation to the theme from the whole-school assemblies. This is often followed up in many areas of the curriculum. Lessons in religious education, art, music, design and technology, PSE and some in science encourage pupils to wonder at the marvels of the natural world and the mystery of birth and growth. The school meets statutory requirements concerning collective worship.
55. The school's provision for moral education is very good. The school provides a secure and happy environment. This is much valued by parents, staff and pupils. Within this caring atmosphere the school effectively promotes a strong set of values for the moral development of its pupils. Pupils are provided with opportunities to identify the difference between right and wrong, understand the values of honesty, fairness and truth and show respect for the property of others. There are clear systems in place for encouraging and promoting good behaviour throughout the school.
56. The school's provision for social development is excellent. A great emphasis is placed on the social development of the pupils. This is prominent amongst the aims of the school. The school successfully encourages good social behaviour, adults set good examples and pupils relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role within the school community and take their responsibilities seriously. Teachers create many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility within lessons and more formally around the school. Tolerance and care for others are well promoted values and pupils show great initiative in dealing with visitors and helping fellow pupils. The school promotes and develops a very good understanding of citizenship. The school makes every effort to ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in school activities and have opportunities to take responsibility. All pupils are equally valued and every opportunity is taken to raise pupils' self-esteem.
57. The school's provision for cultural education is good. Pupils gain experience of many cultural traditions by participating in celebrations of traditional festivals and opportunities are provided in several curriculum areas and classes including history, geography, art, music and religious education. Pupils have good opportunities to widen their experiences by going on residential visits to France as well as visits to museums and art galleries. The multicultural dimension of the curriculum is addressed, when appropriate, in subjects such as religious education, geography and PSE as well as in assemblies and in the variety of visitors who contribute to them and to many subject areas. Many of the displays in the school reflect this and other strands of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The multicultural education of pupils is the least well developed strand.
58. The school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education makes a very positive impact upon the pupils' standards and the quality of their education.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

59. The overall standard of support, guidance and welfare provided by the school is good. This reflects considerable progress since the previous inspection. Day-to-day pastoral support and guidance in lessons is particularly strong. Pupils and staff have very good relationships. Pupils feel they are well supported both in, and outside, of lessons. Parents endorse this view and feel the school responds well to any welfare or bullying concerns that may arise. Specific improvements since 1995 have been in personal and social education, which is now comprehensive and programmed for all pupils across the year groups. Support for pupils with special educational needs has improved substantially, especially in science and mathematics where there is particularly effective use of learning support assistants. Individual education plans and review procedures are good. The school has also made progress with support for the more able pupils. This is particularly so with mathematics where the Junior Maths Challenge has produced some excellent results. Encouraging progress has also been made in English, science, art, music, history and geography. However, the more able are not being stretched fully in some lessons of English, science, art and French.
60. Although overall academic support is sound, progress across the curriculum with academic monitoring and involving pupils in target-setting is still at an early stage of development. There has been some encouraging progress in mathematics where assessment and analysis of data is good. However, across the curriculum target-setting for pupils has not been established. This is a key issue for the school.
61. Strategies for improving and encouraging good behaviour are very good. A good balance has been established between rewards and sanctions with a strong emphasis on encouragement. Good use is made of a home/school agreement and, if necessary, a behaviour contract that involves parents, pupils and school. Parents rightly feel that a high standard of behaviour is a strength of the school. The use of a competitive element in awards for good behaviour has proved effective.
62. Arrangements for child protection are good with staff trained and an effective liaison established with the education welfare officer and social services. Staff are sensitive to the importance of this aspect of welfare and pupils are aware of who to contact if necessary.
63. Attendance is high and therefore the school has not been as pro-active in encouraging improvements as in other areas. Consideration is being given to rewarding very good attendance levels. Punctuality of lessons has improved, with only the occasional one starting late, usually due to an overrun of an assembly. The lateness of buses is largely outside the control of the school but it has taken steps to lessen the impact on teaching time when it occurs.
64. The school has a good health and safety policy in place and the day-to-day administration of minor accidents, sickness and the issue of medication is working well. While fire precautions and drills are good and regularly practised there is a need to ensure closer monitoring of such things as partially blocked fire exits, and ensuring that action needed as a result of health and safety audits is speedily implemented.
65. The school's support, guidance and pupils' welfare provision has a positive impact upon pupils' standards.

Partnership with parents and the community

66. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good. It makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress in all areas of school life. Considerable progress has been made in this area, particularly with the enhancement of community and business links, since the last inspection.
67. Parents are provided with a wealth of written information, which is clearly set out. The prospectus is of a high quality with good coverage of all aspects of the school administration and the curriculum. It would, however, portray a more accurate picture of the school's facilities if it made it clear that the school is not equipped or built to cater for disabled children who cannot walk. Newsletters are frequent and informative and the annual magazine makes a very interesting read. The governing body's annual report is sound but would be improved if it included more evaluation of progress on key issues raised at the previous inspection. Pupils' annual reports are also sound but should be more specific on children's attainment and what they still need to achieve. They must include the amount of authorised absence during the year. Parents feel they are kept well

informed about life and work at the school but would welcome further information on what curriculum work is to be covered during a forthcoming term.

68. Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. The successful introduction of the homework planner has contributed substantially to parents' knowledge of current work being done and their ability to contribute positively. Of outstanding value is the hardworking parent teacher association that not only raises very large sums for the school but is a vital part of its social life. In addition, a number of parents play an important role in the school by regularly helping with reading, maths, pupils with special educational needs, science, history, the information technology club and sports. The overall impact of parents' contribution to standards is considerable.
69. The links established with feeder and high schools are working extremely well. They include regular staff liaison meetings and the exchange of curriculum information. Parents and pupils from the feeder schools are able to visit Bredon Hill, meet teachers and participate in a well-organised induction day. Similar and equally effective links have been established with Prince Henry's High School. The transition of children is invariably a happy one and staff at Bredon Hill are well informed on all new children.
70. The most impressive progress in the last few years has been made with the strengthening and expanding of links with the local community and businesses. This is now a real strength of the school. Two innovations have particularly enhanced the school's public profile. These are the enhanced role of a school press officer and the setting up of a website on the Internet. The press officer ensures a wide and frequent coverage of school events and sporting fixtures in the local papers and this has added to the school's reputation. Pupils make good use of frequent curriculum visits and field trips in connection with history, geography and music. Year 7's visit to Calvados, and Year 8's to Paris are examples of how the school enriches personal development. Pupils support a wide variety of charities, and the annual Rock Ballet in Evesham Arts Centre has become a star event in the local community diary. The part played by competitive sport in school, between schools, at county and even national level, is a highlight of Bredon Hill. The school sends teams annually to play rugby and netball in Guernsey and has achieved high recognition in athletics. For three years it has brought back gold and silver medals in the British Schools Modern Biathlon Championships.
71. Links with the business community are now playing an important part in pupils' education. Strong links have been established with the Lygon Arms Hotel, HSBC Bank (Evesham), and the Bredon Hill Rotary Club. These greatly facilitate project work. The school's winning of an award from the NatWest Bank Group for Business Environmental Achievement Reporting for a study on organic farming at a local farm is an exceptionally good example of how pupils' learning has been enhanced.
72. The partnership that the school has developed with parents and the community has a very positive impact upon pupils' standards and the quality of their education.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

73. Since the 1995 inspection, leadership and management have been through fundamental changes, with a new headteacher since 1997 and a recently appointed deputy headteacher. Since their appointment the new senior management team have been extremely busy in reviewing policy and practice. All staff have job descriptions and curriculum policy statements have been reviewed and recently brought up to date. The headteacher provides very clear, positive leadership and is giving a firm steer to the current and future management of the school's work. She has appropriately prioritised improving standards further and continuing to enhance the quality of education in the school. The development plan for the school is appropriately linked with the County plan for local education authority schools, and the frameworks that have been set out are well matched to the school's needs and circumstances. There are still areas for improvement in monitoring and evaluation, and this affects pupils' attainment.
74. The partnership between the governing body and the school is very good. The governing body has an active

committee structure based on clearly stated principles and with terms of reference for each committee. Chairs of committees are responsible for making regular reports in the form of briefings to the full governing body. The governing body has entrusted the headteacher with giving governors an informed view of where the school should be heading. Her appointment has signalled a new era for the school and the recent past has seen much work in pinpointing weaknesses and setting up new frameworks and procedures, for example to promote and enhance pupils' good behaviour. Governors and the headteacher are committed to continuing to raise pupils' attainment and the school's very good profile in the local community. The governors are very committed to their role in supporting the work of the school. The links they have with specific subject areas work well in sharing current developments. Governors recognise that underachievement by some pupils in the school is a key priority to address. Areas for improvement provide an appropriate basis for governors to hold the school to account, but the detail of projected outcomes is not currently sharp enough and requires more measurable targets for the evaluations to have maximum effect. The school has begun to measure the impact of spending decisions upon standards, for example with the recent review of the effect upon pupils' National Curriculum levels provided by the updated network information technology system. This type of review needs to be extended to all key spending decisions and forms part of a key issue for the school.

