

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Greenleys Middle School**  
Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique Reference Number: 110367

Inspection Number: 188402

Headteacher: John Sprittles

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Thompson  
13179

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707008

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community Middle
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	8 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marron Lane, Greenleys, Milton Keynes MK12 5DE
Telephone number:	01908 312551
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Jeremy Trigg
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
Mike Thompson <i>(Registered Inspector)</i>	Special educational needs; Science; Information technology; French; Music.	Characteristics of the school; Attainment and progress; Leadership and management.
Diane Willson <i>(Lay Inspector)</i>		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community; Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Cliff Farthing <i>(Team Member)</i>	English; Religious education; Art; Design and technology.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; The efficiency of the school.
Phil Mann <i>(Team Member)</i>	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Geography; History; Physical education.	Teaching; Curriculum and assessment.

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress in mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work, and relationships within the school community are good.
- The school provides good quality support and guidance for its pupils.
- The school provides very good information for parents and works hard to involve them in their children's education.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Attainment is well below national expectations in English and is below expectations in mathematics and information technology.
- II. The work of the school is not systematically monitored.
- III. Some lessons are too long.
- IV. Despite the school's best efforts, many parents are not sufficiently involved in their children's education.

**The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be addressed. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made a good improvement since its last inspection and has successfully addressed almost all of the weaknesses identified. Improvements have been made in the provision for mathematics, experimental and investigative science, and reading. However, improvements made to the school library are not being felt because it is currently used as a temporary classroom. The school's provision for developing the spiritual dimension to pupils' work has improved and acts of collective worship now meet legal requirements. A good range of policies is now in place, agreed and adopted by the governing body. Considerable thought has been put into the issue of homework, and it is now set in all classes. However, some parents do not support their children with work at home, and pupils in Year 7 do not receive enough homework. The work of the school is now monitored in a number of ways, and the small number of governors who are actively involved have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring now needs to be carried out in a more planned and systematic way. The school development plan has been improved, but some subject development plans are imprecise. The school's current targets for improvement include the development of target setting, better monitoring of literacy and numeracy, better use of the new information technology suite, and the better behaviour of a small minority of pupils who can be disruptive in class and at play.





• **Standards in subjects**

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

<b>Performance in</b>	<b>Compared with all schools</b>	<b>Compared with similar schools</b>	<b>Key</b>
			<i>Well above average</i> <i>A</i>
			<i>Above average</i> <i>B</i>
			<i>Average</i> <i>C</i>
			<i>Below average</i> <i>D</i>
			<i>Well below average</i> <i>E</i>
			<i>Very low</i> <i>E*</i>
English	E*	E	
Mathematics	E	D	
Science	D	B	

The information shows, for example, that while standards in mathematics in 1999 were well below the national average, they were below average when compared with those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. In all subjects, the low numbers of pupils attaining higher levels of achievement contributes to the grades awarded. For example, in science the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests was average, but few pupils achieved the higher Level 5. As a result, the school is judged to be below average in comparison to schools nationally. Inspection findings show that attainment in English is well below national expectations in terms of the proportion of pupils likely to achieve Level 4 by the end of the academic year. Attainment in mathematics and information technology is below national expectations, but standards are better in science and religious education, where attainment is in line with what is normally expected. From a low base of skills, knowledge and understanding when pupils join the school in Year 4, they make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 in science, mathematics, geography and history, and satisfactory progress in all other subjects except information technology. In information technology progress has been good since the opening of the information technology suite but has been unsatisfactory over previous years, as pupils have not regularly and systematically developed their skills in all elements of the subject. At Key Stage 3, progress slows in most subjects, but is satisfactory overall. In geography and history, pupils continue to make good progress at this key stage.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	8 – 11 years	11 – 12 years
English	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has slightly improved since the last inspection. In almost 91 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. Thirty five per cent of lessons are good and just over five per cent are very good. Nine per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is less than at the time of the previous inspection. Good teaching is a feature of mathematics at Key Stage 2, where the grouping of pupils into ‘sets’ according to ability, together with the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, is beginning to raise standards. A particular strength of teaching across the school is the good variety of activities provided for pupils, and the way in which work is generally well matched to the different abilities of pupils in most classes. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the management of pupils’ behaviour is inconsistent, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are low. Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching is of a temporary nature. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught in individual sessions and are effectively helped within lessons by skilled classroom support assistants.

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

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## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Satisfactory overall. However, a small minority of pupils, many of whom have identified behavioural difficulties, sometimes misbehave in class. At times, some pupils behave aggressively in the playground.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A small number of pupils are persistently late. Lessons generally start on time.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. Pupils thrive within the school's caring community.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher's day-to-day management is good. Only a small number of governors are active in supporting the work of the school.
Curriculum	Broad and balanced, with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Not enough time is allowed for pupils' physical and personal development. Procedures for the assessment of pupils are good.
Pupils with special educational needs	Teachers generally prepare work that is well matched to the abilities of these pupils and provides them with achievable challenges. Good use is made of support staff to help individuals with specific difficulties.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school grounds are spacious. However, teaching accommodation for some classes is unsatisfactory. The recent closure of two classrooms has resulted in the library and music room being used as temporary classrooms and has affected the quality of the school's provision in many subjects.
Value for money	Good.

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

### • The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the School	What some parents are not happy about
<p>V. The school tries hard to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.</p> <p>VI. Teachers are approachable.</p> <p>VII. The school keeps parents well informed.</p> <p>VIII. Their children enjoy coming to school.</p>	<p>IX. Very few negative comments were</p>

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views.

Just over a quarter of parents' inspection questionnaires were returned. No parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector.

• **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

To develop the effectiveness of the school and raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Raise attainment in English by:  
(Paragraphs 10, 16, 17, 27, 31, 87, 88, 90, 93, 114, 137)
  - \*. Reviewing the way in which pupils are grouped for literacy lessons;
  - \*. Improving the quality of the match of work to pupils' abilities in group work during the 'Literacy Hour';
  - \*. Ensuring that a greater emphasis is placed on developing pupils' vocabulary;
  - \*. Improving the consistency of teachers' marking of pupils' work;
  - \*. Setting specific targets for improvement and sharing these with pupils;
  - \*. Improving standards of handwriting through regular practice and the progressive development of pupils' skills from an early age;
  - \*. Improving the quality of sessions at the end of lessons when learning is reviewed.
  
- Raise attainment in mathematics by:  
(Paragraphs 10, 17, 25, 27, 35, 39, 58, 101, 103, 104, 106, 107)
  - \*. Reviewing the way in which ability groups are taught;
  - \*. Better identification of pupils most likely to achieve at a higher level;
  - \*. Improving the level of challenge in some of the ability groups;
  - \*. Using assessment information more consistently when planning future work;
  - \*. Improving the quality of sessions at the end of lessons when learning is reviewed.
  
- Raise attainment in information technology by:  
(Paragraphs 10, 13, 17, 81, 118, 125, 126, 132, 144, 157)
  - \*. Developing the way in which lessons are organised in the new computer suite, to ensure a better use of pupils' time;
  - \*. Ensuring that the use of information technology is clearly identified in the planning in other subjects;
  - \*. Improving the scheme of work to include targets for achievement by each year group.
  
- Improve procedures to ensure that the work of the school is more systematically monitored and evaluated.  
(Paragraphs 66, 112)
  
- Review the timetable allocations for subjects to ensure that lesson time is more effectively used, particularly during the afternoon session.  
(Paragraphs 12, 18, 34, 133, 140, 156)

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

1.Greenleys Middle School is located on the edge of the Greenleys district of Milton Keynes. The school serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. It takes most of its pupils from the housing developments of Greenleys and Hodge Lea. There are currently 196 pupils on roll, 50 per cent of whom are identified as having special educational needs. This is well above the national average. Seven pupils have statements of special educational needs. This number is high in relation to the size of the school. Just over 42 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This figure is well above the national average. Four per cent of pupils come from homes in which English is not the first language. This is a higher proportion than in most schools. Owing to the transient nature of the local population, there is a fairly high turnover of pupils.

2.The school opened in temporary accommodation in 1975 and purpose- built premises were constructed in 1979. The temporary accommodation remains on site and was used to house two of the eight classes until just before the start of the inspection. However, as a result of a structural survey conducted by the Local Education Authority shortly before the start of the inspection, the temporary building was closed and the classes were relocated within the main building.

3.At the time of the inspection, teachers who had only recently joined the school taught four out of the eight classes; all of these are employed on a temporary basis. Pupils' attainment on their entry to the school is well below what is normally expected of pupils at the start of Year 4.

4.Current targets for improvement set by the school are:

- \*. to raise standards in English and mathematics by developing the way in which these subjects are monitored and by sharing good practice;
- \*. to improve standards in information technology by developing the use of the new information technology suite;
- \*. to raise standards overall by developing target setting;
- \*. to improve the behaviour of a small minority of pupils who can be disruptive in class and at play.

\* **5. Key indicators**  
**Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup>**

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	26	15	41

* <b>National Curriculum Test Results</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	9	15	23
	Girls	6	8	9
	Total	15	23	32
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	37(47)	56(42)	78(73)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

* <b>Teacher Assessments</b>		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or Above	Boys	8	12	17
	Girls	4	4	6
	Total	12	16	23
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	29(46)	24(51)	56(59)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

\* **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.7
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.6
	National comparative data	0.5

\* **Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	3
Permanent	1

\* **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	5.6
Satisfactory or better	90.7
Less than satisfactory	9.3



\* **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

\* **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

\* **Attainment and progress**

1. Results of the National Curriculum tests (SATs) show that, in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4, the attainment of the eleven year olds in 1999 was well below average in English and mathematics and broadly in line with the national average in science. Few pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in any of the subjects tested. When results are compared with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards in 1999 were well below average in English and below average in mathematics, but above average in science. The school did not achieve its agreed performance target in English, but exceeded its targets in mathematics and science.

