

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MARGARET BEAUFORT MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Riseley, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109657

Headteacher: Mr Hew Wright

Reporting inspector: Mr Rod Spinks  
2783

Dates of inspection: 8 – 12 May 2000

Inspection number: 185560

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 - 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Riseley Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK44 1DR
Telephone number:	01234 708213
Fax number:	01234 708904
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev David Bourne
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rod Spinks	Registered inspector	Design and technology	What sort of school is it?
		Physical education	The school's results and pupils achievements.
		Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Rob Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
David Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
Adrian Allchin	Team inspector	Science	
		Information technology	
		Equal opportunities	
Beryl Thomas	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	
Neil Rathmell	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Music	
Helen Whiter	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Staffordshire and Midlands Consortium

Mr I H Jones  
Kingston Centre  
Fairway  
Stafford  
ST16 3TW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7 - 12</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15 - 17</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>17 - 19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20 - 21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>21 - 23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24 - 27</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28 - 44</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Margaret Beaufort Middle School is a small mixed school for pupils in the 9 to 13 age range with 363 pupils on roll. The school is popular and the school population is stable with little movement of pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (5.8%) is below the national average. There are fewer than average pupils identified on the school's register of special educational needs (19.8%) but the number of pupils for whom there is a formal statement of need is about average. There is only one pupil for whom English is an additional language. The school is situated in the village of Riseley to the north of Bedford. The school takes pupils from the village and from a wide surrounding area. Many pupils are bussed to and from the school at the beginning and end of the school day. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment just above average although the full range of attainment is represented. They come from generally advantaged backgrounds and are mostly well supported by their parents.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good middle school. The very good teaching enables pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 to make good and often very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress through very effective support programmes. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Behaviour is excellent at all times and pupils develop into mature and responsible young people. Pupils' social, moral and cultural development is very good. The headteacher leads a very effective team of staff in providing a wide range of good educational experiences for pupils. The headteacher works closely with the governing body and the aims of the school are achieved successfully.

The school has about average income per pupil for middle schools and with pupils attaining high and improving standards, the school is providing good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils attain above average standards in both key stages.
- Pupils' personal development is very good – they are mature, thoughtful and responsible. They demonstrate good social skills and they collaborate well in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards school are excellent.
- The quality of teaching is very good. Some outstanding lessons were seen.
- Subject documentation is mostly very good.
- Good procedures and practice for marking pupils' work contributes to high standards.
- The clean buildings with very good displays of pupils' work provide a welcoming and stimulating learning environment.
- There is good support from parents and the community for the work of the school.
- Very good management and effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher to improve the quality and raise standards.
- The very good range, quality and participation in extra-curricular activities which are only possible through the time and energy commitment of staff.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

#### **What could be improved**

- The management of mathematics.
- Meeting the statutory requirements for collective worship.
- Learning resources in science, art, music and sense/control equipment in information technology. The limited range of book resources and the limited access to the library during lesson time reduces the opportunities for pupils to further develop their research skills.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

At the time of the previous inspection the school was found to have significant weaknesses. Pupils are now attaining standards by the end of Key Stage 2, which are well above the national averages for pupils attaining the expected standard of Level 4 in English and science and above in mathematics. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 are above the average in English and science. By the end of Year 8 pupils are attaining standards which are well above average. These standards show consistent improvement since the previous inspection.

The quality of teaching has improved from an unsatisfactory standard to a high standard. In this inspection teaching was judged to be very good overall with some outstanding teaching being observed. The improved standards are a direct result of the improved teaching. The governors have provided secure support and clear direction for the school in addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection report. The current headteacher has been in post for three years and has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Effective management by the headteacher and governors has ensured that all of the key issues identified in the previous inspection report have been very effectively addressed.

## **STANDARDS**

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

<b>Performance in:</b>	<b>compared with</b>		<b>Key</b>
	<b>all schools</b>	<b>Similar schools</b>	
English	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D
Mathematics	B	D	well below average E
Science	A	C	

In the 1999 tests and assessments for 11 year olds, pupils attained standards in English and science, which are well above the national averages. They attain standards above the national average in mathematics. When compared with schools having a similar proportion of pupils



eligible for free school meals, standards in English are above the average, standards in science are average and standards in mathematics are below the average. By the end of Year 8 standards in English and science are well above those expected for this age group and standards in mathematics are average. Standards in all subjects of the curriculum, except music, are above those typically expected by the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8. Standards in music are in line with those normally found by the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8. Pupils enter the school with attainment just above the average and have made good progress to achieve these standards in all subjects except mathematics where progress is satisfactory. Although standards over the last three years show some variation due to varying proportions of pupils with special educational needs, the trend is of improving standards.

By the end of Year 8, from the work observed in lessons and from a detailed evaluation of pupils' work over the last year, inspectors judge that pupils are attaining standards well above the expected levels. Pupils are making sustained good progress over time in all subjects except mathematics where progress is satisfactory.

The school has set targets for the overall attainment of pupils which offer some challenge and are intended to ensure the continued raising of standards, however, the targets could be more challenging.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils come to school to learn and make progress. They concentrate well and try very hard at all times and in all lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are mature and responsible.
Attendance	Good. Pupils attend school regularly and arrive punctually.

Pupils develop well as individuals. They show responsible attitudes. Relationships in the school are excellent and all pupils get on well together and with their teachers. Behaviour is excellent at all times. Attendance levels are above average this year and unauthorised absence is well below average. Pupils move quickly from lesson to lesson ensuring that lessons begin on time.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>Aged 9 – 11 years</b>	<b>Aged 11 – 13 years</b>
----------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------

Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good
----------------------	-----------	-----------

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

In all inspectors observed 82 lessons of which the overwhelming majority were whole lessons. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons observed. It was good or better in over four fifths of lessons and very good or outstanding in almost two fifths of lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use a range of approaches to deliver lively lessons. Teachers use their ongoing assessments of pupils' progress in lessons to challenge them further to enable them to make even better progress. In the majority of subjects teachers' marking is very effective in identifying pupils' successes and showing them what they need to do to improve. The teaching and support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers conscientiously address the learning targets for these pupils.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and fully meets the statutory National Curriculum requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by a comprehensive and excellent range of well delivered extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are very effectively supported. Their progress is monitored closely and the targets for their development are challenging and effectively met by all teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are mature and responsible. They relate well to one another and to adults. Moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual development is more limited and statutory requirements for collective worship are not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is an atmosphere of care and support, which extends and enhances the underlying drive for every pupil to achieve high standards. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress in almost all subjects.

The curriculum provided for pupils fully meets the National Curriculum requirements. It is effective in delivering the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies at Key Stage 2. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These include residential experiences in each year group, a wide range of competitive and non-competitive sporting activities as well as a range of clubs such as the computer club. There are regular additional work clubs, which enable pupils to catch up on unfinished or missed work. Extra-curricular activities take place at lunchtimes and after school involving many staff who give generously of their time and energy.

The school very effectively cares for its pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher gives clear direction for the development of the school and has ensured the sustained improvement of the school over the last three years. Subject co-ordination is mostly very good; however, the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators is under-developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. Governors are fully involved in the work of the school and have a clear understanding of how the school can continue to develop.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school uses a range of data to evaluate the progress of pupils and to target future development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses staff expertise well and a significant proportion of teaching is by subject specialists. The accommodation is well used and recent improvements have enhanced learning, however, the main science laboratory is in need of refurbishment and there is very limited accommodation for music. There are generally adequate resources for teaching and learning although there are limitations in science, art, music and specific information technology equipment. The stock of books in the library is very limited and this limits the opportunities for pupils to carry out independent research.

The management of the school is very good. The headteacher and governors have a clear view of the way the school should develop in order to continue the improvements already made since the last inspection. Managers seek to use the resources available efficiently and effectively. They apply the principles of best value to the acquisition of resources. However, the limitations in the accommodation for science and music and the learning resources for science, art, music and control technology reduces the range of learning experiences for pupils. In the library, the provision of books is very limited. There are insufficient reference books for pupils to use and further develop their research skills.