75. The support and monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is sound. The head has set up a senior management team to create a forum for discussion about the school's work. The senior management team works with the headteacher and deputy to decide on what needs doing. The development of the senior management team is a positive step forward and reflects the headteacher's commitment to ensure that staff have a sense of ownership over, and responsibility for, change. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have a link manager role with all subjects. However, the manner in which this role is to fulfil its expectations is not clear. The link needs an annual review system which requires subject managers to account, to their link member of the senior management team, for the standards currently achieved and what targets need to be set for the next year. Such a system would then enable the headteacher to produce an annual profile of the school's standards. This does not currently occur and forms part of a key issue for the school to address.
76. Subject managers are established in their roles, and have each produced subject action plans. This is an improvement upon the previous inspection and has reinforced their role in improving the school's work. Subject managers of English, mathematics and science have had a role in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and this responsibility is rightly being extended to all subject managers in this term. The literacy co-ordinator has observed lessons and scrutinised planning as part of the monitoring and evaluation aspect of co-ordination. The role of subject managers is improving but some need further professional development and training in order to fulfil their function properly. Subject management is very good in mathematics and information technology. It is good in science, art, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. It is sound in English and religious education, but unsatisfactory in French. The special educational needs (SEN) manager has insufficient time each week to undertake tasks, considering the average numbers of pupils on the SEN register. She has an appropriate cycle of meetings with the learning support assistants to oversee their work.
77. The management of the school's numeracy strategy is good and is having a positive effect upon pupils' numeracy standards. The management of the school's literacy strategy is sound.
78. The three-year school development plan is set out under appropriate headings and the priorities within it are relevant to the County and the school's current circumstances. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the actions to raise achievement are not sufficiently tied to deadlines and the people involved in carrying out monitoring and evaluation aspects need clearer guidance on their respective responsibilities. Some of the criteria for success are too general and need clarification, with measurable targets, to be of help to the people taking action. The subject development plans do reflect involvement by all curriculum co-ordinators. They vary in detail and length. Some have too many priorities; for instance, as many as ten or more.
79. The governing body's role in monitoring and evaluation is improving but governors still need a clearer role in working with staff to track improvements. Governors are attached to subject areas, which provides them with some focus for looking at the school's work. However, school visits are not made with any particular whole

school brief and do not sufficiently inform the governing body on the progress in achieving a current developmental issue. Governors are provided with information about the school's progress through detailed reports from the headteacher with an analysis of assessment data. A clear monitoring and evaluation timetable reflects the headteacher's role in identifying strengths and weaknesses each term. This is a very good initiative to help the school improve its work and governors need to identify how their own monitoring and evaluation role can be tied into this policy.

80. The school is very successful in meeting its aims and values. The curriculum is broad and balanced and leads to above average education standards. There is a clear commitment to raising attainment. The school environment is very positive and its ethos is excellent. The work in class is interesting and stimulating, pupils learn well, but not all are fully stretched; in aspects of mathematics, English, science, modern foreign languages and physical education some groups of pupils need more challenge. The school has good procedures to promote positive attitudes to learning and these are reflected in pupils' very positive responses to school life. The school also has very good procedures to promote a sense of right and wrong. Pupils could have a stronger multicultural emphasis in some subjects. However, their personal development is excellent and this is a special feature of the school. The school is working well to encourage parents to become partners in their children's education. The school makes very good provision to develop respect for religious and moral values.
81. The school has an equal opportunities statement, which has yet to be approved by the governing body, and needs a co-ordinator who could monitor and analyse data collected through standardised tasks. The school regards equal opportunities as a high priority and there are no related issues. The special educational needs co-ordinator has produced an appropriate policy for special educational needs and there is a designated governor who works well with this aspect of the school. The school pays due regard to the Code of Practice. Information on the provision it offers for SEN pupils and the complaints procedure are satisfactorily reported. The arrangements for admitting disabled pupils are reported. Parents are invited to attend and take part in annual reviews. There are satisfactory arrangements for reporting pupils' achievements to parents, but greater detail on current learning targets would enhance their usefulness.
82. The school meets its statutory requirements, with the exception of stating authorised absences to parents in annual pupils' reports.
83. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. In response to the last inspection report, the school drew up an action plan, which has been successfully worked upon. Under the leadership of the former and new headteacher, the school has set up procedures to address the key issues as part of a wider plan for improvement. Actions and developments relating to the four key issues have been appropriately reported through the governors' annual report to parents. However, these reports do not give a summary view on whether the issue has been fully addressed, or what developmental aspects remain. The school's progress with the previous inspection's main findings and key issues is very good. In particular: Key Issue 1: "Ensure that achievement levels continue to be raised across the curriculum and in the areas specified in the report". The school has made very good progress with this issue. The school has continued to improve attainment levels across the vast majority of subjects. The weaker standards identified in history and religious education have been improved, especially in history where a significant improvement has been achieved. There remains scope for further improvement in French, and the school needs a more structured method of measuring and setting targets for attainment gains in all aspects of the curriculum. Key Issue 2: "Establish clear expectations and responsibilities for the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of curriculum delivery". The school has made sound progress with this issue. The roles of subject managers have been successfully developed in terms of managing the learning, development and organisation of their subjects. The role of the senior management team in holding subject managers to account, evaluating the outcomes of the monitoring processes and the feeding of this information into the annual cycle of school improvement is planned as the next stage for the school. This aspect forms the basis of a key issue of this inspection. Key Issue 3: "Develop a curriculum policy for the school which establishes expectations for pupils cultural and spiritual development across the curriculum". The school has made very good progress with this issue. A good whole-school curriculum policy has been adopted by the governing body, which articulates the importance of development of the individual particularly in terms of social, moral, spiritual and cultural growth. The personal and social education

programme (PSE) is now a strength of the school. There remains the need to ensure that the multicultural dimensions of the curriculum are fully implemented in all subjects. Key Issue 4: "Review management roles to ensure clear tasks and an explicit focus on quality and achievement in all aspects of school life". The school has made sound progress with this issue. Senior appointments have been made to undertake key roles in the school's accountability processes. However, there is a need to define the lines of performance management and professional review in greater clarity.

84. There is a commitment to raising achievement, staff work hard to provide a very effective learning environment, relationships are very good and there is equality of opportunity for all pupils. The headteacher has established a sense of purpose, has identified strengths and weaknesses, established priorities and is setting appropriate targets for improvement. The management of the school makes a strong contribution to the improving standards achieved by its pupils. There is a very good awareness and understanding at all levels of management that there remains room for further improvement. The quality of this vision, the clear and obvious commitment to further school development, and the willingness to use the outcomes of this inspection, indicate a very good capacity for further improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

85. The overall staffing, accommodation and learning resources at the school are sound. There have been considerable improvements in some areas, notably in the dramatic upgrading of the information technology suite, the impressive new food technology area, and the management review of staffing.
86. The school has a strong team of well-qualified staff. The generally high quality of both teaching and non-teaching staff has a very positive impact on standards of learning and the quality of education provided by Bredon Hill. A real strength of the school is the number of subject specialists and the overall very high standard of teaching. Since the last inspection a management review of staffing has been implemented and there are clearly understood lines of responsibility.
87. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. However, with the large increase in information technology equipment and the expansion of science facilities the lack of technical assistance is a drawback. Learning support assistance for special educational needs children is good with a very positive effect on learning.
88. Staff training and professional development is good and linked to the school development plan. Individuals can apply for training and subject managers are kept up to date on courses available. Applications linked to a department's priorities receive greater support. However, staff appraisal, which is currently in abeyance, needs to be developed. Induction training for newly qualified staff, of which there is one in school, is good. General and subject mentors are provided and regular meetings to discuss procedures or problems are held.
89. Overall the accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. Its strengths are in the recent improvements for design and technology, information technology, subject-dedicated classrooms and the library, which is well stocked with modern books and is regularly used by pupils for research. These are all strengths of the school. The weaknesses are to be found in the three old, dilapidated temporary classrooms, and the need for renovation in the toilets in the main building. The teaching of French is adversely affected by the use of the dining room and a mobile classroom.
90. Books, materials and equipment are all adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. In information technology the introduction of 16 stations of networked computers has had a dramatic effect on standards. With information technology as a core subject in the primary curriculum pupils at Year 8 are now leaving the school with well above national expectations in this subject. Resources are good in mathematics, design and technology, information technology for 'core' lessons, art and physical education. In other areas they are satisfactory, although less so in music for pupils taught in lessons outside the music room. The school has ensured all subject areas benefit from the use of information technology. However, there is a need for more computers and associated equipment to be available within departments. There has been an effective overhaul of departments' resource inventories.