2. When statistics from the previous three years are compared, the trend is of performance consistently well below the national average in English. In mathematics, standards dropped to a very low level in 1997, but improved in 1998 and improved further in 1999 in comparison with the national trend. In science, results improved steadily from 1996 to reach the national average in 1998 and remained there in 1999.

3. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is well below what is normally expected of pupils at the start of Year 4. In particular, pupils enter the school with very low levels of literacy. Data provided by the school shows that its pupils consistently score at a very low level in an annual local authority 'screening' test for pupils at the start of Year 4, and as a result the school receives additional funding for educational disadvantage.

4. When tested before entry to the school, 85 per cent of pupils currently in Year 5 were below average in reading and 90 per cent were below average in spelling. Fifty per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. In addition, high numbers of pupils join and leave the school during the course of each academic year as their families move into and out of the district. Few pupils are helped with their work at home. This is partly because of low levels of adult literacy.

5. Inspection findings show that at the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils currently in line to achieve the nationally expected Level 4 at the end of the academic year is well below average in English, below average in mathematics, and average in science. These findings broadly correspond with the results of the 1999 SATs. Any slight differences between inspection findings and the results of the 1999 tests are due to the year-on-year differences between the groups of pupils compared. Attainment in information technology is below national expectations. This is because in previous years pupils have not been provided with opportunities to systematically develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject. In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils achieve standards normally expected of pupils at this point in Year 6. Pupils also study French and, because this is not a requirement of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2, achieve standards above those expected of pupils of a similar age.

6.The attainment of pupils in Year 7, the single year of Key Stage 3 represented at the school, is well below average in English and below average in mathematics. It is average in all other subjects except French, where the good foundation provided by work in Year 6 results in attainment above what is normally expected of pupils at this point in Key Stage 3.

7.Overall, progress is satisfactory. Rates of progress generally vary from year group to year group. This is because of the way in which some subjects are taught within the framework of four 'Upper School' classes of mixed Years 6 and 7 and four 'Lower School' classes of Years 4 and 5. In general, the youngest pupils in each class make the greatest gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In some subjects, particularly those taught during the afternoon sessions, progress is affected when lessons are too long.

8.In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in developing skills in speaking and listening, mathematics, science, geography, history and French. Progress is satisfactory in reading, writing, and all other subjects except information technology. In information technology, progress over time has been unsatisfactory because of the way in which the subject has been taught in previous years. However, a new computer suite is now in use and pupils are making good progress in acquiring and practising new skills.

9.In Year 7, progress remains good in speaking and listening, geography and history. In mathematics, science and French progress slows, but is satisfactory overall. In all other subjects except information technology pupils continue to make satisfactory progress.

10.Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their personal targets in both key stages, particularly when receiving additional support in class or when withdrawn from lessons. In the majority of lessons, work is generally well matched to the abilities of lower-attaining pupils, and in mathematics the way in which pupils are grouped in 'sets' according to ability results in good progress for pupils in the lower groups.

11.Pupils make good progress in acquiring skills in speaking and listening. In general, their listening skills are better than their speaking skills. In day-to-day conversation, pupils are able to communicate with reasonable clarity and express themselves coherently in simple sentences. However, in some lessons, pupils' ability to answer is inhibited because they often lack the technical vocabulary specific to the subject being discussed. Progress in developing reading skills is satisfactory. On entry to the school, pupils have a basic knowledge of initial letter sounds and many know a number of sounds made by blends of letters, although not all pupils are secure in this knowledge. Strategies for working out the meaning of unfamiliar words are generally limited. Many pupils rely solely on the clues provided by pictures and their knowledge of sounds when reading, and few use strategies such as the use of context as an aid. Higher level reading skills are generally underdeveloped. For example, in Year 7 very few pupils are confident in skimming and scanning text. Skills learned at school are not regularly practised at home. When interviewed about their reading, many younger pupils indicated that while they read regularly at school they are not heard reading at home. Skills in writing develop steadily in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Pupils' use of correct grammar and punctuation develops slowly, but even basic punctuation such as the use of the comma needs to be regularly revised, because many pupils forget. As they progress from Year 4 to Year 7, pupils produce an increasing range of writing, and many are able to write at some length. However, standards of handwriting are generally unsatisfactory. Skills in the

development of cursive script are not regularly taught.

12. Overall, pupils make good progress in developing skills in numeracy. They develop basic competence in manipulating numbers and make satisfactory use of these skills in subjects such as science and geography. Regular practice in mental arithmetic improves their speed in recalling number facts. However, higher-attaining pupils in Year 7 make unsatisfactory progress because the work set is not challenging enough. Pupils make good progress in developing and consolidating scientific skills. As they move through Key Stage 2 and into Key Stage 3 they improve their understanding of the principles of conducting fair tests. However, in science as well as in mathematics, pupils' low levels of literacy affect the quality of their recorded work. In both subjects teachers work hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the tasks set, by reading through the text of questions and, if necessary, explaining the meaning of technical language. Now that the new information technology suite is in use, progress in information technology is often rapid within the narrow range of skills taught. However, information technology is not regularly used to support learning in other subjects.

### **17. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

13. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to their work were judged to be '*satisfactory or better*' and to be better in the upper school than in the lower school. Evidence from this inspection indicates that pupils' attitudes to their lessons have improved and are good overall. Pupils show an interest in their work, and most are enthusiastic and well motivated. They generally listen well and are eager to respond to teachers' questioning. They concentrate on their tasks and persevere when experiencing difficulties. However, in some lessons, where pupils are expected to listen passively for long periods or when the session is too long, their concentration lapses.

14. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils are courteous and polite to adults in the school, and greet visitors in a friendly manner. Their behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory and sometimes good. However, where teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is weak, and when work set is inappropriate, pupils do not settle to activities and therefore make unsatisfactory progress. For example, pupils became disaffected during a mathematics lesson, as a result of their familiarity with the task and the repetitive nature of the activity. Whilst the great majority of pupils play well together in the playground, a small number display aggressive behaviour.

15. Overall, relationships in the school are good. The teaching and support staff work well together as a team and provide good role models for pupils. This makes a strong contribution to the relationships within the school. Pupils co-operate well in paired and group work, sharing tasks and equipment equally. Pupils are able to respect the needs and feelings of others, and show respect for one another's values and beliefs.

16. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They respond well to the opportunities to further their personal development, when given the opportunity to do so. Sporting events and extra-curricular activities such as the cookery club provide good opportunities for this. Pupils undertake various useful jobs to help with the day-to-day organisation of the school. They take responsibility for returning registers to the office and help teachers to prepare their

classrooms at the beginning of the school day.

## **21. Attendance**

17. Attendance at the school, although still satisfactory, has declined slightly since the last inspection, from 93.8 per cent to 92.7 per cent. This figure is now below the national average. Unauthorised absence at 0.6 per cent is slightly above the national average of 0.5 per cent. There is no pattern of absence in any particular year group. However, some parents do condone their children's absence from school with minor excuses. The great majority of pupils arrive at school on time and the school has systems in place to follow up any persistent lateness. Registration is effectively organised, and pupils settle quickly to their tasks, enabling a prompt start to the morning and afternoon sessions. The satisfactory attendance and punctuality of the great majority of pupils contributes positively to their standards of attainment, since they can make regular, uninterrupted progress in their work.

## **22. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **22. Teaching**

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In almost 91 per cent of lessons it is satisfactory or better, with 35 per cent of lessons being good. Over 5 per cent of teaching is very good and this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when none was seen. Teaching in nine per cent of lessons is unsatisfactory. Almost all of this is of a temporary nature. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The management of pupils' behaviour and low expectations of what pupils can do are the key factors associated with the unsatisfactory teaching observed. Overall, these findings are an improvement on those of the previous inspection.

19. The school is currently undergoing a period of difficulty in recruiting teachers. Four new members of staff have recently been appointed, all of whom have temporary contracts. The headteacher has already recognised some of the strengths and weakness in the quality of the temporary teaching and is endeavouring to build on strengths and remedy weaknesses while attempting to provide pupils with continuity in their education.

20. In general, teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of what they teach. Subject knowledge is most secure in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, and history, and is less secure in the teaching of French. Activities and resources are generally well chosen in most lessons. Teachers skilfully ask relevant questions and provide good explanations. For example, in numeracy and science lessons teachers frequently start their lessons by posing questions which cause pupils to think hard. The match of work to the needs of pupils of all abilities is inconsistent. Ability grouping in English and mathematics provides good opportunities for pupils to work at their ability level, but the needs of the higher attaining Year 7 pupils are insufficiently catered for in the highest ability mathematics set.

21. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are satisfactory overall, and many

lessons incorporate appropriate aims and objectives. Most teachers make effective links with what pupils have previously learned and make progressive demands on them. The identification of learning objectives for pupils at the beginning of lessons is a particularly good feature. Teachers then refer to these when reviewing pupils' learning at the end of lessons.

22. The quality of lesson planning is satisfactory. Tasks chosen are appropriate, and resources are generally well prepared. Teachers make particularly good use of resources in science. In most lessons, including literacy, planning identifies activities for pupils with different rates of learning, and there are good examples of additional work in history and geography to extend the challenge for Year 7 pupils. However, in some lessons, such as in mathematics and group work within 'Literacy Hour' sessions, work is insufficiently matched to pupils' different attainment within the ability groups.

23. Teachers use appropriate teaching methods. In particular, the arrangements for the teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Support assistants are well briefed and good use is made of the individual education plans for pupils with more severe difficulties.

24. Most teachers manage pupils effectively to promote high standards of personal responsibility, with the result that the great majority of pupils work productively to complete their work. Where teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory, as in one of the classes for Year 6 and 7 pupils, techniques to manage pupils' behaviour are inconsistently applied and the pace of lessons is too slow. As a consequence, some pupils become restless and inattentive and make unsatisfactory progress. However, the good management of pupils by all established staff contributes to a positive ethos in these classrooms. This in turn encourages pupils to make good progress and achieve higher standards.

