

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **STREETFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Caddington, Bedfordshire.

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109677

Headteacher: Mrs A M Phillips

Reporting inspector: Mr George Knights  
3268

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 187600

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dunstable Road  
Caddington  
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU1 4BB

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Smith

Date of previous inspection: March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr George Knights	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught
Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector		How high are standards? How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
Sanchia Pearse	Team inspector	English Modern Foreign Languages	
Malcolm McGregor	Team inspector	Art Design and Technology Information Technology	
John Flinn	Team inspector	Geography History	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a mixed comprehensive middle school for pupils aged 9 to 13 years of age. It is located some two miles south of the centre of Dunstable in Bedfordshire and pupils come from a wide area. Although the majority of pupils live close to the school and transfer from four main partner first schools, pupils come to Streetfield Middle School from over 25 schools in four local education authorities. There are 510 pupils on roll, which is above average for middle schools nationally. The school is over-subscribed and numbers on roll have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities attend the school and come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Adult employment in the area is close to the national average. Less than five per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Eighteen pupils, a higher proportion than in most schools, have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils on the school's special educational needs register, at 16.3 per cent, is below the national average, but the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs, at 2.7 per cent, is close to the national average. Around 80 per cent of pupils transfer, at the end of Year 8, to an upper school on the same site, most of the remainder transferring to other upper schools in Dunstable.

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

Streetfield Middle School is an improving school with many strengths. These outweigh those areas in which improvements are needed. Standards are steadily improving as a result of consistently good teaching. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, fostering a climate in which all seek to do well. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Very strong leadership by the headteacher gives a clear sense of purpose which is helping to raise standards.
- Consistently good teaching ensures that most pupils learn well.
- Pupils achieve standards in English which are above average.
- A positive and caring environment encourages pupils to thrive.
- A supportive ethos encourages good behaviour and positive attitudes to school life among all pupils.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits enhances pupils' learning experiences.

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

- The consistent use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning and to give pupils a clear picture of how to improve their work and performance.
- The range and frequency of opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their information and communications technology capability, especially at Key Stage 3.
- The adequacy of accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and the number of pupils in the school.
- The effectiveness of a range of day to day organisational systems in the school.

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

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

Since the school was last inspected in March 1996 standards have improved and teaching is now of consistently higher quality. The school now complies with statutory requirements regarding the registration of pupils and the health and safety matters identified have been addressed. Teachers now have much better knowledge of the content of pupils' individual education plans and use this knowledge effectively to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have taken steps to match tasks more effectively to the differing abilities of pupils in their classes and this has helped average and lower attaining pupils make good progress. Tasks are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of higher attaining pupils. Significant progress has been made in putting in place processes of monitoring and evaluation but these need to be extended further, as does work by teachers to analyse and make good use of assessment information to guide teaching and curriculum planning.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	D	B	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	D
Science	C	C	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Overall, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with both national averages and with the average for similar schools. There has been a slow but steady improvement in standards over the past four years. In 1999 results in English were above the national average and the average for similar schools, representing a distinct improvement on results in 1998. Results in mathematics were in line with the national average, but a relatively low number of pupils gained Level 5 and thus when compared with similar schools overall results were below average. Science results were in line with both the national and similar school averages in 1999.

When pupils leave school at the end of Year 8 they are achieving standards in English which are above the national average for children of this age. Standards in science and mathematics, at this age, are in line with national averages. In mathematics pupils in Year 7 are making particularly good progress and their attainment is now slightly above the national average. Improvements in standards in English and mathematics are closely related to the positive impact of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	A strength of the school is the positive attitudes adopted by pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the wide range of opportunities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is generally good, both in classrooms and around the school, which contributes to a harmonious atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities to take responsibility and this contributes well to their personal development. Relationships in the school, both among pupils and between teachers and pupils, are good.
Attendance	Attendance is close to the national average for pupils in middle schools. A significant number of pupils arrive late to school owing to transport problems. Punctuality in some lessons is unsatisfactory.

The school is a harmonious community where positive attitudes and a genuine respect for others characterise relationships. This encourages a good atmosphere in most classrooms which, in turn, helps pupils learn well.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 9 – 11 years	aged 11 – 13 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

The quality of teaching in the school has improved since the previous inspection. Teaching in both key stages is at least good in almost two thirds of lessons and is very good or excellent in one lesson in five. There is almost no unsatisfactory teaching in the school. Teaching in English and mathematics is never less than satisfactory. In English it is good or very good in three quarters of lessons, especially at Key Stage 3. In mathematics teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3, though with some examples of excellent teaching at this key stage. The teaching of science is generally good, with occasional unsatisfactory teaching which is offset by some which is very good. Elsewhere, teaching is mostly good, especially in aspects of design and technology. Teachers generally have high expectations of most pupils, but work is not always sufficiently challenging for the highest attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 3. Teachers are not making sufficient use of day to day assessment to guide their lesson planning, nor to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum at Key Stage 2 covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal and social education. Pupils are also able to study French from Year 5. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum enables pupils to continue to study all subjects from Key Stage 2 with the exception of information and communications technology. Provision for this subject at Key Stage 3 does not fully meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall provision for these pupils is good. The support they receive from classroom support assistants is particularly effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of pupils with English as an additional language generally have good command of English and find no difficulty in making good progress. The school does, however, ensure that their specific needs are attended to when necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the school makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' moral and social education is good, whilst the contribution to spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Some opportunities are missed to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and insufficient attention is paid to a range of multi-cultural issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. Arrangements for child protection are effective, as are procedures for monitoring attendance. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work and progress are improving but are not yet sufficiently well established to provide a clear picture of the development and needs of each individual pupil.

The school is a caring community which offers a good range of curriculum experiences. These are significantly enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are much appreciated by pupils. The school provides a satisfactory range of information for parents about what the school offers and about the progress of pupils, and many parents work closely with staff to promote aspects of school life. The school has, however, not done enough to ensure a high level of partnership with all parents.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher offers very strong leadership and is ably supported by other senior staff. All staff have a commitment to improvement in the school and middle managers are becoming much more involved in bringing about improvements within subject departments.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are becoming increasingly active in their roles. They share a commitment to bring about improvements, especially in standards. They are now well informed and they thus have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This aspect of the school is improving well. Regular evaluation of classroom practice has begun to result in improved teaching. Action to meet the school's development priorities are increasingly being placed under closer scrutiny to ensure that improvements are taking place.
The strategic use of resources	Overall the school makes satisfactory use of its resources.

The school is well led and management is efficient. Over the past two years good progress has been made in the adoption of a comprehensive plan for school development and for the implementation of a range of policies. Evaluation of progress is improving and governors and senior managers are now working closely together to take the school forward. Careful attention is paid, especially by the headteacher, to ensuring that the principles of best value are applied. The school benefits from an experienced and well qualified staff. Learning resources in the school are mostly satisfactory, though there are not enough computers for the school's needs. Accommodation in the school is woefully inadequate for the numbers on roll. Some day to day organisational procedures need to be improved.

## 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>Teaching is of good quality. High expectations of pupils helps them make good progress.</li> <li>Children like coming to school and behave well when they are there. They are encouraged to adopt mature and responsible attitudes to work and to one another.</li> <li>The school responds well when parents raise questions or problems.</li> <li>The school offers a wide range of activities for pupils beyond the classroom.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The arrangements for securing consistency in the setting of homework.</li> <li>The information which parents receive about their child's progress.</li> <li>The extent to which the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>

Just over a quarter of parents in the school returned questionnaires and around a quarter of these had additional comments attached. Both questionnaire returns and the meeting for parents held before the inspection indicate that parents are generally pleased with what the school offers. Inspectors agree with those matters with which parents express satisfaction. The school is well led and dedicated and committed teachers have worked hard to improve the quality of their teaching. Expectations of pupils are generally high, though inspectors consider that the highest attaining pupils in the school are not being sufficiently well challenged. Children certainly enjoy school, adopt positive attitudes to work and are mature in their dealings with others. The range of extra-curricular activities, including trips and visits, enhances the learning of many pupils. The school is open to approaches and suggestions from parents, but inspectors recognise that there is more that the school could do to encourage the involvement of a larger number of parents in the life and work of the school. The school is working on improvements to the information provided about pupils' progress and this should address the legitimate concerns of parents. Arrangements for homework also require review to ensure greater consistency and relevance.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school at the beginning of Year 5 is in line with national expectations. Assessment of pupils on arrival indicates that their reading ages are average overall, though a significant number have a reading age which is two years below their chronological age. The school undertakes assessments of pupils at the beginning of Year 5 to establish a baseline and to guide class grouping, which includes ability setting in mathematics.
2. By the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils are 11 years of age results in national tests in the school are close to the national average. In 1999 results in English were above the national average and in mathematics and science were in line with national averages. Over the past four years there has been a slow but steady improvement in overall test results at the end of Key Stage 2. When compared with similar schools nationally English results in 1999 were better than average. Results in science were in line with the average for similar schools and in mathematics were lower than average. When compared with results in the six neighbouring middle schools in the Dunstable area over the past three years significant improvement has been made in English, with some progress also in science and mathematics. Overall, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in the school is below the national average. This is a consequence of inappropriately low levels of expectation on the part of teachers of what higher attaining pupils can achieve.
3. There are some significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2. In 1999, for example, girls did better than boys in English, especially at Level 5. There is less difference in mathematics, where the same proportions of boys and girls attain this higher level. In science although girls did better than boys in 1999, over a four year period boys have performed better than girls.
4. Inspection findings show that for pupils currently in the school attainment in English at Key Stage 2 is above national expectations, mainly as a result of recent changes in teaching approaches linked to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. In mathematics standards are close to national expectation overall, though pupils in Year 5 are achieving well, working above national expectations. In science standards are close to national expectations, though in both science and mathematics the achievements of higher attaining pupils are lower than expected as teachers do not always sufficiently modify work to provide appropriate levels of challenge. The school has set targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and Mathematics. These targets are not sufficiently challenging, having already been exceeded by pupils in the school. The target setting process in the school is not at present being used effectively to bring about further improvements in standards.
5. Elsewhere in the curriculum standards of work at Key Stage 2 are above national expectations in music, religious education and physical education and in line with national expectations in art, design and technology, information and communications technology and French. Attainment in geography and history is generally in line with national expectations, but in both these subjects higher attaining pupils under-achieve.
6. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 they achieve standards in English which are above national expectations. In mathematics attainment is in line with national expectations overall, though many pupils in Year 7 are achieving work

which indicates good progress and attainment which is above national expectations. In science attainment throughout Years 7 and 8 is generally in line with national expectations. As at Key Stage 2 the higher attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged to help them achieve well in either mathematics or science.

7. By the time pupils leave the school attainment is above national expectations in physical education and in design and technology and in line with national expectations in art, French, music and religious education. As at Key Stage 2 attainment overall in geography and history is in line with national expectations, but higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged to enable them to achieve well. Attainment in information and communications technology in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory because systematic arrangements are not made for the effective teaching of this subject and pupils do not build successfully on their achievements in Key Stage 2.
8. Across the curriculum standards of literacy are good and standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils develop their reading and writing skills well but the school does not have systems in place to monitor the contribution of work in subjects other than English to the development of these key skills. Similarly, there is no overall process for securing consistent development of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects, though good contributions are made in subjects such as science and design and technology where pupils are able to apply their emerging mathematics skills. Work toward the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies has helped to heighten the awareness of all teachers of opportunities to develop pupils' basic skills. This is not yet well co-ordinated across the school to maximise the potential for further improvements. Good progress is made by pupils in Key Stage 2 in the development and application of their information and communication technology skills, but this is not sustained through Key Stage 3. This contributes to a lowering of overall standards and a limit to the range of curricular opportunities in many subjects at this key stage.
9. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science at both Key Stages 2 and 3. Strengths in teaching, especially in Years 5 and 7, are associated with better than average progress. The lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, especially in mathematics and science, limits their progress. In English pupils make good progress at both key stages. This is the result of good teaching which ensures that tasks are appropriately challenging for all pupils. Progress in most other subjects is satisfactory and is good at Key Stage 2 in music, religious education and physical education. At Key Stage 3 progress is good in design and technology and physical education. It is unsatisfactory at this key stage in information and communications technology.
10. Inspection evidence indicates that the rate of progress of pupils currently in the school is increasing because of improvements in the overall quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Those with English as an additional language make good progress both in oral and written work. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils in the school from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils who are gifted or talented make satisfactory progress but do not make good progress because their needs are not consistently met. The programme for assessing all pupils in reading and spelling on entry to the school is effective in identifying those pupils in need of additional help.
11. Subject departments provide relevant tasks in class for pupils who have special educational needs, supported well by support staff. Those pupils with statements of special educational need receive at least weekly help from the special educational needs co-ordinator on a one-to-one basis. This provision effectively supports attainment of the basic skills of reading, spelling and written comprehension, but is

insufficiently focused on the skills they need to improve and develop their work in class across all of the National Curriculum. The school does not systematically have a means of recognising gifted and talented pupils and, therefore, of modifying tasks and activities to meet their specific needs.