91. Overall, the school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources make a positive contribution to the pupils' attainment and progress.

The efficiency of the school

92. The efficiency of the school is good. Developments are properly costed and the annual bidding procedure appropriately links spending decisions with the priorities of the school development plan. The use of the funds for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school is developing its systems for ensuring value for money; however, valuations of the effectiveness of spending decisions and the impact upon standards are less clearly undertaken. Tenders are requested. Best value for money issues are considered by the financial sub-committee and the senior management team. A particularly effective example of this is the manner in which significant savings were made in the costing of the work relating to the recent remodelling work in the design and technology areas.
93. The governors' overview and involvement with financial matters is very good. The governors' on-site tracking of developments of the new building programme has had significant benefits in ensuring the most efficient use of finance. Governors' tracking of other development issues through a series of focus visits is a recognised next step in enhancing the partnership role with the school.
94. The efficiency with which resources, human and physical are used is good. However, the current size of the school has stretched its resources to such a stage that the possibility exists of this growth having a negative effect upon the quality of provision provided by the school. Some classes are very large, such as in design and technology and, whilst no noticeable effect upon the standards achieved is apparent, it is clear that the extra load provides more work for a very hard working staff. In order to maintain efficient use of staffing, any possibility of reducing numbers in classes should be a high priority for governors to consider. There is also a negative effect upon standards from the current use of non-specialists to teach religious education and the pressures of teaching more than one subject for some staff teaching modern foreign languages. There is some well targeted use of resources, especially in history and geography. However, there is insufficient information technology equipment to serve the needs of some curriculum areas; for instance, the lack of interface equipment to enable design and technology lessons to demonstrate and use control technology. In addition, the provision of extra specialist accommodation, planned for science, music, and special educational needs, needs to be undertaken as soon as possible to ensure equality of experience and opportunity for all pupils in these areas. The large number of mobile classrooms provide poorer working environments, especially when used to provide specialist science practical lessons.
95. Financial control is very good. Small issues in the most recent auditors' report have been addressed. Very good links exist between the financial sub-committee and the governing body. The day-to-day management of finances is very well undertaken by key office staff. The high quality of the school's administration and site agent staff makes a significant contribution to the very positive first impressions that the public have when making contact with the school.
96. The school has improved its efficiency and now provides good value for money. This judgement is on the basis that staffing, accommodation and learning resources are used well. The income per pupil is relatively low. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least good progress, so that levels of attainment overall are generally above those expected of pupils by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 8. Attitudes and behaviour are very good, personal development is excellent, and relationships are very good. The overall quality of teaching is of a high standard and makes a significant contribution to the quality of education and the standards that pupils' achieve.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

97. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is above average. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. Key Stage 2 national test results are above national averages although the more able are insufficiently stretched. Pupils' performance was broadly similar when compared with pupils from similar schools.
98. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above the expectations for this age group with some underachievement in writing amongst the more able. Pupils listen attentively and can articulate opinions in response to reading. The more able are aware of how language can change over time. More able pupils can enter readily into characters' minds and situations but questioning and evaluating each other's drama work is less well developed. Standards of detail reading are good, particularly amongst the girls, and pupils can identify a range of literary devices such as metaphors. However, the lower ability pupils are less confident in applying reading and writing strategies. Imaginative and critical writing is well organised among the more able but pupils' ability to edit and proof-read their work is less secure. Lower ability pupils can sustain personal writing at length but other writing is short and poorly structured.
99. By the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is above the national average with some outstanding examples. Many pupils' personal and critical writing is inventive, powerful and sustained in a number of genres. Understanding of the bias and persuasive power of the media is well developed. Breadth of vocabulary is frequently impressive. Pupils often bring outside knowledge to bear in making sense of what they read. Role-play is well developed amongst all ability groups and makes a major contribution to the standard of detail reading. Research skills are good though note-taking needs more support amongst lower ability. More able pupils can readily identify literary devices, such as metaphors and rhyme patterns, and although not always certain how these contribute to overall meaning, they are beginning to orchestrate these to perceive irony in the works of established writers. Average ability pupils do not successfully use discussion, drafting or collaborative planning to improve their writing. Spelling errors too frequently impair the better work. Overall, by the end of Year 8 standards in reading, speaking and listening are above expectations for the age group. Standards of writing are slightly above average with considerable variation.
100. Oracy and literacy skills are developed in a sound manner across the curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities across the curriculum to learn through talk and standards are well above national averages. They frequently discuss in small groups and explain their opinions and reflections orally. They listen extremely well to each other, habitually adapting their thoughts in the light of others' observations. When given problems to solve in physical education, they can ask focused questions to advance their learning. In geography, history, religious education and English pupils are regularly encouraged to argue a case from a particular point of view. They can do so with intelligence and sensitivity thereby deepening their understanding. They are able to hypothesise at high levels and make confident, articulate, reasoned contributions to whole-class debate. They are keen to read aloud and can do so with very good expression and understanding. Standards of reading and writing across the curriculum are generally good. Recent staff training has had positive benefits in helping pupils acquire the necessary subject-specific vocabulary. Information technology and library resources are well organised and well used. Skills of researching, analysing and evaluating a broad range of material are frequently reinforced and extended across the curriculum. Pupils are well able to detect bias and distinguish fact from opinion, particularly at Key Stage 3. In geography and music, teachers focus on how written work may best be organised according to the particular subject purpose. In information technology, religious education, humanities and science pupils are taught how to compose in a range of written forms and standards are high in these areas. They make good progress in finding evidence to support their written opinions across the curriculum. They learn how to improve their writing in design and technology. However, there is less than the recommended time for literacy teaching at Key Stage 2 and there is limited time for extended writing. Word-sheets exist to support pupils' vocabulary and spelling but these are not systematically used and standards of spelling are lower than in other

aspects of literacy.

101. Pupils make good progress in making thoughtful responses to reading, in understanding pre-20th century literature and understanding language conventions. Progress in writing is slower. Lower ability pupils progress best when they are involved in constructing worked examples before undertaking work collaboratively. More able pupils progress when tasks are more open-ended.
102. The quality of pupils' response is good, often very good. At Key Stage 2 pupils' attentive listening helps all to progress. Pupils of all abilities are keen to answer questions, give opinions and read aloud. They frequently support each other in groups and respect each other's contributions in whole-class discussion. Asking questions and applying learning independently are less well developed. At Key Stage 3 pupils willingly take notes, work together, negotiate and take on roles. They generally keep each other on task and are sometimes keen to continue sharing work beyond the end of the lesson. Homework tasks are regularly set and sometimes completed to a very high standard. Occasionally there is some over-reliance on the teacher and a lack of confidence in more sustained independent discussion.
103. The quality of teaching is good. It is always satisfactory or better at Key Stage 2 with very good teaching frequent at Key Stage 3. Expectations of the pupils are high and teachers ensure that all pupils are involved. Within lessons there is often a well-planned sequence of activities which progressively expand pupils' knowledge, especially when they are asked to challenge each other, for example when lower ability Year 8 pupils strengthen their reading skills by evaluating each other's role-play. Resources, especially audio tapes and teacher-designed materials, are well used. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and homework is well used to develop learning. On occasion the learning objectives are not clear to the pupils and ways of reinforcing these visually or by pupils' active involvement are underused. Reading and writing are sometimes undertaken and completed too quickly without sufficient time spent reflecting on which methods might be applied to improve standards. Reading records restrict the quality of response from more able pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to identify patterns and variations in reading, or to proof-read collaboratively. There is an under-emphasis on texts from other cultures. Overall, teaching has a good impact upon pupils' attainment and progress.
104. The quality of subject management is satisfactory. There is a need for a job description for the acting subject manager. Spending on resources and staff development is matched to individual and school needs and thoughtfully evaluated. The team is strong and work hard, meeting regularly and being mindful of individual needs. The team now needs to establish systems and routines that help teachers learn from each other's strengths, and make best use of all aspects of new initiatives such as the National Literacy Strategy. The team is focused on the need to raise standards and analyses results from an appropriate range, style and frequency of tests. Appropriate concern exists, for example, to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at greater length and develop links with other areas of the curriculum. However, long term planning is not sufficiently systematic to ensure coverage, for example, of opportunities to develop drama skills or teach texts from other cultures. A consistent scheme of work is needed in order to facilitate focused monitoring and allow adjustments to be made in the light of changing needs. Sheets exist for pupils to record words which they may have difficulty spelling; however, their use is patchy and pupils are not clear about how best to use these to strengthen their spelling. Pupils use 'Can-do' sheets to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, but progress is made less likely as the targets they set themselves are often too vague, too seldom referred to and lack a date when they may be reviewed.
105. The quality of education represents an improvement in the standard indicated in the previous Ofsted report. A written policy for drama does exist but now needs translating into planned opportunities for progress throughout the scheme of work. Assessment is often helpful but there is some way to go in making target-setting effective. There is a need to review more thoroughly the approaches advocated by the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils do not routinely link or apply strategies learnt in special needs lessons with the rest of their literacy work. Reading records still constrain more able pupils and guidance for reading helpers could be better linked to existing classwork.
106. In order to improve standards still further the schemes of work should be organised to show how skills will be

developed over the three years. This will need to show, for example, when and how the full range of particular English skills will be developed. Development plans need to be prioritised and worked out in greater detail, showing precise actions, deadlines and how monitoring and review will take place.