25. The majority of teachers use time efficiently. However, in some lessons introductions are too long and too much time is lost in managing the disruptive behaviour of a few pupils. In most lessons, day-to-day class routines are clear, and well-established and good use is made of additional support staff. Resources are appropriately chosen and managed effectively in many lessons, but sometimes visual aids are ineffective in highlighting key teaching points, as was evident in a mathematics lesson for Year 6 and 7 pupils on the topic of compound areas.

26. The quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory overall and an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. All teachers listen carefully to pupils in lessons. They maintain detailed records of individual and class progress within their planning files, and the overall quality of records is good. The quality of marking is, however, still inconsistent and ranges from very good to barely satisfactory. The more experienced teachers make detailed comments on pupils' work and give effective feedback to pupils.

27. The quality of homework set is satisfactory, but not all teachers make enough reference to homework in their lessons. The relevance of the homework set is satisfactory overall, but its impact is limited owing to the inconsistent support from parents and guardians of pupils at home. Not enough homework is provided for pupils in Year 7.

## 32. **The curriculum and assessment**

28. The curriculum is broad and generally well balanced. Since the previous inspection, the quality of the overall provision has been maintained and in some subjects it has improved. The curriculum satisfactorily promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and adequately prepares them for secondary education at the end of Year 7. Statutory requirements are appropriately met for all National Curriculum subjects, religious education and sex and health education, with the inclusion of drug misuse.

29. The curriculum contributes positively to pupils' attainment, progress, and attitudes to learning. When planning in year group teams within the school, teachers pay due regard to the National Curriculum, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and the school's own schemes of work. There is sufficient time to teach the whole curriculum to an appropriate depth, and time allocations meet the recommended minima at each key stage. However, the allocation of time for different subjects is inconsistent between classes within each team. For example, within the teaching of English there can be two hours difference between class timetables. Variations also exist in the allocation of teaching time in information and communication technology, religious education, geography and history. This inconsistent allocation of time limits the school's ability to ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum, both between classes within the same year groups and also between key stages. In some subjects lessons are too long, with the result that some pupils lose interest and make slow progress. However, the allocation of time in mathematics is good, and the impact of the school's organisation of pupils into ability groups is ensuring equality of access and opportunity within this subject.

30. The quality of curriculum continuity between years and key stages is satisfactory overall. The school has continued to develop its curriculum planning and there are now detailed long-term plans or schemes of work for all subjects. Consequently, curriculum planning takes good account of what has gone before and what will follow within the school's clearly identified two-year planning cycle. The curriculum also builds systematically on existing knowledge, understanding and skills, and teachers generally ensure that 'extension' material provides additional challenge for Year 5 and Year 7 pupils within most subjects. The exception is for the Year 7 pupils within the highest ability Year 6 and 7 mathematics set. In this ability group the work is not challenging enough for these pupils and is often the same as that undertaken by the Year 6 pupils. Where schemes of work have been fully established, the quality of the curriculum is good and pupils make good progress. This is effectively illustrated in science at Key Stage 2, where attainment is in line with the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 7 pupils achieve standards normally expected of pupils of a similar age.

31. Staff plan effectively in teams for Years 4 and 5, and for Years 6 and 7. Team leaders monitor the quality of planning to ensure appropriate whole school agreement about subject coverage and the balance between subjects and topics. The overall curriculum frameworks for each year group are a good feature and enable senior staff to effectively monitor curriculum outcomes.

32. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is satisfactory and staff believe that these initiatives are raising pupils' standards. The school has effectively considered the impact of these major initiatives on other subjects, especially in regard to the balance of the curriculum.

33.The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. This quality of this provision has been maintained since the previous inspection and it continues to be a strong feature of the school. A wide range of activities is provided for the pupils in both sporting and ‘life-skill’ activities, such as the very popular cross-country and cooking clubs. Good links have been established with local sports clubs, and competent instructors coach pupils in table tennis, karate and cricket.

34.The procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress are good overall. The guidance available to teachers on marking and assessment is of good quality and provides a useful starting point for new staff. However, the recent changes in staffing have resulted in some inconsistencies in implementation of policies and procedures. The school has recognised this, and senior staff are monitoring and supporting colleagues appropriately. Overall, the accuracy of assessments is satisfactory and there are useful portfolios of pupils’ work which form a reference point for judging overall standards in the core subjects. However, teachers’ annotations of pupils’ work do not always include references to National Curriculum levels. Most teachers use assessment information appropriately to plan future work for pupils. Improvements have been made to the recording of pupils’ progress in reading since the previous inspection. While pupils’ progress is recorded, the quality of diagnostic information is sometimes limited. Where information is not used effectively, for instance in some mathematics sets, some pupils repeat work from previous years. They consequently become restless, make unsatisfactory progress, and sometimes exhibit unsatisfactory behaviour.

35.Pupils identified as having special educational needs are regularly assessed. Good records are kept, and this information is well used to plan appropriate work and to evaluate and set new targets.

#### **40. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

36.The school has maintained the standards in moral, social and cultural provision which were reported at the last inspection. A key issue from the previous inspection was to improve the spiritual dimension of the school, including meeting the requirements for daily acts of collective worship. This key issue has largely been addressed.

37.Pupils’ spiritual development is promoted soundly through collective worship and the curriculum. Most acts of worship give sufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray in their own way. Occasionally, teachers talk through the time for reflection, with the result that pupils are not left enough time for silent thought. In contrast, a visiting Christian group presented a lively assembly that engaged pupils’ imagination and then guided them into a good period for quiet prayer and reflection. Opportunities for spiritual development are often provided through many areas of the curriculum, although they are not consistently planned. In religious education, pupils consider stories from the Bible and from other faiths, which encourage them to consider different patterns of belief.

38.Pupils are taught well, and thoroughly, to distinguish between right and wrong, with opportunities to consider reasons for decisions. Moral values are fostered through the caring and supporting relationships that exist between teachers and pupils in classrooms. These are

strengths, and they are enhanced by the good examples set by all who work in the school. Moral development is underpinned by the promotion of positive behaviour and attitudes, furthered by and evident in the pupils' friendliness and openness towards visitors. Pupils are frequently reminded of shared values and principles in the day-to-day life of the school and in school assemblies. The importance of honesty and justice are communicated through the teachers' evident concern to treat pupils fairly and with respect.



39. The school promotes pupils' social skills in a satisfactory way. Pupils are often given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups in lessons. Older pupils are given some opportunities to introduce younger ones to the school and organise games at lunch times. The school's attempts to organise a pupils' council have not met with success, and this idea has been abandoned at present. Social skills such as teamwork are promoted through a reasonable range of sporting activities. For some pupils, their sense of citizenship is being well developed through their work with a local artist on a mosaic for Wolverton.

40. Provision for cultural development is sound. Cultural development is enhanced through opportunities to study the work of artists from a wide range of cultures and times in history, but this breadth is less well developed in literature and music. Learning about the major faiths of the world is helping to further pupils' understanding of our modern, multi-cultural world. Plans in geography show coverage of a satisfactory range of distant places. However, in some subjects, opportunities are missed to develop further the pupils' cultural education.

#### **45. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

41. Overall, the provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good, and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievement and progress. The school provides a safe and caring environment where pupils are happy to come to school. Teachers and non-teaching staff know the pupils very well, and show a high commitment to their pastoral role, offering good levels of encouragement and support. The school is making good use of its monitoring of pupils' academic progress. Annually, pupils have the opportunity for self-assessment of their attitudes to their work and the progress that they feel they have made. The quality of individual pupil records is good, and annual reports are informative, include targets for improvement, and form a useful record of progress. The school has good links with a range of external support services. These include the educational psychologist, the social services, and support from the traveller education service and the health services.

42. The quality of support and guidance available for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. Their progress in achieving the targets set out in their individual education plans is regularly reviewed, and provision is carefully adjusted following each review. Clear criteria are used for the inclusion of pupils on the special needs' register. Good use is made of a specialist support teacher who works in the school for one day per week. Skilled support assistants work well with individual pupils, both in class and at times when pupils are withdrawn from lessons.

43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are satisfactory overall. Teachers keep their own records and monitor pupils' behaviour carefully. There is a clear and comprehensive behaviour policy in place, which focuses on encouraging good behaviour. However, owing to the recent high turnover in staff, this is not as yet implemented consistently across the school. The school recognises that bullying is a problem, and it has good procedures in place to prevent such incidents taking place and to deal with any incidents should they arise. Parents are informed of the school's anti-bullying policy through a very useful leaflet and an evening held for parents when their child starts school.

44. Satisfactory procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting good attendance. The requirements for reporting and recording attendance are met, and there are clear procedures for following up unauthorised absence. Parents are regularly reminded of the need to inform the school about the reason for their child's absence and are requested to avoid taking their children out of school for their annual holiday. The headteacher monitors registers at the end of every week and is in regular contact with the educational welfare officer, who offers good levels of support. However, the headteacher recognises that some registers are sometimes completed incorrectly.

45. There are good arrangements in place to ensure the health, safety and general well-being of all pupils. Health and safety matters are monitored carefully by both staff and governors, and regular site inspections are carried out. The school is clean and tidy and in good repair. The day-to-day health of pupils is well supported by the provision of a medical room and adults qualified in first aid. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer, and staff are made aware of the procedures for referring pupils in the event of any concern. To raise pupils' awareness for their own safety, the school is well supported by visits from representatives of groups such as the Milton Keynes Park Trust, the railway police, and the local police force.

#### **50. Partnership with parents and the community**

46. The school's partnership with parents and the community is good overall. The school works hard to involve parents and the local community in its activities. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that the school encourages parents to play an active part in the work of the school. However, many parents do not respond to this encouragement.

47. The quality of information for parents is very good. Parents receive good information through a very informative prospectus and governors' annual report, both of which meet statutory requirements. Parents receive a detailed annual report about their children's progress, although targets for improvement are sometimes too general, and not sufficiently detailed to meet individual needs. Consultation evenings are held each term so that parents can discuss their children's progress with teachers, and parents feel able to approach the school at any other time should they need to do so. At the beginning of term, parents receive information about what their children are to learn, and weekly newsletters keep them well informed about day-to-day issues. The school consults regularly with parents on a variety of issues such as homework, sex education, and the 'home-school agreement'. Parents' opinions are surveyed annually by means of the Ofsted questionnaire for parents, copies of which are sent home each year with the governors' annual report.

48. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a new homework policy in consultation with parents. However, the setting of homework is not consistent across the school and parental involvement in their children's learning is limited. Very few parents help in school, and despite the school's attempts to enlist support many are reluctant to do so.

49. The school has good links with the community. Good liaison with the first school and the local secondary school helps to ensure a smooth transition for pupils when they enter and leave the school. The school's regular contacts with other local schools through a liaison group have resulted in improvements to the curriculum. The school site has been well used by groups from the local community. These have included youth clubs, sports clubs and summer holiday clubs. Unfortunately, during the week prior to the inspection, the school's temporary 'Swift Plan' building was closed following a survey. Whilst some of the groups will still be able to use the school building, the closure could have a major effect on social provision for the area, because a nursery, a holiday playscheme and two youth clubs will no longer have use of this facility. Pupils have been able to make a valuable contribution to their community by taking part in activities such as the Milton Keynes 'Litter Blitz'. The school's involvement in the 'Greenleys Partnership Scheme', which supports the whole community, also enables pupils to take part in community events. The school welcomes visits from a range of local organisations, including local Christian groups, theatre groups, music groups and an author. Pupils have many opportunities to take part in local sporting activities and sports coaching sessions after school. All these activities, together with the good use the school makes of visits to the local area, make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and to their personal development.

54.

## **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### **54. Leadership and management**

50. The school is well led by the headteacher. He effectively manages the school and works hard to promote links with the local community. He knows the pupils well and has a clear view of the future development of the school. He is ably supported by his deputy and by all staff and a small active group of governors. Following a recent period of considerable change in the teaching staff, the headteacher has sensibly focused on providing support to the new teachers. This has helped them to quickly become familiar with the way in which the curriculum is planned and to adjust to the particular demands of teaching classes with such a high proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs. There are good relationships within the school and staff work well together as a team.

51. Following the previous inspection in May 1996, an action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future development. These key issues have been effectively addressed, and are as follows:

*52. Key Issue 1: 'Improve standards in mathematics, experimental and investigative science and reading.'*

53. A more systematic and structured approach to the teaching of mathematics has been introduced through 'setting' pupils into ability groups. Further refinements are now needed to make this ability grouping even more effective, particularly in respect of the way in which mathematics is taught to higher ability pupils. Greater emphasis is now placed on the teaching of experimental and investigative science, the science curriculum has been reviewed, and teachers have undertaken in-service training. A lot of effort has been put into

promoting positive attitudes towards literacy and in developing a 'book culture' through activities such as a 'Book Week'. Better recording systems have been devised to track pupils' progress in reading and an attractive library had been created. Unfortunately, the closure of some of the school's classroom accommodation has resulted in the loss of the library, as it is now used as a temporary classroom.

*54.Key Issue 2: 'Provide greater opportunities for pupils to develop, and respond to, a growing awareness and understanding of spiritual dimensions, both in whole school assemblies and through the curriculum, and make appropriate arrangements to meet the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship.'*

55.The school places a high priority on developing pupils' respect for the values and beliefs of others, and makes good use of religious education lessons to achieve this aim. During the course of the inspection, pupils were given a number of opportunities to reflect on important issues or to express feelings of amazement. For example, good use of a video in a science lesson enabled pupils in Years 6 and 7 to reflect on the day-to-day effects of forces on the world around them. Acts of Collective Worship are carefully planned and now meet statutory requirements.

*56.Key Issue 3: 'Ensure that the backlog of policies are appropriately and urgently ratified by the full governing body and develop a more proactive role for governors which will ensure active involvement of all governors in the work of the school.'*

57.The school now has a wide portfolio of policies in place, some of which are now due to be revised. Despite the school's best efforts, the duties and responsibilities that are normally shared among all members of its governing body have to be carried out by a small group of active and committed governors.

*58.Key Issue 4: 'Consider the possibilities of promoting regular homework.'*

59.A good deal of thought has been put into this issue. A sound homework policy has been agreed and is in place, and homework is regularly set. However, a number of parents do not support the school's efforts. For example, in reading interviews carried out during the course of the inspection a number of younger and less able pupils indicated that they do not read to adults at home. In some subjects, pupils in Year 7 do not receive enough homework.

*60.Key Issue 5: 'Develop a formal system for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school which involves governors, develops the role of curriculum co-ordinators within monitoring and support of their subjects and actively involves the senior management team in monitoring the curriculum and the quality of teaching within their areas of responsibility.'*

61.The work of the school is monitored in a number of ways. In response to priorities identified in the school development plan, co-ordinators are released from their teaching duties for half a day per week to enable them to monitor provision in their areas of responsibility. The headteacher supports classes regularly and monitors the quality of teaching and learning. The governors who are actively involved in supporting the work of the school visit regularly and know what goes on there. The governor responsible for

overseeing provision for special educational needs has a good understanding of the quality of the school's provision and of the difficulties it faces in meeting the needs of some of its pupils. The Chair of Governors has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the monitoring that takes place is not yet systematic and is not yet sufficiently refined to identify differences in the quality of implementation of curriculum planning between classes within the same year group.

*62.Key Issue 6: 'Put in place an implementation plan which sets out in detail the tasks and processes required to meet the targets identified in the school development plan, including success criteria and planned monitoring and evaluation of the success of each target.'*

63.The school development plan is a very thorough document. It clearly sets out agreed priorities for action and contains good detail as to precisely what the action is to be. It is underpinned by sound subject action plans devised by curriculum co-ordinators. However, these plans sometimes lack precise success criteria and detailed costings. Owing to the recent changes in staffing, curriculum responsibilities have had to be reviewed, and issues of planned monitoring and evaluation of the success of targets have a lower priority than ensuring that the immediate needs of all pupils are adequately met.

64.The small number of governors who are actively involved in the work of the school successfully fulfil their role as a 'critical friend'. The governing body is organised efficiently and meets regularly. All statutory requirements are fully met.

65.The management of provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is suitably experienced and, within the limited amount of time available to her, works hard to monitor the needs of the very large number of pupils on the special educational needs register. Records are well kept and adequately detailed. Pupils' individual education plans generally contain precise targets for improvement. The policy for special educational needs fully complies with the recommendations of the national Code of Practice.

66.The management of the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been sound. Following the senior management team's observations of 'Literacy Hour' sessions in all classes, the way in which literacy is taught has been evaluated and is being adjusted. However, recent changes in staffing have affected progress in making these adjustments.

67.Despite the recent period of considerable change, together with problems created by the closure of part of the premises, the school has a satisfactory capacity for future improvement.

## **72. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

68. The school has a team of hard working and committed teachers. There is an adequate number of teachers and they are appropriately qualified to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has recently experienced a period of uncertainty, with a turnover of fifty per cent of teaching staff this term. A 'buddy' system, whereby experienced members of staff are paired with new teachers to the school, offers good support. Classroom support assistants play a major part in helping the large numbers of pupils with educational needs and make a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

69. The school has sound arrangements for the professional development of staff. Staff development is linked to the school development plan and to the individual needs of teachers. Subject co-ordinators identify their own training needs, which are linked to the action plans for their particular subjects. Although funding to support teachers' appraisal is not currently available, appraisal is informally sustained by the headteacher through regular 'professional development' interviews with staff. A newly qualified teacher is very well supported by her colleagues and by a mentor, who offers regular help and advice. All staff, with the exception of the headteacher, have job descriptions that are both general and specific to their individual responsibilities.

70. The school's present accommodation is unsatisfactory. During the week prior to the inspection, the local authority closed the 'temporary' building on the school site, as it was deemed to be unsafe. Two classes located in this building were moved into the main body of the school. These classes now occupy the room that was once used solely as the library, and also the music and television room. Not only does this now restrict access to these rooms, but they are unsuitable for whole class teaching. They are cramped and do not enable teachers to effectively deliver the curriculum. The attractive school grounds are well maintained, and there are adequate hard playing surfaces and a spacious field. The caretaker and cleaners are an asset to the school. Classrooms, corridors and toilets are cleaned to a good standard. The grounds are largely free of litter.

71. Overall, the sufficiency, access and quality of resources for learning are satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection, there was an inadequate range and number of fiction, poetry and non-fiction books. The library is now well stocked and the books are of good quality. Selections of books in the classrooms have been improved. Resources for mathematics, science, music and information technology are good, and in physical education they are very good. The new information technology suite, introduced this term, is enabling pupils to make rapid progress in developing their skills. The school has a natural pond in the school grounds. However, it has not been immune to the high incidence of criminal damage in the area.

## **76. The efficiency of the school**

72. The efficiency of the school is sound, and it maintains the standards reported at the previous inspection. Day-to-day administration and financial control are good. The school administrator carries out her role efficiently and effectively. This enables the headteacher and staff to devote most of their time to supporting pupils' learning. The most recent audit report made a number of minor recommendations. These have been acted upon and thoroughly

implemented.

73.The school's financial planning is sound. Members of the finance committee meet regularly to monitor expenditure. However, the value for money provided by spending decisions is not consistently evaluated. Subject co-ordinators are not involved in the budget-setting process, and funding for subjects is allocated on an 'ad hoc' basis. This prevents co-ordinators from systematically planning for future expenditure. The headteacher has successfully put in place procedures to ensure that governors are involved in setting the budget, and costings are linked to the school development plan. The school has a significant underspend at present. This is to be used to absorb any drop in income due to fluctuations in the number of pupils on roll. Future income is very difficult to predict because of the transient nature of the school population.

74.Satisfactory use is made of the skills and expertise of teaching and support staff.

75.Good use is made of additional funds to support pupils with special educational needs. The school has wisely committed additional funding for educational support staff and has particularly directed this support towards pupils identified as having special educational needs. The enthusiastic and committed work of the special educational needs support staff has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and on pupils' attitudes to lessons.