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

12. One of the major strengths of the school is the positive attitudes of pupils to work and to general school life. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk enthusiastically about their lessons and the wide range of other activities available to them, especially the sports and music activities. Several Year 8 students were still buzzing about their participation in the school production of 'Grease' earlier in the year, while a group of over 30 Year 7 girls were totally absorbed in a highly competitive game of rounders at lunchtime. Many pupils of all ages were enthusiastically singing with the choir in preparation for the summer concert. Their enthusiasm for school life often spills over into the classroom. This energy and excitement was evident, for example, in a Year 5 music lesson where pupils entered into the practical work on rhythm and beat with evident interest and focus.
13. Pupils behave well. Lessons are usually characterised by calm purposeful activity. Pupils are open and interested but also polite and courteous. They frequently have to go through another classroom to get to their own teaching area and much of the school is a warren of staircases and small corridors. Despite these limitations in the accommodation all the pupils move around the school sensibly and are mindful of the needs of others who may, for example, be practising musical instruments in communal areas or queuing to enter a room. Year 6 English students concentrated well despite the noise of pupils singing 'happy birthday' in the neighbouring classroom.
14. Pupils usually behave well when in large groups, either formally for class assemblies or informally in the dining hall. There are, however, a very few occasions when pupils do not always demonstrate appropriate behaviour, as instanced by the over excitable behaviour at the beginning of one assembly for Year 7 and 8 pupils. Whilst behaviour in the playgrounds is noisy and boisterous, it is not unacceptable and merely reflects the high spirits of these children. Bullying is rare and when it occurs pupils and parents are rightly confident that it is well handled.
15. A small number of pupils find conforming to the school's expectations difficult. The unsatisfactory behaviour of these very few pupils rarely affects the progress of others and only seldom does it upset the genuinely harmonious atmosphere of the school. This harmony is in part due to the good relationships which exist throughout the whole school. Pupils relate well to one another. Many examples were seen in the classrooms of pupils helping each other. High levels of co-operation were evident in a Year 7 art lesson where pupils were making good suggestions about how to improve the designs of others before making papier mache animals. Pupils were also seen helping one another with computer work in a design and technology lesson where other Year 7 pupils were following production plans for making a game. These high levels of co-operation are also mixed with healthy levels of competition. Year 6 pupils practising throwing skills were celebrating their successes within a good spirit of competition. Year 8 pupils talked excitedly about the pleasure of representing their tutor group at sports day. Throughout school life boys and girls and pupils of different age groups work and play well together. Volunteers from Years 6, 7 and 8 together organised the school's Blue Peter Bring and Buy sale. Relationships between adults and pupils are also good and are characterised by high levels of mutual trust and respect. These consistently good relationships help pupils feel safe and secure in school. The pupils are interested in the lives and challenges of others. Year 8

students showed high levels of sensitivity when discussing and role playing their interpretation of the characteristics of drug addicts. They listened attentively to the views of the teacher when she skilfully and appropriately interrupted their acting to stimulate and guide their thinking.

16. Another strength of the school, much appreciated by parents, is the good personal development of the pupils. Even those pupils whose behaviour is at times unsatisfactory showed that they do care about others and are willing and able to take responsibility for their own actions. Many pupils even in the youngest classes offer help, for example, by opening doors for others and offering directions freely. The school provides an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. A large number of pupils from all ages volunteer to be monitors and thus to contribute to the running of the school. Two girls talked with pride about the religious education cupboard which they manage. A group of 18 boys and girls run the library at lunchtime with much vigour and efficiency. Several boys were to be seen every day during their lunch hour conscientiously cutting the coupons from crisp packets. Pupils are given the opportunity to contribute their ideas to the school's development through informal group discussions with the headteacher, though many expressed a desire for more formal opportunities to influence aspects of school life through, for example, a school council. Their comfort with their own ideas and knowledge and support for their school were evident in the many very positive and mature discussions which inspectors enjoyed with pupils.
17. Attendance is average for schools with children of middle school age. Punctuality is not good, however. Registration sessions in the morning and the first lesson of the afternoon are often interrupted by the late arrival of some pupils owing to transport difficulties. Assemblies other than those for individual classes often over-run, thus shortening many first lessons by up to 10 minutes because of the late arrival of pupils.

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

18. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now at least satisfactory in almost all lessons and is good or very good in almost two thirds of lessons. There is little significant difference between teaching quality in the two key stages, though more of the very good or excellent teaching occurs in Key Stage 3. This consistently good teaching is a major factor in enabling most pupils to make good progress in their learning throughout the school.
19. The teaching of mathematics and English is never less than satisfactory and has improved in both subjects since the previous inspection. In English teaching is good or very good in three-quarters of lessons, mostly in Key Stage 3. In Mathematics teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 3, though some teaching of mathematics to older pupils is of excellent quality. The work done in both departments to introduce the national strategies for literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 has enabled teachers to work hard to improve their teaching skills. The strategies have been successfully introduced, bringing about clear improvements in the quality of pupils' learning in Years 5 and 6. There has been some benefit to pupils too in Years 7 and 8 where teachers have begun to adopt some of the methodology advocated within the two national strategies. The teaching of science is good overall throughout the school, but there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in science at Key Stage 3 when the teacher fails to establish a clear context for the work being presented, with consequent loss of motivation by pupils.
20. Across other subjects of the curriculum teaching is good overall in design and

technology, art, physical education, geography and music. Some of the teaching in design and technology and art is very good or excellent. In French teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and good overall in Key Stage 3, whilst in religious education teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 3. The teaching of personal and social education, undertaken by teachers from English and modern language departments, is good, particularly because of the effective links through language and role-play between the material being taught and the language skills developed in these other subjects. The teaching of history is satisfactory overall throughout the school, though some good teaching takes place in Key Stage 3. The teaching of information and communications technology is good in the subject lessons at Key Stage 2, enabling pupils to gain a good grounding in their skills, but the further development and application of these skills in Key Stage 3 is inconsistent.

21. Significant improvements have been made since the time of the previous inspection in ensuring that teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach their subjects. The greatest improvements in this regard have taken place in Key Stage 2 with the programmes of training for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies playing a significant part. There is now a better match of teacher specialisms to the demands of the subjects taught. Other than in the application of information and communication technology skills good subject knowledge is being used effectively in planning and presentation of lessons. Good attention is paid to the development of pupils' basic skills of language and mathematics, though there is no co-ordinated system for ensuring consistency in approaches to developing these skills across the school. Nevertheless, pupils' language skills are good overall and subjects such as design and technology and science provide good contexts for pupils to apply some of their mathematical skills.
22. Teachers generally have good expectations of what pupils will achieve. This is particularly true of average and lower attaining pupils, who make good progress. In many subjects, including English, mathematics and science, the levels of expectation of what higher attaining and gifted or talented pupils can achieve are not high enough. Teachers do not modify tasks to challenge these pupils sufficiently with the result that they make slower progress than do other pupils in classes. Teachers have good knowledge of the particular requirements of pupils with special educational needs and modify work accordingly. They make good use of the classroom support assistants to provide individual help and these two factors combine together to help these pupils make good progress. Teachers are mindful of the needs of pupils for whom English is not the first language and on the few occasions when specific help is required modifications to tasks or materials are made in order to ensure that these pupils make good progress. Occasionally pupils with statements of special educational need are withdrawn for one-to-one work and during these sessions are well taught by the special educational needs co-ordinator. They are given opportunities to improve their reading, spelling and writing skills during these sessions, but what they learn is not directly linked to the work they would have been doing had they remained in their classes and this means that some opportunities for learning are lost.
23. Most lessons are well planned. Many lessons now have clear learning objectives and teachers are beginning to share these with pupils. This helps the pupils to gain a clear picture of the purpose of the lesson. Particularly in English and mathematics but also in other subjects summaries at the end of lessons use the objectives as a basis for pupils and teachers together to review the learning that has taken place. This practice helps pupils to understand the progress they have made. In some subjects marking of pupils' written work also successfully gives pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing, but this is not consistent across all subjects. Too often marking is general in nature, with little indication to pupils of what to do to improve their work. Pupils'

knowledge of their own learning is only satisfactory because teachers are not consistently making use of their on-going assessment of work to guide pupils sufficiently on a lesson-by-lesson basis.

24. Teachers manage pupils well, establishing good relationships and a constructive learning atmosphere in lessons. This encourages pupils to be confident and interested in their work. Many work well both independently or in groups. They take opportunities to work constructively beyond the classroom, for example, on trips and visits and they behave well. As a result, almost all pupils are able to work freely and confidently, helping to ensure that they make good progress. For many pupils this confidence extends to a willingness, and not a little skill, in presenting their ideas to the class, in turn helping to reinforce their understanding.
25. Careful planning ensures that pupils are able to take part in a wide range of learning activities, well matched to the objectives of the lesson. This ensures that in most lessons practical enquiry and experiment and the opportunity to work with good quality resources enrich pupils' learning. Occasionally, limits to resource availability, for example, in music and religious education restricts progress. The one major limitation to the range of methods and approaches is the lack of effective use of computers to enhance learning in most subjects.
26. The school has a programme to guide the setting of homework for pupils throughout the school. Most teachers set tasks as and when the programme demands and some of these activities are challenging and enriching for pupils. There is a lack of consistency from teacher to teacher and from subject to subject in the extent and quality of tasks set and this is misleading to pupils. Parents expressed concern about homework arrangements, some suggesting that too much work is being set and others feeling that the work set is insufficient. This is a consequence of the inconsistency highlighted, of the inadequate guidance given by teachers regarding their expectations and of inadequate monitoring by class teachers of both the implementation of the homework timetable and the work patterns of pupils. Homework arrangements in the school should be reviewed in order to bring about greater consistency and to help pupils develop good work habits beyond the classroom.

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

27. Curriculum provision for pupils at Key Stage 2 is good, offering a broad and balanced programme which covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum. In addition, the school provides for the teaching of religious education in accordance with the local agreed syllabus and an effective and stimulating programme of personal, social and health education. The introduction of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy have stimulated teachers to review their provision for English and mathematics and in both these subjects the new curriculum, with accompanying changes in teaching styles and approaches, has brought about improvement in standards. Many subjects make some contribution to the development and application of pupils' language skills and their numeracy skills are enhanced in science and design and technology as well as in mathematics. These contributions are not monitored however and, hence, their impact is limited. Throughout this key stage separate lessons develop pupils' skills with computers effectively. The balance of time for the different subjects at Key Stage 2 is generally satisfactory, though the time allocation for art and for design and technology in Year 6 is unsatisfactory. This is a direct consequence of the arrangements whereby design and technology, art and information and communications technology are taught in rotation to different groups of pupils. This is partly necessitated by the unsatisfactory accommodation for art and for the food and textiles components of

design and technology.