Mathematics

107. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school, and by the time they reach the end of Year 8, attainment overall is above expectations for this age group. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. Key Stage 2 national tests are above the national average. There is room for improvement across the school with some underachievement resulting from the banding system. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Attainment is broadly in line with similar schools. Number skills are good by national comparison. The school has made a successful start with the National Numeracy Strategy and pupils are beginning to show a range of effective calculation strategies.
108. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with what is expected for this age group. Not all pupils have instant recall of all their multiplication tables, but they are able to calculate with two-digit, and sometimes three-digit, numbers in their head with accuracy and speed. Pupils have reached a satisfactory standard in the other attainment targets of the subject.
109. At the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is above expectations for the age group. Thinking and reasoning skills are good across both key stages with ample opportunities for this to be developed. Algebraic skills are much improved since the last inspection. For example, in Year 8 some pupils use algebraic formulae in a spreadsheet activity with confidence and accuracy. Work on shape and space is generally of a good standard. Pupils can recognise and name a range of 2D and 3D shapes, and can identify nets for cubes. Some pupils show facility in visualising from 2D to 3D. Data-handling skills are good with pupils having the opportunity to experience spreadsheet and database opportunities using information technology.
110. Numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum, and pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to apply numeracy skills in a number of subjects, and in many cases they demonstrate good levels of accuracy. For example, in science pupils are able to calculate and measure with accuracy, use bar charts, plot graphs showing the relationship between variables, and use scales and measuring instruments effectively. They apply their skills with competence in the context of scientific activities. There is evidence of good numeracy skills in both history and geography, usually in data handling activities such as using tables and charts for historic timelines or geographic travel timetables. They use bar charts for facts about climate, and graphical skills using co-ordinates in a variety of contexts. In design and technology there is good use of decimals and percentages in project work, and good levels of accuracy in measuring activities for length, weight and capacity. In food technology, pupils read scales such as in weighing machines. The use of statistics in information technology lessons is of a high order. Other subjects of the curriculum gave evidence for the development of numeracy. Much of this has resulted from the whole-school approach to numeracy and the training that has been provided for all staff.
111. Across the key stages, progress in lessons is good or very good. Very rarely is it unsatisfactory. When pupils have work which is well matched to their needs, work that is interesting and challenging, progress is good or very good. When the pace of the lesson is slower and the work lacks challenge, progress is less satisfactory. From evidence in pupils' workbooks, long-term progress is generally good. Able pupils, in particular, make very good progress as they move through the school. The progress of average ability pupils is generally sound at both key stages. Some teachers of middle ability pupils set high expectations and achieve far more than those that take a more moderate and less challenging pace. There is some underachievement in middle ability groups resulting from a lack of match to pupils' needs. The range of ability is often wider than teachers realise. To some extent, the banding system produces a mix of competence levels, and if teachers do not plan for the spread of ability some pupils coast. There is some evidence that pupils in middle ability groups lose motivation and do not fulfil their potential simply because they know that it is very hard to be promoted to higher groups. The progress of lower ability pupils is moderate to good.
112. The quality of pupils' response to this subject is very good. They show a willingness to learn and an eagerness

to participate. The level of interest shown is almost always good. The level of concentration is generally good with pupils remaining on task throughout the lessons. This is helped by the variety of teaching approaches offered to them and the quality of resources used to motivate them. The levels of endeavour and diligence are high in most lessons.

113. The quality of teaching is good, and often better, in nearly all lessons. When teaching is effective, it has the following features. Teachers give clear and precise explanations. Their lessons are well planned and pupils are made aware of the learning objectives; in some cases they are written on the board, and occasionally pupils write them into their books. Teachers' questioning skills are particularly good involving many pupils. The rapport between teacher and pupils is of a high order. Teachers use positive encouragement when it is deserved and they are sympathetic to those that find learning difficult. Most teachers provide effective support for individuals, and the variety of their approaches helps to keep pupils interested. Resources are used very effectively. Some teachers are particularly good at capturing the attention of pupils and offer exciting and stimulating learning opportunities. Marking of pupils' work is thorough with some helpful comments given from time to time. Occasionally, teachers forget to follow-up the comments they make. Homework is used effectively to consolidate ideas and to set investigative tasks, and it is reviewed appropriately in subsequent lessons. In most cases, teachers have established a good working atmosphere which leads to purposeful learning. However, some teachers did not allow sufficient time at the end of the lesson to give pupils feedback about their progress or to deal with any misunderstandings. One reason for this is that morning lessons are short, and the three-part numeracy approach is difficult to accommodate in 45 minutes when the national recommendation is a minimum of 50 minutes. In a very few cases, the work had insufficient challenge, either because the pupils had already understood the objective, or the task was repetitive. Overall, the impact that teaching makes on attainment, progress, and the response of pupils, is considerable.
114. The quality of subject leadership and co-ordination is very good. The amount of money spent on learning resources is a little low by national comparisons. The quality of education represents an improvement of standards since the last Ofsted inspection report. In order to improve the quality of the provision in mathematics, attention should be given to providing more time to deliver the three-part numeracy lessons in Year 6. The banding system needs to be reviewed to ensure that either pupils are placed in appropriate groupings for mathematics to match their competence and needs, or teaching reflects the breadth of competence in each group. The department needs to maintain its efforts in raising standards in mathematics and numeracy across the school.

Science

115. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8, attainment is above the national expectations for pupils of this age. The rate of progress that pupils make increases significantly in Year 7 and this is maintained until the pupils leave the school. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. In 1998 the results for the national tests at age 11, for Level 4 and above, were above national averages. This is also the case for 1999. The results for the last few years show a rising trend and are now consistently above average. The percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 has also been consistently well above the national average, also showing an improving trend. In these tests boys performance is slightly better than girls. Teacher assessments for science at Key Stage 2 show a similar pattern to those of the tests. Pupils' performance was broadly similar when compared with pupils from similar schools.
116. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is better than expectations for this age group. Pupils can measure accurately and calculate areas and volumes. They can name the reproductive parts of a plant, describe the changes of state a material goes through when it is heated or cooled, and use circuit symbols to describe an electrical circuit. They demonstrate good practical skills, observe accurately and use equipment safely. They can identify when a test is fair and are able to carry one out but find it more difficult to make predictions that are based on scientific theories. They show a good background knowledge when questioned but are less accurate with the way in which they use scientific terminology.
117. At the end of Year 8 attainment is also better than expectations for this age group. Pupils know that an electric current passing through a wire causes heating and magnetic effects, can describe the structure and

function of the main organs of the digestive system and can explain the process of dissolving. They also show good practical skills, can recognise and control the most important variable in an investigation and give good verbal responses to questions but they find the production of extended written answers to questions a little more difficult.