There has been a very effective programme of monitoring teaching and learning by the headteacher but this has yet to be extended to subject co-ordinators to ensure that more specific subject issues in teaching and learning can be addressed.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good progress their children make.</li> <li>• The high standards pupils attain.</li> <li>• The improvements made to the school buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some inconsistency in the use of homework.</li> <li>• A few parents were concerned to know if their child did not arrive at school on the</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good teaching</li> <li>• Pupils' good behaviour and the attitudes and values promoted by the school.</li> <li>• The wide range of good extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The school is open and approachable.</li> <li>• The school is well managed.</li> </ul>	<p>bus.</p>
--	-------------

Inspectors' judgements support the views of parents that pupils are making good progress and are attaining above average standards. The good progress is the direct result of the very good teaching that pupils receive. Teachers have high expectations of both the quality and quantity of work pupils are expected to do. They also expect pupils to behave and to relate well to one another and their teachers. Inspectors judged that pupils' behaviour was excellent. Inspectors also found that pupils' social, moral and cultural development was very good and that spiritual development was satisfactory. The excellent extra-curricular activities enhance the pupils' education and are a major strength of the school. Teachers also run work clubs during lunchtimes where pupils can complete homework or catch up on work they have missed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

- 1 Overall standards by the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8 are good.
- 2 In the 1999 national assessments for pupils aged 11 pupils attained standards which were well above the national average for pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English and science and above the average in mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average in English, close to the average in mathematics and above the average for science. When compared with similar schools (taking into account the proportions of pupils attaining Level 4 and Level 5) standards in English are above the average, standards in science are average and standards in mathematics are below average. Over the last three years standards have been above the national average in English and close to the average in mathematics and science. The overall trend has been of improving standards over the last three years. The difference in attainment of boys and girls is similar to that found nationally.
- 3 From a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work over this academic year inspectors judge that pupils are making at least good progress throughout Key Stage 2. They are on course to attain standards well above national averages in the national assessments in 2000. Standards in reading and writing show that the majority of pupils are attaining above the levels expected by the end of Key Stage 2 in response to the National Literacy Strategy. Standards in number are in line with those expected and the emphasis on numeracy through the national strategy is being effectively delivered by teachers. Pupils are attaining above average standards in all other subjects in the curriculum except music where standards are in line with those expected. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and attain the challenging targets set for them.
- 4 By the end of Year 8, from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work, in lessons and discussions with pupils, inspectors judge that pupils are attaining standards above those typical for their age in all subjects except mathematics and music where standards are more typical of those expected. Information from the local upper school indicates that pupils consistently attain standards above those expected in the national assessments for 14 year olds in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are making at least good progress in most subjects and pupils with special educational needs frequently make very good progress.
- 5 Taking into account the just above average attainment of pupils on entry to the school they are making good progress and achieving well in all age groups in the school in response to the very good teaching they receive.
- 6 Standards in speaking and listening are high. Pupils are articulate and respect each other's views.
- 7 Standards in literacy are good. Pupils have good reading skills and use them regularly

in a range of subjects such as history and religious education. They are able to make effective use of contents and indices when seeking information. They show good writing skills when writing extended pieces within topic work in history and geography.

- 8 Pupils have well developed numeracy skills. They show facility in calculations in science and design and technology. They use measures accurately in design and technology and physical education, for example, in physical education when measuring and comparing distances in long jump practice. They are able to present information graphically in science and geography to enhance their work.
- 9 Standards in information technology are good. Pupils use hardware and software with good skills. They use information technology to present their work, for example, in English and in science using word processing and spreadsheet software. Their skills frequently enable them to complete more complex tasks than is normally expected.
- 10 Standards in religious education are in line with those specified in the locally agreed syllabus for the end of Key Stage 2 and the end of Year 8. Pupils show a good understanding of several faiths and talk about them with both understanding and interest.
- 11 The school makes effective use of a range of assessment data to monitor the progress pupils are making. The data includes optional national curriculum tests at the end of Years 4, 5 and 7 as well as standardised general assessments. This information is used by the school to set the targets for future achievement. However, although such targets are challenging the school has exceeded them in recent years at the end of Key Stage 2 and so more challenging targets could have been set. The school has recognised this and is revising its longer-term targets.
- 12 There has been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. The improvement is as a direct result of the improved quality of teaching.
- 13 The school has successfully addressed some of the gender issues raised in the last inspection. There is now no evidence of boys dominating classroom discussion. There has been a significant improvement in the attitude of boys to reading. However, the attainment of boys in English is closer to the national average than that of girls, which is well above average, and the school should continue to find ways of raising the attainment of boys to match that of girls.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

- 14 Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning and consistently show a keen interest in their lessons and other aspects of school life. They indicate in discussions that they enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by their parents. Attendance levels have improved since the time of the last inspection and are now above national averages.
- 15 In lessons pupils are keen to participate and contribute and do so with great confidence. Many examples of this were seen in all year groups. Year 5 pupils were

keen to volunteer to read out aloud letters they had composed promoting a pop concert and Year 8 pupils were eager to act out a scene from *Macbeth* in front of their peers. In a special session on drugs awareness pupils expressed their own opinions on the use of drugs and listened with interest to the views of others.

- 16 Standards of behaviour throughout the school are excellent. Pupils behave very well in lessons and when they are moving around the school they act politely and sensibly even though at times there is some congestion in corridors and communal areas, necessitating a 'one way' system which is observed by all. Behaviour in communal activities such as assemblies, breaks and in the dining room is also excellent. At lunchtimes pupils use computers, library resources and sports equipment without the need for close supervision and the school site and property is treated with respect and is well cared for. The high standards of behaviour are underpinned by a well established code of conduct which is understood and accepted by pupils, who also have a major input in devising their own classroom rules.
- 17 Relationships throughout the school are excellent. This is a relatively small school where pupils are clearly well known and valued by school staff. Their achievements are celebrated in extensive displays of photographs and other mementos around the school. Pupils readily confirm that bullying or other oppressive behaviour is extremely rare and if it does occur it is dealt with promptly and efficiently. They work together well, for example, collaborating in pairs to work on a collage in art. At lunchtimes older pupils organise and coach younger pupils in a range of sporting and other extra curricular activities.
- 18 The school is extremely successful in promoting personal development by providing an impressive range of extra curricular activities, residential visits for each year group and opportunities to take responsibility. A Year 8 Council provides a forum for older pupils to discuss a range of issues relating to school life and organise events. As a result of their initiatives a new praise slip to recognise exceptional effort and behaviour has been introduced for older pupils to supplement the existing merit system. Pupils act as monitors, carrying out a range of responsible jobs around the school and help run the school library. Most pupils participate in one or more of the many activities and clubs run at lunchtime and after school, which not only provide them with cultural or sporting opportunities but also give them a chance to help and support each other.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

### **Teaching**

- 19 Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. This is a strength of the school.
- 20 Almost without exception, teaching in every lesson is sound or better. In fact 83% is good or better, and this includes 38% which is very good or excellent. There is some good teaching in every subject, and examples of very good or excellent teaching in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, geography, history, modern languages, physical education and religious education. Overall there is good teaching in mathematics, art, music, and physical education at Key Stage 2. There is very good teaching in English, science, design and technology,

geography, history, information technology, modern languages, physical education and religious education at Key Stage 3, and in these subjects pupils make particularly good progress. There are no systematic or significant differences in the quality of teaching for pupils of different ages or abilities.

- 21 Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are teaching is generally very good. This is particularly clear in science, design and technology and physical education, and in French where there is excellent use of the target language. In Years 7 and 8 teaching is normally by subject specialists and this is also the case where possible in Key Stage 2. However, on the isolated occasion where teaching was less than satisfactory in Key Stage 2, the cause was a lack of specialist subject knowledge rather than any lack of planning or teaching expertise.
- 22 The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology are taught well across the curriculum. For example, there are many examples of high quality extended writing in subjects across the curriculum, and very good examples of pupils leading the class in exercises to consolidate learning of multiplication tables in mathematics.
- 23 Much of the teaching owes its very high quality to teachers' planning, and this is often based on very good departmental documentation. There is inadequate documentation in mathematics and French and this leads to some lack of consistency in the approaches used by different teachers but even in these subjects planning for lessons is good. Learning objectives are often shared appropriately with pupils, for example, in mathematics and art.
- 24 Teachers use a wide and very effective range of teaching methods. These methods are chosen carefully to match the learning objectives for subjects and particular lessons and often succeed in challenging and inspiring pupils. For example, in English the teaching in Key Stage 2 is based on the Literacy Hour with very good use of questioning, in mathematics there is often very good use of straightforward exposition, and investigative skills are systematically developed in science. There are living history days, visits and field trips in geography, practical tasks in design and technology, and mimes and props are used to support understanding in French. In physical education, teachers enthuse their pupils to work to develop their technique.
- 25 Teachers' expectations of pupils are generally very high and this is particularly noticeable in science where there is an expectation of success for all pupils, and in French where teachers are persistent in demanding accuracy and good pronunciation.
- 26 The management of pupils' behaviour is generally unobtrusive but very effective and there is very good use of time. Support staff are used very well and so are resources for learning even though in some subjects they are barely adequate. For example, video clips are used well in geography and religious education, and so are power tools and soldering irons in design and technology. On the other hand, information technology is used across the curriculum, although in subjects other than information technology, the hardware provision is out of date and this limits what can be achieved.
- 27 Teachers use assessment well with some particularly good examples seen in English and physical education, and there are good examples of pupils assessing each others'



work in music. There is good use of homework to reinforce and extend learning. Some parents identified some inconsistency in the use of homework, however, inspectors judged that it was used appropriately to support pupils' learning.