28. Pupils are able to maintain their study of most subjects in Key Stage 3, though arrangements for information and communications technology do not guarantee that pupils receive their full statutory entitlement at this key stage. This is because there is an unfulfilled expectation that subjects across the curriculum will provide opportunities for the development and application of information and communications technology skills. Currently there is no reliable system for planning these opportunities, nor a means of monitoring what pupils actually receive. Some subjects have begun to include provision of these skills in their schemes of work, but this is not consistent.
29. Other than in the provision for information and communications technology the curriculum at Key Stage 3 is broad and relatively well balanced, though time allocations for subjects such as geography, history and physical education are relatively high, while those for religious education and art are relatively low. Pupils continue to study French during Key Stage 3, having begun this subject in Year 5. At both key stages there are some limitations to the physical education programme. Lessons in this subject take place in single sex groups which denies access, for example, of boys to dance and girls to rugby and soccer. The school does not include swimming in its physical education curriculum at Key Stage 2.
30. Throughout their time at school pupils study a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education which effectively addresses sex, drugs and health education. Recently the teaching of this subject has been undertaken by teachers in the English and French departments. This has had the effect of providing rich opportunities for the practical application of drama, role play and general language, whilst at the same time enriching the learning of the personal and social education programme. The school makes good use of the community as a learning resource. Members of a range of organisations are invited into school to make contributions and pupils are able to go on many educational trips and visits. All of these enrich pupils' learning experiences. So too does a good programme of extra-curricular activities in a range of subjects, all of which are popular with pupils.
31. Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils across the school is satisfactory overall. All pupils have good access to the taught curriculum, except for aspects of the physical education curriculum. The school has recently begun to analyse performance information on boys and girls, revealing some noticeable differences. This information is at present not well used enough to achieve a more even balance between the performance of boys and girls.
32. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, from minority ethnic backgrounds, for whom English as an additional language and who are gifted or talented have full access to the curriculum. Occasional withdrawal from class is used effectively to help pupils to develop their reading, spelling and writing skills. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is suitably organised to meet their identified needs. These needs are defined in individual education plans with clear targets for improvement. However, some of the pupils' individual targets are not closely matched to the termly reviews and are too general. They do not, for instance, indicate what specifically is required to help pupils improve their reading or spelling ages from their present levels; nor do they indicate what teachers and support staff need to do, over the period of the review, to achieve this improvement. Individual education plans are available to all staff who readily make use of them. Information recorded on the progress of pupils receiving additional support successfully provides a wealth of valuable information, but this is not used well to define specific learning targets. In some subjects higher attaining pupils and gifted and talented pupils are not



sufficiently well challenged to enable them to make good progress, especially at Key Stage 3.

33. When they first enter the school all pupils are assessed for reading and spelling by the learning support department. Contributory lower schools also provide useful assessment information. This ensures that all pupils who need additional help are quickly identified. Further effective assessments are carried out as needed with the help of support services. If it is found that a pupil has special educational needs individual education plans are drawn up. These are at present appropriately reviewed termly. The school communicates effectively with parents about the needs of children who require additional support. Good records are completed by teachers and support staff which provide a clear picture of each pupil's needs. These records are regularly updated and provide clear information which is used to decide the approaches needed in class to meet their needs.
34. The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is sound. Overall the school is very successful in meeting its aims because the school is a caring and purposeful community of well-motivated staff and pupils who relate well to one another. Since the previous inspection the school has built upon its good practices in promoting moral and social education but has not significantly attended to issues raised in the previous inspection about promoting greater multi-cultural understanding in its curriculum planning.
35. The school attempts through its religious education teaching, its assemblies and form periods to provide the pupils with a secure spiritual and moral framework. In religious education lessons pupils are introduced to the spiritual dimension of people as diverse as Christians, Jews, Moslems, Sikhs and Hindus. In school and year assemblies and in form time through the 'thought for the day' pupils are encouraged to reflect on various spiritual and religious issues. Although the school does not comply with the statutory requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, it nonetheless provides a sound basis for pupils' spiritual development. The school has a strong link with a vicar from a local Church of England church, but has no regular links with faiths other than Christianity.
36. The schools' provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are provided with a clear, well-understood and well-publicised code of conduct which emphasises the importance of respect for all persons. The school's personal and social education programme encourages pupils to develop mature approaches to their relationships with others and encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes. The current personal and social education course specifically promotes basic health care and personal hygiene, the importance of a balanced diet and regular exercise. Sex education is well taught. Other important areas of personal and social education teaching include well-planned lessons about road safety, accident prevention, environmental education, disability and drugs education.
37. The school reinforces positive attitudes towards work and leisure by presenting merit marks, certificates and badges for good work and for positive and responsible attitudes. The headteacher publicly commends these positive attitudes. The most outstanding pupils receive letters of commendation at end of year assemblies. The school places much emphasis on the traditional values of courtesy, good behaviour and appropriate dress, caring for others and the environment. A major feature of the school's commitment to the pupils' moral education is demonstrated in its encouragement of pupils to collect for numerous local and national charities. With strong staff support many of the pupils carry out much of the administration and

organisation of collections.

38. Provision for pupils' social education is good. Pupils are very helpful and provide visitors to the school with much help in showing them around. Pupils socialise very well together and enjoy living in an affirming and positive environment. Pupils help in departmental bases and in the school library and take responsibility for numerous duties throughout the breaks and lunch times. Pupil librarians receive some training for their work and exhibit confidence when helping others. The headteacher of the neighbouring upper school reports that pupils from Streetfield arrive at his school with increased levels of responsibility and maturity. Pupils involved in many music and sporting activities relate well to one another and often take opportunities to exercise leadership roles in their chosen fields. The generous provision of sporting opportunities provides many pupils with excellent opportunities to learn and to develop social skills and attributes. Pupils who pursue off-site annual year group activities such as the trip to the Gower Peninsula are given many opportunities to exercise team leadership as well as playing full roles as team members.
39. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is demonstrated by teachers' willingness and enthusiasm to enhance classroom teaching by arranging trips to theatres, museums, general places of interest and national sporting events. Pupils have benefited from residential visits to a computer camp, ski resorts, Normandy and outdoor field centres. The Year 5 pupils enjoy a day trip to Sulgrave Manor to experience life in Tudor times and Year 6 go to Hitchin to experience Victorian schooldays. The ably led choir and orchestra provide pupils with first-rate opportunities to sing and play in public and to rehearse music from a broad spectrum of styles and musical periods. The school provides a very full range of lunchtime and after school clubs and activities. These are predominantly, but not exclusively, in aspects of sport and music, though good opportunities are provided to play chess, to read in the library, to speak French and to develop computer aided learning. In 1999 the school successfully involved many pupils in its production of 'Grease'. All these pursuits significantly enrich and broaden pupils' lives.
40. The school misses some opportunities to introduce pupils to contemporary cultures of peoples from other than British origins. Pupils consequently have a limited knowledge and understanding of peoples living in the local area and further afield in the UK from other cultures. Key areas and departments within the school such as religious education do not currently invite speakers from world faiths other than Christianity to talk to the pupils about their customs and traditions.

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

41. The school has effective measures for ensuring that pupils are safe and are well cared for whilst at school. Appropriate and effective child protection procedures are in place. Of particular benefit to the welfare of the pupils is the very genuine and consistently caring attitude of almost all the teaching and support staff. Pupils benefit considerably from the time, energy and thought which staff give to identifying and promoting each child's individual personal development needs. The school now has in place a regular system of meetings for year groups, for departments, for senior management teams and for daily staff briefings. This formal structure, coupled with very good informal communication throughout the school, ensures that information about pupils' needs is communicated effectively and quickly.
42. The school has some good systems in place for supporting and guiding individual pupils. Where there are concerns about a pupil's personal development and progress the school has developed a good 'round robin' sheet for researching the views of other

teachers who have contact with the child concerned. An action plan is prepared and shared after discussion with all staff concerned. The pupils complete their own record of achievement booklet. This is their understanding of their progress and attitude to school and subjects. Coupled with the pupil's annual report this is a good focus for general discussion at an annual interview between pupil and tutor. These opportunities could be of greater value if the school systematically collected information from all years and in all subjects, analysed it to identify patterns and trends and used the information to predict potential future performance.

43. Most departments assess pupils' academic attainment and progress regularly and appropriately, with some very good practice in design and technology, which is detailed in the subject paragraph. However, as noted in the previous inspection report there is inconsistency across departments and a lack of an up-to-date, coherent, whole school policy to guide this aspect of work. The procedures for marking pupils' work are sound in most subjects and some departments have made improvements in using the ensuing assessment in their teaching and planning. The school's policy on marking is not consistently applied to help ensure consistency and continuity.
44. The school is now collating and analysing data relating to National Curriculum levels across all subjects. Some departments are beginning to use this analysis to recognise patterns such as the underachievement of boys in English. National Curriculum levels are now reported to parents in each year. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
45. The system in design and technology for involving pupils in their own assessment through the sharing of National Curriculum levels and clear assessment criteria is helping pupils understand how to improve their work. It is also giving teachers an insight into how to provide for individual needs in order to raise standards. Another useful example is the practice in English and mathematics of pupils identifying their own targets for improvement. This is now ready to be extended to include National Curriculum criteria. The school needs to examine the good practice in place and develop a coherent whole school policy which will give all pupils good opportunities to understand their own achievements and how to progress further.
46. The school has recently improved its arrangements for the collection of data and information is now being built up on pupils' attainment. Plans are in place to develop analysis of this information and to use it to give an overview of how pupils are progressing and what needs to be done to improve standards further.
47. Procedures for managing the behaviour of pupils are good and set to improve even further with the planned development of an assertive behaviour strategy. The school has recently adopted a more positive approach to behaviour management and is still translating the good practice into formal policy and procedure. Almost all the staff are now making it quite clear about how they expect pupils to behave using warnings and sanctions carefully to alert pupils to the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour. Good use is made of rewards to motivate the pupils. This effective management helps pupils make good progress in their lessons.
48. The recording of attendance is effective but is still completed by hand in class registers. There is currently no system in place to allow quick and easy analysis and identification of trends and patterns on a whole school basis and this limits the school's potential to improve attendance.

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

49. There is some polarisation in parental views of the school. Almost all the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those spoken to directly by inspectors are rightly very satisfied with the school and the way in which it provides a suitable and appropriate education for their children. Parents who have regular contact with the school and participate in school life are exceedingly happy. Some come into school to help support classroom activities such as reading with the younger pupils. Many parents provide valuable resources. A lively and busy Parent Teacher Association works hard to raise funds and provide events, including a very successful programme of monthly discos which is very popular with the children. The induction pack of materials for new parents is generally very good, the only omission being information about each discrete subject and how it is covered in Year 5. When their children first start at the school parents are eager to be involved and included as evidenced by the over 90 per cent attendance at parent consultation evenings for Year 5 parents.
50. Despite these many positive features the overall partnership with all parents is only satisfactory. The school has in the past not taken the initiative in actively encouraging all parents to work in partnership. This is now changing. Analysis of the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire shows that a higher than average number of parents have concerns about some aspects of the school's work. Concerns regarding the lack of information about what the pupils are studying are currently justified. However, the school already has plans in hand to circulate parents with descriptions of what their children will be learning in the year ahead.
51. Some parents expressed concern about the extent of information provided regarding the progress pupils are making. The school is in the process of improving its recording and reporting systems. An annual timetable is now produced indicating when information is shared with parents either as a report or through a consultation. There is now one overall format for reports with an appropriate box for sharing grades within aspects of individual subjects. There is inconsistency between departments in the extent and clarity of information provided about how pupils could improve their performance. The school is planning improvements to the consultation evening process as currently only about 40 per cent of Year 8 parents attend these consultation meetings compared with the 90 per cent who come to Year 5 meetings.
52. The organisation of the reception area is such that visitors to the school are often not properly greeted, either because they cannot be seen or because staff in the front office are not available to greet them. Although there is a school commitment to welcoming visitors, in practice people entering the school do not always gain a good first impression.