118. The progress of pupils in lessons overall is good and improves as pupils move up the school. No difference was detected in lessons between the progress of boys and girls but the progress of some higher attaining pupils was limited by the work not being sufficiently challenging for their needs. The progress of pupils with special educational needs was consistently good.
119. The quality of pupils' response is good and shows improvement as the pupils move through the school. Pupils are always very well behaved. They always show great concentration, always work safely and successfully carry out the tasks given to them. Pupils show interest in their work and can be relied upon to work in a co-operative way. When the occasion arises they also show that they are capable of working independently and are always courteous to each other and to adults.
120. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good with the majority of lessons being judged good in both key stages. In Key Stage 2 half of the lessons were judged to be satisfactory with the other half of the lessons being good or very good. In Key Stage 3 three fifths of lessons were judged to be good with another one fifth being very good. The best teaching has clear lesson objectives well rooted in the National Curriculum and is helped by good subject knowledge, skilled classroom management of resources and pupils and enthusiastic delivery. The weaker teaching observed lacked a clear scientific focus, a sense of purpose and was not well matched to the ability range of the pupils. The impact of teaching upon standards of pupil attainment is good.
121. The quality of subject leadership is good. Good advice, guidance and support is given by the subject co-ordinator. The liaison between the school and others supports the work of the subject. The system for monitoring the effectiveness of the subject throughout the school is at an early stage of development. It includes a complete analysis of pupil performance. The system for ensuring that feedback to pupils and parents is helping pupils to improve their performance is underdeveloped. The subject fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The present scheme of work is satisfactory but needs reviewing and enrichment. It is adequate for very experienced teachers but it does not highlight strongly enough the learning objectives for pupils, identify common pupil misconceptions for less experienced teachers or promote the already good use of information technology and risk assessments. Further enrichment could take place by developing differentiated teaching strategies and materials to support the needs of pupils and to promote the multicultural education of pupils. The quality of learning resources is good but their quantity is barely adequate to service the present curriculum. These are very efficiently used and well maintained. The level of technician support is low but represents an improvement since the last inspection. When it is available it operates at a high level of efficiency and has a significant effect on the standards reached by the pupils.
122. The quality of education represents a steady improvement on the standards indicated in the last Ofsted report. In order to improve the quality of the provision for science attention should be given to the following. Steps need to be taken to enrich the schemes of work by highlighting more fully the possible learning objectives and outcomes for all pupils, promoting further use of information technology, risk assessments, and developing multicultural education. A more formal and rigorous monitoring procedure needs to be introduced so that good practice can be more effectively shared. This evaluation of the effectiveness should include ensuring that the results of assessments have an influence on day-to-day planning and that a more consistent marking policy is operated. The department needs to continue to develop differentiated teaching strategies and materials so that the needs of all pupils are catered for effectively.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

123. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8,

attainment is in line with the expectations for pupils of this age. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. When compared with other subjects in the school this represents some underachievement.

124. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for this age group. Pupils use a range of media and materials confidently and are beginning to develop their ideas in drawing, painting and clay. They gather source materials for their work. They are beginning to use the work of artists imaginatively within their practical work. Pupils in Year 6 effectively combine the work of the artist William Morris, gather pictures of flowers and rubbings of leaves to design appropriate decoration for their slab pots. Pupils have very good understanding of, and can use a wide range of, art vocabulary to describe their work and the work of other artists. This is a strength of the department.
125. At the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for this age group. Most pupils take responsibility for planning and developing their work, using skills and techniques learned in previous years. Pupils demonstrate an increased understanding of the art elements, and use a wide variety of art materials and techniques with confidence. In Year 7 a digital camera was used effectively to photograph pupils in different stances so that they could depict accurate figures in their paintings. In Year 8 well-observed distorted self portraits were achieved, through close observation, when looking in concave/convex mirrors. Simple printing tasks comprising repeated skills prevent Year 8 pupils from achieving high standards in this aspect.
126. The progress of pupils is satisfactory to good in lessons, overall it is good. They make the best progress in lessons where they are challenged and expectations are high. Higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress in lessons where tasks do not match ability and interest and where the set challenge is low.
127. The quality of pupils' response is very good. Pupils work with commitment and enthusiasm. They support each other and are constructive in the criticism of each other's work. All take a pride in their work. They clear away at the end of lessons responsibly. The attitude and behaviour of pupils is very good.
128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory to very good, with the majority of the lessons observed being good. Lessons are well planned and the best practice offers explicit learning objectives which are reviewed at the end of the lessons by teacher and pupils. Subject specialist knowledge is good. Knowledge and understanding of works of art is introduced effectively within the practical curriculum. Homework tasks are well conceived and link clearly to the scheme of work. Work is marked regularly and always includes a comment which identifies areas for improvement. Monitoring the effect marking is having on the quality of work would improve the standard of drawing and painting skills. Pupils have a good understanding of the marking policy. Pupils are given frequent feedback on their progress. The impact of teaching upon pupils' attainment is good.
129. The quality of subject leadership is good and is provided through a detailed handbook and appropriate schemes of work, which focus clearly on good learning opportunities. Assessment is appropriate and provides an accurate basis for reporting to parents and informing the receiving high school. Assessment does not always inform lesson planning or give clear guidance to pupils as to what they need to do to achieve higher standards.
130. The timetabling of art with design and technology leads to a disjointed experience which affects the development of skills and therefore attainment. Accommodation is good and well cared for. The department is well resourced but would benefit from increased resources of non-western art. Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to visit the Tate and National Galleries which has a positive impact on the individual projects developed by the year group.
131. The quality of education represents an improvement to the standard indicated in the previous Ofsted report. In order to improve the quality of the provision for art attention should be given to the following: review the timetabling arrangements in order to provide continuity and progression and to raise attainment; monitor the effect of marking to raise standards and inform lesson planning; continue to develop information technology to make it an integral part of the subject for all age groups.

Design and technology

132. Pupils make good progress as they move through both key stages. By the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is above the expectations for pupils of this age. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. Evidence from pupils' work shows that attainment in designing and making is good in both key stages and at times in Key Stage 3, it is very good. The standards achieved are higher than indicated in the previous report.
133. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above average. Pupils are developing their skills in cutting materials to size, but some pupils have difficulty in identifying simple hand tools and why they have selected particular materials for their designs. They can cut, shape, mix, and join materials to make simple models. The range and scope of hand held games in the pupils' Year 6 work are attractive and display a lively sense of imagination. Pupils can set out a simple design and use this as a basis for planning and making. Most of their models are of sufficient accuracy to work effectively.
134. By the end of Year 8, pupils can build on this understanding to use constructions as a basis for working models. They can make a simple frame structure and strengthen it and use this as the basis for the frame of a moving model. They understand the simple processes of transfer of movement and can use this to operate their designs. They have a clear understanding of simple cams and use them in their models. They can shape plastics and successfully link them to other materials. They understand the nutritional values of food and can follow and cook simple recipes using some of the principles that they have learned. Some of their research folders, such as for the 'cake stall' project, are very well organised, have outstanding quality working drawings such as in the cat and fish automata, and display a good understanding of the design and make process. Pupils can cut and sew very attractive and interesting textile hand puppets and wall hangings. However, the general use of information technology, although planned for, is not taught or exploited in as full a manner as it might be.
135. Pupils' progress in lessons is good in both key stages. During lessons some significant improvement in pupils' skill levels can be observed. They make some progress through planned projects, although too little reinforcement is given on key skills between the different material strands of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and also make good progress.
136. The quality of pupils' response is very good in both key stages. In the main, pupils behave very well and are extremely interested in their work. In both key stages pupils respond to challenge with determination and enjoyment. They are very keen to make their projects and show high levels of satisfaction in their finished work. Relationships between pupils are harmonious and they are very willing to support and help each other. In most cases they can sustain concentration and work with intensity on a task that really interests them. All older pupils show significant evidence of independent working and are confident using machines in both technology rooms. They take pride in their projects and this is also evident in the quality of the finished work.
137. The quality of teaching in both key stages is mainly good, and regularly very good in Key Stage 3. There are many strengths in the teaching. The staff work very hard and their areas are very well organised. The very appropriate improvement in the food technology area makes a significant contribution to the working ethos of design and technology. The technician makes a very effective and supportive contribution, and this is another improvement since the previous inspection. Relationships are excellent, teachers talk to pupils in an open friendly way and pupils appreciate this and respond well to it. Lessons are thoroughly planned and prepared against a plan of activities, some of which need to be revisited to link the work to end-user purpose and relevance. Subject knowledge is successfully taught through a set of practical skill development activities. In most lessons, the structure, pace and challenge are very well developed, leading to increasing progress as pupils move through the school. Assessment has improved recently but needs to be further developed to clearly help pupils to know what they need to do to achieve even higher standards.
138. The quality of education represents, as a result of much hard work, significant improvement since the previous Ofsted inspection. The head of department makes an effective and positive impact upon the co-ordination of the area. In order to improve, the department needs to: build on the current standards by clearly

setting appropriate expectations for all through target-setting; establish time to share good teaching practice and monitoring progress; review the scheme of work to include modelling and prototyping kits, structures and a greater relevance of projects; and develop the use of information technology within all aspects of the subject.