- 28 There is a clear relationship between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning and so learning is also very good. The well planned and stimulating teaching is very effective in enabling pupils of all ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs, to acquire new knowledge and skills, to develop their ideas and increase their understanding and in enabling them to work quickly and to apply intellectual and physical effort. Pupils show great interest in their work, sustain attention very well for the hour of each lesson, and know how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- 29 The improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection has been dramatic. It has been achieved through effective training and monitoring. It is now very good, but at that time over a quarter of teaching had shortcomings and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 5 was around one-third.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

- 30 The school provides all pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which fully meets statutory requirements and which is further enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The length of the taught week has been increased to 25 hours, which exceeds the minimum recommendation for Key Stage 2. This has enabled the school to extend the basic curriculum in all years to include a modern foreign language and information technology as discrete subjects. The school uses a range of setting and grouping of pupils to effectively meet pupils' learning needs. Lessons, assemblies, clubs, sporting activities, music, drama, visits and residential all contribute to a rich learning experience which meets the needs and interests of all pupils.
- 31 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There are regular reviews of all pupils on the special educational needs register, with effective follow-up to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support. All pupils at Stage 2 and beyond have good individual education plans in line with the national Code of Practice. Teachers take pupils' individual education plans into account when planning their lessons.
- 32 There is a consistent approach to curriculum planning across all subjects, which helps to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The quality of long-term and medium-term planning in most subjects is very good and in some cases excellent, for example, in English and religious education. There are departmental handbooks for almost all subjects, which provide teachers with very helpful guidance and help to ensure consistency of approach between teachers. The exception is in mathematics where documentation is limited. There are policy statements for all subjects, approved by the governing body and signed by the chair of governors.
- 33 There is an effective whole school approach to literacy, with a spelling policy which is applied consistently in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and

opportunities for reading are provided at registration as well as during lessons. The Literacy Hour has been introduced very successfully and has had a significant impact on standards of literacy in Key Stage 2 and Years 7 and 8. There are examples of extended writing of high quality in most subjects.

- 34 There are good strategies for teaching the basic skills of numeracy and standards are high. The Numeracy Hour has been effectively introduced and there are good opportunities in other subjects for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge and skills, for example science and design and technology, for pupils to apply numeracy skills in a variety of contexts.
- 35 Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, with a very wide range of lunchtime activities and a very high level of pupil involvement. Several different activities are offered every day, including sport, music and other interests of various kinds. There is a regular programme of visits to extend pupils' experience in lessons and an annual programme of residentials, which make an important contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
- 36 The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. However, timetabling arrangements could in some cases be improved. There are instances where for some classes the same subject is taught twice in one day, for example geography, and occasions when pupils are withdrawn for learning support in the same lesson each week, thereby impeding their progress in that lesson.
- 37 Although there is no planned programme of personal, social and health education, there is good cross-curricular provision for these aspects of pupils' learning. In science, for example, pupils undertake project work on healthy life-styles and in English pupils explore a range of personal and social issues. The school makes good use of visiting speakers to enhance learning about health matters and for drugs education. The school has identified the need to review current provision and draw up a more clearly defined programme, showing how all aspects of personal, social and health education are taught and how pupils' knowledge and understanding will develop from year to year.
- 38 The school has good links with external agencies and with its partner schools. There is effective liaison with the police, educational psychologists, school nurse and educational welfare service. Visiting speakers make regular contributions both to lessons and to school assemblies. The school is increasingly used as a centre for community activities. There is a very active and successful Friends Association and parents regularly help with school visits, residentials and other events. Liaison with feeder schools and with Sharnbrook Upper School is very effective, both in arrangements for transfer and in joint initiatives for curriculum development.
- 39 There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, both in lessons and in other aspects of school life. Assemblies are well planned and cover a wide range of issues, giving pupils opportunities to reflect on ideas and beliefs. Individual and team achievements are valued and shared. Social skills are very well developed, both in lessons through collaborative working and in the extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which the school offers. There has

been a significant improvement since the last inspection in multicultural education.

- 40 Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development, providing them with insights into the values and beliefs of different faiths and communities. Further insights are provided in art, music, English and design and technology. The school still fails to meet its statutory obligation to provide a daily act of worship, although school assemblies provide opportunities for reflection and encourage pupils to think deeply about their own and other people's values and beliefs.
- 41 The school promotes a strong moral code and pupils' behaviour reflects this. The school is a safe, orderly and happy community.
- 42 The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. Pupils regularly work co-operatively and collaboratively. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. There is a Year 8 Council which meets regularly to discuss pupils' ideas for improving and developing aspects of school life. Pupils contribute in many practical ways to the daily life of the school, acting as monitors, organising assemblies, supervising behaviour in corridors, helping in the library, showing visitors round the school, organising sporting events and writing an annual report to parents. Many pupils take advantage of the opportunities which the school provides for independent learning by working in the library or computer room or by attending lunchtime activities, such as the Writers' Club.
- 43 There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural traditions other than their own in English, art, music, geography and religious education. There has been a significant improvement in the quality and range of multicultural education since the last inspection, with schemes of work in music and art which draw on a variety of cultural traditions and, in English, poetry and fiction which give pupils insights into the experience of people from different countries. Displays of pupils' work, presentations in school assemblies and visitors to the school are all used to raise awareness of cultural diversity. There are also many opportunities for pupils to take part in and enjoy activities which draw on and celebrate their own cultural traditions, including plays and musical events.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

- 44 Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to deal effectively with child protection issues. The headteacher is the named person with responsibility for these. Policies are kept under review. There are sound cover measures for when the headteacher is not in school and training for the whole staff is being arranged.
- 45 The school receives a variety of additional support from visiting professionals, particularly those involved with the special educational needs and behaviour of pupils. The school nurse runs a fortnightly 'drop in' session for pupils where she can help them with a range of emotional and medical problems which otherwise could impact

on their behaviour and learning. The community police officer also visits regularly to talk on a variety of matters including drugs awareness.

- 46 Good arrangements have been made to deal with the requirements of health and safety legislation. Site inspections are carried out at regular intervals by senior staff and a nominated governor. Risk assessments have been completed and the health and safety issues relating to specific curriculum areas are well documented. The school provides a secure and safe environment for its pupils.
- 47 Accurate attendance registers are kept and regularly monitored, including checks by the local education authority's education welfare officer who visits regularly. Any unexplained absences are followed up quickly, particularly in the case of a small number of pupils whose attendance record gives cause for concern. These measures have contributed to increased levels of attendance and very low rates of unauthorised absence.
- 48 The school has well developed policies to promote good behaviour which are reviewed regularly. These are based largely on the concept of celebrating achievement and there is a structured system of merit awards which are recorded and publicised in newsletters to parents. The monitoring of individual pupil's behaviour is based on good arrangements for the exchange of information through year team and whole staff meetings. Individual programmes of behavioural improvement are devised for pupils as necessary. The measures taken have produced a calm and orderly community where effective learning can take place.
- 49 There are effective systems in place particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics for the monitoring of academic progress. This process begins with an initial screening of pupils when they enter the school in Year 5. Throughout their school career pupils take a variety of statutory and non statutory tests and detailed central records are kept of the results. This process is supplemented by effective teacher assessment in individual subjects although in some subjects this is not linked specifically to National Curriculum levels. A senior member of staff is responsible for co-ordinating the recording of assessment data and procedures are being developed to make wider use of this information to guide teachers' planning. Great emphasis is placed on target setting and the involvement of pupils in this process but these targets tend to be focussed on effort and attitude rather than specific subject attainments.
- 50 The support pupils receive is also promoted through the close pastoral and curriculum links that exist with the feeder schools and the upper school to which most of them transfer. These ensure that relevant pupil information is passed on as necessary so their individual needs can be quickly identified and met.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

- 51 Overall, the links with parents are good. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection and there is now strong parental satisfaction about the way the school works with them. Parents believe that the school is approachable and that generally they are kept well informed.