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

53. Very strong leadership by the headteacher ensures that the focus is fixed firmly on raising standards. She has a very clear view of the direction in which the school will go. The school's aims are evident in the work of the school at all levels. They place a strong emphasis on the general development of pupils, but do not make specific reference to a commitment to helping pupils achieve high standards.
54. The headteacher's highly effective leadership has motivated other staff to commit themselves to change and improvement. She is inspiring, influencing and motivating her staff. The rate of change over the past two years has been sufficient to start

creating an energetic and forward-looking culture without unsettling those members of staff who are less enthusiastic about embracing change. There is now a sense of real team spirit among the staff which is felt and shared by the pupils. The two other senior management team members are very recently appointed. They are already demonstrating a good knowledge of the school and are effectively committing their own skills and knowledge to future developments. The headteacher, senior staff and governors all have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

55. The quality of the school development plan and the planning and review process has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The school has produced a clear and comprehensive programme for development with good short and long term coverage. It is a good tool for co-ordinating strategies for bringing about school improvement. The school has identified six long term targets to be achieved over a three year period. Having considered the 1998/99 targets and with due consideration to the various new initiatives confronting education in the short term the school identified four separate targets for this year. They reflect the school's need to move on from the strengths which have long been in place and to address issues associated with teaching, assessment, professional development, curriculum initiatives and improvement in the school environment. Detailed planning for each year sets out a range of activities together with indications of cost implications, training needs and measures by which the success of the actions will be judged. This detail is produced on a whole school basis and for each department. Departments take into account whole school targets and any specific department needs when creating their plans. The whole school plan is monitored well through a good mid-term review process. At departmental level the degree to which careful attention has been given to the review has hitherto been variable.
56. Governors are involved in the approval of the plan but are not sufficiently involved in its creation. They monitor aspects of its implementation through the headteacher's reports to the governing body and discussion in committees. They are fully involved in the budget setting and monitoring process. Governors are committed to the school, have an increasing understanding of its work and take an active interest in its activities. They are linked with curriculum areas and this link provides regular opportunities for individual governors to report on their subject area to the whole governing body. The governor for special educational needs has not yet made effective contact with the special educational needs co-ordinator in order to be able to monitor provision or produce an appropriate yearly statement on provision for the parents' annual report.
57. Heads of department are encouraged to take full responsibility for the management of their departments. The headteacher has devoted considerable time and energy to identifying the developmental needs of the middle management team. Opportunities have been created for a programme of monitoring of teaching to take place and the results of classroom observations to be reviewed. The cycle is not yet complete in all departments but is helping focus attention on improving teaching quality. As yet the outcomes of the monitoring of teaching are not yet fully informing future development plans.
58. The school has very good procedures for the management of finance. The headteacher has reviewed budget setting processes and systems and good use is now made of computer systems to monitor the process. Financial control is very good. The principles of best value, for example, in terms of ensuring that the school understands why it is necessary to bring about current developments are being applied extremely well at senior management level. This is not, however, a rigorous or well

established approach at other management levels. For instance, there is not a culture of continuous challenge within all departments nor is attention sufficiently focused on such matters as identifying 'how well we are doing'.

59. Some aspects of day to day office administration are ineffective and unsatisfactory in terms of efficiency and public relations. Computer technology is not yet being used effectively to help the school to record, analyse and improve its academic, administrative and pastoral performance. The school meets statutory requirements in most areas, but not in the provision of a daily act of collective worship nor in the provision for information and communications technology at Key Stage 3.
60. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Specific grants such as funding for special educational needs are prudently and suitably used. The special educational needs co-ordinator fosters an effective team approach and is successfully developing and managing overall provision. Well-qualified staff provide valuable in-class support which makes a significant contribution to the work of the department. The co-ordinator effectively monitors their work and meets with them frequently to discuss the needs of the pupils they are supporting. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language and for gifted and talented pupils has no identified co-ordinator. Some departments have policies stating how pupils' needs will be met, but this practice is inconsistent and under-developed. The headteacher maintains oversight of special educational needs provision and ensures that support for pupils with English as an additional language is available when required.
61. The school has sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers and an effective team of classroom support staff. There is a good system of professional development interviews in place which provides all teaching staff with the opportunity of an annual review of their performance, progress and training needs. Targets are set for improvement and development over the next year but currently many targets are not precisely defined with measurable outcomes and the link with the monitoring of teaching by heads of department has yet to be made. Staff training is closely linked to the school development plan and individual teachers' training needs, as identified in the performance review. The system is to be extended to support staff during the next year. The school has taken appropriate measures to ensure that performance management systems will be established as soon as required by the government.
62. New staff are given variable levels of support. The induction process is not documented and the effectiveness of its delivery depends on individual middle managers. The school provides good support for the training of student teachers. Changes made to the overall pattern of staffing have resulted in a closer match between most teachers' subject training and experience and the subjects they are teaching. This positively addresses the issue of non-specialists delivering significant parts of the curriculum at Key Stage 2, raised at the time of the last inspection. There are insufficient specialist teachers in the mathematics department. A few key members of staff are part-time and this adversely impacts on the effectiveness of their role and the construction of the whole school timetable. Technician support is available for science and information and communication technology, but not for art or design and technology. Learning support assistants make a very positive contribution to classroom activities particularly in supporting the learning of those pupils with special education needs. They are well qualified and very experienced.
63. The school is over-crowded. Over many years the number of pupils admitted has been in excess of the planned capacity of the buildings. In particular, accommodation for science, art and some aspects of design and technology have been inadequate. A

current building programme will improve provision for the teaching, though not preparation and storage areas, in science and the school has scope, with the retention of a de-mountable classroom currently being used for science, to improve accommodation for art. At present the poor accommodation for art and the need to share space for the teaching of food and textiles compromises the work possible in these subjects. Group sizes for art are of necessity small and this limits the efficiency with which this and other subjects are taught. Accommodation for music, particularly regarding practice facilities, is unsatisfactory, with many groups of pupils having to work in already limited circulation spaces. The changing facilities in physical education are woefully inadequate.

64. Staff work hard to overcome these particular difficulties. Similarly, they work hard to minimise the regular disturbance to lessons caused by the lack of practice facilities in music and the need for classrooms to be used as thoroughfares given the lack of effective corridors to enable movement between classrooms. The buildings are well cared for, clean and free of graffiti. A rolling programme of repair and re-decoration is effective in maintaining these high standards. Teachers work hard to create a stimulating working environment for pupils by mounting colourful and interesting wall displays. The school is situated in pleasant grounds and is surrounded with good facilities for outdoor games. Unsatisfactory maintenance by the current contractor limits the extent to which the use of these facilities can be optimised.
65. Learning resources in departments throughout the school are generally adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The main exceptions to this are in religious education and music. In religious education textbooks are very old and there are limited modern resources for teaching about world religions other than Christianity. The department does not use computers to enrich curriculum provision. Similarly, the music department has no computers and has a totally inadequate supply of CDs, records and sheet music to meet the needs of the music curriculum. Nor does the department have multi-cultural percussion instruments with which to develop successfully an awareness and appreciation of aspects of world music. Plans are in place for the department to acquire computer aided learning resources soon and there is a good knowledge of what software is necessary.
66. Resources for the teaching and application of information and communications technology skills are inadequate throughout the school. The number of computers is well below the national average and access to those available is limited. The failure to identify computer use in many subject schemes of work is both a consequence of this lack of provision and a factor in not ensuring adequate provision. The school library is small and is not conducive to research and study. It is cramped and used as a thoroughfare for most of the day. It often accommodates lessons, which restricts access to pupils from other classes who wish to undertake research. The administrative system for managing loans is very out-dated, making no use of information technology.

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

67. In order to raise levels of attainment of all pupils in the school and to improve the overall provision attention should be given to the following issues:
  - Improve the and consistency in the use of assessment data, by:
    - reviewing and rigorously monitoring the implementation of a clear, consistent, whole school policy on assessment (*paragraphs 43, 46 and 55*);

- undertaking better analysis and use of data to inform teaching and curriculum planning (*paragraphs 31, 42, 45, 84, 109 and 131*);
- establishing a coherent system of marking, on-going assessment and feedback to pupils which will help teachers and pupils understand what they need to do to improve standards still further (*paragraphs 23, 42, 43, 45, 51, 77, 84, 89, 109, 116, 128 and 143*);
- Improve provision for information and communications technology at Key Stage 3, by:
  - ensuring full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study (*paragraphs 8, 28 and 118*);
  - putting in place a programme of challenging learning opportunities across the curriculum, building upon the good work in Key Stage 2 (*paragraphs 8, 20, 28, 83, 118 and 130*);
  - developing a secure system for assessment and reporting so that pupils and parents are fully informed about progress with their learning (*paragraph 121*);
  - increasing the number of, and accessibility to, additional computers to facilitate greater use across the curriculum (*paragraphs 65, 66 and 123*);
- Take the necessary steps to bring about improvements to the quality of accommodation, particularly for art and some aspects of design and technology, by:
  - capitalising on the opportunities afforded by improvements in science accommodation to bring about immediate improvements in facilities for teaching art (*paragraphs 27, 63 and 97*);
  - making arrangements to improve accommodation in food and textiles (*paragraphs 27 and 63*);
  - establishing a long term programme of new building, and modification to the existing buildings, in order to meet the demands of the curriculum and the number of pupils on roll (*paragraphs 55 and 63*);
- Improve a range of day to day organisational systems in the school, by:
  - making arrangements to ensure that office staff are efficient and effective in responding to visitors and to telephone calls to the school (*paragraphs 52 and 59*);
  - embracing new technology to improve a range of administrative functions in the school (*paragraph 59*);
  - developing rigorous and efficient processes for the analysis and identification of trends in attendance (*paragraph 48*);
  - providing a computer-based system for loans of books and materials in the library (*paragraph 66*);
  - ensuring that assembly arrangements enable pupils to arrive punctually for lessons (*paragraph 17*).

The following additional issues should also be considered by the school:

- Provide greater challenge in all subjects for higher attaining pupils, especially at Key Stage 3 (*paragraphs 4, 7, 10, 11, 22, 32, 60, 75, 82, 87, 105, 107, 112 and 140*);
- Ensure that all pupils are able to take part in a daily act of collective worship (*paragraphs 35 and 59*).



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3	17	43	36	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

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	510	n/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	84	n/a

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	83	n/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
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	75	51	126

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	58	57	66
	Girls	39	29	37
	Total	97	86	103
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (61)	68 (60)	82 (72)
	National	70 (64)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	51	60	65
	Girls	34	33	39
	Total	85	93	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (59)	74 (63)	83 (76)
	National	68 (64)	69 (64)	75 (70)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	8
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	488
Any other minority ethnic group	3

## Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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 – Y9**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	25.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Education support staff: Y5 – Y9**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	154

### **Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y9**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	86.1
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### **Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y9**

Key Stage 2	24.6
Key Stage 3	22.9

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	907,221
Total expenditure	894,248
Expenditure per pupil	1,754
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,100
Balance carried forward to next year	34,078

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 27.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out	510
Number of questionnaires returned	138

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	58	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	55	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	65	10	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	57	22	5	1
The teaching is good.	25	67	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	45	30	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	50	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	45	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	19	51	20	9	1
The school is well led and managed.	28	60	7	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	59	7	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	46	16	4	12

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed appreciation of the efforts made in the school to care for and support pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific medical needs.

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

### **ENGLISH**

68. Standards in English are good at both key stages. Pupils achieve above the national average in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The school's records, which are moderated with local schools, indicate that the pupils in Year 8 are expected to achieve above the national average by the end of Key Stage 3. These good standards are confirmed by the lessons and pupils' work seen during the inspection. This represents a significant improvement in standards in the last two years and since the previous inspection. Girls' attainment is better than boys', as is the case nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve appropriate standards. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also make good progress and some of them are amongst the highest attaining pupils in the subject.
69. As they were at the time of the previous inspection speaking and listening skills are good at both key stages. Pupils listen attentively to adults and each other and show good understanding by giving extended answers to questions. For example, in Year 6 pupils showed good understanding of main and subordinate clauses by giving imaginative examples of both in the whole class session of the literacy hour. This was developed in group work with two groups preparing talks on pictures which again demonstrated their good command of complex sentences as well as their confidence in speaking in front of the class. In Year 8 pupils entered into interesting discussions about the essential elements in children's books, describing in depth some of their own favourites. Pupils generally show knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary, including technical terms relating to English such as alliteration, metaphor and simile, and they take pleasure in expressing themselves accurately. Pupils generally are articulate and confident and respond well to being asked to develop and extend their ideas. Speaking and listening skills are further strengthened by drama lessons and school productions. All these experiences are providing a good basis for developing pupils' reading and writing skills.
70. Reading skills have developed well since the last inspection and are now good at both key stages. The good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has improved the formal reading curriculum for younger pupils at Key Stage 2. Year 5 pupils took pride in reading descriptive words such as 'studded' and offered alternatives such as 'embedded'. Most pupils read a range of books with confidence and enjoy novels such as Harry Potter and The Hobbit. They read non-fiction books confidently and know how to find them in the library. They use reference books for projects in school and for their own interests such as mythology and wild animals. Reading out aloud in front of the class is also done with pleasure. For example, groups worked independently on performing rap poems using choral techniques and maintaining a good sense of the rhythm. Pupils are also encouraged to talk at length about their favourite books by presenting them during their book bag talks or suggestions for book of the week. This confidence and enjoyment is further developed in Year 6 where pupils start to develop an appreciation of different styles and genres. By Key Stage 3 most pupils have no difficulty reading the wide range of materials presented to them in English lessons or in other subjects. They enjoy reading pre-twentieth century texts such as Chaucer and Shakespeare as well as books which deal with contemporary issues such as *Buddy*. Their book reviews show that they are analysing issues as well as appreciating different styles and registers of language. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class. They also have individual withdrawal reading time which is helping develop their confidence and skills.

71. Writing skills are good at both key stages. In Key Stage 2 pupils have regular handwriting lessons which means that all pupils produce clear, cursive, writing. This, combined with regular spelling tests in both key stages, is helping to maintain good levels of presentation. Most pupils spell accurately, showing good strategies for building up unfamiliar words. These good basic skills help pupils to express their ideas fluently in writing. Year 6 pupils study different styles of writing and, for example, enjoy identifying persuasive language or key features of factual writing, which they can then apply to their own work. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils write confidently for a range of purposes, including letter writing, diary writing, book reviews, interviews and scripts of plays. This range is further extended in Key Stage 3 where pupils produce well structured and well punctuated writing in a wide range of styles. Some of their work is word-processed using a range of fonts, 'draw' packages and imported pictures. This is particularly effective with their work on autobiographies and is also effective when they produce their own children's books. Year 8 pupils rise well to the challenge of producing their own children's book, with careful planning which stimulates drafting and editing and thoughtful consideration of what would most appeal to their target audience.
72. Overall, pupils are making good progress, entering the school with standards in line with the national average and leaving with standards above average. They achieve well in lessons and show improvements through each year and over the time spent in the school. This improvement includes pupils with English as an additional language, many of whom are in the higher attaining groups.
73. Pupils behave well and show an interest in their work. They join in whole-heartedly at both key stages and concentrate hard on the tasks in hand. They co-operate well with each other in group work and show consideration for one another, for example, when a group is feeding back at the end of the literacy hour or performing during the lesson. The good relationships which they enjoy with each other and the adults in the school help develop their confidence and allow them to take risks without fear of ridicule. For example, Year 8 pupils read out children's stories to the class with all the expression and enthusiasm which they would use if reading to young children without signs of embarrassment.
74. The good behaviour and positive attitudes to work spring from the good teaching and learning. All teaching is at least satisfactory with nearly three quarters of the lessons being good or better. Where teaching is good there is a good use of time and resources which keep pupils motivated and on task. Teachers plan lessons carefully and share the aims with pupils, helping them to see the links with previous and future lessons. This has developed through the good application of the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 2 and transferring these ideas into Key Stage 3. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
75. The best lessons end with a good evaluation with accurate assessments of pupils' contributions and the impact of the teacher's planning. For example, Year 8 pupils discussed why they had not achieved as much as hoped for in terms of their own behaviour and application as well as the possible over-estimation of what was possible by the teacher. The good teaching includes well targeted questions which encourage pupils to think more deeply and extend their answers. This is laying good oral foundations for the later activities of reading and writing and in helping pupils to benefit from each other's ideas. Such good practice is also part of the teaching strategy of matching work carefully to individual need and attainment. Teachers are using the group work in the literacy hours in Key Stage 2 successfully to offer pupils different levels of work and this is building pupil confidence and skills. Good teaching is lively, using a range of stimulating resources and activities which appeal to pupils of differing

levels of attainment. In the best lessons seen the higher attaining and gifted and talented pupils are being challenged well, but this is not yet a feature of every lesson. Time is not used to maximum effect throughout the lesson and some resources are difficult for pupils to see properly, leading to unrest and thus not encouraging full pupil participation. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well used during group sessions, but this valuable resource is currently not always used effectively during whole class activities. Homework is set regularly and is appropriate.

76. The consistency of teaching has improved since the last inspection with the use of qualified English teachers at Key Stage 3 and for the literacy hours at Key Stage 2. The widespread training of staff for the literacy hour has also informed the teaching in the extra English lessons at Key Stage 2 and the application of literacy across the curriculum, which is becoming increasingly effective at both key stages.
77. Assessment has developed over recent years and now rightly includes the National Curriculum levels throughout the school. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets which helps them in their understanding of their own progress. They do not as yet understand the National Curriculum levels in detail, nor what they need to do exactly to reach the next level. This would be a helpful extension of the present practice. The department makes good use of information from regular testing and from national tests to inform planning and teaching. More rigorous whole school analysis is not yet used to raise standards still further, especially for boys who are at present doing less well than girls and the higher attaining pupils who need constant challenges. As the previous report noted the department is well managed. An improvement since the last report is the good start which has been made to monitoring and evaluating teaching.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are attaining standards which are in line with the national average. In national tests in 1999 pupils' results were close to the overall national average, but were below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 in these tests was below the national average and girls performed less well than boys. Pupils have in recent years made satisfactory progress in mathematics and overall attainment is similar to that at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving standards in mathematics which are close to those of pupils in previous years, but standards in Year 5 are relatively higher. Higher attaining pupils in this year group are achieving well. They can, for example, calculate the range, mode and median of a distribution and they have a good understanding of square numbers, equivalent fractions and complementary angles. This improved rate of progress is a direct consequence of improved teaching during the past year, especially in Year 5.
79. By the end of Year 8 pupils are achieving standards which suggest that they will by the end of the key stage attain standards in line with or slightly above the national average. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 can, for example, reflect and rotate two-dimensional shapes on a four quadrant Cartesian grid and have a good grasp of powers and roots of numbers. Average attaining pupils are competent in rounding and estimating numbers whilst lower attaining pupils confidently convert fractions to decimals and can solve simple linear equations. Pupils in Year 7 are performing relatively better than pupils in Year 8, showing good progress since the end of Key Stage 2 as a result of improved teaching.

80. At both key stages the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well known and teachers take these into account when planning lessons. This, together with close and effective collaboration between teachers and classroom assistants whose role is to help these pupils, means that they are able to make good progress in their work. The small number of pupils in the school for whom English is an additional language have no difficulties in understanding the tasks of them. The progressive move toward more oral work is helping these pupils and overall they too make good progress.
81. Pupils clearly enjoy their mathematics. They work hard and behave well in almost all lessons. In lessons where they are given opportunities to talk about their mathematics, explaining and describing their answers and methods, they are particularly keen to do well. They listen attentively to one another and many spontaneously offer ideas and thoughts which develop the contributions of others. When given the opportunity to do so pupils work well together in pairs and groups. Many lessons are stimulating and challenging and pupils respond well to these. Occasionally, in lessons for pupils in Year 8 lessons lack stimulation and challenge and pupils become restless and lose concentration.
82. Overall, the teaching of mathematics in the school is good, although it is slightly better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 3. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the material they are teaching and present topics in interesting ways. This is a distinct improvement on the previous inspection, with teachers now having a better subject knowledge and making better use of a broad range of teaching styles. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy into the school at Key Stage 2 has had a considerable impact on teaching throughout the school. The approach to improving pupils' basic skills has been helped by placing considerable emphasis on the recall of previous work and the development of pupils' abilities to calculate and handle numbers mentally. The encouragement to describe their thinking and explain their methods has begun to bring about major improvements in the level of pupils' understanding of the mathematics topics they are studying. Teachers' levels of expectation of what pupils can achieve are good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3. Some of the highest attaining pupils, especially in Years 7 and 8, are not being sufficiently challenged by the provision of modified tasks, though steps are being taken to challenge a small number of gifted and talented pupils in Key Stage 2. Expectations of what lower attaining pupils can achieve are relatively good, especially at Key Stage 2.
83. Teachers use a good variety of methods and approaches which are aimed at maintaining pupils' interest. Good use of practical apparatus and equipment helps pupils to gain clear insights into their mathematics and very good use of spoken language, concentrating on appropriate technical terms, is helping pupils gain confidence. The scheme of work for mathematics identifies investigative work as the main means of teaching the use and application of mathematics, but too little attention is paid to integrating this aspect of the subject into teaching of other aspects such as number, shape and space and data handling. This means that teachers sometimes miss opportunities to adopt creative approaches to presenting new ideas, though the National Numeracy strategy is helping improve this situation. The scheme of work also includes references to the use of computers to support the learning of mathematics, but this use is not sufficiently evident in practice.
84. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is undertaken regularly and some teachers provide clear indications to pupils about how they could improve their mathematics. This is rare, however, and pupils generally are not sufficiently well aware of how well they are doing. This means that they are not consistently able to focus on those aspects of their work which they need to concentrate on. A good start has been made to helping pupils develop broad targets for work over a term, but not all groups of pupils are yet



doing this effectively. The departmental grid for these targets does not include Attainment target 1, *Using and Applying Mathematics*, which suggests that staff lack awareness of the importance of this aspect of mathematics. Teachers assess pupils' work at the end of topics but the outcomes of these assessments are not yet well used to guide curriculum planning. Teachers generally set homework, but tasks are not always sufficiently challenging to help pupils make the progress necessary in organising their personal study. Some teachers do not consistently follow the guidelines for setting homework and this is a significant disadvantage to pupils in their classes.

85. The management of mathematics in the school is very good. A great deal of work has been undertaken to ensure that there are effective schemes of work to guide the work of the large number of staff who teach mathematics, identified in the previous inspection as a weakness. Significant steps have been taken to put in place a programme of classroom monitoring and evaluation and this is beginning to help further improvements in ensuring consistently good quality teaching of mathematics throughout the school. Extension of this evaluative programme is hampered by the limited scope for enabling the mathematics co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues in classrooms. The department does not yet have effective processes in place for the detailed tracking of pupil progress through the school from the time they arrive and this limits the scope for modifying the curriculum to meet individual needs.
86. The introduction of the National Numeracy strategy has been used effectively to improve planning and to promote training in teaching methodology. Resulting improvements in teaching are helping pupils to make better progress by improving their numeracy skills in mathematics. Teachers of other subjects are also becoming aware of how to help pupils develop these skills and overall pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory.

## SCIENCE

87. Standards of achievement in science at both key stages are in line with all schools and compare well with those achieved by similar schools. This pattern has been maintained over the past four years. Boys' attainment is better than girls', which is contrary to the national pattern. Higher attaining and gifted or talented pupils do not do as well as they might because they are not sufficiently challenged. Attainment in coursework is rather better than national tests in both key stages. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate secure knowledge of the classification of living organisms down to the vertebrates and Key Stage 3 pupils can describe a wide range of separation techniques. Pupils show basic competence in organising and performing practical tasks. Year 6 pupils, for example, enthusiastically made and recorded detailed and reasonably accurate observations of specimens of invertebrates. Year 7 pupils worked confidently and efficiently to make a saturated solution of salt and Year 8 pupils connected components into simple circuits and measured correctly the current shown by an ammeter. However, the standard of investigative work in practical classwork and in the occasional formal 'investigation' is no better than satisfactory. This is unsurprising given the lack of emphasis by teachers on identifying and developing the skills involved. Higher attaining pupils do not demonstrate the sorts of higher order thinking and performance that should characterise their work in science, involving more abstract ideas, mathematical descriptions and reflective investigative work. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
88. Teaching is good overall in both key stages and has a positive impact on overall attainment. Lessons are well planned, well structured and the pace generally keeps

pupils learning effectively. Some very good teaching is characterised by a constant stream of questions that challenge even the youngest pupils to think for themselves. This creates excitement and anticipation which engages pupils and motivates them to learn, enriching their experience with stories of scientists and applications of principles. The response of the pupils to such lessons is good and there is a generally positive learning ethos in the department. However, teaching in Key Stage 3 occasionally fails to engage pupils because the context of the science is poorly developed and the teacher's presentation is disjointed. Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to apply their language and mathematical skills and standards of numeracy and literacy in science lessons are satisfactory.