76.Staff make sound use of learning resources and accommodation. While computers are regularly used by pupils, they are not used consistently to support work across all subjects of the curriculum. Good use has been made of the school for extra-curricular activities and to promote the school as a focus for its community. However, to some extent this community use will now reduce as a result of the closure of the temporary buildings.

77.In judging the value for money provided by the school, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

78.Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below what is normally expected at the start of Year 4, and half of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Attainment overall is below what is normally expected by the end of Year 7, but pupils display good attitudes to learning and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of education provided is sound. Even though half of the classes are taught by temporary staff, over one third of teaching is good or better. The school's provision for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is good. This is achieved with an income that is broadly average for a school of this type.

79.In view of the educational standards achieved, and particularly the progress made by pupils starting from a low base, and of the quality of education provided and the good improvement made since the last inspection, the school provides good value for money.

## 84. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

84.

### ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 84. English

80. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in English is well below that normally expected at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. Results for the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4, and of those achieving Level 5, was well below average. In comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were also well below average. Although standards are lower than those reported at the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the school in English is now well below that usually expected and is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. When results over the previous years are compared, the trend is of performance consistently well below the national average. However, comparisons drawn from the results may not be reliable, since 50 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, many of whom experience difficulties in literacy. In addition, a significant number of pupils enter and leave the school during the course of each academic year as their families move into and out of the area.

81. When account is taken of pupils' very low levels of attainment in all elements of English on entry to the school, and the high numbers of pupils identified as having special educational needs, progress overall across both key stages is satisfactory. Occasionally, progress varies from good to unsatisfactory in lessons.

82. By the end of Year 6, attainment in speaking and listening is in line with national expectations, and in Year 7 pupils achieve standards broadly equivalent to those expected of pupils of a similar age. Most pupils are confident speakers when sharing their ideas in conversations. They talk in detail in most lessons, but have a limited vocabulary when discussing work in nearly all subjects. In one lesson pupils in Year 7 worked in pairs to discuss life in Victorian homes. They developed their ideas thoughtfully and listened carefully to each other.

83. Most pupils make good progress in speaking and listening across both key stages. In Year 4, skills in listening are better than in speaking. In day-to-day speech, pupils soon develop the ability to express themselves coherently in simple sentences. By Year 5 many pupils are able to speak with reasonable clarity and add details in answers to further questions. In religious education lessons pupils asked relevant questions after handling the Qu'ran and made confident contributions to class discussions. However, pupils' ability to use vocabulary specific to certain subjects is below that normally expected.

84. Progress in reading is satisfactory across both key stages. However, too few pupils achieve the standards normally expected for their year groups. Most pupils in Year 4 are confident in 'sounding out' and using blends of letter sounds to read simple texts, and a small number read with expression. An increasing number of pupils in Year 5 read with accuracy and fluency. However, they have a limited range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. For example, very few pupils use the context of words to support their reading. By Year 6



just under half of pupils read with reasonable fluency and expression. In Year 7 very few pupils are able to skim and scan text to give references when answering questions to support their ideas. At home, most pupils in Years 6 and 7 read a narrow range of books, and very few read poetry or reference books. In school, good efforts have been made in recent years to improve the quality of classroom collections of books, and pupils' reading preferences have widened.

85. Progress in writing is satisfactory across both key stages. Skills in grammar and punctuation develop steadily across the school, but the quality of writing is largely limited. Pupils produce an adequate range of writing for different purposes, but not for different audiences. Greater opportunities are being provided for older pupils to produce 'extended' pieces of writing, but their work largely lacks the fluency and expression normally expected of pupils of this age. Pupils' spelling of common words is usually accurate, but few pupils progress to spelling complex words correctly. Standards of handwriting are unsatisfactory. Many pupils, including large numbers of older ones, still print their work, although letters are accurately formed and consistent in size. A small number of pupils progress to joined, legible writing and some of these can adapt their writing to a range of tasks.

86. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The literacy targets contained in their individual education plans are generally specific and work is usually well matched to their abilities. Skilled support assistants provide good quality individual support.

87. Pupils' response to English is mostly good, although occasionally older pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes. Most pupils sustain good levels of concentration. They are keen to take part in discussions and listen quietly to their teachers and classmates without interrupting. Behaviour in most lessons is good. Behaviour and attitudes become unsatisfactory when pupils are allowed to call out in lessons and the slow pace of learning causes them to lose interest. Some pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read. However, there is a significant minority for whom books hold little interest. Standards of presentation show that pupils usually take a pride in their work.

88. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall. Almost 70 per cent of lessons were sound, 15 per cent were good and 15 per cent were unsatisfactory. Almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching is of a temporary nature. The quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory overall. Whole class work is nearly always good, but the time devoted to group work is inconsistently used. In the best lessons, tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, and good use of the same 'core' activity enables all pupils to play a full part in a review of learning at the end of the lesson. Teaching becomes unsatisfactory when neither the planning nor implementation show sufficient match of work to pupils' abilities or ages. The situation is made worse when the teacher supervises the pupils, rather than guiding their reading or writing, though this does ensure that pupils behave well. Teachers often give constructive comments in lessons to help pupils to make progress. Marking is positive and regular, and this helps pupils to do their best. However, teachers' written comments to support further learning are inconsistently used, and pupils do not often respond to them. In reading and writing, teachers often carefully record what pupils have achieved, but then do not use their records to set specific targets to promote further progress. Some teachers use homework well, but others use it inconsistently.

89. In the majority of subjects, pupils' low levels of attainment in literacy affect their rate of progress. Teachers sometimes have to read written instructions to lower attaining pupils to ensure that they are able to take part in activities. Satisfactory efforts are made to ensure that pupils use skills in literacy in their work in other subjects. For example, their 'extended' writing is satisfactorily promoted in religious education and history. On the other hand, written work in science is often too structured by teachers and opportunities are missed to challenge pupils to produce more fluent pieces of writing. There is little planning to promote pupils' reading skills in other subjects.

90. The quality of subject leadership is sound. There have been observations of 'Literacy Hour' lessons in all classes, and evaluations are resulting in adjustments being made to the way in which sessions are taught. The impact of this is being hindered at present because many teachers are very new to the school.

91. Assessment procedures are sound. A portfolio of examples of pupils' work matched against National Curriculum levels has been collected and provides a useful reference point for teachers to agree judgements about pupils' work. The school library has been improved significantly since the last inspection. However, opportunities for pupils to use books for information retrieval are being hindered because the library has to be used as a classroom owing to the closure of some accommodation.

## 96. **Mathematics**

92. The results of the national tests indicate that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was well below the national average in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4. Just two pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in 1999, whereas no pupils attained this higher level in 1998. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are below average. The large proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs within the school is severely limiting its ability to raise standards. In addition, a significant number of pupils move into or out of the local area during the course of each academic year. Despite these factors, pupils make good progress overall. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

93. A scrutiny of trends over time shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 fell substantially in 1997 but considerably improved in both 1998 and 1999. This has been mainly due to the grouping of pupils into ability 'sets' and the early adoption of the teaching methods identified within the National Numeracy Strategy.

94. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below national expectations. Inspection evidence indicates that just over a half of pupils are likely to achieve Level 4 in national tests at the end of the academic year, and very few are on course to attain the higher Level 5. The numeracy skills of these pupils are appropriate for the end of the key stage. Those in the top two ability sets can order decimal fractions to two decimal places, and their knowledge of place value is satisfactory. For example, they can complete simple addition and subtraction of decimal fractions. Their understanding of fractions and simple algebra is developing appropriately. These pupils can name several two- and three-dimensional shapes such as trapezium and tetrahedron, and can record their properties on a complex grid. Very few pupils in these sets

are working consistently at the higher Level 5, and only a small percentage of these pupils is likely to attain this standard by the end of the key stage.

95. Pupils in the other two ability groups are able to order numbers in tens, hundreds and thousands. They can multiply three digit numbers by ten, and their understanding of place value is satisfactory for pupils of this ability. Most of these pupils are developing an understanding of simple fractions and can complete simple bar charts from data. Only some of these pupils are likely to attain national expectations by the end of the key stage.

96. The attainment of pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 is also below what is normally expected of pupils of a similar age. Only half of these pupils attained the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2. The highest ability pupils in this year group are attaining standards similar to those expected for pupils of this age across the breadth of the curriculum, but tasks set for this group are generally not challenging enough.

97. Progress varies, but is good overall. Pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 2. Many pupils in Year 4 can identify even and odd numbers. Most are aware of and use the rule of inversion to calculate the answers for a range of simple problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Lower ability Year 4 pupils make good progress in simple additions and subtractions involving money. Progress is enhanced through effective matching of tasks to the prior attainment of pupils within the sets. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress. Most are in the two higher ability sets for Years 4 and 5 and are attaining standards similar to those expected of pupils of a similar age. This level of improvement is achieved by good teaching and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy techniques. Progress is unsatisfactory when teachers' expectations are too low and not enough time is provided for independent work during lessons.

98. Most Year 7 pupils make satisfactory progress. The lowest attaining pupils are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment, both in lessons and over time. They can use their knowledge of place value to round up numbers to the nearest hundred. Many can identify and match simple equivalent fractions such as a half and two quarters. Progress for the higher attaining pupils is unsatisfactory because planning does not properly cater for their needs. These pupils represent about a third of the year group, yet tasks set are frequently the same as those for the Year 6 pupils in the higher ability set. This shortcoming is due to the fact that teaching in this 'set' is of a temporary nature.

99. The attitudes of pupils are good overall. Pupils are clearly enjoying the numeracy sessions and many find the gaining of new knowledge rewarding. This is helping with their confidence and personal development. Year 5 pupils are willing to volunteer answers and to use the white board to demonstrate their knowledge to the teacher and the class. Pupils in the lowest ability group in Year 4 persevere with their tasks. A small number of these pupils appear to be disaffected and struggling to cope with the tasks, but they respond well to close support from adults in the classroom. The presentation of work in all sets is satisfactory, with the best in the higher sets. Pupils in many classes show their willingness to improve. For example, many pupils in Year 6 in the highest ability set persevere to complete as many mental calculations as quickly as possible in two minutes. The behaviour of these pupils is very good. Year 7 pupils in the lowest ability set enjoy mathematics and respond very well to the good teaching, and a good example of this was observed in a lesson about co-ordinates. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory when teaching does not provide them with work that is challenging enough and when time is not used effectively in lessons.