- 52 There is a structured programme of parents' meetings, including an optional meeting to discuss the main annual report on pupils' progress. There are detailed monthly newsletters which include curriculum information and the school has conducted several surveys about parental concerns. Information gathered has been used to include specific initiatives in the school development plan. The pupils' diary is used as an effective means of communication between school and home and the school has developed a number of activities, including a reading passport, which facilitate parents' involvement with children's work at home. Parents receive two reports on their children's progress each year and are asked to return their comments on these and work with their children in devising targets for the following year. These strategies have had an impact on increasing the progress made by pupils.
- 53 Parents are active in supporting the school with fundraising and have recently raised a large sum to replace the school minibus. Parents have also been involved in helping in specific lessons or projects, including a river study and the production of the school's millennium frieze. There is some regular parental help in English and many parents assist with extra curricular activities. Pupils benefit directly from this additional input of resources and experience.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 54 The headteacher provides clear leadership and direction for the school. He is keen to continue to raise standards through improving the quality of teaching. The governors are very supportive and have a clear understanding of the steps necessary to improve the quality of education and to raise standards.
- 55 The school has a clear set of aims to develop each pupil to be confident and eager to learn more. The school meets these aims in its work. Relationships in the school are excellent and there is a caring atmosphere in which pupils develop into mature young adults.
- 56 The headteacher has monitored teaching effectively to promote strong improvements over recent years. New staff have become part of the team, sharing the goals of improving the quality of teaching and raising standards.
- 57 Some subject co-ordinators have had the opportunity to monitor the work in classrooms. However, subject specific monitoring of teaching is under-developed. Therefore general teaching skills and knowledge have improved significantly but more specific subject knowledge and skill development has been limited and this is particularly so for those teaching several subjects in Key Stage 2.
- 58 The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities for continuing the improvements of the last three years. It is sufficiently detailed and costed. There is a monitoring programme to identify the successful implementation of the plan.
- 59 The school is effectively using a detailed analysis of assessment data to target its future work and development. However, it has not yet identified procedures for closely monitoring the standards pupils are achieving in the individual subjects.

- 60 Detailed budgetary information is used effectively by managers and governors to guide planning. There are efficient systems for monitoring spending each month. This is enabling the governors to make informed decisions regarding the allocation of funds to meet the priorities they have identified. However, the governors do not yet evaluate the impact spending has had on improving the quality of education and on the standards pupils attain early in the autumn term each year.
- 61 The school has a well qualified and appropriately experienced staff. They are efficiently deployed and management roles are established except for the post of mathematics co-ordinator. Where possible teaching is by subject specialists in both Key Stage 2 and Years 7 and 8. However, some subjects such as religious education are taught by non specialists in Key Stage 2.
- 62 The governors ensure that most statutory requirements are met. However, the school continues to fail to meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship.
- 63 The school is housed in a large building on three floors. There are three classrooms housed in two temporary buildings. There is sufficient classroom space and there is a large hall and a separate dining hall. The buildings are in good repair and are maintained to a high standard by the caretaker and cleaning staff. There is good specialist accommodation for design and technology, information technology, art and physical education. However, the main science laboratory is in need of refurbishment and there is limited accommodation for musical activity. The school is situated in extensive grounds, which provide good facilities for outdoor physical education and include lawn tennis courts. There is a wild area used to extend scientific study. There is one large hard surface play area for pupils to use during fine weather.
- 64 Overall, there are adequate learning resources for the delivery of the curriculum. However, there are significant shortages in resources for science, art, design and technology, music and for control technology in information technology. They are generally well stored and accessible to teachers and pupils. The library book stock is very limited and in need of updating. The limited range of texts, particularly for reference is limiting the opportunities for pupils to utilise their well developed research skills. The use of the library as a teaching space also limits pupils' access to the library during lesson time.
- 65 The school has effective budgetary control and management. The most recent auditor's report identified some matters for attention all of which have been addressed. The school has established systems for ensuring best value in the purchase of resources and is seeking ways to link spending decisions more closely with the educational outcomes delivered.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- 66 In order to build upon recent improvements the governors, headteacher and other key staff should:
- i) Secure the spiritual development of pupils by establishing a daily act of

collective worship. [40, 62]

- ii) Improve the leadership and management of mathematics in order to ensure that there is high quality teaching and raised standards by:
- developing a comprehensive scheme of work and procedures for recording pupils' attainment, particularly for Key Stage 3;
  - ensuring specialist support and guidance for all teachers.  
[2, 4, 61, 78, 79, 91, 92, 93]
- iii) Seek ways to improve the amount and quality of the resources for teaching and learning in:
- science;
  - art;
  - aspects of information technology;
  - music;
  - the library.  
[64, 98, 103, 126, 141]

67 Governors and senior managers may wish to address the following areas which, although satisfactory, are of relative weakness:

- the monitoring of subject teaching and learning by subject co-ordinators; [57, 77, 135]
- the accommodation for science and music; [63, 99, 141]
- the accessibility of the library and information technology equipment during lesson times for pupils' independent research; [64, 126]

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

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5%	33%	45%	16%	1%	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	363
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	17

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	72

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	6.0

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*



***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	48	39	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	36	46
	Girls	37	34	39
	Total	78	70	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (65)	80 (69)	94 (80)
	National	70 (64)	68 (58)	78 (68)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	41	33	46
	Girls	36	32	39
	Total	77	65	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (64)	75 (64)	97 (80)
	National	68 (65)	69 (59)	75 (69)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	359
Any other minority ethnic group	4

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y5 – Y8**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	109

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y5– Y8**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.8
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8**

Key Stage 2	26.3
-------------	------

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999
----------------	------

	£
Total income	658,467
Total expenditure	659,129
Expenditure per pupil	1,821
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,575
Balance carried forward to next year	16,913

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	363
Number of questionnaires returned	137

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	42	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	52	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	61	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	59	10	3	1
The teaching is good.	40	55	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	42	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	50	41	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	26	1	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	43	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	50	4	0	1

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

- 68 Overall, standards in English are high.
- 69 Standards of attainment in English by the end of Year 6 are well above the national average. In the 1999 national tests, 89% of pupils achieved Level 4 or above and 43% Level 5 or above, compared to national averages of 70% and 22% respectively.
- 70 In comparison with similar schools standards are well above average. Standards have shown a consistent improvement since the last inspection at a faster rate than found nationally. The differences in the attainment of boys and girls is similar to that found nationally.
- 71 From a scrutiny of pupils' written work and in lessons inspectors judge that pupils in Year 6 are on course to attain above average standards in the national assessments this year.
- 72 Pupils read and write confidently and accurately. They have a good knowledge of the rules of grammar and the standard of spelling and punctuation is generally good. They can use appropriate terms to describe different types of written text and understand how language is used for a range of purposes. Most pupils enjoy reading and the school has been successful in encouraging more boys to read and enjoy different kinds of books. Pupils write well in a range of styles and there are many examples of high quality written work of all kinds, from poetry and fiction to persuasive writing and information. Pupils know how to develop and improve their work through a series of written drafts. The standard of speaking and listening is very good. Most pupils speak confidently and articulately, using a mature vocabulary. They listen carefully to other people's views and know how to take part in discussion and debate.
- 73 Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 7 and 8 and by the end of Year 8 attain standards well above average. They read and respond to increasingly challenging texts, develop their writing skills in a wider range of styles and become more confident and ambitious in their use of language. There are many examples of extended writing of high quality, not only in English but also in other subjects. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their skills in drama. The school recognises this and is planning to increase the use of drama both in English, in line with the requirements of the revised National Curriculum, and in other subjects. Where drama is used, as in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher took on the role of a parent and pupils were required to use language persuasively in role as her children, the impact on pupils' learning is significant.
- 74 Standards in literacy are good across the school. Pupils are given opportunities to use these skills in most subjects in both key stages.
- 75 The quality of teaching in all years is usually good and often very good or excellent. Lessons are very well planned. Teachers use an effective range of strategies to ensure

that all pupils make good progress. The marking of pupils' written work is used both to encourage and to give pupils guidance on what they need to do to improve. Class teaching during the Literacy Hour is usually very effective, with very good use of questioning both to reinforce what pupils have already learned and to introduce new skills. Relationships are very good and lessons are invariably well organised and disciplined. The pace of work is generally high and pupils respond well to the demands made on them. There is good support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and most teachers use effective strategies to challenge the more able pupils. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to provide a higher level of challenge, for example, by setting extension tasks as a matter of course for the highest attaining pupils.

- 76 The guidance provided for teachers in the departmental handbook is exemplary and is a significant factor in achieving high standards of teaching and consistency of approach between teachers. There is a long-term plan which ensures breadth of coverage across all aspects of the English curriculum and medium-term plans which set out in detail the schemes of work for each year as a basis for teachers' individual lesson plans. Assessment arrangements are thorough and ensure that the progress of individual pupils is effectively monitored.
- 77 The management and leadership provided by the English co-ordinator is excellent. There has been a significant improvement in all aspects of the subject since the last inspection report. The introduction of the Literacy Hour has been managed very successfully, as have a number of other initiatives, for example on boys' reading and whole school approaches to literacy. Priorities for development which are already in place include developing the use of drama and further work to reduce the gap in attainment between boys and girls. The English co-ordinator has monitored some literacy lessons but opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching, identify best practice and provide support where necessary are limited.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 78 Overall, standards in mathematics are in line with national averages and in relation to pupils' prior attainment, teaching and learning is good, and improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. However, leadership and management of mathematics is presently unsatisfactory and comparisons with other subjects indicate that higher standards are possible. The school has the capacity to improve this situation.
- 79 In the 1999 Key Stage 2 national assessments, 80% of pupils in the school gained Level 4 or above which is above the national average. 24% of pupils gained Level 5 or above which is close to the national average. Performance in Key Stage 2 national assessments remained above the national average, just under one term ahead of national average progress. Results were lower than national averages in 1998, but taking the last four years as a whole, results have been close to national averages. In 1999, the girls' results were slightly better than those of the boys. In this year, girls were ahead of national average progress by over one term. Boys were also ahead of the national average rate of progress, but were much closer to it. Despite lower results for both boys and girls in 1998, taking the past four years together the performances of both boys and girls have been close to the national averages. In relation to similar

schools, results in 1999 were close to the average in terms of the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 or above, but below the average for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 or above. Overall, in 1999 pupils' performance in the mathematics tests was below average in comparison with similar schools. This comparison is less favourable than for English and science, and particularly unfavourable in relation to English at Level 5 or above. Targets for pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 2 have been identified by the school. However, while these are relatively high in relation to national standards, in the context of this school, and in particular of the performance in other subjects, and even in relation to mathematics in the past, they are unchallenging.

- 80 There are no national measures of performance that refer to pupils in Key Stage 3 in the school. However, according to results returned to Margaret Beaufort by its partner upper school, pupils who left the school in 1998 and took Key Stage 3 tests in 1999 gained results that were well above national averages.
- 81 From a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and the work observed in lessons inspectors judge that pupils are currently attaining similar standards to those indicated in the national assessments in 1999.
- 82 Pupils in the school are taught mathematics in attainment sets, and the standards of work in teaching groups therefore vary over a wide range. There are no differences between boys' and girls' achievements, and no significant differences between performance in the different areas of mathematics. At the end of Year 4 in their lower schools, pupils take optional national tests which show that the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is in line with national expectations. Building from this baseline of prior attainment, pupils' progress is sound in Key Stage 2. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 3 is also sound overall. However, by comparing mathematics with standards achieved in other subjects in the school, it is likely that pupils are capable of greater progress.
- 83 Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. In relation to the findings of the last inspection report, standards remain sound but there is now less variation and nearly all pupils are achieving results at least in line with their prior attainment
- 84 Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are almost always good or very good. Very nearly all come to lessons expecting to work, and show an interest in the subject. They listen intently to explanations and instructions, settle to individual work immediately when asked and almost always sustain attention and concentration throughout their lessons and this enables them to make good progress.
- 85 All mathematics teaching is at least satisfactory. Three quarters of teaching was judged to be good, and some very good. The methods teachers use are often based on giving clear expositions followed by suitable consolidation and practice exercises. Explanations are nearly always pitched at the right level to enable children to develop knowledge, skills and understanding quickly. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, setting appropriate objectives that are often shared explicitly with their classes and use time well. Their subject knowledge is at least adequate and often good in relation to the

level of mathematics they are teaching. In the best teaching, teachers challenge pupils to perform at their best - either in terms of speed of working or of quality of thinking - and pupils automatically rise to meet this challenge. Learning is very often enhanced by good questioning techniques, for example, when teachers ask pupils questions and give time for extended answers rather than expecting just a single word or short phrase in reply. In some lessons teachers expect pupils to come to the board to give explanations or demonstrations. This motivates pupils in the class and their learning is consequently improved. Management of pupils is unobtrusive. Teachers expect pupils to behave very well, and they generally do so. Only in rare instances, for example in a lower attaining Year 8 class, do teachers have to speak to any pupils about a lack of concentration or for failing to complete a task, and when this happens a positive response is immediate.

- 86 Teaching and learning has improved significantly. Most importantly, whereas at the last inspection there were shortcomings in half of the lessons, and significant shortcomings in a fifth, there is now no unsatisfactory teaching or learning. In addition, the proportion of good or very good teaching has improved from half to three-quarters.
- 87 The basic skills of numeracy are taught well in mathematics, and there are some good applications of mathematics across the curriculum. For example, pupils use ratio and proportion in science, tables of data about food value in design and technology, scale in geography and in French pupils carry out addition and multiplication in the foreign language. However, there is no policy for the systematic development of numeracy across the school.
- 88 Many of the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are being implemented. In particular planning in Key Stage 2 is based on the national "Framework for Teaching Mathematics", mental or oral starters are used to good effect in many lessons, and plenary sessions are used well at the end of some lessons to draw learning together and to assess how well pupils understand the subject matter. These approaches are beginning to raise basic numeracy skill levels in pupils of all abilities.
- 89 There is a good range of practical work. For example, in a unit of work on speed, pupils used stopwatches and measured the time they took to run a measured 20 metres with standing and running starts. Using and applying mathematics is taught, but the skills and understanding required for all the different aspects of this area of mathematics are not yet being developed systematically throughout the school. The information technology requirements of the mathematics National Curriculum are covered well, but most of this teaching takes place in information technology lessons. Calculators are generally used in mathematics where they are appropriate.
- 90 Teachers assess pupils' work in a number of different ways, both formal and informal, and use this information to plan the next steps in their teaching. For example, at the informal level, a teacher realised that not all pupils in the class had understood her demonstration of a technique for long multiplication. She asked pupils who needed more help to come to her so that she could explore their concerns in a small group, while the majority in the class tackled the exercise she had prepared. Teachers

regularly mark work in pupils' exercise books. While they do not write many comments, they plan their subsequent lessons based on the level of understanding they have discerned in their pupils' work. In Key Stage 2 there are standard systems in use for recording pupils' progress against National Numeracy Strategy key objectives. In Key Stage 3 teachers keep records of the progress of their own classes, but there is no standard school system in use. Homework is set and marked regularly, and makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning. There are limited opportunities for enhancing pupils' literacy in mathematics lessons.

- 91 The school currently does not have a mathematics co-ordinator or any official whole-school subject documentation. The school plans to appoint a mathematics co-ordinator from the beginning of next school year and expects full department documentation to be produced by the end of the autumn half term. In the meantime, planning takes place in year teams. Meetings in Key Stage 3 are convened by the deputy headteacher and all teachers of mathematics in this key stage contribute to planning. The mathematics specialist is already taking a lead in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Some other duties of the subject manager have been assumed by the headteacher, but nonetheless the current arrangements for leadership and management of mathematics are unsatisfactory. This results in the standards attained by pupils in mathematics being lower than in English and science.
- 92 Co-ordination was reported as good at the last inspection, though there was a lack of consistency in the assessment system. Leadership and management of mathematics is presently unsatisfactory, and in Key Stage 3 the recording of assessments still remains largely in the hands of individual teachers.
- 93 There is not sufficiently clear direction for the work of the department. For example, teachers in Years 5 and 6 have received some training on the National Numeracy Strategy and have started to implement its recommendations. However, even though another training day is planned, they have not yet received the full three days of training that the strategy expects all teachers of mathematics in Key Stage 2 to have completed by Easter 2000. There is monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching by the headteacher, but as a non specialist himself he is unable to assist his colleagues to develop their teaching beyond a certain point, which has now been reached. The school's specialist mathematics teacher is benefiting from the professional network of mathematics teachers in the partner middle and upper schools, but within the school he has not had sufficient specialist support and guidance during his induction year. In these limiting circumstances, it is to the credit of the teachers of mathematics in the school that the quality of teaching and of pupils' attainments is as high as it is. This owes much to the mathematics teachers' shared commitment to improve.
- 94 Despite the lack of official whole-school documentation, individual teachers and year teams have some helpful mathematics documents, systems and procedures. In Key Stage 2, for example, teachers plan from the national "Framework for Teaching Mathematics" and use its key objectives for assessment purposes. They record the results of formal assessments on appropriate grids. In Key Stage 3 on the other hand, there is inadequate documentation to ensure fully effective development of mathematics learning from year to year.



## SCIENCE

- 95 Standards of work in science are very good. Key Stage 2 tests results have improved faster than the national rate over the last three years and were well above the national average and the average for similar schools in 1999. They show significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 5 can speculate about how some materials dissolve and what might be happening when a solution is evaporated. By Year 6 they are beginning to predict the behaviour of simple electrical circuits using scientific knowledge. Although there are no national tests at the end of Year 8, work in pupils' books and their responses to questions in lessons show that standards in Key Stage 3 are also high. By Year 8, for example, pupils are able to undertake extensive and high quality research into issues such as healthy living and apply their knowledge of forces in tension and compression to the construction of structures. Independent analysis of pupils' cognitive development through the CASE programme (Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education), which the school teaches within its science curriculum, confirms that pupils make better than expected progress as they move through the first two years of Key Stage 3.
- 96 Investigative skills are systematically developed alongside pupils' knowledge and understanding of science in both key stages. Standards are high. In Year 5 pupils not only make simple predictions about the outcome of an investigation but are able to justify their thinking by drawing on their every day experience and their growing scientific knowledge. For example, pupils discussing the germination of seeds speculated that any growing medium would be effective as long as it held water and that the air might provide any nutrients required. A range of growing media was therefore explored including mashed potato, a stone with an indentation in it and a bed of baked beans. Pupils are fully aware of the issues related to fair testing and the control of variables. By Year 6 pupils are writing detailed accounts of their observations using appropriate technical vocabulary and displaying their numerical results in tables graphs and charts. Pupils' skills are further developed in Key Stage 3 so that by Year 8 many are able to use preliminary tests to refine their early ideas before undertaking practical investigations. The extended investigative work undertaken in Year 8 on floor surfaces and pendulums is often of high quality and beautifully presented. However, some pupils lack the mathematical skills, for example familiarity with derived variables, to take this work further and sometimes opportunities are missed to make the work more demanding in scientific terms, particularly for the very able.
- 97 The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory; it is often good, very good and is sometimes excellent. Teaching is by specialists and they are able to draw on their own high level of knowledge and use carefully crafted questions to stimulate thinking rather than simply providing facts for pupils to learn. In the lessons observed it was clear that this approach enabled pupils to make their own connections between scientific ideas, to speculate on the science underlying an event or situation and to make their own discoveries. The approach to lessons is lively and stimulating, no time is wasted and pupils enjoy their learning. Lessons are well planned, relationships are excellent, and there is an expectation of success for all pupils. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is now excellent; the detailed, diagnostic and encouraging comments given by

teachers contribute to the high standards pupils achieve and the regular use of end of topic tests enables pupils to make and record their own assessment of the progress they have made.

- 98 The department is well led. Good planning and collaboration ensures that the subject co-ordinator's commitment, vision and enthusiasm are shared by all staff. However, procedures for the monitoring of lessons by the subject co-ordinator are not established. The day to day resources with which the department works are barely adequate, book stocks in the laboratories and the library are old and, although some work with sensors is undertaken, the lack of modern information technology equipment severely restricts opportunities for learning in these specific areas and limits the progress pupils make.
- 99 All the issues raised in the previous inspection report have been addressed. A new laboratory has eliminated overcrowding, although the original one is now in need of refurbishment.

## **ART**

- 100 Standards of attainment in art are good and have improved since the last inspection. The quality of pupils' work at the end of Year 6 is above those typically found. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 7 and 8, learning new techniques and working with different materials, including digital media. Most pupils have a good knowledge of the work of artists from different periods and cultural traditions. They can use appropriate terms to describe the features of individual works of art. All pupils use sketchbooks to try out ideas, research topics and collect relevant source material. The standard of drawing and painting is generally good and sometimes very good. Pupils handle materials and equipment skilfully and confidently to create three-dimensional work in a variety of media. There are examples of excellent work in all years.
- 101 The quality of teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and always start with a whole class session which is used either to demonstrate a new technique or to focus on a particular aspect of the current topic. This reflects the secure subject knowledge of the teachers and is an effective way of setting expectations and is a key factor in ensuring that pupils make good progress. Pupils are given individual help and advice during the lesson and are encouraged to assess and re-assess their work as it develops. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work provides positive feedback and targets for improvement.
- 102 The curriculum provides good coverage of the National Curriculum for art and fully complies with statutory requirements. The departmental handbook provides teachers with a very helpful set of guidelines covering all aspects of the subject, along with detailed schemes of work for each year. This ensures that pupils' skills and knowledge develop consistently from year to year. However, pupils in Year 8 do limited experimental work which reduces the opportunities for independent learning. There are good displays of art work of all kinds in the art room and many other displays of pupils' work around the school. This makes an important contribution to the school's aim of raising attainment, both by celebrating success and by setting high standards for

pupils to aim for.

- 103 There has been a significant improvement in all aspects of art since the last inspection, with the exception of resources, which remain barely adequate. Pupils do not have sufficient access to high quality materials. Storage, both for materials and for pupils' work, is inadequate. Pupils are rarely given the opportunity to visit art galleries or to work with professional artists, both of which would help to extend the range of pupils' experience in art and provide new challenges.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 104 Overall standards in design and technology are above average and have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are attaining standards well above those typical for pupils of this age. They have access to specialist teachers, accommodation and use a wider range of tools and materials than normally found. They are able to use hand tools such as a tenon saw and soldering iron as well as using power tools such as the pillar drill. They show good skill levels. They use the design, make and evaluate process well and produce items to a high standard. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced an electronic quiz game using information technology for the board design, laminating the board and then electronically linking the questions to the answers. The quality of the finished products was very good.
- 105 By the end of Year 8 pupils are able to apply the skills they have learnt to different tasks. They produce a series of designs, select the most effective and then make the item to a high standard. The effectiveness of their product is evaluated by the pupils and the teacher. For example, in the food technology lesson Year 8 pupils made a pizza to their own recipe as part of a project to produce a healthy eating pizza with limited fat and high fibre content. The products were both innovative and well made.
- 106 Pupils' work shows that they make consistently good progress both in their skill development and their understanding as the move from Year 5 to Year 8. The tasks they are given ensure that there is consistent development of skills and knowledge.
- 107 The quality of teaching in design and technology is consistently good and very good. All teaching is by specialist teachers who have very good subject knowledge and very good personal making skills. They are able to encourage high attainment through the demonstration of this knowledge and skill. Lessons are well prepared and planned so that pupils get to work very quickly at the start of each lesson and no time is lost. They then work at a good pace, concentrating well and showing very good levels of independence and excellent attention to their own and others safety, for example, when using power tools or soldering irons. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching and work in the subject.
- 108 The accommodation for design and technology is very good. There is a recently refurbished materials technology room with well planned working space and well equipped with machine tools. The food technology room is hygienic and well equipped with cookers and work spaces. However, the layout of the room does not facilitate the demonstration of cooking and textile skills to class groups of pupils. Resources are barely adequate for this very practical subject and there are very limited

books available for pupils when they are researching their designs.

- 109 The current standards and the quality of teaching and learning indicate a significant improvement since the last inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 110 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national expectations and is still above them by the end of Year 8. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection.
- 111 In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to use local maps, make maps and plans using symbols and keys, use four figure grid references, measure direction and distance, follow routes and make good use of atlases. Pupils show an understanding of the differences between their locality and Sedbergh in Year 5 and in Year 6 with localities in India. Pupils are able to show an understanding of some of the problems people face, particularly children living in the streets of India, and question stereotypical views. In Key Stage 3, pupils continue to study places in more depth, including Kimbolton, Brazil and Italy. These studies show how well pupils are able to research the information, form their own ideas, and understand the people in other places. They write letters from a family in north east Brazil to relatives in Sao Paulo explaining why they wish to move, write a speech in support of using the rainforest, use interview techniques asking a local resident of Zafferanea about the explosion of Mount Etna.
- 112 Teaching in geography is always at least good and often very good. This is an improvement from the satisfactory teaching found in the previous report. Good teaching uses teachers' secure subject knowledge to identify the links with the previous learning, challenge the pupils to think, uses enquiry skills effectively and links work to other curriculum areas. The constant use of good geographical terminology by teachers and the lists of good geographical terms and concepts on display in classrooms help the pupils become good geographers. As a result of a visit to Riseley Brook pupils in Year 6 identified twelve words relating to natural features and ten words relating to man made features, for example, cultivation and recreation. In Year 8 pupils learn and understand the meaning of corrosion, abrasion, attrition and deposition in their work on water and landscapes. Teaching is very effective when pupils are challenged to find things out for themselves, for example, when researching the Easter floods from information from a wide variety of sources. The expectation that all groups will report their findings to the class encourages pupils to be more diligent and the technique of starting with the one the pupils found most difficult particularly enhances learning. A demonstration using a jar of muddy water effectively introduced pupils in Year 8 to the idea of velocity, transport, deposition and erosion very well and led to them considering the factors that affect river velocity. Pupils began to understand why rivers carry sediments and erosion takes place. The use of a video of the river Tees enabled pupils to see how the landscape changes. They learn that soft rock wears away, that some places become backwaters and reinforce their findings using Ordnance Survey maps of the area.
- 113 Pupils learning is further enhanced through visits and field trips that are planned each year for the pupils to have first hand experience of the environment and contrasting

places. Pupils really enjoy the challenge especially when they have problem solving exercises.