89. Staff keep detailed records of assessments and know each pupil's general level of work even though a pupil only finds this out when test results are given back. Marking follows school policy but is ineffective as a way of helping pupils improve week by week or for informing parents of progress. Planning routines and the implementation of policies are well established. Objectives for lessons are stated, differentiated extension tasks are set, work is regularly marked, recorded and homework is set. The department curriculum follows the local education authority's scheme, agreed among all local middle schools and meets National Curriculum requirements, including some use of information and communications technology. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to apply their scientific knowledge and are not encouraged to use their computer skills, for example, to collect and analyse scientific data.
90. Resources in the department are adequate. The technician gives good service under very cramped circumstances, which the current building work is unlikely to improve. Management of the department is conscientious and deals effectively with administration and documentation. However, there is a need for clearer vision of how to engage pupils as young scientists as they follow the scheme of work, to reflect the context and work of this department in its generalised policy statements and to achieve more effective delegation of responsibilities among those teaching science.
91. Of the issues raised in the last inspection report most have been addressed successfully. Teaching spaces in the department are now much improved: one laboratory has been refurbished and another is being built. Pupils now engage in self-evaluation after each topic, though they still do not use evaluation of experiments and findings as a tool to improve their science. Teachers prepare material which is matched to the differing needs of pupils and take account of pupils' individual education plans. There are now two computers in the department, doubling the previous provision, though appropriate access to information and communications technology to support learning in science is still inadequate. The school has doubled the technician's hours in science to four hours per day.
92. Some issues identified in the previous inspection report remain to be addressed. These include the need to encourage pupils' evaluation of their own thinking, actions and results in class. There is still a need to extend the scientific challenge presented to older and higher attaining pupils and to improve the still inadequate preparation and storage space. The arrangements for the storage of flammable chemicals remain unsatisfactory. Pupils need to be encouraged far more in the use of information and communications technology to enhance their study of science, both at home for planning, reporting and research and at school. The department's implementation of the assessment policy needs to be improved, with criteria for successful science made clear and used routinely in class so that pupils' performance can be related to them and marking comments can show pupils how to improve.

## ART

93. Standards in art by the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils know about the work of artists and artistic styles and conventions and talk confidently about pictures and artwork. They are able, for example, to use the Internet for research and to develop their own work. They can identify primary and secondary colours and use these effectively in their work. They draw and paint from observation and imagination, using line tone and colour, and can create work in two and three dimensions. Their work is often linked to topic work from other subjects. For example, a class of Year 5 pupils had made expressive masks based on their studies of the Greeks and others can discuss portraits and identify the characteristics of Tudor artwork. They are developing the use of sketchbooks to record and develop their ideas. Pupils make good progress with their learning in Year 5 as a result of well-planned lessons by class teachers and good guidance provided by the teacher in charge of art. Progress in Year 6 is not as good because the timetable for art results in pupils having long periods of the year with no art teaching. Nevertheless, overall progress during Key Stage 2 is satisfactory as pupils do have some opportunities to develop their art skills within information and communications technology lessons.
94. At Key Stage 3 standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils have specialist taught art lessons on a weekly basis and the pace of progress is better than it was in Year 6. They continue to develop their making skills alongside the development of knowledge and understanding of the work of artists. They can record from observation and show increasing skill in their ability to develop their ideas in both two and three dimensions. For example, pupils in Year 7 were able to create paper sculptures of imaginary animals with lively use of colour based upon their observations of animal patterns and camouflage. Year 8 pupils were able to create and use printing blocks developed from their studies of natural forms and made good progress with their printing because skills and processes were clearly and competently demonstrated by the teacher. This enabled pupils to achieve good quality prints. Links are made to the work of artists. These were evident in displays of competent and imaginative paintings linked to studies of landscape artists by Year 7 and lively paper masks based upon studies of African art. At both key stages progress in the use of information and communications technology to develop artwork is good because pupils are able to develop their independent research skills and use of art software through well-planned and resourced tasks.
95. Pupils enjoy their art lessons, respond positively to the tasks set and handle equipment and media confidently, often in very crowded conditions for practical work. Relationships and behaviour in art lessons are very good, especially at Key Stage 3, and pupils make good progress with their learning. Art makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral education through the development of high standards of behaviour and respect for others.
96. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes excellent because teachers' planning is thorough and clear instructions and guidance are given to pupils on how to improve. Tasks are challenging and well presented with good quality resources provided by the teachers that stimulate and motivate pupils. For example, Year 7 pupils who were making observational drawings of feathers and snakeskin provided by the teacher were highly motivated by these and worked with excellent concentration and great care. In Year 5 good quality reproductions and question sheets are used effectively by the teacher to guide pupils' observations and discussions of portraits which, with well directed questioning by the teacher, lead to greater understanding. Non-specialist teachers are given support and guidance by the head of art, which results in appropriate expectations of the pupils. Assessment sheets give the opportunity for

pupils to contribute to their assessments through evaluation of their work and so gain a better understanding of their progress. Teachers make use of specialist vocabulary but there is scope to develop further the use of this by pupils in discussions and also to promote more independent use of sketchbooks beyond the classroom through homework at Key Stage 3. Teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, provides challenging opportunities for pupils to use information and communications technology to extend their knowledge and develop their work.

97. Since the last inspection the kiln has had a proper guard installed and resources to support cultural and multicultural aspects of art have improved. The part time head of art continues to work hard to provide a range of opportunities in both two- and three-dimensions which includes ceramic work and the use of information and communications technology. As at the time of the last inspection accommodation is unsatisfactory because of the very small area and this severely constrains the range and scale of work that can be undertaken. Some larger groups having to spill over into corridor areas. Displays of work are used very effectively around the school to enhance the environment and celebrate pupils' achievements. There is further scope, through visits, to extend the range of experiences for pupils and to make use of resources outside the classroom.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

98. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations for most pupils with a significant number of pupils achieving beyond this level. Pupils' ability to follow a design brief and plan the sequence of their work is often very good. They develop practical skills across a range of materials and processes within the constraints of class-based lessons. They learn to measure and mark out with growing accuracy and record what they do with simple drawings and diagrams. They can, for example, make drawings of faces from which they select a final idea and use this as a template to make a simple puppet with moving parts. They begin to learn about materials, their properties and how to cut and shape them. For example, Year 5 pupils investigated the effectiveness of a range of solutions in preventing browning of sliced apple. They know what is meant by a 'fair test', how to organise and record the results of their testing and were beginning to draw conclusions from these. Pupils learn the basic skills of handling a range of tools and equipment safely when making and they develop understanding of the design process, gaining confidence and independence over the key stage.
99. At Key Stage 3 standards by the end of Year 8 are above national expectations for pupils. Skills of planning, developing and making using a range of materials and processes are well developed in many cases and show good progress from Key Stage 2. Pupils can apply their skills to designing and making products in food, textiles and with plastics, electronics and wood. They develop their ability to record ideas using drawing and illustration skills and notes and diagrams. Pupils show particularly good levels of independence, working productively and safely in practical rooms. As a result they make good progress with their learning. Although access to computers is limited, pupils make some use of information and communications technology to plan and record their work but insufficient use to design and develop their ideas.
100. Attitudes and behaviour are very good and pupils are enthusiastic about their work in design and technology because they are given clear guidance on how to improve and are made aware of the criteria by which their work is judged. Tasks are presented clearly and pupils are given guidance on methods of working and this helps all pupils to achieve. They are given opportunities to work together and co-operate very well,

sharing equipment and supporting each other. For example, pupils sharing sewing machines waited patiently for their turn in a textile lesson and others in a food lesson worked enthusiastically in groups, being able to organise their work with minimal help from the teacher.

101. Teaching is consistently good and often very good or excellent. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that challenge pupils of all abilities and provide opportunities to work with a variety of materials. Teachers manage pupils very well and encourage high levels of independence. As a result, pupils work with growing confidence and take responsibility for their learning. Teachers provide very good information to pupils on how to improve their work and this motivates them to achieve high standards. For example, a Year 7 class making an electronic toy were very aware of their National Curriculum level and could identify what aspects of their work required improving because the teacher had explained clearly and displayed information about levels on the wall. Teachers frequently use questioning to check understanding and consolidate knowledge. For example, in a Year 8 lesson the teacher used questioning effectively to involve pupils and to elicit the function of electronic components in a circuit.
102. There is a clear framework for assessment and pupils are involved in the assessment and evaluation of their work. Assessment arrangements enable staff to provide clear information on progress in reports to parents. Since the last inspection the schemes of work have been reviewed and are the subject of further development in the light of the revised National Curriculum. The use of computers to support all areas of design and technology is still limited, partly because there are insufficient computers and design software. Health and safety matters are dealt with appropriately and items for attention are identified through annual audits. The head of department has recently left for promotion and the department staff in charge of food and textiles and resistant materials are facing the challenge of this change by seeking to maintain the high standards and ethos of the department and sustain improvement. Accommodation in the form of specialist areas for teaching is limited, particularly for work in food and textiles, which are taught in the same area. This poses potential health and safety hazards with food preparation and storage that the staff work hard to overcome by careful organisation of their sequence of teaching. There are insufficient food preparation and storage areas and furniture, while worktops, although well cared for, are in need of refurbishment to improve hygiene. Long term planning has identified appropriate targets for development, including proposals for a range of improvements to the accommodation.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

103. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for pupils of their age. Most pupils attain Level 4 but few higher attaining pupils achieve the higher grades in geography. There is no significant difference in the standards of boys and girls and many pupils who have received learning support in lessons attain standards which are good in relation to their known level of ability.
104. The range of topics studied in Years 5 and 6 are appropriate to develop in pupils an understanding of their own local environment as well as that other locations such as St. Lucia. Pupils enjoy the subject and develop the ability to collect their own information by conducting a local traffic census. They can record the traffic patterns appropriately by using bar charts. Most pupils are able to use local ordnance survey maps accurately and develop good understanding of a variety of methods for recording information on maps. Activities such as orienteering within the school grounds are used to further develop map skills. Learning and understanding are supported by the

good standards of presentation shown in displays of pupil's work in classrooms and in most exercise books. By the end of Year 6 a significant number of pupils are using a range of geographical terms accurately within their written work, for example, when studying rivers and this is having a positive impact on attainment across the ability range. The department should now ensure that there is a consistent approach to the development of glossaries of key words within pupils' exercise books to enable all pupils to use the terms accurately.

105. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 8 is in line with national expectations but with few of the higher ability pupils reaching the highest levels. The overall level of attainment of boys is similar to that of girls. Pupils with a special educational need attain standards which are good in relation to their perceived level of ability.
106. During Years 7 and 8 pupils make good gains in learning through opportunities which build upon the techniques and knowledge gained during Key Stage 2 activities, for example, by linking existing knowledge of the weather and recording techniques to an in-depth study of Britain's weather. Many pupils use key terms accurately and are encouraged to develop a fuller understanding in the many discussion tasks provided. There is, however, little recording of ideas or words during these activities, with the result that some important information is missed when pupils complete a written task. The participation of a number of pupils in a fieldwork activity on the Gower Peninsula enables them to develop good recording skills and several pupils have produced quality written work as part of the Coastline 2000 Project. Within lessons many pupils confidently use a variety of mathematical techniques such as bar chart and scatter-graphs to display information, but teachers have yet to show pupils how to link these diagrams with their written information. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their own ideas and opinions about environmental issues. For example, Year 7 pupils were considering the conflicts between farming and conservation. When given the opportunity, as in producing a report about flooding in Bangladesh, higher attaining pupils produce good quality written work at levels expected for their age and ability. Pupils show the ability to identify their concerns and raise issues but there are insufficient books and other information sources available for them to research possible solutions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and the development of some additional worksheets is having a positive impact on the accurate completion of lesson tasks and in raising levels of attainment in end of unit tests.
107. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection linked to the development of a relevant curriculum and schemes of work are now in place for all year groups. Marking and assessment strategies have been reviewed and a good range of end of unit tests, matched to National Curriculum requirements, are in place to assess all pupils' level of attainment. Moderation of test marking and the recently introduced observation of individual teacher's lessons are having a positive impact on standards. The department has still not sufficiently addressed the issue of the raising of standards of the more able pupils, few of whom attain above Level 5 at the end of Year 8. In a lesson about Kenya the more able pupils rapidly identified a range of links between the key feature of each region but were given no additional tasks to further develop their knowledge. The department should review its provision of additional learning opportunities for the more able pupils.
108. Teaching is good overall and teachers show appropriate subject knowledge linked to lesson planning for the topics studied. All teachers encourage pupils to participate in discussion activities and most pupils respond positively by showing good recall of information and the ability to suggest ideas from their own knowledge. There is evidence of some innovative approaches. For example, in a lesson about settlement

the teacher successfully linked previous work to the identification of factors influencing the development of the local town by displaying each pupil's suggestion on a large-scale sketch map. However, too many lessons start with an overlong review of pupils' knowledge and give pupils no clear overview of the lessons, tasks and targets. There is a need for teachers to review their lesson planning to ensure that discussion activities are more varied and enable pupils to incorporate information and ideas from homework research. Photographs and videos are used to enhance understanding. For example, in a lesson about shanty towns pupils responded positively to the pictures and with the teacher's guidance were able to gain an accurate impression of the inhabitants way of life. This approach supports pupils' social and cultural development well.

109. The head of humanities provides good support for the subject and has developed a sound system of end of unit tests. This is now linked to a recording system which is starting to inform teaching staff of the progress that each group, and the individual pupils within it, are making. The department now needs to develop strategies for using the information so that where appropriate the teaching programme can be modified to match the needs of pupils across the ability range. Homework is set regularly but there is a need to review the range of tasks and the level of availability of resources so that all pupils can make additional progress. The level of comment on marked work is not always sufficiently clear to inform pupils what is good about their work or for them to identify ways of improving standards in future work. Some use has been made of information and communications technology to support pupils learning and understanding, for example, in collecting information from the Internet and producing a newspaper report about earthquakes. Overall it remains under-used as a means of recording, displaying and analysing information and as a result pupils are not being provided with a full range of learning experiences.

## **HISTORY**

110. The attainment of pupils in history at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with national expectations for pupils of their age. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls but although most pupils attain Level 4 few pupils achieve the higher levels. Pupils with a special educational need attain well in relation to their perceived ability as a result of good in-class learning support. This enables them to be fully involved in all aspects of lessons.
111. From the start of Year 5 the well-planned schemes of work provide good opportunities for pupils to develop understanding of people and events within different historical periods. Pupils rapidly develop an understanding of the main events of the Tudor period through a variety of activities which include writing their own accounts of events and the construction of a family tree of Tudor monarchs, having first been placed in the individual roles. A visit to a local Tudor manor house enriches all pupils' knowledge of the lives of people through active involvement in a range of activities. The construction of a time line of British history enables pupils to relate individual events within a time sequence. Teachers make frequent checks of pupils' knowledge of facts and dates to ensure that they have a good level of understanding of the events they are studying. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have developed good knowledge of ancient Greek and Egyptian civilisations. They have considered the major events and have been given the opportunity to investigate and write about the lives of an ordinary Egyptian family. A Victorian school room experience enables pupils to compare their own experience of school with those of a Victorian child through dressing in the clothes of the period and experiencing a lesson. These learning activities have done much to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject so that by the end of the key stage most pupils

can describe accurately and give reasons for the events within different time periods and identify the period on a time line.

112. By the end of Year 8 attainment is in line with the national expectation for pupils aged 13 years. The majority of both boys and girls attain Level 5 but few reach the higher levels. The attainment of special needs pupils is good with most reaching Level 4 as a result of the good support they receive in lessons.
113. There is good development of pupils' historical knowledge in Year 7, but the recent changes in provision for history have had a significant impact on attainment in the end of unit tests. Pupils across the ability range show an improvement in their level of understanding of events. For example, pupils were able to consider information about the two 1914 alliances and assess the relative strength of each one. This enabled higher attaining pupils to suggest the factors related to power that would be of most significance in a conflict. Pupils across the ability range are given the opportunity to write in-depth answers, for example, about the causes of the Civil War and there is a growing awareness that events can be interpreted in different ways. By the end of Year 8 most pupils have a good understanding of chronology and can write and explain about the key events, personalities and way of life of several time periods, linked to Britain as well as the Roman Empire and Islamic civilisations. Some classroom activities encourage pupils to make their own interpretation of events such as the Gunpowder Plot, but this approach isn't widely used. The department should ensure that it has enough extra resources to enable pupils to access and evaluate a range of information so that they can make their own informed judgement about events. The range of topics studied is appropriate and good links with local upper schools ensure that pupils are sufficiently well prepared for their final Key Stage 3 year.
114. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements, notably the increased opportunities for pupils to write in-depth answers which is supporting their literacy development. This is supported by the links made with other departments such as English and art so that pupils study, for example, Shakespeare and consider Tudor portraits. This good development is extending pupils' awareness of the many dimensions of an individual time period. The head of humanities provides good direction for the subject and his efforts have resulted in the development of schemes of work for all topics. The individual topics are clearly linked to end of unit tests which have a well defined and moderated marking structure. Changes in staffing have resulted in a team of teachers who have the competence and experience to teach the subject within both key stages. The monitoring of lessons by the head of humanities and the sharing of good practice is just starting to have a positive impact on the planning of individual lessons.
115. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a number of good lessons especially in Years 7 and 8. The best lessons have a carefully planned structure with the tasks made known to the pupils at the start and time reminders provided to ensure that work is completed. Many lessons provide opportunities for pupils to recall and discuss information from the previous lesson and this supports the accurate recall of knowledge. Pupils enjoy this type of activity and are keen to participate, as they were in a lesson about 1914 where a pupil with special educational needs provided clear ideas about the strength of one alliance. In many lessons the review session is too long and is over-dependent on the recall of information. The department should extend the range of discussion opportunities to enable all pupils to incorporate information and ideas they have obtained from their own research within a lesson or as part of a homework activity. Homework is set regularly, but many of the tasks are insufficiently challenging and are often not supported by suitable resources. Some



lessons provide pupils with tasks related to their level of ability, but in many cases the tasks and pace of work is the same for all pupils. This affects the progress and attainment of all pupils but is having a significant impact on the attainment of higher ability pupils, few of whom attain above Level 5 at the end of Year 8. A range of additional tasks should be developed and incorporated into key lessons to encourage and enable pupils across the ability range to reach higher standards. Marking is carried out regularly and work is discussed with pupils, but there is considerable variation in the use of written comments. This results in many pupils not being fully aware of the strategies needed to improve or how they can reach a higher level in end of unit tests.

116. The use of information and communications technology to support learning has been used, for example, to research the Tudor and Victorian periods, but the department has yet to incorporate a full range of class and homework activities into its teaching programme. A range of end of unit tests is used appropriately to assess levels achieved by every pupil throughout each year and the department has recently introduced a straightforward recording system which in the future will allow it to identify the progress made by each pupil in history from Year 5. It should now identify ways of using the data, for example, to modify the teaching programme to match more closely the needs of individual pupils.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' ability to use computers to gather and communicate information is strong. Pupils have regular information and communications technology lessons and can in many cases use the school network with good levels of independence. They are able to use a range of software including the Internet for research and can use word processing and publishing software to present their findings. They are familiar with databases and can carry out simple and in some cases complex searches for information. For example, pupils in Year 5 had gathered information from the Internet and selectively used this when developing their own designs for playing cards as part of their artwork project. In a Year 5 science lesson pupils were able to use a spreadsheet to analyse data on the evaporation of water from plants. Pupils are introduced to modelling software and can create and modify simple procedures to control a screen robot. Pupils in Year 6 have, since its installation last year, made a confident transition from the old computer systems to using the school network.
118. At Key Stage 3 standards by the end of Year 8 are below national expectations. The school is seeking to develop information and communications technology across the curriculum with the intention that pupils will build upon the skills they learned in Key Stage 2 in their work in all subjects. Pupils can use word-processing and publishing software, for example, in English where they can draft and redraft their work, and some opportunities are also provided for computer use in art and design and technology. In French pupils use language software and the Internet to develop their communication skills and they make use of spreadsheets and simulations for investigation work in mathematics. The planned use of computers across other areas of the curriculum is not so regular and this slows progress overall. Where opportunities are provided for computer use pupils achieve well, but the use of computer skills is not sufficiently built into the provision for all subjects. Therefore, the school does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

119. Pupils' attitudes to information and communications technology are very positive. When they have the chance pupils co-operate and behave well, share equipment and help each other with their work.
120. When information and communications technology is taught at Key Stages 2 and 3 most of the teaching is good. Lessons are well planned. Teachers make effective use of the resources and break tasks down into easily managed units, which enables pupils to understand and make good progress with their learning. Expectations are high and minor shortcomings at both key stages are principally caused by a lack of experience by non-specialists. Tasks set by the teachers, particularly in Key Stage 2, are challenging and promote good levels of motivation and progress with learning. The teachers use a range of methods which include involving the pupils through questioning and demonstration and this, coupled with well-targeted praise, results in good attitudes and progress with learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson thorough preparation of support materials by the teacher meant that pupils had a clear structure to their work and made very good progress using the Internet for research about Queen Victoria and Lewis Carroll. Staff work hard to develop their knowledge of information and communications technology and those that are involved are able to support pupils effectively. Teachers assess work regularly at Key Stage 2 and this is now used to provide progress reports to parents.
121. At Key Stage 3 staff skills and experience in other subjects are more varied. Insufficient opportunities are planned by teachers to support pupils' learning so that they can develop and regularly apply their computer skills. There has been some interruption to progress and development with the change to a different computer system, but Key Stage 3 planning for information and communications technology remains weak in many subject areas. Teachers do not assess pupils' information and communications technology capability against the national criteria or report this to parents, which means that pupils are unaware of standards and how to improve them.
122. Leadership and management of information and communications technology at Key Stage 2 is secure and ensures a suitable range of experiences within the information and communications technology lessons. Schemes of work continue to be the target for revision in the light of forthcoming changes to the National Curriculum and increasingly the Internet is used effectively to support learning. The information and communications technology co-ordinator works hard, with only limited technician help, but also has responsibility for the co-ordination of mathematics, which severely limits the time available to provide support and guidance for other staff in information and communications technology.
123. The room available for class use of the school network is cramped for large classes and poorly ventilated which makes for an unpleasant teaching and learning environment on hot days. The school has, with some help from National Grid for Learning funding, installed a school network during the last year that is capable of expansion in the future. Improvements at the time were restricted to replacement of old computers and the ratio of computers to pupils remains low in comparison with the national picture. This restricts access and the possibility of greater use by subject teachers. The range of software to support subjects also requires development to meet the increased demands of the National Curriculum.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

124. Standards at Key Stage 3 are in line with national expectations. Pupils benefit from starting French in Key Stage 2 where they develop their speaking and listening skills

through a range of enjoyable activities which help reinforce key vocabulary and grammatical structures. They are well motivated playing games which require them, for example, to identify objects or actions. By the end of Year 6 pupils can communicate their basic needs and show confidence in pronouncing words and phrases. They take part in simple role-plays, acting out everyday scenes such as shopping. Higher attaining pupils benefit from the opportunity to attend a lunchtime club where they speak French. The present group of around a dozen pupils have made a video of a fashion show which consolidates vocabulary and expressions related to clothing, which they plan to use with other pupils. Oral skills are further developed in Key Stage 3 when pupils learn to use the past tense as well as the present. In the top sets pupils are starting to use French to ask questions for daily routines in the classroom and to take part in role plays, for example, suggesting activities for going out or asking for information. They pick out key information, such as the times of trains, from tapes which use native speakers. Pupils at both key stages are now becoming used to French being the main means of communication in the lesson.

125. From Year 5 pupils start to read single words and simple phrases producing sound pronunciation. This develops throughout the years so that by Year 8 pupils read role-plays with expression and intonation. They show understanding and answer questions in French about the texts they have read. In Year 6 pupils start to write their own sentences, for example, creating short poems about their own homes which show accurate use of the present tense and an awareness of grammatical points such as agreement of adjectives. Independent writing is mainly developed in Key Stage 3. The sound basis of oral work from Key Stage 2 means that pupils move quickly into creating their own writing in Key Stage 3. In Year 7 pupils write confidently about themselves and their families, for example, producing word-processed poems about their families which are illustrated using 'draw' packages. They create class books, combining their word-processed work, which are used for display and with younger pupils. In Year 8 pupils' writing is more extended and includes the use of the past tense. Again, there are good displays of pupils' work about their holidays, their hobbies, and their horoscopes, which serve to stimulate interest in other pupils as well as developing their own skills.
126. Pupils are benefiting from starting French in Year 5. They make sound progress through the four years and show a growing confidence in expressing themselves in French. They enjoy French and are well motivated. They are keen to try, especially in Key Stage 2 and in the top sets in Key Stage 3. They behave sensibly and show good concentration.
127. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory. They are mainly satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and mainly good or better at Key Stage 3. Where teaching is good, teachers are using good fluent French as much as possible throughout the lesson. This provides good role models for pupils and is an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils are beginning to respond well to this and are trying to respond in French at all times. The good teaching involves a range of activities in each lesson which allow pupils to practise their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Careful planning ensures that pupils build on previous work and develop their vocabulary and range of phrases. Time is used well to maintain pupil interest and involve pupils as much as possible in actually using French themselves. In the best lessons seen the teacher and the pupils entered into a natural flow of conversation, which is encouraging pupils to think in French. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the lessons at Key Stage 2 and benefit from being in smaller groups when set in Key Stage 3.

128. There is regular assessment through formal and informal testing. Pupils are also involved in self-assessment which helps them to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. This would benefit from being related more closely to the National Curriculum levels.
129. The department is well managed. There is now satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of teaching which is helping to spread good practice and identify training needs. For example, one teacher is going on an immersion course in France during the summer in order to refresh and update oral skills. This is indicative of the commitment and enthusiasm shown by the staff who also take part in annual educational trips to France in Year 5 and Year 8. These trips stimulate pupils' interest and provide good first hand experience of using the language and appreciating the culture of France.

## **MUSIC**

130. The standard of pupils' attainment in music is above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 8. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are able to perform significant parts from memory and from notation and are aware of their own contributions such as leading, taking a solo part or providing rhythmic support. By the end of Year 8 pupils can select and make expressive use of tempo, dynamics, phrasing and timbre. Pupils also know how to improve and refine their compositions. The school has involved many pupils in extra-curricular music making and has provided pupils with many well-organised opportunities to compose and to perform. The standards of the pupils' instrumental capabilities are rising as an increasing number of pupils pass examinations accredited by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Standards of the orchestra are rising and the school choir sings well, giving appropriate attention to tonal clarity and good diction. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. Because pupils do not have access to information and communications technology equipment for composing and recording their standards of competence in using this equipment are well below national expectations. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in overall standards and in curriculum opportunities.
131. The quality of the music teaching is good overall. The teaching of Key Stage 2 pupils is consistently good and at Key Stage 3 it is at least satisfactory. Pupils benefit at both key stages from an experienced specialist music teacher whose expectations are high. Lessons are well planned and a good variety of teaching methods are used so that all pupils are able to cover fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils respond positively because they are given numerous opportunities to make live music together which stimulates their creative energies and engages their full attention. Pupils' learning is much enhanced by skilful teaching that prompts tactfully, challenges and inspires pupils of all abilities. Music lessons are generally enjoyable times when teacher and pupils work together on interesting and meaningful singing or playing activities. Pupils are consistently praised and rewarded for good individual and group work. The class music lessons, the instrumental lessons and the extra-curricular music activities provide pupils with a good grounding in musicianship which prepares pupils well for their later musical education. High attaining pupils are not challenged enough in class music lessons and music teaching does not include computer-aided work, especially at Key Stage 3. The music teacher meticulously maintains good quality records of the assessments of pupils' work. At the moment these assessments are not fully used to inform planning such as classroom groupings or differentiated tasks.

132. Purposeful learning takes place at a good pace. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in lessons because they are fully engaged and involved. Year 5 pupils, for example, worked well on their rhythmic compositions in which they incorporated a simple repeated rhythmic pattern into their compositions. Pupils in Year 6 became fully involved in the singing of The Rhine Stone Cowboy song and The Marseillaise and followed this through with group work which incorporated rhythms used in the songs. The pupils in Year 7 quickly digested some of the key features of Beethoven's Leonora overture and concentrated on syncopated rhythms in their group work. Purposeful work on Pachelbel's Canon fully engaged the attention of Year 8 pupils.
133. Curricular opportunities are good. A very good range of instrumental lessons as well as extra-curricular opportunities enhances the class music lessons. First-rate opportunities for pupils to play in a string group, the orchestra and two recorder ensembles provide excellent extension activities for the more able and enthusiastic. The choir sings a broad and balanced selection of works ranging from musicals such as 'Cats' to works of the great masters. The string group currently plays a full range of pieces selected from the examination pieces that pupils are preparing for Associated Board examinations. Pupils taking instrumental examinations are given additional lunchtime and after-school aural preparation classes and have the opportunity to rehearse with a piano accompaniment. These well-supported opportunities greatly enhance the school's social and cultural provision for pupils of all abilities.
134. The department benefits from the able and enthusiastic leadership of a recently appointed teacher. His leadership is highly regarded by pupils and parents. The department contributes well to the teaching of literacy but less well to the teaching of numeracy. Visiting instrumental teachers feel valued and much involved in the school's musical life and appreciate the responses that they receive from the pupils. The department is totally committed to the school's vision and sense of direction and works hard to enrich the pupils' musical lives by raising standards and offering a rich programme of music making. The school is fully aware of the poor and inadequate accommodation for pupils taking instrumental lessons or rehearsing in small groups and is attempting to redress this as soon as possible. The few teaching resources that currently exist are well used by the department. The department is in a good position to raise standards at Key Stage 3 and is determined to succeed.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. Both at the end of Key Stage 2 and by Year 8 pupils' attainment is above that expected for their age. Pupils achieve well across a wide and relevant range of activities. These include football, rugby, hockey, athletics, tennis, rounders, cricket, basketball, netball and rounders. Not all these activities are, however, available to both boys and girls. Examples of good standards are seen in all years. A Year 5 boys' class showed an application of good skills when practising cricket skills. They successfully bowled underarm at a fixed target and could throw and catch balls over a distance. A Year 6 boys' class developed the controlled use of their arms and legs well when practising a standing long jump. They responded with enthusiasm at the challenge provided, increasing the distance of their jumps according to set targets. A Year 7 boys' class developed their technique of over-arm bowling very well. They showed a good command of how to hold the ball when bowling and accurately propelled the ball with good movements and control in a chosen direction. They readily and appropriately answered questions, showing a very good awareness of technique. A class of Year 6 girls showed very good control with their throwing and catching techniques when playing a mini-game of rounders. They showed a good awareness of the rules of the games and positions they take on the rounders court. In

a Year 8 class all the girls responded well to the holding and throwing of a discus, with most achieving at least a satisfactory standing throw over an increasing distance.

136. No lessons were seen for gymnastics or dance and the school does not make provision for swimming lessons. Examinations of photographs illustrating previous work and results of competitions pupils have entered indicate good or very good standards in gymnastics and dance. Provision for indoor sporting activities is well supported by access to a good gymnasium, although the changing rooms are too small and very crowded for the number of pupils' involved. Standards for outside activities are much enhanced as a result of an excellent range of facilities provided on an extensive field. Here, lack of regular maintenance sometimes restricts the range of activities possible. Since the last inspection good standards have been maintained overall. There is now a wider range of activities for most pupils. There are now good links with partner first schools and other middle schools for competitive sports, where generally the pupils perform well with good levels of success. The needs of more able pupils are now better addressed as lessons are now supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities and competitive sport, which gives good opportunities for pupils to achieve at high levels according to their capabilities.
137. The quality of teaching at both key stages has been maintained since the last inspection and is good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and in some lessons it is very good. At both key stages teachers have high expectations, manage classes well and teach and develop skills effectively. During lessons pupils successfully develop a progressive sequence of skills. Teachers present, evaluate and support these skills well with both personal and pupil demonstrations. Pupils show at least good and sometimes very good attitudes to their lessons. They work at a good pace with enthusiasm and interest. They show high levels of concentration and are keen to improve their own personal performances. Teachers focus attention on skills development, helping pupils to learn the necessary techniques. The subject is well managed. All areas of study are appropriately and very thoroughly documented and are supported with a relevant range of well-applied policies. The physical education department is staffed by well-qualified experienced staff who have good personal levels of expertise in a range of sports. They show very good levels of expertise, motivation and enthusiasm for their work and these qualities motivate pupils and help them to achieve good standards. The department offers a very good range of extra-curricular and competitive activities. Staff give freely of their time to provide pupils with a range of extra-curricular activities that include dance, gym, football, cross-country athletics. Their dedication has led to boy and girl pupils being successful in Eastern Regional sport and local athletics, football and gymnastics competitions.
138. All classes from Year 5 to Year 8 are taught in single sex groups. Only boys have opportunities to take part in football and rugby and only girls take part in netball and rounders. In Years 7 and 8 only girls take part in dance. The present policy of restricting some activities to boys and girls only, with pupils having no opportunities to take part in swimming, means that all pupils do not have equal access and opportunity to the curriculum. The new National Curriculum orders starting in September 2000 indicate that at Key Stage 2 swimming activities and water safety must be chosen areas, unless pupils have covered the full swimming and water safety requirements at Key Stage 1. The school should now address this provision. The curriculum is broadened by the provision of a range of outdoor and adventurous activities at Key Stage 3.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. The attainment of pupils in religious education is above the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 2. They have a good knowledge and understanding of stories and festivals of the natural world, sacred writings and religious leaders. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 8 their attainment is in line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of beliefs and lifestyles in Christianity and some knowledge of Islamic and Sikh lifestyles. Pupils are all able to explain some of the difference in belief and practice of people from different world religions and all pupils demonstrate respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils have received good quality first-hand knowledge of Christianity through the school's links with, and input from, a local vicar. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is appropriate.
140. Good teaching in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 3 contribute much to pupils' overall attainment. In Key Stage 2 teachers work hard to make the lessons interesting and informative. The department has produced a good range of learning resources which stimulate the pupils' interest and also convey the main points of the lesson. In Key Stage 3 some of the demands of the Agreed Syllabus relating to the teaching of world religions present a challenge to the non-specialist teachers. During the week of inspection very good teaching of Year 6 fully captivated pupils' attention with the well-planned viewing of a videotape which attractively presented the peoples and places that Jesus visited whilst on earth. The teacher posed challenging questions to the pupils about the video clips and reinforced the learning with a well-devised worksheet. In a lesson with Year 7 the teacher shared the story of highlights in his life with various personal possessions including photographs and certificates and clothing in order to stimulate the pupils' interests in life's religious and secular journey. The one major weakness of all the teaching is the absence of more demanding work for high attaining pupils and specifically targeted work for those with special educational needs. The teaching is currently not enhanced by computer aided learning, mainly because of very limited access to computers.
141. The progress of pupils in lessons is generally good. The pupils are generally well behaved and attentive and show respect for their religious education teachers. Year 5 pupils enjoy learning about the parable of the Good Samaritan from the gospels and enter into the drama activities co-operatively and enthusiastically. Year 6 pupils ask intelligent questions in their lessons about religious leaders when studying the roles and influences of Jesus, Ghandi, Guru Nanak and Mohammed. Pupils in Year 7 give good attention to lessons about the spiritual and secular journeys of life and ask questions that demonstrate their curiosity and quest for deeper meanings. Older pupils, in Year 8, are keen to understand how the teaching of Jesus has been lived out through the lives of peoples as diverse as Martin Luther King, Elizabeth Fry and Dr Barnardo.
142. The school fully meets the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. There is equality of opportunity and access to religious education lessons. Teachers work hard to provide an interesting and motivating curriculum, but the department does not currently make sufficient use of outside speakers to talk about their life and faith and no believers from religions other than Christianity are invited to lessons or assembly.
143. The quality of leadership of the religious education department is good. Effective improvements have been made to the syllabus and to the provision of curriculum materials. Insufficient attention is currently being paid to assessing the performance of pupils' religious education work at either key stage. The team of teachers work well

together and support each other by sharing resources. Ways of introducing effective computer aided learning need urgent departmental attention.

144. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in the raising of standards by the end of Key Stage 2 and in the attention to three out of the four issues raised in the last religious education report. The school has looked carefully at staff deployment, purchased a range of suitable artefacts and successfully revised its scheme of work to meet the requirements of the new Agreed Syllabus.