Geography

139. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is well above national expectations. Overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils make significant progress over their three years in the school.
140. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is slightly above expectations for this age group. Pupils are able to describe the physical features of geographic locations, and to apply this knowledge. Pupils are able to sketch the distinctive features seen from the upper floors of the school and can identify these on maps of the area. They are able to give reasons for the location of roads in their locality and can apply this to other regions. Pupils are able to consider the consequences for the environment and also to evaluate the human implications of developing a new road network in their home region.
141. At the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations. Pupils are able to apply their skills and knowledge to a range of locations. They are able to evaluate a range of data and offer reasons for the way regions have developed, and they are able to consider the conflicts of interest that arise when areas are developed. Pupils are good at collecting data on the Alps and analysing the impact a new ski resort would have on the region being studied. They are able to assess the environmental impact of the tourist industry and to weigh this against the economic advantages. The pupils' ability to select and use appropriate skills developed in Key Stage 2 is good.
142. The progress of pupils is good. At Key Stage 2 pupils consolidate their skills and learn how to use a range of sources of evidence. At Key Stage 3 this foundation is developed so that as new knowledge is gained their skills are reinforced and applied to more complex situations. This carefully planned curriculum results in good progress for all pupils.
143. The quality of pupils' response is very good. The pupils enjoy their lessons and find the work stimulating and interesting. Pupils take pride in their work and work in a conscientious and diligent way. The pupils have enquiring minds and enjoy finding answers to problems. They are articulate in discussion, and work collaboratively when asked to do so, respecting the views of others. The higher attaining pupils would benefit from more opportunities for self-directed learning. Progress of some higher attaining pupils is limited by the restrictions of the banding system the school operates.
144. The quality of teaching is good or better; overall it is very good. Half the teaching observed was very good, and some was excellent. Teachers in this subject have a good knowledge of the curriculum, are enthusiastic and convey this to the pupils. Lessons are well planned and there is a consistency of methods across each year group, which arises from a detailed subject handbook which provides clear objectives for the work to be taught. The variety of tasks and stimulating exercises allow students to become involved in the subject matter. Exercise books are marked regularly, but there is room for more diagnostic comments to be made and greater consistency across the subject. The impact of teaching upon pupils' attainment is a strength and results in high standards of education being achieved.
145. The quality of subject management is good. The present post holder is a temporary appointment, but the standards of subject delivery are being maintained and improved. The teachers of the subject work as a team and are committed to raising standards for the pupils. An appropriate and useful assessment scheme for extended projects is now in operation and marking relates to National Curriculum levels of attainment; these projects are moderated and formative comments are made and given to the pupils. A field work club meets regularly to arrange visits to places of geographical interest and pupils are encouraged to become involved in

every aspect of planning these visits. The specialist room is a creative environment and outstanding in the atmosphere and interest it generates amongst the pupils who enter a tropical rain forest, complete with snakes hanging from the trees.

146. The quality of education represents an improvement to the standard indicated in the previous Ofsted report. In order to improve the quality of provision, attention should be given to the following: the introduction of the use of assessment to help pupils to set improvement targets for their work; and increased monitoring of teaching to ensure dissemination of good practice.

History

147. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is well above national expectations. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Standards improve significantly as pupils progress through the school.
148. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above national expectations for those of higher and average ability, and in line with expected levels of attainment for those of lower ability and pupils with special educational needs. Pupils know the chronology of the events they study. When analysing the Battle of Thermopylae pupils are able to consider the significance of the Greek victory and to recognise that the results of this had long-term effects. Pupils are also able to identify bias in source material, and when studying the sea battle at Salamis are able to distinguish between Athenian and Persian accounts of the event.
149. At the end of Year 8 pupils' work is at least in line with national expectations, and for many it is above, or well above, the national average. Pupils have a good factual knowledge of the topics they study. They are able to give reasons for the events they study and show they understand the long and short-term consequences. When considering the reasons why Mary I reintroduced Catholicism to England, Year 8 pupils are able to consider the attitudes of people at the time and to identify a range of reactions to the policy based on interpretation of primary source materials. Pupils are perceptive and thoughtful when analysing historical sources, and they are able to extract factual information from a variety of sources and from this put forward their own assessment. When studying Mary I's reputation as 'Bloody Queen Mary' pupils can evaluate both Protestant and Catholic primary sources and consider the information in the context of other religious persecutions which took place in Europe at the time.
150. The progress of pupils is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and very good at Key Stage 3. At both key stages there is some underachievement amongst the higher attaining pupils. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject and make good progress in the development of presentational skills and in narrative writing. At Key Stage 3 pupils progress well, become proficient in the evaluation of primary and secondary sources and are able to assess the reliability of historical information. Pupils are less successful when trying to empathise with non-European aspects of the subject.
151. The quality of pupils' response is very good and a strength of the subject. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested in their work, anxious to perform well, and eager to undertake the tasks set them. They respect each other and their teachers, and are willing to help each other in group work as well as take pride in their individual contributions. This ethos is common to both key stages and is developed and encouraged by the teachers and therefore has a positive impact on the educational standards achieved.
152. The quality of the teaching is at least satisfactory with two thirds of the lessons seen being good, and over one quarter of the lessons being very good. Overall it is very good. Teachers plan their work well, make their objectives clear, and use a variety of teaching methods and activities so that the pace and challenge maintained is good. The skilled use of question and answer techniques reinforces previous learning and the opportunities for pupils to debate how and why events took place and present their own conclusions helps them generate their own ideas and think independently. Role-play and drama are also used well, and information technology is promoted as well. All work is marked, but there are too few diagnostic comments to inform pupils of how they can improve. The impact of teaching upon pupils' attainment is good and promotes high educational standards.

153. The quality of subject management is good. The history handbook is a well-constructed document which is used effectively by the teachers and gives effective guidance for lesson planning. A system of assessing each unit taught has been developed and is used by other middle schools in the area. These assessments are moderated and given National Curriculum attainment levels. A lively history club operates weekly, is well attended, and Year 8 pupils help with the younger pupils. Visits are a regular feature of the subject, and follow up work is imaginative, with wall displays being produced. Teachers feel supported and there is a sense of collegiality and commitment which is a strength of the subject and has a positive impact on the educational standards achieved.
154. The quality of education represents a significant improvement to the standard indicated in the previous Ofsted report. In order to improve the quality of provision, attention should be given to the following: the subject manager should monitor the quality of teaching; and consideration should be given to marking and target setting so that it is integrated into a whole school perspective.

Information technology

155. Pupils make very good progress as they move through both key stages. By the time they reach the end of Year 8, attainment is well above the expectations for pupils of this age. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. Progress is planned for within the whole curriculum, but inconsistently delivered, requiring further support, monitoring and evaluation. Overall, standards have continued to improve since the last inspection.
156. At the end of Key Stage 2, within information technology lessons, attainment is above the national average. Pupils can use software to enter, modify, save and print out writing and can compare this with other forms of written communication. However, they are not as familiar with using the computer to help develop the work of all subjects. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, use computers to reinforce skills and concepts in numeracy and literacy. Very good pupil use of information technology was also noted in Year 6 of the 'core' course, and in some English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography lessons.
157. By the end of Year 8 in Key Stage 3, attainment is well above that found nationally. All pupils can use software effectively to develop and present information with an awareness of the eventual user. For instance, a local town research project produced using a desk-top publishing software package is of a very impressive level, with pupils' demonstrating both capable use of computers and talented sensitive and expressive writing. When taught, such as in English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography pupils can interrogate information which they have stored on the computer and are able to interpret their findings. They can control movement on a screen and in small systems by programming a sequence of instructions. The print outs of the results of their research work in graphical form are very good, and many pupils display a sophisticated understanding of their locality. However, a significant majority of pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their information technology skills through all subjects of the curriculum.
158. The quality of pupils' response is excellent. The pupils show evident enthusiasm for information technology and enjoy using computers. They can sustain a high level of concentration and collaborate well in pairs. On occasions, such as in the very popular lunch-time clubs, higher attaining pupils help other pupils to use programmes and do so in a helpful and constructive way. Pupils use the CD-ROM system effectively in the library, but the lack of such equipment in other curriculum areas negatively effects the use and extension of this knowledge and understanding.
159. The quality of teaching within information technology lessons is usually very high. However, it is clear that, despite much training and support undertaken by the head of department, some staff in the rest of the curriculum lack confidence and expertise in developing pupils' capability in information technology. There is a well structured scheme of work in place which gives pupils the opportunity to develop their potential and allows for good progression through the three years that they spend at school. Information technology activities are built into some subject schemes of work across the curriculum, giving very clear guidance of the nature of tasks and what pupils are intended to learn. However, at this time these are not consistently taught to all pupils. Staff need further support in identifying how pupils might progress in their use of a few key

applications and in seeking ways of setting information technology in the context of other subjects. The information technology lessons are very effectively planned and the teachers have high expectations of the pupils. The assessment system works and meets basic requirements, but does not lead to a central profile on the attainment and progress of all pupils from all subject areas. The subject manager is very effective and has a clear vision for the curriculum area. The attention to detail and organisation of the subject staff handbook is of the highest order.

160. Attainment and progress are very good within 'core' lessons, but are adversely affected by the absence of adequate monitoring and evaluation of the planned skills and areas of learning in all subjects. The quality of education represents a significant amount of improvement when compared with the 1995 Ofsted report. In order to further improve the quality of the provision for information technology, attention should be given to the following. The subject manager needs planned time to support, enable and monitor other subjects in fulfilling their coverage contracts and assessment responsibilities. In addition, the school needs to continue to develop greater access to suitable information technology equipment across the school and especially in the library.