- 114 The co-ordinator is very secure in her knowledge and understanding of geography and is a very good role model for staff and pupils so enhancing the impact of non specialist teachers. The curriculum is well planned and she has a clear vision for the development of opportunities for pupils as she prepares the curriculum for next year. Very good links are planned with other subjects particularly history, literacy and science. As yet the co-ordinator is not involved in monitoring the quality of teaching of geography across the school. Geography lessons are taught in the library, this is very effective for their research work but does not allow other pupils access to the library during lesson time.
- 115 There has been good progress since the previous inspection. The needs of the special educational needs pupils are now met successfully, resources, which were barely adequate, are now satisfactory and the curriculum promotes the cultural development of all pupils.

## **HISTORY**

- 116 Overall, standards in history are above average in both key stages. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- 117 Year 5 pupils know about Margaret Beaufort and are able to decide whether Henry VII was a good king or a bad king. Year 6 pupils understand some of the legacy of the Ancient Greeks and through research have drawn some very good interpretations of life in Athens and Sparta. Detailed drawings of Greek pottery give an insight into the life and work of these people and pupils have a very clear understanding of the early Olympic games. They understand AD, BC and use dates and terms well. Year 7 pupils have a good understanding of what life was like in Roman Britain. Year 8 know why the Civil War started and about the execution of Charles I. They wrote very good essays on, 'How do we really know what life was like in the Civil War?' using a wide range of source materials.
- 118 The quality of teaching and learning is very good in both key stages. This is better than identified in the previous report. Teachers lead very good discussions at the beginning of lessons, for example, in a Year 5 lesson on Ancient Egypt which established that all pupils knew that Egypt is in Africa, the importance of the Nile and the seas around Egypt. Suitable text, well read explains the 'land of the black mud,' and how a shaduf works. The use of problem solving activities challenge pupils to analyse the information and decide where they will settle on the Nile. This type of exercise helps the pupils further learn the meaning of the red land, the position of the pyramids, where gold, wood, granite, copper, ebony, ivory and salt are found and the richness of the soil enabling them to grow wheat, barley, beans, dates and figs. The homework given reinforces and extends the learning about Ancient Egypt. Teachers use good historical vocabulary at all times and have a very good understanding of the work. Good organisation and communication by teachers promote good progress, especially in independent learning. For example, a very successful Year 7 lesson was based on pupils finding out the cause and consequences of the Battle of Hastings and

addressing, 'Why did William win?' Good teaching encourages pupils to consider short term, long term causes and, luck. As a result of this pupils are well aware of ten causes of the Norman's success.

- 119 History is enhanced through the very good living history days at the end of each study unit. Pupils enjoy these and are able to recall the details of them easily.
- 120 The links between history and geography are well developed; all units are set in the context of the world using maps and features effectively. Good links are being made with literacy, where relevant historical fiction and non-fiction books are used. The art curriculum is planned to link in with the history units and the work on display of Ancient Egypt is very good. These good links extend pupils' learning and motivates them to learn more. A very good historical feature is the work on the millennium project displayed in the corridor and the hall. This reflects life during the past one thousand years, particularly identifying the Bayeux tapestry, explorers, the Armada, Victorians, communications, fashion, medicine, space, sport, children's books, 90s music, the French revolution and endangered species.
- 121 The co-ordinator is very supportive of colleagues. There is a good policy and clear guidelines for the subject. Staff plan together which ensures a consistency in approach, however, the co-ordinator is not yet involved in working alongside colleagues in the classroom. Resources are now good. History lessons are taught in the library; although beneficial for these pupils it prevents access for others to do research during lesson time.
- 122 Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The issues identified have been addressed and the curriculum now meets the needs of the pupils with special educational needs and they do very well. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are now more secure in their ability to analyse historical sources and give historical explanations.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 123 Standards of work in information technology are good in each key stage and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 5, for example, quickly master the concept of sequential instructions for a screen turtle and are able to generate a series of commands which they then test and modify. By Year 6 pupils can produce good quality posters which combine spreadsheet modelling with text and graphics. They can undertake database searches using logical operators and are able to produce word-processed text in the French language and combine this with a photograph to produce a curriculum vitae (CV). By the end of Year 8 pupils have produced high quality posters designed with a specific purpose and audience in mind and can successfully undertake more complex control tasks using, for example, nested control sequences. They can extract information from a French language Excel file and present it, in the target language, using text and images, and they have learnt how to build and link attractive web pages in order to construct an Internet site on endangered species.

- 124 Pupils are fluent in their use of information technology. They acquire information technology skills, including reasonable key boarding skills, quickly and progressively as they move through the school so that their energies are focused on the use of these skills to produce the best possible solutions to the tasks and problems set, rather than on managing the technology. All pupils have e-mail addresses and are learning to use these as a means of communication both in lessons and during the lunchtime computer clubs which teachers provide on three days each week.
- 125 The quality of teaching is always at least good and often very good. Both specialist and non specialist teachers set clear objectives for lessons, related directly to the demands of the National Curriculum and have sufficient subject knowledge and mastery of the software to facilitate learning by pupils. Tasks are relevant to the pupils and introduced in lively, interesting and sometimes amusing ways. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the class were challenged to generate simple clear instructions by which one of their peers could navigate their way from their seat to the door without a collision. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear, their use of praise and encouragement is effective and their relationships with pupils are very good. This gives rise to a purposeful learning environment in which no time is wasted, where pupils make good progress, and where there is sometimes an audible reluctance to log-off at the end of a lesson.
- 126 The department is well led; non specialist teachers are supported through lead lessons, training and helpful documentation linked to each of the topics taught. Developments since the last inspection have been well managed. The school is aware of the need to improve the access to computers in subject areas and the limitations of its current simulated provision for control activities.
- 127 Information technology is used across the curriculum although in many subject areas the hardware provision is out of date and limits what can be achieved. Nevertheless, measuring and sensing takes place in science, the control of traffic lights takes place in design and technology, work on spreadsheets takes place in mathematics and the art department has undertaken some interesting work on replicating the style of particular artists. There is widespread use of information technology across the curriculum by pupils for research and for the presentation of information although the information technology facilities in the library are very limited.
- 128 Since the last inspection all the issues identified have been fully addressed. There has been a carefully thought through upgrading of the main information technology provision, its software and filing systems so that pupils and staff can access high quality programmes with very few technical difficulties. All pupils have one lesson each week of information technology in addition to mapped information technology opportunities in other subject areas. Tasks and activities continue to be well designed and linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of slower and faster learners are now catered for through differentiated task requirements and a range of support materials. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against the level statements of the National Curriculum so that they are aware of the progress they are making. The school has produced portfolios of pupils' work to illustrate each National Curriculum level. This helps to ensure common understanding and high expectations among the

teachers delivering information technology.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

- 129 French is taught to all pupils; for one hour a week in Years 5 and 6 as an additional subject; and two hours a week in Years 7 and 8.
- 130 Standards attained in both key stages are good. Most pupils are on line to at least meet national expectations at the end of Key Stage 3. A number of pupils in Year 8 are already attaining national expectations and sometimes above, and these pupils should attain the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 3. Boys and girls achieve equally well in all skill areas. Most pupils have a very good understanding of quite complex target language spoken at near normal speed by the teacher. Pupils are confident orally. They respond quickly to questions and have good recall of language previously learnt. Responses are generally accurate and pupils often have good pronunciation. Pupils in Year 7 can describe their family in detail and are able to maintain extended sequences of question and answer with a partner. By Year 8 a number of pupils are able to speak confidently, accurately and at length using a range of structures, tenses and vocabulary and with no prompts. However, pupils make limited spontaneous use of the French within the classroom.
- 131 Pupils have good writing skills and write for a range of purposes. Pupils in Year 7 are able to write paragraphs incorporating language from different topic areas. Many pupils in Year 8 produce extended pieces of mainly accurate writing, for example a letter of two pages with a range of language and using the past tense. By Year 8 pupils understand a range of written material. Most pupils have a good grasp of basic grammatical structures, for example, Year 6 pupils understand the grammatical difference between 'je joue au foot' and 'j'aime jouer au foot'. In Year 8 a number of pupils use present, past and future tenses with some confidence. In the last inspection it was reported that both less and more able pupils did not make sufficient progress and that listening and speaking skills were underdeveloped. Pupils of all abilities now make good progress in all skill areas within lessons and across the years.
- 132 The quality of teaching by the specialist and non specialist teachers is consistently very good and has improved since the last inspection. All lessons are characterised by excellent use of the target language by teachers, with mimes and props to support understanding where necessary. Teachers provide an excellent range of motivating activities, involving active participation and opportunities for pair and group work. They take care to ensure that pupils are constantly re-using previously learnt vocabulary and structures and are integrating them with new language. Teachers give regular positive feedback, but also have high expectations and are persistent in demanding accuracy and good pronunciation. They put a strong focus on grammatical understanding, often providing a recap of any new structures at the end of the lesson. Teachers give good support to the least able, including the provision of materials to meet their specific needs. In the last inspection it was reported that independent reading and the use of information technology were only at the planning stage. Satisfactory progress has been made in introducing both of these aspects.
- 133 Pupils are attentive, work with interest and often enthusiasm. They settle quickly to tasks and work purposefully. Pupils in all year groups have very positive attitudes and



there is a high level of participation in all lessons.

- 134 There are regular assessments of pupils' performance but as yet there has been little assessment matched to the levels of the National Curriculum. Therefore teachers are not able to make secure judgements about standards and progress. Marking is positive in tone, personal and in the target language; however, it does not show what needs to be further developed by giving pupils clear guidance on how they can improve. Pupils' individual cassettes provide excellent evidence of attainment and progress in speaking and there are effective strategies for feedback to pupils on the content and accuracy of their recordings.
- 135 In the last inspection it was reported that the development plan lacked detail and this is still the case. The subject co-ordinator does not yet monitor the quality of teaching and learning of the subject across the school.

## MUSIC

- 136 Overall, standards in music are satisfactory.
- 137 Most pupils achieve standards in music at the end of Year 6 which are typical for their age. They are able to use a variety of musical instruments to create and perform their own compositions. They have a broad knowledge of different musical styles and the work of various composers. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are not currently achieving high enough standards. The knowledge and skills they acquired at Key Stage 2 do not provide them with a sufficient basis to attain high standards, although they are now beginning to make better progress.
- 138 The quality of teaching is now never less than satisfactory and often good. There were significant shortcomings at the time of the last inspection. Lessons are always well organised and disciplined, there are good relationships and pupils are motivated by the teacher's own enthusiasm. In the best lessons, there is a focus on high standards, as in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were asked to evaluate each other's compositions against clearly defined criteria. In some lessons, pupils could make more rapid progress if practical tasks were broken down into more clearly defined stages, using a mixture of class teaching and group work to help pupils develop and extend their ideas. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on '*Carnival of the Animals*' pupils were asked to work in groups to develop ideas for compositions, however, insufficient time had been spent with the class as a whole exploring initial ideas and considering how best to approach the task.
- 139 The newly appointed music co-ordinator has made an impact on the quality of teaching and has made a good start on producing a curriculum plan, developing schemes of work and putting together a departmental handbook.
- 140 Pupils' experience of music is enhanced in many cases by learning to play a musical instrument and by taking part in an expanding range of extra-curricular musical activities. Visiting instrumental teachers make a valuable contribution to the musical life of the school and many pupils achieve high standards in performance. Their achievements are valued by the school and opportunities are provided for them to

perform publicly, for example, by playing in school assemblies.

- 141 Accommodation for music is inadequate. The music classroom is too small for many practical activities and there are no music practice rooms. Group work often takes place in unsuitable surroundings, such as cloakrooms or outside in the playground. Resources are limited and limit pupils' access to a wide range of musical instruments and to other resources, including the use of computers for composing.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 142 Overall, standards in physical education have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are attaining standards above those that are typical for their ages in a wide range of physical activity and games.
- 143 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards in physical education which are above those typical for their age. They show good hand-eye co-ordination and when playing short tennis are able to play both forehand and backhand strokes effectively. They co-operate well in pairs and threes to practise their strokes, working hard and making good progress.
- 144 By the end of Year 8 pupils are attaining standards frequently well above those typical for their age. They carry out a range of athletic activity showing good technique both in field and track events. They work hard and make good progress frequently helping each other to improve their performance.
- 145 The quality of teaching, by mostly specialist teachers, is good at Key Stage 2 and very good at Key Stage 3. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan their lessons very effectively. Lessons are delivered at a brisk pace with good attention to pupils' safety and welfare. Teachers consistently assess pupils' attainment and progress recognising success and offering suggestions for improvement. In the very good lessons teachers enthuse their pupils to work even harder to improve and develop their technique. Pupils obviously enjoy their physical education lessons, concentrating and persevering to improve. In the very good lessons there is an infectious enthusiasm where pupils encourage one another and applaud success.
- 146 The programme for physical education is well planned to give pupils a wide range of experiences to enhance their learning and involve them in team activity. The curriculum is very well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activity both competitive and recreational. There are opportunities for competitive games with other schools and in local area competitions, for example, in football, rugby, netball, rounders and athletics. During the inspection there was a track athletics match with another middle school. All these activities are well supported by pupils.
- 147 The facilities for physical education are very good, with a large playing field, hard surface playground, lawn tennis courts and an open-air swimming pool. All facilities are well maintained. The facilities are used effectively to provide pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, with a very broad range of learning experiences.
- 148 The standards and quality of teaching have improved since the last inspection. There

are now good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 149 Standards achieved are above average expectations in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8. Achievement is good throughout the school for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Standards have greatly improved since the previous inspection when they were below expectations at both key stages.
- 150 Pupils in Key Stage 2 know about stories and festivals and the origins of good and evil. They know about Hindu worship, especially in the home and are well aware of the significance of the Puja tray.
- 151 In Year 7 pupils are able to describe the way Christians mark different stages in life from birth to death and explain the beliefs that were expressed in words and actions. Pupils are able to design a church, identify and give reasons for the key features of a place of worship and understand some activities associated with worship. In Year 8 pupils have a clear understanding of what it means to be a Sikh and have written pamphlets as a guide to a visit to a gurdwara. They are able to research work for themselves and make good use of the Bible.
- 152 The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good, greatly improved from the many weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Some teaching is excellent. However, when a non specialist teacher had an insecure knowledge and understanding of aspects of other faiths this resulted in weaknesses in teaching. Teachers promote an awareness of Christ and other world faiths successfully using a range of resources, for example, a painting, '*Christ in the Wilderness*' by Ivan Nikolaevich Kramskoy helped pupils in Year 5 put the story of the temptations in context and identify what Jesus might have been thinking about rather than retell the events of his life. A poem, '*Ballad of the Landlord*', by Langston Hughes offered pupils in Year 8 opportunities to understand the meaning of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. Snippets of a video about Martin Luther King helped pupils' understanding of his Christian background, his non-violence and the meaning of institutional racism. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy researching about Muhammad through a well-planned activity, 'The Muslim Experience,' from which they learn more about the Islam way of life and how Muhammad challenged religious beliefs and practices. Good questioning challenges all pupils to think deeply and explain their ideas clearly, this was particularly effective when discussing the 'Bus Boycott,' to help pupils understand that the beliefs of Martin Luther King affected his actions and influenced others. The quality of teaching ensures there is very good progress in religious education. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes show how much they enjoy the variety of opportunities to learn about religion.
- 153 Good links are made with literacy and the development of pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 154 Improvement since the last inspection is very good. There is very good subject co-ordination. A very good policy and schemes of work have been written, which are

now closely connected to the agreed syllabus. Learning objectives are now clear in planning and pupils are aware of the themes through the outlines given. Curriculum time has been addressed. The very good approach focuses on the way in which religious faith influences the way people behave and live their lives. Assessment practices are now well developed and marking has clearly improved overall. The use of concepts and terminology is improving and there is now evidence of independent work by pupils. Resources that were poor have been added to and are now good giving pupils hands-on experience of living religion. Homework provides opportunities for in-depth studies. Although there is now some monitoring of teaching and learning taking place, this still needs to be developed.