100.The quality of teaching is good overall. Sixty per cent of lessons observed were good or better and 20 per cent were satisfactory, but 20 per cent were unsatisfactory. All unsatisfactory teaching was of a temporary nature.

101.Planning is detailed in nearly all lessons and at its best it caters for the needs of all pupils in the set. Where planning is unsatisfactory the needs of the highest ability pupils are not met, such as in the top set for Years 6 and 7 pupils. Teachers generally use subject-specific language well to challenge the pupils. Introductions to the numeracy sessions are usually brisk and clearly focused. A very good feature is the highlighting of learning objectives by all teachers at the beginning of lessons. These also provide a useful focal point for the conclusion of lessons, but not all teachers make reference to them at this point. Some teachers do not use time effectively to provide good opportunities for pupils to consolidate learning during the independent learning or group sessions of the lesson, because introductions to lessons are sometimes too long. Marking is inconsistent and varies from good to barely satisfactory. When it is at its best, teachers enter into clear dialogue with pupils, but some marking consists only of ticks, and little written advice is given to pupils about how they might continue to improve. In some cases teachers find it necessary to mark work in class along with pupils who have low levels of literacy. Some teachers are making effective use of assessment information to inform their planning, as in the lower ability set for Year 4 and 5 pupils. In this group the teacher effectively evaluated a previous lesson and used the information well to plan activities at a higher level for some pupils. Homework is set weekly, and parents are informed about homework at the beginning of each term. The best reference to homework is made in the lowest ability set for Year 4 and 5 pupils.

102.The curriculum is satisfactory. Medium term planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and allocated accordingly to the appropriate set. There are, however, instances where the work is at too low a level for many pupils in some sets.

103.Leadership is consistently good. The subject has received considerable support and development since the last inspection. The previous co-ordinator worked alongside staff to focus on improving the pace and challenge in lessons. The clear policy provides good guidance to staff and includes extra detail on resources. The current action plan for mathematics identifies tasks to be undertaken, but the absence of clear success criteria or costings limits its overall potential as a tool for monitoring improvement. There is no specific budget for mathematics, but the co-ordinator discusses any future spending with the headteacher. Lessons have been monitored during the previous half term. The key focus has been to allow teachers to observe the lessons of colleagues in order that they may gain in confidence and improve classroom practice. The co-ordinator has been involved in observing lessons this term to monitor the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy.

104.There is a good level of resources for mathematics. Equipment is well stored in the classrooms and the central area, and storage trays are clearly labelled. Liaison with the local first school has improved. Provision for staff in-service training is good and there are strong links with the local liaison group and the local education authority adviser.

## 109. Science

105. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the percentage of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 and above was in line with the national average. However, the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 was below average. These results are similar to those achieved in 1998, and an improvement on those of the previous two years. Standards achieved in 1999 were above average when compared with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

106. Inspection findings confirm these test results and indicate that at the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils likely to achieve Level 4 by the end of the academic year is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 are achieving what would normally be expected of pupils at this point in Key Stage 3. Overall, these findings are similar to those of the previous inspection in 1996. Pupils' attainment in experimental and investigative science is below average but has improved since the previous inspection, when attainment in this element of the subject was reported as being low.

107. A scrutiny of the work produced by pupils at the start of Year 4 shows that they enter the school with attainment that is well below what is normally expected of pupils of a similar age. Overall, progress is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Year 7. Rates of progress vary between year groups. This is because of the way in which classes are organised and because of the way in which the subject is taught. In general, the youngest pupils in each class make the greatest gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Progress is good in Year 4, satisfactory in Year 5 and good in Year 6. Rates of progress also vary between classes catering for the same age groups because of differences in the way in which teachers interpret joint planning. The differences are most noticeable in experimental and investigative work. This occurs partly because a number of teachers are new to the school and partly because monitoring procedures are not yet refined enough to focus on these differences. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported in class; work is well matched to their prior attainment, and they make good progress.

108. The curriculum is organised into two-year cycles of study to ensure that pupils do not repeat work in Years 4 and 5 or in Years 6 and 7. In Year 4, pupils have a basic understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet, know about some of the major organs of the body, and understand that exercise affects the pulse rate. Most pupils are able to devise simple tests to check the effects of exercise on pulse rate and are competent in taking their own pulse rate from either the wrist or the neck. Year 5 pupils follow the same work and are generally capable of more detailed work and greater accuracy in recording their findings. Many are able to draw sensible conclusions from their work. Some of this term's work in Year 6 and 7 follows a similar theme at a more advanced level. Pupils in Year 6 know different types of joints of the body and have a basic understanding of the circulation of blood and the effects of diet on our health. In studying forces, they show a sound understanding of the principles of fair testing and know that force is either a pushing or a pulling motion. Year 7 pupils generally work on the same topics in greater depth. They are more accurate in their hypotheses about the effects of drag on different shaped objects. In class activities such as finding different ways of propelling small paper 'sliders' across their desks, they are generally able to list more types of forces acting on the models than are pupils in Year 6.

109. Pupils' low levels of literacy affect their attainment in science. For example, in some lessons, teachers have to read some of the instructions prepared for pupils to ensure that all are able to take part fully in the intended activity. In other lessons, some pupils evidently understand concepts such as friction, but are unable to articulate their view clearly enough because their vocabulary is too limited. For some pupils simple recording of experiments is difficult. Teachers compensate for this by preparing worksheets that enable pupils to record their answers in short phrases or find the correct word to complete a sentence. However, the use of such worksheets for whole groups of pupils with similar scientific ability may result in opportunities being missed for pupils with greater literacy skills to record their answers in a more challenging way.

110. Pupils' attitudes to work are good at both key stages. Pupils are generally very interested in their work and listen attentively to their teachers. They concentrate well and most are able to sustain good levels of concentration even though some lessons are too long. Relationships are good and pupils generally work well with partners or in small groups.

111. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory at both key stages and is of a similar standard to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed, and 40 per cent of lessons were good. Teachers generally plan their work thoroughly and work is often very well matched to pupils' different abilities to provide achievable challenges at all levels. Instructions are clearly given and good use is made of appropriate scientific vocabulary. In some classes this takes the form of 'prompt sheets' prominently displayed to give pupils a framework around which they can formulate their answers. Lessons are properly structured and support assistants are well deployed to help pupils with specific difficulties. In the best lessons teachers skilfully set tasks of differing degrees of difficulty based on the same basic data. In this way they ensure that all pupils are able to play a full part in the important period at the end of lessons when work is reviewed and learning is consolidated.

112. The curriculum is sound. A scrutiny of planning and of pupils' work from the previous academic year shows that the requirements of the national curriculum are fully met. Planning has been reviewed to incorporate recommendations made by the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Good progress has been made in responding to areas for development identified during the previous inspection. Resources are of good quality and are well stored for ease of access. The recent closure of part of the school buildings has affected the quality of provision for some of the pupils in Years 6 and 7. This is because the rooms that are now used to house the relocated classes are unsuitable for the effective teaching of experimental and investigative work in science. Subject leadership is sound.

## **117. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

## 117. Information technology

113. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information technology were '*generally sound and in line with pupils' ages in both key stages*'. However, attainment in information technology is now below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. This occurs because pupils have not previously been able to systematically develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects of the subject year by year, and because information technology is not regularly used to support learning in other subjects.

114. Pupils' progress over time has been unsatisfactory. However, a new computer suite is now in use, and this enables weekly whole class teaching of information technology to take place. As a result, pupils are now making good and sometimes rapid progress in acquiring and practising new skills.

115. Pupils joining the school in Year 4 generally have low levels of ability in the subject. In previous years, they have been unable to make up the deficit because of the limited opportunities available to them to use information technology equipment. The legacy of these years remains, and pupils are generally working at levels at least a year below what is normally expected in many areas of the subject.

116. In all year groups, current work is focused on developing keyboard skills. Most pupils in Years 4 and 5 position their hands correctly and accurately carry out simple 'touch typing' exercises to produce repeating patterns of text. They know the functions of some of the screen icons and are able to select options from 'drop down' menus on screen. They are able to simply manipulate text on screen by using 'click and drag' techniques to highlight areas of text. In Years 6 and 7, pupils show greater competence in changing the appearance of text and can merge text and graphics. For example, when illustrating short pieces of text produced as part of a study of life in Victorian times, pupils selected images from a simple graphics database and accurately positioned them on screen. If necessary, they altered the size of their picture before adding their text. With adult support, in small groups and individually, pupils successfully use multi-media computers to research topics as diverse as musical instruments and life in ancient Egypt.

117. A scrutiny of planning indicates that the curriculum for information technology covers all required areas of the subject within two year cycles of work. Interviews with a sample of pupils confirm that this planning is properly implemented. However, because of the way in which the subject has been taught in previous years and because of previous limitations of hardware and software, not all pupils have had regular first hand experience of all areas of the subject. As a consequence, their skills and understanding of data handling, graphics, control technology and modelling are below what is normally expected in all year groups.

118. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and by support assistants, and currently make sound progress in relation to their prior achievement. However, progress over time is unsatisfactory because of limited opportunities to practise and develop skills.

119. Pupils' attitudes to information technology are good. They work well both individually and in pairs. They treat equipment well and are patient in waiting for their turn. They generally listen attentively to their teachers, and respond quickly when given their tasks. The



new information technology suite is popular with pupils and they are keen to work there.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed, and in half of the lessons teaching was good or better. Teachers' subject knowledge varies considerably, but all are proving competent in teaching to pupils' current levels of ability. Lessons are usually well planned and instructions in the use of programs are clearly given. Teachers' management of pupils is generally satisfactory and lessons are well organised. However, the current arrangement of 'pairing' most pupils to work on the computers in the information technology suite sometimes results in one of the pair being insufficiently occupied for some parts of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They thoroughly prepare teaching aids, such as large diagrams, so that the use of screen icons or graphics positioning techniques can be clearly demonstrated to the whole class. A good pace to lessons is sustained through well-timed interventions to clarify techniques that are proving difficult for pupils to master, and through progressively developing challenges.