Modern foreign languages

161. Pupils make adequate progress in French as they move through the school. By the end of Year 8 their attainment is in line with expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. The overall standards indicate some underachievement by the end of Year 8 when compared to other subjects, given the Year 6 start, and the attainment upon entry.
162. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is at a moderate level. They have met a range of basic language about themselves, their family and daily life but cannot always use it confidently. They can read aloud, and understand and copy familiar language reasonably correctly. Weaknesses lie in a confident grasp of important basic grammatical ideas like gender (the difference between 'un' and 'une') and a capacity to use some simple language during lessons to ask questions and make comments. There is too little difference from band to band in the content of exercise books at this stage.
163. At the end of Year 8, top band pupils are better than the national average and lower band pupils below it. An upper group showed a good capacity to memorise language, to follow a description on a familiar topic and had previously written a short paragraph about their family with some accuracy after practice. Middle band pupils working in groups successfully made simple changes to a dialogue and, following a brief rehearsal, performed enthusiastically to the rest of the class. Lower band pupils showed some understanding of basic French but lacked a capacity to produce sentences.
164. Whilst pupils' progress over the three years is adequate, the Year 6 start should be yielding better standards at the end of Year 8. Pupils' exercise books do not clearly show command of French building up over time - moving from short to longer sentences, short to longer paragraphs. They contain many worksheets which are often not challenging enough. Confidence in simple spoken French should be more secure by the end of Year 6 and by the end of Year 8 most pupils should be able to give longer answers to questions, simple opinions and reasons for them. They should also be describing past and future events from early in the year rather than late, as the scheme of work indicates.
165. Pupils respond well in lessons. They are keen and ready to learn, participate willingly and particularly enjoy lessons where they have an active part to play (as in the Year 8 middle band lesson described above). They collaborate well and where they are given responsibility in a lesson show a mature attitude. They have a much greater capacity to learn than their French teachers currently draw upon.
166. The quality of teaching varies from good to unsatisfactory, but is predominantly unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, there is a focus on the National Curriculum programme of study for French, an awareness of the National Curriculum levels pupils are working at, structured planning with a variety of tasks, and a mix of study and practice. There is also a high level of personal use of French to run lessons and an insistence on pupils speaking correctly and giving full answers. Generally, teachers are not focused enough on

identifying in their planning precisely how pupils are to progress in a lesson and this needs to be given a higher priority in order to raise standards. Marking is not frequent or consistent enough to help pupils' standards. No developmental comments are made to help pupils see how to improve next time and no corrections are required. Markbooks do not contain a sufficient number of marks and are not organised to reflect the four areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. They do not offer a clear profile of pupils' progress over a year and cannot contribute to a broadly-based assessment of pupils' attainment at the end.

167. The management of French is unsatisfactory. A policy of all teachers using French to run lessons and requiring pupils to use more French in lessons should be fundamental to the work of the department. There should be a better scheme of work which reflects the different bands, is referenced to the National Curriculum order for French, and uses the level descriptions to set targets and drive standards. An assessment policy which is based more broadly than just on coursebook unit tests is required. Better account should be taken of the school's literacy and numeracy policies. A more business-like handbook that covers all aspects of the department's responsibilities should be put together. The rooms in which French is taught include an outside classroom and the dining room. These are unhelpful as they restrict the resources that teachers can use and the dining room in particular has a bad acoustic. There will be some adverse effect on standards because of this.
168. This report represents an insufficient improvement on the previous one. To raise standards the department should, in addition to addressing the management issues, take a fresh look at how a Year 6 start can lay a better foundation for higher standards at the end of Year 8, seek professional development opportunities via courses or up-to-date reading, study and implement the revised National Curriculum order for modern languages which includes consideration of a language in Key Stage 2.

Music

169. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is above average for the majority of pupils. The overall progress of pupils with special educational needs is good.
170. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is above the normal level expected for this age group. The singing in class is well in tune and pupils project their voices well with clear diction, good phrasing and a sense of performance. There is some good composition work when pupils improvise melodic ideas to represent fossil sounds on classroom instruments and add their own hidden melodies, this work being inspired by listening to Carnival of Animals. Listening skills are also good.
171. At the end of Year 8 attainment is also above expectations for the age group in most aspects of the subject. There is some good singing when pupils hold their own parts in a four part round or when singing the Christmas Echo song. Performing and composing skills are good. Pupils compose rock compositions using chords confidently and add melodies with an awareness of harmonic structure. When composing and performing waltzes they use keyboards, pitched percussion and some use their orchestral instruments confidently. Examples of 'Windy Day' and 'River' compositions by more able pupils show an imaginative use of instruments and musical ideas in structures. The performing skills of these pupils are very good. Pupils have no music information technology skills apart from the use of keyboards.
172. In both key stages pupils make good progress. They build on the key musical skills of performing, composing, listening and appraising and this enables them to produce some good quality work.
173. The quality of pupils' response is very good, especially to practical work. Their ability to concentrate on practical tasks and to work collaboratively, often in areas outside the classroom, is very good. Instruments are always treated well, folders are well maintained and relationships are good. The high level of good behaviour and responsibility has a significant impact on standards.
174. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and it is never less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 3 it is occasionally very good. Particular strengths in teaching which contribute to high achievement are the level of subject

expertise amongst the specialist staff, enthusiasm that imparts a real joy in the subject and good management of pupils and resources. Art work is often effectively used as a stimulus for musical themes and the room is well displayed and organised.

175. The time allocation at Key Stage 3 is well above the norm but this results in many classes having one of the two lessons outside the specialist room. This is not a satisfactory arrangement as the continuity in practical work is broken. Although there is some good singing, composing, listening and appraising work in place there are some writing and drawing activities which are not totally focused on the National Curriculum programmes of study. The department is about to move to a new room, which will give better facilities and some practice room space, but this will not resolve this issue. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there are good policies for assessment. In composition work however, though pupils are fully aware of what they have to do as an activity, they are not always clear as to what makes a satisfactory, good or very good performance and what they need to do to improve next time.
176. The school makes access to music tuition a high priority. The quality of this provision is very good with specialist teachers from the County Music Service teaching a wide range of popular instruments including guitar. Nearly one in four pupils learns an instrument and this has a significant impact on standards in the classroom. Whole year groups rehearse and perform, such as the Year 6 Hosanna Rock, and this gives all pupils an opportunity to experience the delight of sharing music together and raises expectations and standards. There are several extra-curricular groups and many opportunities for pupils to attend concerts and to perform in local venues outside the school. All of these opportunities contribute to the high ethos of the school and the very good social and cultural development of the pupils. The department is well led by a dedicated and enthusiastic subject manager.
177. The quality of education represents an improvement to the standard indicated in the previous Ofsted report. In order to raise standards of achievement even further attention should be given to the current timetabling issues, the use of assessment to help pupils know how to improve, the need to develop criteria for practical work in medium-term plans and the use of music information technology.

Physical education

178. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is above average. The overall progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of girls and boys. The progress of pupils across the three years in the school in what they know, understand and can do is good. Rapid gains are made by pupils when learning a new skill or concept during lesson time.
179. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectations for this age group. In Year 6 dance, the girls are able to remember and repeat step patterns which they develop into a traditional dance composition of their own. They can respond rhythmically to music, though they still need practice to be able to perform with a sense of style. In hockey they are still working hard to acquire the basic skills of the game but are making rapid progress in gaining the skills of push, dribble and stop. Footwork skills are still weak but are showing some improvement; the girls know why it is important to track the path and judge the speed of a ball but can't quite position their feet quickly enough to effectively gain possession of the ball. In Year 6, the boys are developing their gymnastic skills and know and understand the need for tension, extension and control in their balance and apparatus work. They can observe one another's work accurately and are beginning to describe their work to each other and their teacher in a way which will help them to identify what they do well and what they need to do better.
180. At the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is above the national average. In Year 7, attainment in gymnastics is at least in line with expectations although the majority of boys achieve standards above the national expectation. They demonstrate good body management skills showing tension and clarity in the group balances which they perform. They know the principles involved for building group balances and know, understand and apply the safety rules when lifting or supporting one another. The next stage is to gain the skills required for moving into and out of balances fluently. In Year 8 volleyball, the boys are able to

demonstrate a growing understanding of the principles of the game and have a good knowledge of the basic rules. They can adequately demonstrate a service from a bounce and can use the dig to return the ball across the net or to another player. Anticipation and placement skills are also developing well. In hockey, skills are well developed and boys and girls are able to perform with accuracy and control. In dance, standards are broadly in line with expectations for pupils of this age but they could and should be higher. Pupils know how repetition of motif and phrase can be used to create a dance idea. Movement memory is not well developed and some pupils have difficulty in remembering and repeating previous work. Not enough time is given to dance in the curriculum and pupils are unable to rehearse and refine their very basic work to show quality of performance. The department needs to review the current provision if standards for both boys and girls are to improve during curriculum time. Boys and girls can use relevant language and terminology when describing what they are doing or when answering questions related to their knowledge and understanding of the activities they do.

181. The quality of pupils' response is very good. The majority of pupils at both key stages are interested and enthusiastic in physical education lessons. They are well prepared for lessons and are always dressed appropriately. Participation rates are very high. They answer questions readily, sustain their levels of concentration and show a commitment to their work. They work well as individuals, pairs and in group activities, co-operating well and finding solutions to tasks and problems through discussion and exploration. The majority of pupils can take responsibility for their own learning and work well when out of direct supervision of the teacher. Relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and their teachers. Behaviour is always very good in lessons and during extra-curricular activities. Pupils are good listeners and confident speakers. The best responses are seen as pupils progress through the school, with older pupils clearly displaying a growing maturity in their attitudes towards learning.
182. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers' knowledge and expertise, commitment and enthusiasm has a significant impact on learning. Teachers enable pupils to learn in a safe, purposeful, lively, yet challenging environment. Teachers know their pupils well and lessons are well structured, managed and organised to provide a range of appropriate learning activities for all abilities. Teachers have very high expectations and pay good regard to safe practice issues. The link from lesson to lesson is clear in planning and in delivery and good opportunities exist for pupils to use their previous knowledge and understanding. Teachers usually explain learning activities clearly to pupils at the beginning of lessons but don't always tell pupils what they are expected to learn or improve upon during the lesson. A more consistent approach to setting such objectives and reviewing their outcomes would further develop pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve.
183. The quality of subject management is good. The subject manager has many strengths and manages the day to day running of the department well. Routines are well established and expectations of work and behaviour are high. The curriculum meets statutory requirements at both key stages but the balance of activities needs to be reviewed to give more opportunities for gymnastics and dance. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are in place and give a simple yet clear picture of pupils' achievements. Assessment is beginning to inform future planning and will be further enhanced when pupil self assessment is introduced. This department actively sets out to promote the image of physical education and sport, raising the overall reputation and profile of the school in the process and greatly contributing to pupils' social and personal development. The staff and pupils are to be commended for the huge amount of commitment and dedication given which has enabled them to be awarded their 'Sportsmark' by Sport England. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities at all levels is a strength of the department.
184. The quality of education represents an improvement to the standard set out in the previous Ofsted report. In order to improve the quality of provision, attention should now be given to the following: review the current balance of activities at both key stages with a view to raising standards in gymnastics and dance during curriculum time; consistently share learning objectives and outcomes with pupils to further develop their understanding of what they need to do to improve; continue to give pupils opportunities to analyse and appreciate performance and be able to give feedback to one another during lessons; develop the medium-term planning to show continuity and progression across all three years in each area of activity; and increase the liaison with feeder primary schools to ensure continuity for Key Stage 2 pupils on transfer.

Religious education

185. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and by the time they reach the end of Year 8 attainment is in line with that which could be expected. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is lower than would be expected in both areas of religions of the world and human experience of the world around them within the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus which the school has adopted. This level of attainment improves in Key Stage 3 to an average level. Satisfactory progress is made by pupils with special educational needs in both key stages.
186. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know that the Bible consists of two main parts, the Old and New Testament, and that these are made up of books. All pupils are able to find bible references and give simple accounts of the stories of Noah and Moses. The level of skill associated with research, retrieving and recording information is weak but improves through Year 6.
187. By the end of Year 8 attainment has improved overall and is broadly in line with that which could be expected for pupils of this age. Pupils can define such terms as martyr, saint and blasphemy, give an account of the spread of the early church and know some facts about Sikhism. Research, discussion and presentation skills have improved to a good level.
188. The overall progress of pupils is satisfactory. Although progress in Year 6 is slow it improves in Years 7 and 8 so that it is satisfactory by the time the pupils leave the school. The progress of all pupils is slowed by the low amount of curriculum time that is given to the subject. The present level of curriculum time is lower than is recommended and the present arrangement of that time makes learning the subject difficult.
189. The quality of pupils' response is good. Pupils have good attitudes to religious education. They show tolerance of each others' views. Many pupils offer restricted answers when responding to teachers but are keen to offer answers. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They are developing independence as learners. In all lessons pupil behaviour is good and good levels of concentration are shown.
190. Teaching, in both key stages, is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Overall the standard of teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching is good there is a high order of classroom and pupil management. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and adopts a range of teaching strategies. In these lessons curriculum objectives are effectively translated into focused learning outcomes. To improve the quality of teaching overall steps should be taken to strengthen teacher subject knowledge, understanding and planning through a programme of in service education. The quality of marking is not consistent and lacks comments that would constructively help pupils raise the standard of their work by clearly giving advice on what the strengths and weaknesses of a piece of work are and how it can be improved.
191. The quality of subject management is satisfactory. The subject is led by an experienced teacher who has put into place a good policy and scheme of work. This planning would be greatly enriched by the addition of specific learning objectives related to the activities that are to be undertaken. In addition, the work is not well matched to pupils of different abilities. Monitoring of the implementation of the curriculum and teaching and learning outcomes is underdeveloped. Priorities need to be set for future development on the basis of effective assessment. The subject meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus and is well balanced. Religious education in all years contributes strongly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The subject is adequately resourced to support the present scheme for religious education.
192. The quality of education represents an improvement on the standards indicated in the last Ofsted inspection. In order to improve the quality of the provision attention should be given to the following: actively seek more opportunities to differentiate the work to match more closely the needs of pupils; review the curriculum time offered to the subject and arrangements for the use of that time to ensure greater continuity and progression; address the issue of weaker subject knowledge of some teachers; enhance the planning of the subject to include clear learning objectives; enable the subject manager to undertake a more rigorous monitoring of the

subject so she is able to identify and share good practice; and ensure a more consistent approach to assessment including the adoption of a marking system that helps pupils improve their standards by accurately identifying strengths and weaknesses and giving clear advice for improvement.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

Range and extent of discussions with the pupils

193. A representative sample of pupils from each year group, with a balance for gender and attainment, were met by the inspection team. All were spoken with to gauge their feeling about the school and the extent to which it enables them to make progress. Their records were also scrutinised. In addition, frequent informal conversations with a large number of pupils took place throughout the period of the inspection.

Range and extent of discussions with staff

194. Over forty meetings were held with staff in their capacity as senior managers, class teachers and subject managers to discuss the progress of the pupils and to consider planning, assessment and record keeping practices and the management and development of the curriculum areas that they lead. The headteacher and all senior staff were involved in discussions about all aspects of the school. Most support staff were spoken with about their roles within the school. Representatives of the administration staff, secretaries and the site services manager were also spoken to about their work. In addition, the headteachers of a feeder first school and receiving high school contributed evidence for the inspection.

Range and amount of pupils' written work seen

195. A sample of all of the provided work and records of a representative group of pupils from each year group, with a balance for gender, and ability spread of the school, was scrutinised to ascertain judgements about overall attainment, progress, consistency of work across the curriculum and individual strengths and weaknesses relative to individual education plans. Inspectors further scrutinised written work and records of pupils across all areas of the National Curriculum plus religious education. The central record files of a sample of pupils with special educational needs were inspected. Pupils' work exhibited in the wide range of good quality displays were observed and read.

Any other significant evidence

196. The school was inspected by a team of 10 inspectors, including the lay inspector, who spent the equivalent of 30 days in the school. The school's complete policy and planning documentation, working papers of the various management teams, curriculum and staff development information and administrative and financial records were scrutinised. The work of all the classes and teachers and across all aspects of the curriculum was inspected. Arrival and departure times, break and lunch-times and meetings were observed. Many meetings were held with various members of the school's management team. Parents expressed their views

through the questionnaire and supporting written comments and a meeting with the registered inspector and his deputy. In addition, discussions took place with a member of the Parent Teachers Association Committee.

DATA AND INDICATORS

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
Y6 - Y8	454	5	96	21

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y6 - Y8)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	20.94
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.68

Education support staff (Y6 - Y8)

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked each week	51.5

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes:	83.9
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Average teaching group size:	KS2	26
	KS3	25

Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	721144
Total Expenditure	723447
Expenditure per pupil	1666.93
Balance brought forward from previous year	53867
Balance carried forward to next year	51564

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	450
Number of questionnaires returned:	85

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	32	57	9	2	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	46	46	7	0	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	26	51	18	4	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	20	55	20	5	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	57	14	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	52	4	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	51	43	6	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	27	64	1	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	49	45	4	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	51	38	11	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	59	38	2	0	1

Other issues raised by parents

There were a small number of written comments. Parents are mainly supportive of the school, the many opportunities it offers and the standards its achieves. Responses indicate that parents have a range of individual concerns based on their own experience.