121. The scheme of work satisfactorily meets pupils' present needs. However, the school recognises the need for the scheme to be reviewed before the end of the current academic year in response to pupils' developing competence as a result of the impact of the new computer suite. The use of information technology is not fully integrated into curriculum planning in other subjects. Resources are now good in terms of the number of computers available for pupils to use, but are underdeveloped in areas such as control technology, digital imaging and the use of the Internet. Class timetable allocations for the information technology suite do not currently ensure the efficient use of this valuable facility. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the future development of information technology and provides sound leadership.

126.

## **Religious education**

122. Following the previous inspection in 1996, inspectors reported that there was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment. This was not the case during this inspection, and evidence indicates that attainment is in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils in Year 6 and when they leave the school in Year 7. For example, a scrutiny of the work for Year 6 pupils shows that they have a sound understanding of the work of William Wilberforce and William Tyndale and their importance in bringing the Bible to ordinary people. By the time pupils leave the school, they meet the targets for their age, as outlined in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Most know that religious symbols often mean ideas and truths that are of significance to people of different faiths. When talking about symbols used in Islam, pupils do this with respect and draw similarities with the fact that Christian people also have special symbols.

123. Progress through the school for most pupils, including those with special education needs, is generally satisfactory. In some lessons for younger pupils progress is good. Progress is good where pupils are provided with activities such as handling religious artefacts or watching videos, which promote discussions about different beliefs. Progress is best where teachers have a clear idea of what pupils already know. For example, careful questioning established what pupils already knew about the Qur'an. This information was then used as a starting point to broaden and deepen pupils' knowledge. As pupils move into the older age

groups, a wider curriculum is introduced. They share ideas about the role that commitment plays in the lives of members of different churches, such as the Salvation Army or the local 'Signposts' group. Pupils are beginning to explore their own feelings about relationships, for example when thinking about bullying in their own school.

124. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are largely good. Many are very willing to talk about their own experiences, and older pupils are keen to explain their connections with local churches. Occasionally, pupils lack enthusiasm because teachers direct activities too closely and do not give the pupils enough opportunities to explore their own feelings. In general, behaviour in lessons is mostly good and this makes an important contribution to pupils' progress since there is little wastage of time. Pupils handle religious artefacts with respect.

125. The quality of teaching is sound overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed, and in half of the lessons teaching was good. Teaching is best where teachers have clear learning objectives and share these with pupils to ensure that they understand what they are about to learn. Resources in these lessons are well prepared and used carefully to ensure a high level of interest. Teachers make clear to pupils what is expected of them in terms of listening and answering questions without calling out. While teaching is satisfactory overall, in some lessons pupils are not given enough opportunities to explore their ideas and are directed too closely in their discussion and writing. This hinders their progress in considering the two sides of points of view and supporting arguments. Teachers do not consistently emphasise key vocabulary in religious education to enrich pupils' literacy skills. Planning and implementation of lessons do not always take account of different ages and abilities found within classes.

131. Subject leadership in religious education is largely good. The curriculum has been well planned to meet the statutory requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The governors have ratified the religious education policy since the previous inspection report. There is an adequate supply of materials to support pupils' learning, and these are well used by teachers. Overall, there is a sound action plan for religious education. However, it is not fully costed and does not consistently detail specific success criteria against which the school can judge its success.

131.

### 131. Art

131.

126. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, across both key stages, and achieve standards broadly similar to those expected at the end of Key Stage 2 and in Year 7. Pupils make sound progress in the use of materials and tools. In Years 4 and 5 they produce paintings and drawings in the style of art at the time of Ancient Egypt. In Years 6 and 7 pupils make good use of colour to produce paintings in the style of famous artists, such as Van Gogh. Throughout the school there are some good examples of three-dimensional work. Many of the pupils' assignments are closely linked to work in other subjects. However, there is very little evidence of the use of information technology in the art curriculum.

127. Most pupils enjoy their art lessons, and try to achieve a high quality of finished work. Younger pupils are nearly always careful and concentrate hard for lengthy periods when working individually. Occasionally in Years 6 and 7, pupils lose focus when they are not sure what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and when lessons are too long. However, for much of the time pupils support each other with encouraging comments and helpful advice. Older pupils talk with pride of the work they have completed on Aboriginal art.

134. The quality of teaching is sound. All lessons observed were satisfactory. Planning is generally sound, but sometimes not enough emphasis is placed on the skills and techniques that pupils are to learn. Teachers give clear explanations of the background to art lessons, such as those linked to history, and this means that pupils have a good context on which to base their work. There is a good portfolio of examples of pupils' work, which is carefully annotated by teachers, but these notes do not provide teachers with clear guidance on how pupils' skills can be developed.

134.

128. The good standard of displayed work reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. During the previous inspection it was reported that there was no guidance for teachers in art. The school now has a sound policy and a curriculum plan to guide teachers' work, but not enough emphasis is placed on the techniques that pupils are to learn. Subject leadership is sound.

### 135. **Design and technology**

129. The previous inspection found that standards were in line with expectations and that pupils made steady progress. This is still the case. Design and technology has a firm place in the curriculum of the school, although no lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence of pupils' progress has been gained from looking at past work, discussions with staff and pupils, and scrutiny of school documentation. The curriculum is well planned, with a suitable emphasis on an increasing range of materials, tools, techniques and skills for both designing and making.

130. In food technology lessons in Years 4 and 5, pupils made a variety of salads using a range of ingredients and techniques. After tasting them they were able to evaluate them and say which they preferred. In Years 6 and 7 pupils looked at manufactured toys and how they worked, and then used well-labelled diagrams to design their own toys. Most pupils are able to measure accurately and use a variety of joins to make their own toys with moving parts. In discussions they show that they can evaluate the success of their work and know what they would change to improve it. However, their use of subject-specific vocabulary is below what is expected of pupils of similar ages. Resources are satisfactory in both quality and quantity, but the temporary accommodation for two of the classes is too cramped for practical work. The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership.

## **French**

131. French is taught to pupils in Years 6 and 7. Owing to the way in which the timetable is arranged, only one short session of French in Year 7 could be observed during the inspection. During this session, French was taught to two separate groups of Year 7 pupils, formed from the four Year 6 and 7 classes. There is insufficient evidence to enable a secure judgement to be made about the quality of teaching. Further evidence was obtained through discussions with pupils, an interview with the subject co-ordinator, and scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation.

132. The study of a modern foreign language is not a requirement for pupils at Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 therefore make good progress, and achieve standards which are above those expected of pupils of a similar age. In Year 7 pupils make satisfactory progress and are currently achieving standards that are above those normally expected of pupils in this year group at this point in the academic year. Inspection findings represent an improvement on those of the last inspection, in which attainment was judged to be *'sound in both key stages'*.

133. To some extent progress is inhibited by the way in which the timetable has been organised. Pupils in Year 6 receive just one lesson per week and pupils in Year 7 receive two. This arrangement places great demands on teachers and pupils, since there are no opportunities for shorter lessons on a more frequent basis. It is therefore difficult for pupils to assimilate vocabulary and develop their understanding through frequent practice. In the two single sessions briefly observed, both teachers attempted to cover a range of vocabulary that would have provided the teaching material for a number of very good, shorter daily activities.

134. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are fully integrated into French lessons. They make good progress in Year 6 and satisfactory progress in Year 7.

135. Planning indicates that pupils in Year 6 start to learn French through the use of games and flashcards. They learn to follow simple instructions and develop basic vocabulary in activities such as counting to 20 and responding to questions about themselves. These activities are carefully developed during the year and form a sound basis for future learning. The success of the school's work is evident in the good response of pupils in Year 7. Few of the pupils observed were self-conscious about using French and most were able to formulate short, reasonably accurate replies to simple questions. Using a simple town plan, most pupils were able to follow directions to locate various buildings. In one of the groups, some pupils successfully formulated their own questions about the plan and were able to ask other pupils to identify locations. Written work is generally well presented and grammatically correct.

136. The curriculum is well structured and is based on commercially-produced materials. It sensibly provides for a greater emphasis on oral work in Year 6, with more written French being developed in Year 7. However, teachers need to pay very great care in ensuring that they are consistent in the way that grammar is used. They also need to place a strong emphasis on the correct inflection of their voices when speaking, so that pupils develop better accents.

137. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision, and provides sound leadership. Areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report were the development of a subject policy, the need for more authentic resources, and the greater use of information technology to support learning. A sound policy is now in place. However, more authentic resources are still required and information technology is not integrated into curriculum planning.

#### 144. **Geography and history**

138. It was possible to see only three lessons each in geography and history during the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning, photographs, displays of pupils' work and a review of pupils' past work indicates that pupils, including those with special needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in both history and geography. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 achieve standards normally expected of pupils of similar ages.

139. Map work is a good feature, and pupils consolidate and extend their learning skills as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 4 can carefully draw the main rivers of England on a map after locating them in an atlas. Many in Year 5 can identify the River Nile on a sketch map and name the countries that the river passes through. These pupils are able to talk about the main characteristics of rivers and can recall a fieldtrip to the River Ouse during which they measured the speed of the current using 'Pooh sticks'. Older pupils in Years 6 and 7 are able to interpret contours on a map to identify high and low points in a mapped landscape.

140. In history, the pupils' understanding of chronology is developed through a well-planned curriculum based on various topics. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 are fascinated by the life of the ancient Egyptians. This interest is heightened through the imaginative way in which some of their work is approached, which often gives pupils an opportunity to develop literacy skills in lessons. For example, they set out what they know about the discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb by producing their own versions of Howard Carter's diary entry for that day. These pupils know that artefacts discovered in the tomb are over two thousand years old. Where possible, good use is made of historical evidence. For example, most pupils in Years 6 and 7 are able to interpret data from the 1891 census and use this to correctly answer questions about people's occupations and dates of birth. They can use this information to deduce what daily life was like for people living in the Victorian age.

141. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. They show a keen interest in maps and other countries and are enthusiastic about answering the teachers' questions. Many pupils are keen to share what they know. They settle purposefully to any written work and are pleased with their growing knowledge of the world around them and understanding of the past.

142. The quality of teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. In geography two thirds of lessons are good, and in history all the teaching is good. Teachers prepare a good balance of practical and written activities and use non-fiction books and artefacts well to demonstrate teaching points. Good use is made of the locality as a geographical and historical resource, and the immediate area is used well to stimulate interest in geographical features. Good displays around the school bring the curriculum to life for the pupils.

143. There is a good policy for geography but none for history. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce schemes of work which are planned in a two-year cycle so that pupils in the mixed age classes do not repeat work from year to year. There is enough 'extension' work available to cater for the curricular needs of pupils in Year 7, such as work on volcanoes and tectonic plates. There are sufficient resources to meet the current needs of both subjects. The school uses visits to local museums and other places of interest in the locality, such as Stacey Hill Museum and Bradwell Abbey, to enhance the curriculum. Visitors, such as local historians, bring additional interest to the humanities curriculum.

## 150. Music

144. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, it was possible to observe only a small sample of music lessons during the inspection. Further evidence was obtained through discussions with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of planning and other documentation. A scrutiny of pupils' work provided little evidence relating to their musical studies.

145. Evidence from the limited observations indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages and at the end of Key Stage 2, and that in Year 7 they achieve standards normally expected of pupils of similar ages. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

146. Curriculum planning provides a well-structured development of pupils' skills and ensures that all elements of the curriculum are adequately covered. However, the way in which the planning is organised into units of work on separate aspects of the curriculum results in pupils being unable to regularly practise and develop skills across all areas of the subject. In Years 4 and 5, this term's work focuses on performance and composition. Pupils successfully identify, describe and perform simple rhythms and are able to vary the tempo of their performance. In Years 6 and 7 the focus of work is on developing skills of musical appreciation. Pupils in these year groups know the names of some 'families' of instruments of the orchestra and successfully research information about a range of instruments. In one of the classes, pupils listened carefully to music by Vivaldi and matched different excerpts to different moods and feelings.

147. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Where appropriate, support is provided to compensate for difficulties experienced in literacy

148. The majority of pupils display positive attitudes to the study of music. They listen carefully, make thoughtful contributions to lessons, and work well with one another. In most lessons pupils behave well and sustain concentration throughout their activities.

149. Within the narrow sample of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. Teachers' expertise varies widely between classes and this is evident in the way in which skills are introduced and techniques are taught. Lesson planning is satisfactory and work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities. Where teaching is good, learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they clearly know what they are expected to be able to achieve. Good links are made between music and learning in other subjects, and as a result

pupils' interest is stimulated at an early stage of the lesson. In the single unsatisfactory lesson observed, class rules were inconsistently applied, teaching lacked pace, and the teacher's expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low. As a consequence, some pupils became restless and misbehaved. In some classes, lessons are too long and teachers have to work hard to keep pupils on task.

150. The previous inspection report noted that computer programs were used to aid composition. Current planning and discussions with pupils give no indication that this is still the case.

151. The school's provision is enhanced through instrumental tuition provided by a number of visiting teachers and through opportunities for public performances provided by concerts and musicals such as 'Bugsy Malone'. The recent closure of some classrooms has adversely affected the quality of the school's provision for music, since the music room is now used as a temporary classroom. Music lessons now have to be taught in classrooms, some of which are unsuitable for the activities planned. Resources for teaching music are generally good. Opportunities are sometimes missed to further develop pupils' appreciation of music in assemblies. Subject leadership is sound.

## **Physical education**

152. The provision for physical education is satisfactory overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in a wide variety of activities and by the time they are in Years 6 and 7 achieve standards normally expected of pupils of this age. The programme of extra-curricular activities continues to be a strength of the school.

153. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in a range of physical skills. For example, pupils in a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils displayed confidence in gymnastics floorwork and were able to travel and jump under control to land in a variety of shapes. Many could perform a series of imaginative symmetrical and asymmetrical balances as part of a sequence of movements. These pupils made good progress in the lesson because of the clearly focused teaching and effective planning. There were no opportunities to observe pupils' gymnastic skills using conventional apparatus. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are making satisfactory progress overall in playing team games. For example, some were able to consolidate their skills of passing, running and marking in a netball lesson. They could pass a netball using a range of techniques, but attainment in this activity was below the standard expected of pupils of similar age.

154. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported and enjoy full access to the curriculum. They make satisfactory progress overall.

155. Pupils are enthusiastic about all physical activity and respond well in lessons. A number of pupils are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities. For example, many were keen to practise their running at lunchtime in readiness for a forthcoming cross-country championship with other schools.



156.The quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory. In addition to swimming, only one games and one gymnastics lesson were observed during the inspection. In these lessons, teachers displayed sound subject knowledge. Demonstrations of techniques were at least satisfactory and were best in the gymnastics lesson for a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils. In this lesson the teacher displayed confidence in performing the required movements and was dressed correctly for the activity. However, too few opportunities were provided for pupils to appraise the work of others.

157.The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school's schemes of work provide a balanced coverage of the programmes of study, but there are not enough opportunities for vigorous activity within the weekly timetable. For example, most pupils are allocated only one forty-five minute lesson each week, but inconsistencies between class timetables indicate some variations in the time allocations.

158.There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities for all the pupils, and this good provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Activities include football, cross-country, cricket, karate and table tennis. Many of these are staffed by competent outside coaches and instructors.

159.The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Good links have been established with a wide range of clubs and instructors to enhance the provision overall. Good use has also been made of national initiatives to improve the level of resources available to support teaching and learning.

## **Swimming**

160.The inspection of this school included a focussed view of swimming which is reported below.

161.Swimming lessons take place at a local community pool. Pupils from the Years 4 and 5 classes swim during the spring and summer terms each year. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 swim during the autumn term.

162.Pupils make good progress in swimming and the attainment of many pupils is above average. Almost all pupils are in line to be able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6. These pupils are able to use a range of recognised strokes to propel themselves effectively through the water. Higher attaining pupils confidently immerse their faces in the water to synchronise their breathing with their chosen stroke. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to swim unaided with recognised beginner strokes, but are currently only able to swim a few metres in the shallow end of the pool.

163.Pupils are particular receptive to the swimming provision and endeavour to improve their skills when they visit the pool. They listen carefully to instructions from teachers and instructors and persevere well to develop their skills.

164.The quality of swimming teaching is satisfactory overall. Four lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. Lower attaining pupils were taught by a member of the

school teaching staff, while average and higher attaining pupils were taught by an instructor based at the pool. In the lessons for novice swimmers, the teacher's planning provided a clear structure for the step-by-step development of pupils' skills within the half-hour sessions. The supporting instructor displayed good subject knowledge, but lesson planning was very brief for the average and higher attaining groups. The sessions were well managed and pupils made sufficient progress in the allocated time. Good adherence to health and safety rules was observed.

165. The provision for swimming is good. The programme of lessons is well organised and complements the overall provision for physical education. The time allocated for the subject provides pupils with good opportunities to learn and to practise their skills and allows for extra provision for pupils who develop swimming skills more slowly. Procedures for assessing pupils' swimming competence are satisfactory and adequate records are kept. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the award of certificates.

## **172. PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **172. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

166. The school was inspected for four days by a team of four inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector.

167. During the inspection, 14 inspector days were spent in gathering firsthand evidence. The total time spent in direct observation of lessons, sampling pupils' work, and talking to pupils was 50 hours, 30 minutes.

- 54 lessons or parts of lessons were observed;
- Time spent in direct observation of lessons at Key Stage 2 was 29 hours, 15 minutes; other time spent in observation of learning at Key Stage 2, through scrutiny of work in books and on display, plus reading interviews and interviews with pupils in some subject areas, totalled ten hours, 50 minutes;
- Time spent in direct observation of lessons at Key Stage 3 was four hours, 15 minutes; other time spent in observation of learning at Key Stage 3, through scrutiny of work in books and on display, plus reading interviews and interviews with pupils in some subject areas, totalled six hours, ten minutes;
- Discussions were held with pupils in all classes as part of observations, to ascertain their understanding in all areas of the curriculum;
- The quality of pupils' reading was sampled in each year group;
- Work completed by a sample of pupils was scrutinised;
- Pupils' work displayed in classrooms and around school was examined;
- Teachers were interviewed regarding their curricular and other responsibilities;
- Visiting teachers were interviewed;
- Registration sessions, assemblies, break times and meal times were observed;
- Test results and pupils' records were examined;
- School assessment data was scrutinised;
- National Curriculum test data was scrutinised;
- Teachers' planning was examined;
- Teachers' records were examined;
- Policy statements, schemes of work, financial documentation, and the school development plan were scrutinised;
- Informal discussions were held with parents in the playground;
- Members of the governing body were interviewed;
- The headteacher was interviewed
- The school administrator was interviewed;
- The opinions of parents were also surveyed through the use of questionnaires.

175.  
INDICATORS

DATA AND

• **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
<b>Y4 – Y7</b>	196	7	98	83

• **Teachers and classes**

• **Qualified teachers (Y4 – Y7)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	23.3

• **Education support staff (Y4 – Y7)**

Total number of education support staff:	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	129

Average class size:	24.5
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• **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998-99
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	£
Total Income	360,497.00
Total Expenditure	345,546.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,630.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,939.00
Balance carried forward to next year	33,890.00

· **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:  
 Number of questionnaires returned:

196
50

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	36	64	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	48	2	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	30	54	16	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32	64	0	4	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	28	58	8	6	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	24	72	0	4	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	30	56	14	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	28	64	4	4	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	26	64	10	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	22	64	12	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	40	54	2	4	0

- No parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector.