

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST. EDWARD'S ROYAL FREE ECUMENICAL  
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Windsor, Berkshire.

Windsor and Maidenhead LEA

110086

Miss W Merwood

Reporting inspector: David Darwood  
3552

Dates of inspection: 21-24 January 2002

Inspection number: 189672

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle School Deemed Secondary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School Parsonage Road, Windsor Berkshire
Postcode:	SL4 5EN
Telephone number:	01753 867809
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Maura Walker
Date of previous inspection:	7 <sup>th</sup> October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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10173	Catherine Hinds	Lay inspector		How high are standards? How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and resources
1475	Valerie Lynch	Team inspector	Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30576	Peter Bannon	Team inspector	Mathematics	
21971	John Glennon	Team inspector	English	
12721	David Riddle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	
19026	Brian Downes	Team inspector	Geography Modern foreign languages	
20832	Mohinder Galowalia	Team inspector	Science English as an additional language	
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22501	Susan Jones	Team inspector	Music	Citizenship
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical School is a Church Aided (Church of England and Roman Catholic) middle school serving pupils from 9 to 13 years. There are 349 pupils on roll, with a similar number of boys and girls. The school includes a specialist unit for children with moderate learning difficulties. There are currently 17 pupils in this unit, most of them living within the borough but some are admitted from other local education authorities. The school draws pupils predominantly from within the Windsor area, although there is a significant influx of pupils in Year 7 from Slough. Pupils enter the school at the age of 9 with levels of attainment that are broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free-school meals is low compared to the national figure and has fallen in recent years. The proportion of pupils on the Special Educational Needs register is slightly above the national average. The inclusion of pupils with moderate learning difficulties results in the number of statements of special educational needs being almost three times the national average. These pupils receive additional support in lessons. One quarter of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds where English is an additional language.

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

St Edward's Royal Free is an improving school. By the end of Year 6, the achievement of pupils is at the national average and comparable to similar schools. By the end of Year 8, levels of achievement are above average in English, mathematics, geography and physical education. They are similar to national averages in all subjects except French and information and communication technology (ICT), where they are lower. Improvements are the result of good teaching and good relationships between staff and pupils. The school is effectively managed on a day-to-day basis and the headteacher has created a strong caring ethos throughout the school. She is supported by a hard-working deputy and a well-informed governing body. The school aims to provide a secure learning environment alongside a drive to raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The school has taken effective measures to improve standards.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in their work.
- The school promotes a caring attitude amongst pupils.
- There has been significant improvement in the provision for mathematics.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Relationships within the school are very good.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities in physical education.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology and its application in other subjects across the school.
- The management structure in order to provide a clear strategic direction to the school and to ensure more effective systems for evaluating school improvements over time.
- Standards in French.

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

The school has responded well to the findings of the previous inspection and has made good progress. Standards of achievement have improved steadily and are now rising at the same rate as they are nationally. Standards in mathematics, judged to be below average at the time of the previous inspection, are now good. The quality of planning and teaching has improved, largely as a result of more effective use of data by teachers as well as the introduction of a satisfactory marking system. There is a re-structured senior management team, although its precise purpose and role is still not carefully enough defined. Statutory requirements with regard to art and the contents of the

school prospectus have been met. The provision of ICT remains an issue. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now very good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum Tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	C	C
Mathematics	C	D	C	C
Science	D	C	C	C

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

Pupils' standards of achievement when they enter the school are broadly at the national average. However, this hides the fact that there are relatively few pupils from the high ability range and a large number of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of pupils, particularly those with difficulties in basic literacy skills make good progress. Standards of attainment for pupils aged 11, based on National Curriculum tests, are at the national average in English, mathematics and science. The overall trend in standards over the past few years has been upwards, in line with what is happening nationally. The evidence from inspection is that standards of achievement for pupils aged 13 years are well above the national average in mathematics and above national figures in English, geography and physical education. They are satisfactory in science, history, design and technology, art and music, but unsatisfactory in French and information and communications technology.

Standards of literacy are satisfactory. Most pupils read well and engage confidently in discussion. Writing skills are sound. Standards of numeracy are also satisfactory. Skills in handling number are very well developed in mathematics and good in geography. In other subjects, practice is more variable.

The school sets challenging but realistic targets for the number of pupils reaching particular levels in national assessments at the age of 11 years. It is on target to achieve them.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well prepared to learn and talk positively about their school experience.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They work willingly and diligently in lessons and act responsibly in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show respect and consideration for each other and there are very good relationships throughout the school. They grow in confidence and maturity as they pass through the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory, although procedures for checking on regular attendance are not always rigorously enforced.

Relationships are very good and are a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. The school works hard to integrate all pupils into mainstream lessons and this does much to promote a warm and supportive learning environment. Staff provide very good role models to the pupils and there is a real sense of racial harmony where everyone recognises the cultural value of others.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 - 6	Years 7 – 8
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and steadily improving. The key to this success in many lessons lies in the teachers' high expectations of pupils both in terms of achievement and behaviour. This is reflected in the way they include all pupils irrespective of talent or temperament. Pupils respond positively to lessons and rise to the challenge of demanding work particularly when they sense that the teacher believes in them and their ability to succeed.

The best teaching was seen in mathematics, physical education, personal, health and social education and those sessions where support staff worked with pupils. Teaching was good in English, geography and music and satisfactory in science, history and ICT. It was unsatisfactory in French, where pupils were often not provided with challenging tasks to ensure they reach the standards of which they are capable. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are generally satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils experience a wide range of worthwhile activities within the timetabled day. The range of extra-curricular sports activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils receive sensitive and well-targeted support within lessons. This allows them full access to the curriculum and they make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall. This is, in part, due to the very good relationships in the school, which provide a very secure learning environment. There is, however, insufficient targeted support to pupils who are in the early stages of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Many opportunities are provided in assemblies and lessons and particularly in personal, social and health education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring community. The staff see pupils' welfare and interests as central to their work. Pupils feel safe and well supported. Procedures for Child Protection need to be reviewed.

The curriculum effectively contributes to the quality of education pupils receive. Parents are generally satisfied with what the school offers their children. Opportunities for developing pupils' ICT skills are restricted due to a lack of appropriate hardware and software packages. As a consequence, the school does not comply with statutory requirements for ICT. Teachers know their pupils well and take great care in monitoring their academic and personal development. Relationships are very good and help create a very positive attitude towards learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher has done much to provide a warm and supportive learning environment. She is well supported by a hard working deputy and between them they have worked hard to move the school forward. Most subject managers are effective leaders.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and act as good critical friends to the school. They carry out their responsibilities effectively. Their financial oversight is very good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The strengths and weaknesses of pupils' academic performance are carefully diagnosed and progress is monitored. Formal arrangements for checking and reporting on the quality and evenness of provision across departments, however, are not consistently implemented or used.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's funds and resources are appropriately directed towards identified needs, although the present range of ICT resources is inadequate.

The dedication of the headteacher, the support she receives from the leadership team and the quality of the involvement of the governors have been key factors in the steady improvement in the quality of what the school offers. Some aspects of leadership and management relating to school organisation could be improved – particularly the co-ordination of areas like literacy, numeracy and ICT as well as the need to measure the progress of groups of pupils, particularly those for whom English is not their home language. Resources are generally good and well used, with the exception of ICT, where there are insufficient computers. Accommodation is unsatisfactory in the practical subjects like design and technology, art and physical education. The school budget is effectively managed with due consideration to ensuring that the principles of best value are applied.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations.</li> <li>• The school is well managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour of a small minority of pupils.</li> <li>• Consistency in the setting of homework.</li> <li>• The information they receive about their children.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

**THE SMALL NUMBER OF PARENTS ATTENDING THE PRE-INSPECTION MEETING AND THE LOW NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRE RETURNS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO BE CERTAIN ABOUT THE VIEWS OF THE MAJORITY OF PARENTS. INSPECTORS DO, HOWEVER, SUPPORT THE POSITIVE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE PARENTS. THEY FOUND PUPILS' ATTITUDES TO SCHOOL TO BE VERY POSITIVE. THE TEAM JUDGED THE OVERALL BEHAVIOUR OF PUPILS TO BE GOOD. A SMALL NUMBER OF PUPILS CAN BE DIFFICULT, BUT IN MOST LESSONS THEY WERE HANDLED WELL AND DID NOT AFFECT THE LEARNING OF OTHERS. WHILE THERE ARE SOME INCONSISTENCIES IN THE SETTING OF HOMEWORK, THE INSPECTORS' JUDGEMENT IS THAT OVERALL PROVISION IS SATISFACTORY. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SOME INCONSISTENCIES IN THE USE OF PUPIL PLANNERS WHICH SOMETIMES MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR PARENTS TO CHECK WHAT HOMEWORK IS BEING SET. THERE IS SOME JUSTIFICATION IN THE**

**CONCERN OF PARENTS ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE INFORMATION THE SCHOOL SUPPLIES. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE WITH REGARD TO PRECISE INFORMATION ON WHAT THEIR CHILDREN CAN AND CANNOT DO, AND WHAT IS ACTUALLY BEING TAUGHT. THERE ARE VERY GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE LESSONS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SOME IN MUSIC. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH VARIETY OUTSIDE THESE AREAS TO MEET THE RANGE OF INTERESTS OF PUPILS.**

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The pupils' level of attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, although it tends to be more skewed towards the middle and lower levels with relatively few pupils attaining the higher grades. One of the reasons for this profile is the high proportion of special educational needs pupils who choose to enter the school because of its specialist provision in this area.
- 2 In the 2001 national tests for 11 year olds, attainment was comparable to national averages in English, mathematics and science in terms of average point scores. It was, however, higher in mathematics and science in the percentage of pupils reaching the national average of Level 4 and above. This represents good progress in mathematics and science from standards demonstrated by pupils on joining the school. The same picture is true in relation to schools in similar circumstances. In national tests in 2001 girls did better than boys in English as did their peers nationally. Boys did better in mathematics and science and were above the national average in the latter. The percentage of pupils attaining the high levels at the age of 11 are lower than both national averages and similar schools with the exception of science where it is in line with national averages. This is in part a reflection of the lower number of high attaining pupils entering the school at the age of 9 years. The overall trend in results is upwards, in line with the national average.
- 3 Standards are above average in history and physical education. This represents good achievement on the basis of pupils' attainment when they join the school. Standards are at the national average in all other subjects, with the exception of French and information technology. In information technology, pupils start from a very low base and do make satisfactory progress, but standards by the age of 11 are still poor. In part this is due to the difficulty of recruiting specialist information communication technology staff (ICT) over the last three years. In French, both standards achieved and progress obtained are unsatisfactory.
- 4 In lessons and in work inspected, standards by the age of 13 (Year 8) are good overall. In English, mathematics, geography and physical education pupils achieve higher levels of attainment than would be expected nationally. Standards are below average and progress is unsatisfactory in French and ICT. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards relative to their age and the progress they make are judged to be better in Years 7 and 8 than in earlier years. This is a result of better teaching in these years.

- 5 Although English test results in Year 8 indicate that boys under-achieve against girls, this is not reflected in work seen in lessons. Overall, there is no significant difference between girls and boys beyond what is found nationally. As in Year 6, the gifted and talented pupils do less well relative to the age than what might be expected nationally. In part this is due to a significant number of more able pupils transferring out of the school at the age of 11 to attend 11-18 schools in the neighbouring local education authority.
- 6 The overall profile of standards since the previous inspection has changed significantly. Then standards were judged to require substantial improvement, now they are at national averages by the age of 11 and above at the age of 13 years. The improvement in the core subjects overall is good, but particularly so in mathematics.
- 7 Standards of speaking and listening are good overall. Pupils listen well, except in a few lessons. They understand the importance of listening to each other as well as to the teacher. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are keen to talk in class and read their work aloud, although lower-achievers have a much more limited range of vocabulary. Most subjects make good use of key words, either displayed as part of displays in mathematics, English, music, geography and history or by writing new terminology on the board and recording it as homework. This helps pupils write accurately and with understanding.
- 8 Standards of reading are variable. Many pupils have limited reading skills upon entering the school. However, they grow in confidence as they progress through the school. The support given to slow readers, particularly those with special educational needs is very good.
- 9 Writing skills are satisfactory, but variable across subjects. In English, pupils are used to writing in a range of styles and formats. This is also true in history and geography where pupils are given clear guides around which to develop written research work. Good examples of creative, instructional and persuasive writing were seen in these areas.
- 10 Further progress in establishing a common approach to literacy across the curriculum is limited by the lack of an identified co-ordinator and the lack of a clear policy for developing levels of literacy.
- 11 Standards of numeracy, particularly within mathematics, have improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is to a great extent the result of a coherent approach to developing number skills in mathematics, although some other subjects are also contributing to this. For example, in geography, pupils routinely handle data when looking at birth and death rates, presentation and interpretation of graphs, and integration of statistical information on gross national products. Elsewhere practice is more variable and number skills are often developed at a basic level
- 12 ICT skills are poor and presently there are no clear schemes of work for these to be developed in a coherent way either within separate ICT lessons or across the subjects of the curriculum. This is recognised by the school and is a priority in the school improvement plan. There is some piecemeal work going on in individual subjects, for example in history, where pupils use desktop publishing, interrogate databases and use spreadsheets. In special educational needs the use of ICT is very good and contributes positively to both motivating pupils and enhancing their

learning. Elsewhere ICT has not been given sufficient priority. This is partly because of a lack of appropriate ICT training for teachers, but more specifically because of difficulty in gaining access to computers.

- 13 Standards of achievement amongst special educational needs pupils is good and they make very good progress as they move through the school. There is careful analysis of data to find out the performance of individual pupils and the school uses this to set clear targets on pupils' individual education plans. Special educational needs pupils receive high quality support in lessons and in specialist teaching. This has led to enhanced opportunities for speaking and listening and is a key factor in the levels of achievement reached. Special educational needs pupils are well integrated into the mainstream school and work well with their peers. For example, in a Year 8 physical education lesson a pupil with particular difficulties was well supported by the help and enthusiasm of the group within which she was working.
- 14 For the gifted and talented children the school has begun to develop individual education plans and support to these pupils in physical education, mathematics and history is good. For example, by Year 8 more able pupils in mathematics make good progress with many in the top set already working towards Level 7. In other subjects, overall progress for these pupils is satisfactory, although it is weak in French where there is not enough challenge.
- 15 A quarter of pupils in the school have English as an additional language. The support for these pupils, and their progress, is variable. In most lessons they cope well and are encouraged to participate in oral work. For example, in a Year 8 geography lesson a pupil whose first language was Spanish and who had only recently come to the school could still explain key technical terms like 'eco-systems'. The progress made is due to the quality of teaching and the supportive environment in which pupils learn. There is, however, currently insufficient specialist support for pupils in the early stages of learning English. There has been too little whole school training to meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, particularly in the development of their writing skills. Although the school records individual pupils' progress, there is no overview of how well these pupils achieve and nor is it clear whose responsibility it is for co-ordinating work in this area. It is because of this that approaches are so variable across different subjects and year groups.
- 16 The school carefully analyses data to determine targets and these have recently been raised following consultation with the local education authority. School targets are now challenging and are built into the school improvement plan. These higher targets are an indication of the school's renewed pride in itself and its will to succeed.

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

- 17 Pupils at the school have good attitudes, a characteristic evident during the previous inspection. They are enthusiastic about their life at the school. The many smiles and cheerful greetings as they gather in the morning in the playground reflect their pleasure in each other and their school. Pupils appreciate the good range of additional activities available to them, particularly in music and physical education, and enjoy their involvement. Their attitudes at the after-school basketball club for Years 5 and 6 clearly demonstrate this feature of school life. Gleeful shouts of encouragement accompanied boys' and girls' attempts to improve their basket scoring techniques.

- 18 Pupils, including those with special education needs, have equally good attitudes to their learning. They have greater commitment to their studies than at the time of the previous inspection. These positive attitudes make significant contribution to the progress the pupils make. Pupils enjoy their lessons and usually remain focused on their work. Groups of Year 7 dancers were so involved designing sequences to link musical sounds and movements that they remained oblivious to the clashes, bangs, trills and tinkles of other groups. Pupils with special education needs are, like everyone else in the classes, keen to start their lessons. Their concentration often improves as the lesson continues with selective prompts from the teacher and support staff.
- 19 Attitudes are only occasionally less positive. In a few lessons, mainly in Year 5, some pupils, boys in particular, are unsettled, neither listening to the teacher nor participating fully in the tasks provided for them.
- 20 The behaviour of the pupils in the school is good. Pupils behave well in lessons, where they are almost always attentive, calm and prepared to meet the expectations of the teacher. Although they are busy and chatty as they move around the school, they are constantly aware of others, moving aside as the need arises. They look after property and belongings carefully, an impressive feature of school life as many of the cloakrooms and communal areas are small. Pupils are very composed when they are together formally in large groups. Their very good behaviour as they enter the hall for assembly ensures that these gatherings are dignified occasions.
- 21 A few pupils have difficulty conforming to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. The minor disturbances which occur are not usually allowed to disrupt the learning of others and are very sensitively handled. No pupils have been excluded from school in recent years. There was little evidence of bullying and none of racism or sexism observed during the week. Reports from pupils and parents and observation of records indicate that the occasions when bullying occurs are rare and pupils are very confident that these will be well handled by staff.
- 22 The very good relationships between the whole school community are a major strength of the school. Relationships, already good at the time of the previous inspection, have improved further since then. Pupils, boys and girls, younger and older, enjoy being with one another, whether in the classrooms or around the school. They come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and all are happily working and playing together. Pupils offer each other very good support in lessons, automatically and modestly helping each other. Proffering a helping hand comes very naturally to these pupils. Sympathy and humour accompanied Year 5 pupils' attempts to explain to each other the extreme intricacies of a game played in a circle during a personal and social education lesson.
- 23 Another significant feature of the very good relationships which prevail is the ease with which the school includes all pupils in school life. Those pupils who have special education needs are totally involved with their friends in work and leisure activities. No one is left out of the impromptu games of football in the playground or the socialising during lunch in the hall. The school is a very harmonious community.
- 24 Pupils relate equally well to adults. They show high levels of mutual interest, care, respect and trust. Parents recognise and applaud these characteristics of school life. Pupils value the experiences and feelings of others. Year 8 pupils listened with great respect as their classmates willingly shared the things they believed in or liked doing during a class assembly. Pupils show high levels of interest in, and

compassion for, the lives and needs of others. They organise activities for charities, responding well to emerging world situations and poverty.

- 25 The school acknowledges the importance of each pupil's personality and ensures that each makes good gains in their personal development. This represents another improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils adhere very carefully to the school's uniform code. They use their homework diaries well and sensibly stack lunchboxes away and school bags on racks. The school remains in good condition and this is a reflection of the pupils' pride in their environment.
- 26 The school gives pupils, particularly the oldest, a good range of specific responsibilities around the school. Pupil librarians efficiently control the flow of books at lunchtime. Almost half of Year 8 are prefects and they perform their duties seriously and maturely. Their commitment to taking significant responsibility for pupil behaviour at lunchtime is equal to their willingness to prepare and dismantle chairs and tables in the hall for lunches. Pupils use their initiative well and are looking forward to participating more fully in the recently formed school council.
- 27 Attendance at the school is satisfactory, although it is just below the average for similar schools. The majority attend on a very regular basis. A few pupils do not yet commit to regular attendance and figures are adversely affected by parents taking pupils on holiday during term time. Pupils do not all arrive in time for activities to start promptly at 8.45 a.m.

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

- 28 The overall quality of teaching is good and is now a strength of the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in 20 per cent of lessons. It is this quality of teaching that accounts for the good progress made by the majority of pupils and the very good progress made by those with special educational needs. Of the lessons seen 92 per cent were satisfactory or better, 66 per cent good or better and 31 per cent very good or excellent. Good teaching was seen in all subjects and only in French was it judged to be less than satisfactory overall. A key to the success of many lessons lies in the teachers' expectations for high achievement, revealed in the effort they made to include all pupils to the full extent of their capabilities. This is particularly a strength in mathematics and physical education in Years 7 and 8. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, more able pupils showed their knowledge and understanding of factors through an interesting dice game. In a Year 8 physical education lesson, a series of ball skill activities were followed by very accurate assessments of what pupils could and could not do, which led to negotiated targets for further improvements. High expectations are not just expected in terms of levels of achievement, but also in terms of behaviour and attitude.
- 29 Teachers demonstrate a consistently high level of planning. This presents clear learning objectives to pupils, giving them a sense of purpose to lessons. Pupils themselves respond positively in lessons where they are clear about expectations and understand what is required to produce high quality work. They rise to the challenge of very demanding work when they realise that the teachers believe in them and will provide them with practical help to meet the high expectations. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson on 'natural disasters' the teacher captured interest by linking the lesson to recent television news coverage of the volcano in Goma and provided appropriate support materials to aid pupils' writing. The more able pupils had to highlight key sentences while a middle group had to find

meanings of difficult key words and low attaining pupils were given related work with support from learning assistants. At the end of the lesson they came back together to share their results.

- 30 The teaching methods used are generally effective. Pupils study well and are focused on their learning most of the time. Some pupils can be difficult to teach as was observed in the few lessons where the teaching was unsatisfactory. In these cases, the small number of potentially awkward pupils managed to disrupt the lesson by silly behaviour and low level 'messing about'. It is to the teachers' credit that in most lessons this small group of pupils did not affect the learning in the classroom. They studied well, completed work and progressed appropriately.
- 31 Teachers make good use of question techniques. In the best lessons, pupils are encouraged to provide extended answers, to clarify the concepts they use and to give reasons for their opinions. Teachers frequently retrace questions in order to ensure that all pupils are included in the discussion. In a Year 5 art lesson, for example, where the teacher wanted pupils to use observation skills, she carefully started with questions related to the pupils' immediate environment, targeting different pupils and checking their understanding. She then moved on to more open ended questions and pupils' personal visual memory of the sea shore.
- 32 The quality of relationships between the teachers and the pupils and the positive climate for learning created both around the school and in classrooms are further strengths. These on the whole generate high motivation and good behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to take risks and are confident in asking for help and guidance. They co-operate and are supportive of one another. For example, in a Year 7 personal and social education lesson, pupils sitting in circles played a series of games designed to improve observational and co-operative skills. They responded positively and effectively and were quickly able to organise themselves, select a leader and complete the assignment. There are clear and well-understood classroom routines so that pupils know what to do and get on with it. Teachers use regular reviews to focus activities during lessons, diagnosing difficulties, consolidating learning and giving praise when appropriate. There are a few lessons where the tasks are set at a level that is too low for high attaining pupils with the result that they settle for modest achievements. The whole-class session at the end of lessons, in the main, works well. In weaker lessons, however, the teacher tells the pupils what they have learned rather than finding out what they feel they have learned.
- 33 Strategies for teaching literacy throughout the school are satisfactory. A small amount of in-service training has been given to all teachers, but there is no written whole school policy. There is some confusion over whose responsibility it is to ensure that departments are including literacy in their planning and work. Although in some individual departments there is good practice, there is no system for ensuring that this is spread throughout the school. In mathematics there is a very comprehensive literacy policy in place and this is translated into practice in the classroom. Teachers prepare key vocabulary for every lesson and this is often displayed on the board. Thus, Year 5 pupils knew what the teacher meant when she talked about the 'penultimate' throw of a dice. In design and technology, good practice is seen in the emphasis on pupils using specialist expressions and in the way teachers skilfully word questions so that single word answers are not sufficient. Keywords are displayed in some subject areas, including English, geography, music and mathematics. Generally speaking, pupils receive a satisfactory amount of opportunity to practice speaking skills, for example in English, geography, art and 'circle time' in personal and social education. In music, pupils evaluate their work in

discussion. However, there is no systematic approach to raising standards of speaking. Similarly, pupils are given good opportunity to write at length in English, history and geography, but there is no concerted strategy for teaching pupils how to make best use of these opportunities.

- 34 Improvements in levels of numeracy are good. However, this is largely down to the high quality work in mathematics. In other subjects, provision to practice numeracy is satisfactory. There are good examples in geography where pupils routinely handle statistical data and develop skills in drawing and interpreting graphs. Elsewhere, however, there are missed opportunities and no whole school policy to give guidance to staff.
- 35 Teaching of ICT within separate lessons is now satisfactory, but pupils are not learning to apply skills in other subjects because there are not enough computers or software. Most subjects have not identified specifically how they will use ICT to help pupils learn and to develop their skills. This adversely affects pupils progress in this area.
- 36 Pupils with special educational needs learn well. The specialist team has a high level of expertise and the organisation of teaching is very good. Both the special educational needs co-ordinator and the head of the resource unit provide many opportunities for pupils to be assessed in depth in order to identify their needs. As a result, both teachers and pupils are purposefully involved in learning and there is a nice blend of help and challenge. Teachers attached to the resource unit are skilled at adjusting and adapting learning targets to take account of pupils' rapid development. Teaching of SEN pupils is very good, particularly when learning support assistants work in classrooms. This is because they work closely with teachers, are very well briefed and are able to offer good advice in assessing both the standard and progress of pupils work. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson on identifying features of ghost story genre, the teaching support assistant used differentiated resource materials with a group of special educational needs pupils. Through good use of questioning and support the pace of work was fast and very focused. As a result, they could explain why one text is more frightening than another
- 37 Support to those with English as an additional language is more variable. When support is provided they progress well, but presently this help is limited, particularly in the early stages of their language development. In part this is due to the absence of the language support teacher and this has led to a degree of frustration among some newly arrived pupils who are keen to learn as well as they have in their previous school. While teachers know and identify pupils in their lesson planning, they do not indicate the level of language competency of their pupils as they do for youngsters with special educational needs. Nor do they presently plan any specific language objectives for these pupils.
- 38 The school identifies able pupils and those with particular talents. Provision in different subjects is variable. In mathematics the most able are given challenging work to allow access to the higher order thinking skills and make good progress as a result. Similarly, demanding work was seen in physical education and history in Years 7 and 8. Elsewhere it was generally satisfactory, but progress was less effective.
- 39 The use of assessment in teaching is very varied across the subjects. It is excellent in mathematics. Pupils are actively involved in self-review and effectively supported diagnosing their strengths and areas for improvement. It is good in geography,



English, physical education and science. In these subjects, teachers know their pupils' levels of attainment well and have communicated them to the pupils. There is also effective use of review so that pupils can identify their strengths and weaknesses and have a clear understanding of how to improve.

- 40 Assessment is less effective in history, French, design and technology and ICT because comments in marking are often limited and do not give pupils a clear sense of direction. Homework is set, but the inspection team agrees with parents that there is some inconsistency in setting homework and in the use of planners.
- 41 Teaching generally encourages pupils to do their best at all times and most pupils are responding by working hard and maintaining a positive attitude to learning. The interviews with pupils, and response forms from parents, show that they overwhelmingly approve of what the school is doing for them.

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

- 42 The curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and also French in Years 5 and 6. There have been improvements in planning in art, physical education and design technology since the previous inspection. The provision for information and communication technology has also improved, but statutory requirements are still not met. There is a good programme for personal, social and health education supported by time spent with tutors. The strategy for teaching literacy and numeracy relies heavily on the English and maths teams. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities in physical education, but the overall activities offered are too narrow.
- 43 Because the teaching week is longer than is recommended nationally, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to study French. However, in Years 5 and 6 lessons that last an hour are too long for pupils in French and too long for pupils in music. In all years, pupils benefit from additional time spent on English and mathematics.
- 44 Some of the additional time in English and mathematics is spent on aspects of literacy and numeracy. Currently, there are no policies for literacy and numeracy and, therefore, the school does not have a co-ordinated plan for developing and using these skills in all subjects. However, many subjects do contribute to the development of literacy skills. The head of mathematics has provided guidance on numeracy, but practice in other subjects is not yet systematically planned.
- 45 Arrangements for pupils to develop their skills in using computers have improved since the last inspection. The school has had difficulty in recruiting a specialist to lead in this area and, therefore, not enough work has been done to make sure that all aspects of the subject are covered. This is particularly those aspects that should be covered as part of other subjects, for example, computer control in technology.
- 46 The arrangements for personal, social and health education are very good because they focus on developing personal and social skills. In Years 7 and 8 the programme includes all aspects of health education, including sex education and education in the misuse of drugs. There is very little careers education planned into the programme and there are not enough links with industry and the community in other subjects. There are some very good links with the community in physical education and music. The school has also demonstrated its commitment to delivering citizenship through its preparation for the Berkshire Bronze Health Award.

This now includes categories on personal and social education and citizenship, the environment, the family and the community. The programme for citizenship is co-ordinated effectively by the deputy headteacher. It is taught through separate religious education and personal and social education lessons and elements of citizenship are included in schemes of work.

- 47 Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are welcomed into the school and there are good examples of where the school has worked hard to gradually re-integrate into school pupils who experience difficulties. The school is good at making sure that pupils with special educational needs and those pupils whose home language is not English can benefit from all the opportunities available. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from high quality targeted help from support staff. Pupils with English as an additional language, particularly those at the early stages of learning English, receive good support when the specialist teacher is available, but the school is not taking enough responsibility for planning for these pupils in all lessons. The school has not identified and planned specifically for pupils who may be gifted or talented. In some subjects, for example in mathematics, higher ability pupils are provided with very challenging work, but this is not so in all subjects.
- 48 There are excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside lessons in physical education and there are also some activities associated with music. The library is available at break times and lunch times for pupils to read and study. Overall, there is not enough variety of activities to meet the wide range of interests of pupils. For example, they cannot use the computers at lunchtime.
- 49 The school works closely with its partner schools. In many subjects there have been detailed discussions to clarify who will teach what aspects of the National Curriculum so that pupils are not disadvantaged by moving schools during the period leading up to their next statutory tests.

### **Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.**

- 50 The overall provision is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Assemblies and religious education particularly make a very good contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development. The personal, social and health education programme also makes a very valuable contribution. Other subjects such as mathematics, geography, art, music and physical education also provide opportunities for personal development within lessons.
- 51 Although religious education was not inspected as part of this inspection, there is no doubt that it makes a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual development. It is well planned to celebrate the diversity of the faith groups in the school. Assemblies, particularly Year assemblies, provide very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and to celebrate the lives of each other. Few subjects have specifically identified how they might contribute to this aspect of pupils' development
- 52 There are good opportunities provided for pupils' moral development both in and out of lessons. This is because there is a strong emphasis throughout the school on the importance of taking personal responsibility for your behaviour and the way you treat other people. When there are occasions of poor behaviour, staff take time to explain why the behaviour isn't acceptable and to help pupils understand how they can put things right.
- 53 The provision for pupils' social development is very good with many opportunities for pupils to work together in teams and groups. The school makes sure that pupils

understand the role that they can play in the school community, the parish and local community and the world community. The use of circle time as part of the work pupils do with their tutor is excellent practice. Pupils were enthusiastic to participate and listened and respected the contributions of others. There was some very good practice observed in the five minutes at the end of the day when pupils met with their tutor. In one Year 8 group it was used to reflect on the day and to say a prayer. In other groups it was rushed and, although prayers were said, the atmosphere was not calm and thoughtful. The recently formed school council and the prefect system give pupils opportunities to take responsibility and to play a role in the school community.

- 54 Provision for cultural development is very good in physical education and good in art, geography, history, French and music. In music there are opportunities for pupils to study music from different cultures. Similarly, in art pupils study the work of artists from their own and other cultures. However, what is lacking is a sense within the whole school that this is a school that celebrates its diversity. There is no evidence of other languages in the general notices and displays around the school.
- 55 Staff have spent time extending their understanding of how they can contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and identifying how each subject could contribute. However, most departments have not included these aspects in their planning and there is a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for making sure that this happens. Consequently, practice across subjects varies and opportunities are missed. This is particularly true in relation to the multi-cultural aspect.

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

- 56 The school pays close attention to the welfare of pupils. As at the time of the previous inspection, it takes good care of its pupils. Staff spend considerable time and energy building very good relationships with pupils and responding to their individual need.
- 57 The pastoral support for pupils is very effective. The school gives very sensitive support and encouragement to pupils who are experiencing specific traumas or challenges. It looks after those who are sick or injured or have particular medical needs exceptionally well. Very good relationships exist throughout the whole school community. The school has developed good administrative and communication procedures, including the Tender Loving Care notice board in the staff room where staff communicate the names of those pupils in temporary need of special care and attention. The general office staff are exceptionally efficient, friendly and effective. These very positive features of school life ensure fast, easy, relaxed and accurate communication between all adults in the school, particularly about pupils' welfare.
- 58 The school makes good use of tutor time and personal and social education lessons to support pupils. There is easy rapport between adults and pupils and this empathy allows personal and sensitive issues to be explored safely and securely. Staff sometimes miss opportunities for encouraging the pupils to practise what they have learnt in these very good sessions throughout the rest of the day. The school makes good use of registration periods to settle pupils for the session ahead.
- 59 The school pays suitable attention to health and safety issues and is kept clean and in good condition. This ensures both a healthy environment for staff and pupils and stimulates pupils to care for their environment. The school rightly continues to draw

parents' attention to car parking arrangements and to restrict vehicle access to staff and expected visitors. Formal child protection arrangements are in need of reviewing, despite the school's caring and attentive approach.

- 60 The school arranges and provides very good support for pupils with special education needs. Teachers and support staff know their pupils very well. Support staff make very positive contributions to both pupils' welfare and their learning in school. The procedures for assessing and identifying pupils with learning difficulties are very effective and consistent. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice and has regard for the new Code of Practice to be applied in the autumn. All statements and reviews are up to date.
- 61 Shortcomings exist in the arrangements for supporting the gifted and talented pupils in the school. The assessment and monitoring of their achievements is inconsistent. There are also temporary shortcomings in the support offered to those pupils who have English as an additional language. Currently, the school has no local education authority specialist help for these pupils.
- 62 The school has satisfactory arrangements to promote attendance. The school uses a computerised system which is beginning to facilitate accurate recording, monitoring and analysis. Some staff promote the importance of regular attendance and the need to explain absence more rigorously than others.
- 63 Staff have high expectations of pupils, expecting them to take some responsibility for their own behaviour and encouraging them to recognise when these standards are not maintained. A few pupils, usually boys, experience difficulty conforming to the school's code of conduct. Their unsatisfactory behaviour rarely disturbs the learning of others. The school has very good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, never using exclusion as the ultimate sanction. Most staff use rewards well to motivate pupils to work hard and behave well.
- 64 The school has good arrangements for assessing how pupils are getting on with their studies and makes good use of results to inform future activities. Departments make good use of national tests and many make good use of their own procedures for assessing pupils' work. Staff in some departments, such as mathematics, have taken these good assessment arrangements further and use the results very effectively in future planning. Teachers record each pupil's performance accurately and regularly in specific areas of the subject. They then make very good use of this information to identify the next piece of learning for each pupil and the means of acquiring it. This accurate and detailed target setting is not yet a secure feature of all departments. The school is beginning to make good use of the range of data it has about individuals and groups of pupils to track, compare, predict and motivate, but is not yet doing this on a regular and systematic basis. This whole area of the school's work has, however, improved since the previous inspection.
- 65 The school monitors the achievements of those pupils with special education needs very closely. Parents receive selected targets and reviews for their children fortnightly. This system ensures exceptionally good guidance and communication. For those pupils for whom English is not their home language, monitoring is less effective. The staff are committed to provide effective support and quickly establish good relations with the pupils. However, some feel insecure about how to best to provide appropriate help. The school does not carry out periodic diagnostic assessment to identify specific needs of these pupils. Nor does the school analyse and evaluate these pupils' performance as a group to determine how they are doing in order to plan for effective future action.

- 66 Overall, however, procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Teachers regularly share assessment results with pupils and identify what improvement is necessary. Pupils in many subjects recognise their level of work. The school also offers good support for pupils' personal development. Teachers prepare attitude and behaviour reports termly and in all subjects. These graded reports are sent to parents. This system ensures that teachers regularly review and share these aspects of their pupils' development.

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

- 67 Parents are very supportive of the school and applaud its many strengths. They are very positive in their praise of the quality of education provided, particularly commending the care taken of the pupils and the high expectations the school has for pupils.
- 68 The school welcomes its parents. Staff commit significant time and energy to communicating with parents, listening carefully to their queries and diligently following up concerns. The welcome extended to parents and visitors by the office staff is very friendly and efficient. This initial welcome is further enhanced by the interesting and attractive school environment. Displays around the college are lively and informative and lots of photographs show pupils happily working.
- 69 Parents are eager to be involved in school life. Almost all attend parent consultation evenings and many support the activities of the busy Parents and Staff Association. Parents respond positively when asked to provide particular resources for the school such as artefacts from home. Only a few help in school on a regular basis, but more are willing to help on trips and provide transport to sport's events. Homework is usually, but not always, given regularly. This inconsistency inhibits parents' opportunities to fully support their pupils' learning at home.
- 70 There is some justification in the concerns of a few parents about the quality of information which the school provides. While the governor's annual report for parents and the prospectus fulfil legal requirements they are neither particularly creative nor imaginative. Parents do not receive regular detailed information about the curriculum. Termly graded attitude and behaviour reports are good. However, annual reports are unsatisfactory. Other than in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science reports do not give a precise picture of exactly what pupils can and cannot do. Reports do not all contain the descriptions of the levels at which pupils are working. Some reports give targets for improvement. These targets concentrate on the pupil's attitude and effort rather than subject specific skills and knowledge.
- 71 The school develops and maintains close links with the parents of pupils who have special education needs. The school shares fortnightly targets with parents. Most, but not all, parents attend annual reviews where the school encourages them to be involved in identifying needs. The school does not always involve parents in writing and reviewing individual education plans.

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

- 72 The overall leadership of the school is satisfactory. The head provides responsive leadership and is well supported by a hard-working deputy and well-informed governing body. This contributes significantly to the school's effectiveness and to the significant improvements made since the previous inspection. This is a school whose aims are not wild hopes but 'inclusive' statements about what the school believes and works towards.
- 73 The school promotes a caring culture within a Christian context and has worked hard to raise standards and provide an appropriate curriculum for the pupils. Documentation and guidance in terms of curriculum and assessment have improved and linked to the school's monitoring programme. This has had a positive impact on standards. There is, however, still a lack of planning and leadership in terms of whole-school approach to cross-curricular issues. For example, there are no whole school policies and guidelines on literacy, numeracy or ICT, and while there is good practice in specific areas, for example mathematics, science, special educational needs and geography, there is no current mechanism to share and implement this good practice across the school. Equally, while very good practice exists in some departments regarding the use of day-to-day assessment to inform planning and pupil targets, it is variable across the school. In mathematics, for example, practice is excellent and pupils are actively involved in their own assessment and in reviewing what they have learnt.
- 74 The school has been involved in a number of worthwhile management activities in response to national initiatives to improve teaching and learning – a key focus since the previous inspection. These include the collection and analysing of data, setting pupils' targets for improving their work, subject reviews and audits and performance management. While there is no doubt that these have been successful their impact on raising pupils' attainment has been practically reduced by the fact that they have been tackled separately and not as one strategic 'joined up' process to move the school forward. For example, some substantial subject reviews are undertaken, but issues that emerge from the reviews do not always consistently get taken forward into the school's overall development plan.
- 75 Nevertheless, the headteacher knows what has to be done. She and the deputy have effectively established performance management in the school. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has focused the staff on the importance of improving teaching and learning. The senior management team is very supportive and appreciative of the work staff do. The management structure is relatively new and there is not, as yet, a clear rationale and purpose for the group nor is it sufficiently clear as to the specific roles and responsibilities individual members have. As a result, although the head has a clear vision of what St Edward's Royal Free school could and should be, her vision is not explicitly shared and planned for. Planning has tended, therefore, to address short-term priorities, for example, the issue arising from the previous Ofsted report. The school has not become involved in more explicit longer-term thinking. This is recognised by the school and is a priority in the school improvement plan.
- 76 Overall, management is good. The governors have established an effective working relationship with the headteacher. They are diligent in ensuring that the school is held to account for what it does, while respecting the professionalism of the teachers.
- 77 Since the last inspection, senior and middle managers have been given delegated additional responsibility and autonomy. This has been beneficial in allowing individuals to show initiative and for teaching ideas to develop. This is a key factor

in the progress the school has made. What is lacking is the structure for communicating and disseminating ideas and developments across the school and processes to ensure that school policies and procedures are rigorously enforced by all.

- 78 Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are well informed about the school and have a structured programme for their own professional development as governors. There is an effective committee structure which enables the governing body to manage its responsibilities and day-to-day work effectively. Governors do not simply rubber stamp the school's policies and practices, but function collectively as a critical friend. For example, their system of focused monitoring when a nominated governor visits the school to observe and investigate identified subjects and issues is well managed. They carry out the visits with the full co-operation of the staff and are sensitive to the professionalism of the teachers and listen and learn from their views. They make sensible and well-observed comments.
- 79 The school manages its finances prudently and uses its funds appropriately. Although the unit cost per pupil is high, this is, in part, explained by the number of pupils with special educational needs in the school and within the Resource Unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Governors recognise the importance of applying best value principles in decisions about key items of expenditure. The school compares its costs and results with similar schools and is becoming more skilled in using both national and local data from the local education authority to inform its work, particularly in terms of pupils' improvement. The most recent auditor's report found all systems to be in good order. A few minor procedural matters were identified as needing improvement. These have been addressed as required by the auditors. The day-to-day management of the school is very well undertaken by an efficient school office. Daily routines are clearly established and monitored.
- 80 The school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils irrespective of talent or temperament permeates all its work. The work of the staff in supporting pupils with special educational needs is exemplary and these pupils make very good progress largely because of the effective management and support given by the Resource Unit co-ordinator and special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 81 The management and co-ordination of subjects have improved significantly since the last inspection. Most subject leaders use data effectively to set improvement targets for their subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes a very effective contribution to the management of the school. She not only uses her expertise in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties but also in supporting other staff in the planning and delivery of lessons. The considerable increase in the number of pupils with educational needs has, however, placed a considerable demand on an already hard-worked member of staff. The head of the Resource unit is equally informed, not only in how special educational needs pupils learn, but also in meeting their wide-ranging personal, social and emotional needs. This is evident in the thorough monitoring of all aspects of support and in the planning to meet learning and additional stated needs. There is equally good practice in physical education where curriculum planning, an issue at the time of the previous inspection, is now exemplary and provides very effective support to the teachers, particularly non-specialists. In mathematics the schemes of work are exceptional and fully embrace and enhance the National Numeracy Strategy. In geography the subject co-ordinator has established clear and sensible priorities for development and made a significant contribution to the improvements in teaching. Similar examples of effective management are seen in science and English.

Management is unsatisfactory, however, in French, where the monitoring systems have not led to action to prevent standards falling. In ICT the difficulty in recruiting a co-ordinator has also contributed to poor provision overall in ICT.

- 82 The school improvement plan is a helpful document. The targets are already rooted in a careful analysis of the school's immediate needs. It sets appropriate priorities and is shared with staff.
- 83 The school has sufficient well-qualified and experienced staff to teach all subjects of the national curriculum. It effectively deploys teachers to make the most of their expertise and experience. Teachers ensure that classroom assistants are well prepared and their high quality contributions impact positively on all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The contribution made by other support staff is also very good. The school effectively supports newly qualified and newly appointed staff through a well-structured induction programme. The deputy head efficiently manages and monitors arrangements for the professional development of all teaching staff. In-service training provision reflects the priorities for individuals and the school keeps full records of courses attended. The performance management policy is fully in place. The school is in its second review cycle and has carefully identified staff's individual targets, including those for the headteacher. Support staff do not yet have regular or formal review procedures.
- 84 The accommodation, although clean, well maintained and in good order is insufficient and is inadequate to meet the needs of pupils and staff. Some of the practical areas are too small and restrict the opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups and to share materials. There is not enough available space for computers. The school does not have enough office accommodation and neither the deputy head nor the year heads have their own office. Some teachers have to teach in a variety of different classrooms because there is no spare capacity. Changing rooms for physical education are totally inadequate. There is no drama studio or gymnasium. The hall is the only large space in the school and is, therefore, in very high demand. It also acts as a main thoroughfare to the majority of the classrooms. However, staff and pupils remain remarkably focused during lessons. Nevertheless, the lack of separate gymnasium and hall has a negative effect on the type and range of activities which can be planned both during periods and at lunch and break times.
- 85 Most departments are appropriately resourced and are used well to support teaching and learning. There are, however, not enough computers in the school and, consequently, pupils do not have sufficient access in all classrooms and in all subjects. The school is, therefore, unable to fulfil the statutory requirements in the teaching of information and communication technology. This lack restricts the progress pupils are making in information communication technology.
- 86 The library is now a much-improved resource since the previous inspection. It is bright and airy and very attractively displayed. The volunteer librarian is highly skilled and rigorously promotes reading to all pupils. Pupils who help and support her take pride in managing their particular subject sections, which helps maintain order in the organisation and presentation of books. Pupils only have access to the library at those times when there is supervision. This limits pupils' opportunities for independent learning study and research.
- 87 There is a clear will to succeed and improve the provision of education for all pupils. The response to the previous inspection was immediate and decisive in relation to most of the issues raised. The inspection found key weaknesses in the quality of



teaching and standards. Since then much time and effort has been invested in the monitoring of teaching and the analysis of test data. This has led to substantial improvements both in the level pupils achieve and the quality of teaching. Most pupils make good progress, particularly those with special educational needs. There are still some weaknesses in ICT and in planning, monitoring and evaluating specific aspects of the school, for example provision of English as an additional language literacy and numeracy development. The school is, however, managed effectively, particularly in terms of its day-to-day administration and financial planning. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

88 The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to raise standards:

improve the overall provision for ICT and standards of attainment achieved by:

- improving access to, and use of, ICT facilities by all pupils;
- ensuring that the full ICT National Curriculum programme of study is taught;
- ensuring that ICT activities are integrated coherently in all subjects;
- improving the monitoring and assessment procedures so that pupils' capability is developed systematically;
- ensuring that teaching effectively builds upon pupils' prior experience and knowledge;
- ensuring that there is a clear code of practice regarding the use of ICT and Internet access;
- using ICT to help the school management systems;

(paragraphs 3-4, 35, 42, 85, 87, 106, 108, 119, 139 and 155-162)

improve the management systems to plan and organise as well as providing more effective information on school developments and procedures by:

- clarifying the strategic purpose of the senior management team and the precise role of each member;
- developing a more proactive approach to the school's long-term aims and planning;
- ensuring policies and procedures are implemented by all staff;
- ensuring that the outcomes of monitoring are evaluated and used to inform practice across the school;
- ensuring that middle managers not only have responsibility for their area but are monitored and appropriately supported;

- ensure that there are clear lines of communication so that the development of good practice can be effectively shared and evaluated;

(paragraphs 73-75 and 77)

improve standards in French by:

- setting clear and challenging targets for pupils' achievement;
- improving the quality of teaching across the department;
- developing clear management procedures for the planning, sharing, delivery and evaluation of work to ensure that all pupils achieve appropriate standards.

(paragraphs 3-4, 82, 163-165, 167-169 and 171-172)

Other issues

The school should also consider addressing the following areas:

- ensure that child protection procedures are fully in place and all staff receive appropriate training; (paragraph 59)
- the support given to pupils for whom English is not their home language; particularly those in the early stages of learning English; (paragraphs 15, 37, 47 and 61)
- the allocation of time in music and French; (paragraph 43)
- the quality and extent of information available to parents. (paragraph 70)

## **OTHER FEATURES**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Strengths:

- Pupils make very good progress.
- Teachers and support staff make very good use of information on pupils to plan teaching and learning with the right amount of challenge.
- There is very good communication about pupils between support staff and teachers.
- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to learn.
- Very good liaison with other agencies to support pupils learning and personal development.

Areas for improvement:

- The shortage of support staff within the main school which impacts on the support provision for pupils in the unit.

- The development of parents' involvement in the writing and reviewing of pupils' individual education plans.

- 89 The school is funded and staffed to provide a 16-place unit for pupils with special educational needs. Staff support pupils in a range of ways to ensure they benefit very well from all the opportunities available at the school. Currently, there are 17 pupils, 8 boys and 9 girls, who benefit from these arrangements.
- 90 Standards at age 11, while below standards nationally, are in line with or better than what would be expected, based on what pupils had previously achieved when they were aged 9 years. The standards pupils achieve by the age of 13 are very good. The main reasons for this are the very good procedures for assessing what pupils can do, careful targeting through the teaching and support, monitoring the progress and using results to plan effectively. Pupils make very good progress from the standards they achieved when they were 11 year olds. In some cases, excellent progress is made from when pupils enter the school at the age of 9 years. There are many examples of pupils in Year 8 attaining results in mathematics, English and science that are in line with results nationally. The school uses test and assessment data to set challenging targets for pupils. Pupils make good progress both in relation to their targets in their individual education plans for both their learning and behaviour. There are no variations in performance in English, mathematics and science and pupils are given enhanced opportunities in lessons for speaking and listening.
- 91 Teachers and support staffs plan so that the work in each lesson is very well matched to each pupil's needs. They record what each pupil knows and can do during each lesson to show the progress each pupil is making. Support staff work with the teachers to ensure consistency with standards and progress judgements. The liaison between class teachers, support teachers, support staff and the special educational need co-ordinator is high quality. The pupils' individual education plans contain clear targets that are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. Pupils know their targets. The support staff are very effective because they know the pupils very well and frequently set specific targets for learning with a very good blend of help and challenge. Each pupil is treated as an individual with specific needs and the support staff are extremely good at presenting information to pupils at the right level to be understood. In a science lesson a work sheet for a pupil with a very low reading age was presented using colour coding to support the words to enable the pupil to do the activity. Building on from the success of this support the homework was also given the same treatment. Pupils make very good gains towards their targets and some pupils make excellent progress.
- 92 Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and benefit from very good relationships with their peers and adults. Their self-esteem is raised when they are enjoy learning and are doing well; something support staffs are very keen to encourage. Pupils respond well to lively teaching and the very good, and frequently excellent, support they receive in lessons. At the beginning of lessons they are eager to start and their concentration improves with selective prompts from the teacher and support staff. They respond very well to challenge and to opportunities for sustained interest and to praise.
- 93 The school provides a good range of learning opportunities. All pupils with special educational need benefit very well from what the school provides. In addition they have opportunities in the resource room at breaks and lunch times to practice and develop literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. The school makes

every effort to make sure that these pupils' needs are met and they all get a fair deal. Pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. Withdrawal is rarely used, but, when it is, pupils have the same curriculum as mainstream pupils but at a level matched to their individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by support staff throughout the school day in a range of ways to ensure they benefit from all the opportunities available at the school. All pupils benefit very well from these arrangements. To enable pupils to be fully integrated into the school they are given varying degrees of support according to the needs identified at the time of the Annual Review. There are very good opportunities for pupils to be included in instrumental lessons, school choir, productions and assemblies.

- 94 The school liaises well with other agencies, parents, pupils and teachers. Teachers know their pupils well and support them very effectively. The school complies with the Code of Practice and statements and reviews are up to date and the provision in statements is being fully implemented. The school is successful in meeting the targets identified in individual education plans and Annual Reviews. The needs for speech and language therapy are not being met. Pupils' achievements and progress are rewarded and certificates are shown to parents before being entered in pupils' records of achievements. Parents also receive selected targets from individual education plans to let them know the progress their child is making. However, there is not enough parent involvement in the writing of pupils' individual education plans. There are very good arrangements in place to support very low achievers in making very good progress and to recognise their achievements.
- 95 The unit is very well managed and the work of the unit makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning and progress. All staff are sufficiently qualified and very experienced in ensuring pupils' learning needs are met. The unit benefits from the support of an informed governor. It is very successful in reflecting the school's aims and values in its work especially helping pupils to enjoy learning, develop positive attitudes and self-image and to fulfil potential. The unit's use of information communication technology to inform and support teaching and learning is good. Through regular meetings and informal discussions there is good monitoring of the work of the unit.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

86

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

38

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	9	18	30	22	7	0	0
Percentage	10.	21	35	26	8	0	0

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

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

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

Years 5-8

Number of pupils on the school's roll

349

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

29

#### **Special educational needs**

Years 5-8

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

30

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

87

#### **English as an additional language**

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

91

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

29

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

20

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	6.3

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.4

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	40	43	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	34	39
	Girls	36	31	41
	Total	64	65	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (76)	78 (66)	96 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	34	39
	Girls	34	32	41
	Total	59	66	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (75)	80 (66)	96 (85)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	36
Pakistani	65
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	220
Any other minority ethnic group	22

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	85.3%
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8**

Key Stage 2	27.3
Key Stage 3	23.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	904,444
Total expenditure	879,519
Expenditure per pupil	2,557
Balance brought forward from previous year	69,172
Balance carried forward to next year	38,931

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 16.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	298
Number of questionnaires returned	50

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	40	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	60	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	53	11	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	60	8	6	0
The teaching is good.	40	54	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	47	16	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	6	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	52	16	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	46	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	44	4	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	42	12	6	2



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

### **ENGLISH**

Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

#### **Strengths:**

- Pupils make good progress in Years 7 and 8 and attain above average standards by the age of 13.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes and behave well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all years.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is unsatisfactory.
- The department is not providing pupils with their entitlement to information and communication technology.

96 Pupils enter the school at the age of 9 with standards of English which are at the national average. By the age of 13 they have made good progress and reached above average standards because of their good attitudes and the good teaching they receive.

97 In the national tests for 11 year-olds in 2001, results were average compared with all schools nationally and also with similar schools. However, fewer pupils than average reached the higher levels of Level 5 or above. Girls did better than boys by about the same amount as in most schools. Results in English were not as good as those in mathematics and science. They have, however, risen since the time of the previous inspection broadly in line with the national trend.

98 Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 5 and 6 were at the national average, matching the test results. This shows satisfactory progress as pupils enter the school at the beginning of Year 5 with average attainment. Most pupils have satisfactory speaking skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson they explained in simple terms why one passage of writing was more frightening than another. High attainers have good speaking skills. They told the inspector clearly what complex sentences are and how to construct them. One pupil gave a succinct explanation of what a bibliography is. In one lesson a teacher obtained high standards of speech by demanding full explanations from pupils. When asking pupils what genre a text belonged to, she made them explain fully why they had reached that conclusion. She constantly challenged them with questions such as: 'Why did you say that?' Teachers generally, however, do not strive sufficiently hard for the highest standards of speech.

99 Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 are very good readers; they read a number of books a week and are pleased to talk about their favourite authors or subjects. One boy, for example, likes reading about dinosaurs and is comfortable in pronouncing the most difficult technical terms. Most pupils read competently and show good understanding, as was seen when a girl said that she knew a short passage was from a mystery story because it ended with '....I peeped through the crack', which left her wanting to know more. The lowest attainers read with less confidence, following the text with a finger and reading one word at a time. Reading standards are helped by the weekly library lesson. The skilful and efficient librarian knows the

pupils well and encourages them to read for pleasure and information. When necessary, she guides them to books that are more suitable for their ability.

- 100 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not write as well as they speak and read. Even so, there are examples of writing in which complex sentences are handled accurately and confidently, as in: 'Tom threw a stick and, as Mary reached it, the ice below gave way'. Low attainers, however, make many spelling and punctuation mistakes. Some teachers write very helpful comments on pupils' books so that they know what they have to do to improve. Only rarely, however, are comments related to the pupils' targets and generally there is too much attention on the marking of errors. The addition to the curriculum at this stage of an extended writing lesson each week is proving beneficial in helping pupils improve.
- 101 The results of the optional tests in Year 8 indicate that attainment is better than the national average. Fewer pupils achieved the higher levels of 6 or above in English than in mathematics and science. Girls performed significantly better than boys, as they do nationally
- 102 In work seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 7 and 8 make good progress in English and reach standards that are above the national average. However, the gap in standards between girls and boys is now not as wide as it was at the time of last year's optional tests. The department is aware of the issue and has implemented some measures to raise boys' attainment, for example, by introducing class reading books which are more likely to catch their interest. When speaking, most pupils express their ideas clearly so that they can be readily understood, although often when speaking in class they do not speak loudly and confidently enough for all to hear. Teachers do not insist on pupils doing better but simply repeat what they say for the benefit of the rest of the class. Too little drama was seen during the inspection to judge what effect it has on standards of speaking, although the lack of a suitable teaching space limits what the school can offer.
- 103 Pupils benefit from the good emphasis placed in the curriculum on reading. In addition to the regular opportunities to select books from the library, most pupils enjoy the lessons where they read novels in class. A Year 8 class of middle and lower attainers read *Goodnight Mr Tom* confidently and expressively with just a little hesitation on less usual words such as 'enterprise'. Teachers, however, often ask factual questions instead of focusing on raising standards by extending higher skills such as drawing inferences. High attaining pupils develop understanding of literature by writing perceptive studies of characters such as Scrooge. Pupils of all abilities were seen enjoying learning about the Elizabethan theatre in preparation for a unit of work on Shakespeare. The enthusiasm of the teachers played a significant part in these lessons in particular.
- 104 Pupils make good progress in writing in Years 7 and 8. Teachers give them practice in a good range of styles including narrative, descriptive and persuasive. The good emphasis placed on drafting helps raise standards and pupils also show proficiency in taking notes. High attainers control language well and use a wide vocabulary, accurately employing vocabulary such as 'inexplicable' and 'nauseating'. Low attainers write well enough to be understood, although their sentence organisation is poor and the weakest make very basic spelling errors, for example spelling 'Wednesday' as 'wesday'. Teachers' comments encourage and congratulate pupils but, as in Years 5 and 6, do not show pupils how to do better work.
- 105 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all years. The very good lesson planning is a feature of the department and always takes the needs of

these pupils into account. They benefit particularly from the support they receive from the very effective learning support assistants and from teachers providing them with work specifically designed to meet their needs. Because of the support they often work at a greater pace than the rest of the class. However, apart from a few pupils who are very new to this country, pupils for whom English is an additional language do not receive any support and have exactly the same lessons as their peers. Consequently, although overall they make satisfactory progress, their lack of familiarity with the language in many cases holds them back from achieving their full potential. A simple example is of a girl in Year 5 who speaks Urdu at home and did not understand such words as 'appetite' and 'obligingly' in a book she was reading. She does not receive any extra help.

- 106 Pupils have good attitudes to English and their behaviour is good. Teachers manage their classes well and provide a satisfactory range of tasks to keep pupils interested. As a result, pupils take an active part in lessons with most being keen to answer questions. Classrooms are thus happy and busy places in which pupils respond to good teaching by learning well. This is particularly true when teachers keep the lesson moving at a good pace, sometimes putting a strict time limit on tasks in order to ensure pupils work hard. However, in other lessons the pace is not quite as challenging and consequently pupils do not progress as fast. Nevertheless, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, which is a big improvement on the previous inspection. A major weakness is that teachers do not give pupils chance to use the computers, thus failing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- 107 The department has a good system of target setting by which pupils are made aware of what they need to do to improve. However, the practice is not as good as the theory as teachers' comments on pupils' work rarely refer to their targets and some pupils do not know what their targets are without looking them up. Pupils know what levels of the National Curriculum they are working at, but are vague about what they need to do to reach the next level. Level descriptions are displayed in the classrooms, but teachers do not make enough use of them.
- 108 The leadership and management of the department are good. The results of national tests are analysed and necessary action is taken. For example, extra lessons were time-tabled to improve the comparative weakness in writing. There is good liaison with both first and upper schools so that pupils are helped by a continuity of approach. Target setting is helping to improve standards, although the system still needs further refinement. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is much better, with work being well matched to pupils' abilities. There is better provision for the more able pupils in Years 7 and 8. Record keeping and assessment have improved, but the use of ICT is still unsatisfactory. Above all, there is no adequate provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 109 Strategies for teaching literacy throughout the school are satisfactory. A small amount of in-service training has been given to all teachers, but there is no written policy. There is some confusion over whose responsibility it is to ensure that departments include literacy in their planning and work. Although in some individual departments there is good practice, there is no system for ensuring that this is spread throughout the school. In mathematics there is a very comprehensive policy in place and this is translated into practice in the classroom. Teachers prepare key vocabulary for every lesson, which is often displayed on the board. Thus Year 5 pupils knew what the teacher meant when she talked about the 'penultimate' throw of a dice. In design and technology, good practice is seen in the emphasis on pupils using specialist expressions and in the way teachers skilfully word questions so that

single word answers are not sufficient. Keywords are displayed in some subject areas including English, geography, music and mathematics. Generally speaking, pupils receive a satisfactory amount of opportunity to practise speaking skills, for example, in English, geography, art and 'circle time'. In music, pupils evaluate their work in discussion. However, there is no systematic approach to raising standards of speaking. Similarly, pupils are given good opportunity to write at length in English, history and geography, but there is no concerted approach to teaching pupils how to make best use of these opportunities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Overall, the quality of the provision in mathematics is very good.

### **Strengths:**

- Standards in mathematics throughout the school are rising rapidly.
- Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 8 are above national expectation.
- Standards in numeracy are satisfactory by the end of Year 6 and good by the end of Year 8.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about mathematics.
- Teaching in mathematics throughout the school is very good.
- Leadership and management in mathematics are excellent.

### **Areas for improvement:**

- To improve computer access to continue the development of the good use of information and communication technology that already enhances learning in mathematics.
- To ensure more consistency across the department in the setting of effective homework.

110 Results in National Curriculum tests in 2001 indicate that by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils obtaining Level 4 and above was slightly above the national average, while the proportion obtaining Level 5 and above was slightly below. Results, overall, were in line with schools nationally and with similar schools. There was no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys. Currently, standards throughout Year 6 are at least in line with national expectation and some of the most able pupils are on target for Level 6 in National Curriculum tests. The school's own test results show that by the end of Year 8, pupils reach standards above national expectation. Standards in the current Year 8 confirm these results and the most gifted pupils are working at Level 8 which would be outstanding even for pupils in Year 9. There is currently no significant difference throughout the school in the performance of girls and boys.

111 Standards in lessons throughout Year 6 are at least in line with the national average. The highest attaining pupils, in fact, are working at levels even higher than would normally be expected of such pupils. In an excellent lesson on sequences, pupils began by building on the homework activity of learning the nine- times table. They worked as separate teams where each individual was required to follow on from the next to chant the next number in the table. This motivated pupils not to let each other down so that their team would finish quickly. The same process was then used to chant not only this table in reverse, but also forward and reverse for the 90 times table and the 0.9 times table. Pupils were involved in the decision making of where to start and stop for this starter activity. The main activity moved towards more complicated sequences, including that of triangular numbers. This discussion

was initiated by the teacher's imaginative story about how tins of coke were stacked in the supermarket. Pupils calculated totals accurately and began discussing maturely and meaningfully how a rule could be formulated to simplify the calculation of the total number of cans when stacked to any height. This involved very impressive investigative skills and the ability to generalise and use algebra to a higher than expected level.

- 112 Pupils of average ability are able to use the ideas of factors, multiples and squares to help know their tables. They consolidate their learning of the 7 times table to 70 effectively, using the idea of a 3 by 3 grid with an extra box underneath. They put in 7, 14 and 21 quickly because they know these well. They remember easily  $5 \times 7 = 35$  because it ends in 5 and 49 because they remember square numbers. The other elements of the table follow from these. Pupils use their knowledge of tables effectively to multiply difficult tens and units by tens and units using partitioning so that  $57 \times 34 = 50 \times 30 + 50 \times 4 + 30 \times 7 + 7 \times 4$ . They do this because they understand place value well and are able to work confidently at a level at least in line with national expectation. The weakest pupils also work at levels appropriate to their ability. Pupils with special educational needs are given well-targeted support not only by the class teacher, but also by support teachers and assistants. Even the lowest attaining pupils in Year 6 work keenly and confidently in multiplying numbers containing tens and units together.
- 113 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 generally have a very good attitude to mathematics. They show interest and work hard. They work well together and usually make very good progress because teaching is usually very good and often excellent. It is always good or better. Teachers' planning is almost always excellent. They differentiate activities, share the learning objectives openly with pupils and use a wide range of activities and resources. Assessment and target-setting procedures are excellent. This includes teachers involving pupils in their own assessment by asking them to indicate after lessons how well they have learned. Assessment on a more formal basis involves weekly mental tests and half-termly written tests indicating National Curriculum levels. Cognitive ability tests and optional National Curriculum tests are used effectively to supplement the formal tests. Teachers use literacy and competitions very well.
- 114 More able and gifted pupils are well catered for. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, the teacher used an enormous die to throw nine scores at random that pupils had to choose where to place on a 3x3 grid. The grid was blank apart from target numbers above each of the three columns and at the left of each of the three rows. Pupils were required to place the scores from the die so that they were factors of as many of the target numbers as possible. The pupils were captivated by the game and chose cleverly demonstrating a good understanding of factors. They also knew what the 'penultimate' throw meant. The main part of the lesson built on this knowledge with pupils working through activities differentiated by the level of challenge suitable to pupils' current attainment levels and discussed their progress against the learning objectives at the end of the lesson.
- 115 Pupils in Year 8 are working at levels above the national expectation. The very best solve simultaneous linear equations and plot graphs of quadratic and cubic expressions. All higher attaining pupils use a spreadsheet with confidence to plot linear graphs accurately. They are able to determine from equations what graphs of straight -line graphs will look like and appreciate fully the advantages and disadvantages of using computers rather than manual methods for graph plotting. This is above national expectation, even for high attaining pupils.

- 116 Average attaining pupils make good use of worksheets specially prepared to enhance understanding of relationships similar to, but slightly easier than the linear equations used by high attaining pupils. Diagrams are used effectively to help pupils visualise patterns of how, for example, the quantity of black squares relates to the quantity of white squares. In an excellent lesson, pupils in teams began by playing a loop game in teams of four, describing two-step linear relationships. Every pupil was motivated to concentrate as they each had a number of cards in their hand and were involved until the very end of each game. Owing to the competitive nature of the activity, pupils helped team-mates play their cards as quickly as possible and hence develop good strategies to formulate equations. Pupils in the lowest set, including those with special educational needs, receive very good support in lessons by the teacher and support assistant who ensure that differentiated resources provide very good learning opportunities.
- 117 Pupils in Years 7 and 8 almost always have a very good attitude to mathematics. Relationships are very good amongst pupils and between teachers and pupils. Teaching is usually very good or excellent. It is always satisfactory or better. The very good practice of all aspects of the teaching, target-setting and assessment in Years 5 and 6 is continued and even improved upon in Year 8 by the consistently very good use of homework to prepare pupils for their next lesson. In Year 8, pupils show very high levels of enthusiasm, understand their targets very well and are determined to achieve as much as possible. By the end of Year 8, progress is very good. Resources are used imaginatively throughout Years 7 and 8. In an excellent lesson, Year 7 pupils with special educational needs worked their way in teams round a circuit of practical activities. They used a variety of weighing devices to answer questions on the weight of sugar, pasta, potatoes and tins of baked beans. The very good prompting by the teacher and support assistants typified the positive steps taken to include all pupils in the learning of mathematics
- 118 Leadership and management in mathematics are outstanding. Improvement since the previous inspection is remarkable. Within three years of being in post, the co-ordinator has been the driving force that has moved teaching from being too often unsatisfactory to very good. This is mainly because of producing exceptional schemes of work that fully embrace and enhance the National Numeracy Strategy and leading the way by outstanding teaching, determination and very hard work. The result has been a significant lifting of standards across the school from below average in Year 6 and barely average in Year 8, to at least average in Year 6 and above average in Year 8.
- 119 Improvements in levels of numeracy are even more marked, largely due to the very good work in mathematics. Opportunities to practise numeracy elsewhere in the curriculum are satisfactory, although they are good in geography. Here pupils routinely handle data, such as birth and death rates in Kenya. They also interpret graphs and produce their own, particularly for rainfall and temperature. The co-ordinator has been well supported in raising standards by the other teachers of mathematics, the majority of whom teach good or better lessons consistently. Some often teach very good or excellent lessons and morale is high. All teachers work hard and now staff are suitably deployed. While accommodation is adequate, room displays are very good, showing key words and the standards needed to reach particular levels. Resources are now very good and are used extremely well. Information and communication technology is very effective when used, but access is limited. No formal individual plans are in place to support pupils with English as an additional language. However, teachers regularly check the progress of such pupils and effectively use other pupils to help those with English as an additional

language to make the same very good progress as the rest. The overall improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection is very good.

## SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision for science is good.

### Strengths:

- The standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of good leadership and management.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 7 and 8.
- The school uses targets effectively so that pupils are able to check their progress.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The information is used effectively for monitoring pupils' progress and for setting in Years 6 to 8.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress.
- Pupils' attitude to learning science and their behaviour are good.

### Areas for improvement:

- The sharing of clear learning objectives with pupils and more frequent use of review.
- Provide better laboratory and classroom accommodation.
- The analysis of examination and test results and the evaluation of the progress of different groups of pupils.

120 The results of National Curriculum tests taken by 11-year-olds in 2001 show that standards in science are at the national average and comparable to those schools whose pupils come from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence of work seen confirms these results. Since 1998, the school has raised standards consistently in line with the national trend. The attainment of boys and girls is similar. Standards at age 13 are also at the national average. Pupils enter the school with standards broadly in line with those nationally. However, in practice their scientific experiences in their previous schools have been very varied and many individuals have only limited knowledge of science. The present standards at ages 11 and 13 indicate an improvement since the last inspection.

121 Overall, pupils understand key scientific ideas such as food chains, producers, prey and predators. They are developing an understanding of animal adaptations for different habitats and how to present results in a line graph, for example the cooling of water. Higher attaining pupils, as expected, have clearer understanding of reversible and irreversible changes and are beginning to use models to explain how sugar dissolves in water. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment is good. Lower attaining pupils know some features that distinguish different classes of vertebrate animals. Overall, achievement and progress are the outcome of sound teaching. Teachers have good subject expertise which they use effectively to explain scientific ideas such as the dissolving of solids, and fair testing so that the comparisons made are valid. One weakness of teaching is the lack of consistency in the sharing and reviewing of learning objectives with the pupils. On some occasions time in lessons is wasted with routine administrative activities and the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Shortage of laboratory space means pupils do not do enough practical work in science.

122 Levels of achievement by Year 8 are already at the national levels expected for pupils aged 14 years. Average attaining pupils are working within National Curriculum Level 5. They use diagrams to show how different distributions of particles give substances their property as a solid, liquid or gas. Higher attaining

pupils understand how physical and chemical factors cause weathering of rocks and explain how igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary rocks are formed. Good teaching in these years ensures that all pupils, especially the lower attaining and those with special educational needs, learn and achieve well. For example, well-prepared work sheets and list of key words promote their literacy and help them to link ideas and information. Oral skills are effectively developed through good questioning techniques. Pupils use equipment showing due care to health and safety. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils made substantial gains in their knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of switches. They developed very good skills in constructing and drawing circuit diagrams including the use of logic switches. Pupils' high motivation, interest, independence and co-operation contributed effectively to their learning. The development of pupils' numeracy is sound. For example, as a part of their learning about the Earth and the Sun, they work out journey and arrival times from a given point to distant places to the east and west. Pupils do not progress as much as they could because they do not have enough experience of using graphs to represent and interpret information.

- 123 Heat and light sensors are used satisfactorily. However, the overall use of information technology in science is limited. It is restricting pupils' progress in areas such as independent learning, presentation of information and research.
- 124 Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. As a result, they make good progress. This is provided by a specialist educational needs teacher and well prepared support assistants who work alongside special educational needs pupils within mainstream classes. In one lesson, very good support helped pupils with statements to investigate factors that affect how sugar dissolves in water. The pupils showed good awareness of how to make the comparisons of their tests scientifically fair, for example, by using the same amount of water to dissolve the same amount of different sugars. In this lesson, pupils made very good gains in investigational skills and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the dissolving property of different sugars. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, overall. For example, one Year 5 pupil could read the instructions, understood what she and other pupils in the class had to do and completed an investigation on how different musical instruments make sounds. There is evidence that English is a barrier for some pupils for whom it is an additional language. For example, one pupil in Year 7 top set classified the frog as a predator and a prey and slugs as producers, predators and prey. Obviously, the pupil has not understood the meaning of scientific ideas of producers, prey and predators. In another lesson, however, two newly arrived pupils had been well received by their classmates. This promoted their confidence and helped them to acquire English and learn science.
- 125 Good leadership and management have ensured overall improvement since the previous inspection; they are gradually improving pupils' learning. However, there is insufficient support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Analysis of results to identify pupils' progress should provide indicators as to where specific action is needed to further improve pupils' overall performance in science. Assessment arrangements for monitoring pupils' global attainment and progress are good. The information is used effectively for setting pupils in Years 6 to 8.



## ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the provision for art is good.

### Strengths:

- Pupils make good progress by the age of 13 years.
- The teaching is good with some very good features.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to the pupils are good.

### Areas for improvement:

- Planning for higher attainers and gifted and talented pupils.

- 126 Standards attained by pupils at the age of 11 are comparable to the national average. Considering the below average levels of attainment on entry to the school this demonstrates good progress. They have a good understanding of natural forms and use tonal effects in their drawings. They understand proportion and use their observational skills well to carefully draw portraits of one another. Pupils in all years with special educational needs make good progress against their individual targets.
- 127 Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school and the standards they attain by the age of 13 are good. This is an improvement on the last inspection when standards in art were average. Pupils know examples of non-western art forms and their characteristics. They can observe details in examples of Aboriginal, African and Indian art identifying distinctive colours, features and textures. Across all years, pupils are given opportunities to use and develop literacy skills, especially specialist art vocabulary. They enjoy learning new art terms like 'symbolism' and are able to use these terms when describing different art forms.
- 128 Art also contributes to the development of numeracy. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on portraiture, pupils learned about the meaning of proportion and symmetry. They subsequently used these skills in their observational drawing. However, the use of information and communication technology, although developing, is not used sufficiently to enhance learning.
- 129 The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This is, in part, because of the high expectations teachers have both in terms of pupils' learning and their behaviour. Planning is detailed to include key words, techniques and resources to support pupils learning. However, the planning does not sufficiently identify strategies to provide challenging work for the more able. During lessons good use is made of key words to improve knowledge, questioning techniques to check understanding and encourage discussion and the works of other artists to stimulate and extend pupils ideas. For example, in a year 8 lesson, the teacher's use of postcard reproductions of artists' work enabled pupils to see different techniques, shades of colour, shapes and how they are combined to give different effects. Noting these features in their sketchbooks, pupils subsequently referred to them during the review of the lesson.
- 130 The use of assessment is effective because pupils are given the levels they achieved at the end of each unit and are then involved in setting their new targets. National curriculum levels of achievement for art are displayed in 'pupil-speak' around the art room and pupils have individual action plans of how to achieve their targets.

- 131 Support assistants are very knowledgeable about art and the students with whom they work. They give very good support for pupils with special educational needs, a significant improvement on the last inspection. Good use is made of display to celebrate pupils' work, to demonstrate the work of the great artists and to provide stimulus and resource material. Homework is used mainly for finishing existing work, not to extend pupils' learning. For younger pupils, high standards are set by teaching basic skills, showing pupils how to use them and to achieve quality results. The good progress pupils make in lessons is carefully monitored and used to inform future teaching and learning, as well as enabling staff to share best practice.
- 132 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Teachers and support staff work hard to sustain pupils' interest in their work, especially with a minority of younger pupils, mainly boys, who have immature attitudes and lower levels of concentration. Older pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and take pride in presentation. Pupils enjoy learning new skills and how to do things better, especially when the effects on their work are good. They are generally eager to work and very perceptive. There is no specific support in art for pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils frequently rely on other pupils for some of their understanding. In spite of the teacher's best efforts, their needs are not fully met.
- 133 The leadership and management of art are good. The subject failed to meet statutory requirements at the last inspection, when there were no curriculum policies for art. Despite changes in staffing and the absence of the subject co-ordinator, curriculum development has been well managed. The art curriculum is very good. It offers a very good range of learning experiences and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral social and especially cultural development. The subject now fully meets requirements and all policies are in place. Sketchbooks have been introduced and planning focuses in more detail on techniques and skills. Ceramics is included in all years. The many changes required to improve the curriculum have been very well implemented and the use of assessment to inform planning and to meet pupils' learning needs is good. Resources have improved since the last inspection in both quantity and range and are now at a good level to support the changes in the curriculum. The profile of art is successfully raised through the displays of pupils' work and successful cross-curricular links, for example, with music recording sounds in art.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- Pupils' attainment is now in line with that expected for their ages.
- The teaching of food technology in Years 7 and 8.

### Areas for improvement:

- Teaching of some elements of product design.
- The provision for food technology in Years 5 and 6.
- Access to information and communication technology.
- Ensuring that planning enables pupils to have access to the higher levels of work identified in the design technology national curriculum.
- The teaching of resistant materials in Years 7 and 8.

- 134 Standards at the ages of 11 and 13 are in line with national expectations at these ages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By the age of 11, pupils use questionnaires to take account of users' needs when designing products. They are able to produce a range of possible solutions to a practical problem, but are not taught the necessary skills to develop the chosen solution. Pupils identify major design factors, but not in relation to the packaging of food, where there is confusion between surface decoration and product design. Insufficient work is done in food technology for pupils to develop appropriate level of practical skills. They use simple mechanisms to produce a moving toy of a satisfactory standard and use correct techniques for reinforcing structures.
- 135 By the age of 13, well-planned teaching in food technology enables pupils to acquire good knowledge of techniques for testing food and they develop a good range of appropriate vocabulary as a result. They are able to carry out a simple soldering exercise when assembling an electronic circuit. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the functions of some electronic components being used. They have a basic understanding of the working properties of materials, for example plastics. Pupils can produce a good range of annotated design sketches in textiles technology, but they do not develop a particular design. Pupils have insufficient product design skills in electronics and graphics. In resistant materials they produce practical work of an appropriate standard. However, many of these projects are purely construction exercises and do not fulfil the requirements of design and technology. Pupils are now able to evaluate their own work, an improvement since the previous inspection. However, they are not taught the importance of producing a specification for a design before it can be fully evaluated. There is no evidence of pupils working at the higher levels identified in the design technology curriculum, a point raised in the previous inspection. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 136 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress, but there are not enough special resources available to enable them to progress at a faster rate.
- 137 Pupils have very good attitudes to work. Relationships are good and they co-operate well in groups. For example, in Year 8, pupils listened attentively to each other and this led to mature discussions about how the different senses could be used for assessing the quality of food. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop the capacity for individual study and to take responsibility for their own work.
- 138 It was not possible to observe any teaching in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection week. Teaching in Years 7 and 8 is satisfactory overall and leads to pupils making satisfactory progress in learning. Teachers use questions effectively to extend pupils' understanding. In textiles technology the teacher's good subject knowledge enables pupils to plan a range of ideas incorporating previous exploratory work with batik. Some staff, however, have insufficient training in the teaching of the key elements of product design. Similarly, some teachers need training for the teaching of resistant materials in Years 7 and 8. Marking of pupils' work does not contain enough information to show how pupils can improve their work in the future. The pupils are not taught how to use colour correctly to enhance their drawings. This has an adverse effect on the presentation of pupils' work.
- 139 Appropriate priorities have been identified from the previous inspection and most have been acted upon. However, the long-term absence of the head of department

has had a negative impact on the development of design and technology. For example, some planning is not related to the current National Curriculum. The use of ICT within design and technology is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the resistant materials room is small and restricts the number of pupils that can be taught at one time. The assessment system has been organised so that pupils are aware of their levels of attainment and can set targets for improvement of their work. Teachers do not, however, use the collected data to help with planning.

## GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision for geography is good.

### Strengths:

- The quality of teaching.
- The good standards achieved by the end of Year 8.
- The very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and their teachers.

### Areas for improvement:

- Provision of work to meet the specific needs of high attaining pupils.

140 Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of the same age at the end of Year 6 and above average at the end of Year 8 when pupils leave the school. There are significant gains during Year 8. Overall, standards have risen since the last inspection. There are no wide differences in achievement between girls and boys or between the different ethnic groups found in the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve good standards in relation to their prior attainment and achieve well.

141 By the end of Year 6, pupils can use maps of various types. They understand the use of symbols and can calculate direction, distance and use grid references. Pupils have satisfactory map drawing skills. Pupils study St. Lucia as their overseas study and can distinguish between the physical and human features of the island. They are able to link the physical features and the climate with the types of human activity found there. Pupils carry out basic case studies and make comparisons, for example, between Windsor and Milton Keynes, clearly establishing similarities and differences and the reasons for them. Higher attaining pupils write reports of their studies with accurate spelling and punctuation. There is no strong evidence at this stage, however, of pupils using a range of resources for their own investigations or of posing questions for research and answers.

142 By the end of Year 8, pupils have a good geographical vocabulary. They are able to explain such terms as migration, urbanisation and peninsula, for example. They have a good geographical knowledge and understand, for instance, plate tectonics and how earthquakes and volcanoes are formed. Pupils develop good map and diagram drawing skills and take great care over the presentation of their work. There are good examples of pupils carrying out their own research and writing up the results, such as the work seen about Mount Pinatubo. Pupils have good opportunities to develop the skills of analysis, critical thinking and interpretation. Good work was seen during the inspection on the features of more economically developed and less economically developed countries and the reasons for them.

143 Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and there are displays of the key vocabulary in

each lesson. The emphasis on basic vocabulary and on grammar has a positive impact on literacy standards. This is also helped by the practice of pupils regularly reading aloud in class. Pupils routinely draw and use graphs and tables to present and interpret data and the subject makes a good contribution to numeracy in the school. Pupils' use of ICT to edit and refine their work, for research and to create graphs is good. A particularly good use of ICT is seen in the daily display created and edited by pupils on 'What Is Happening In The World Today'.

- 144 The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes are good. Teaching is always satisfactory or better and is good, very good or excellent in three-quarters of the lessons. Teaching was reported as satisfactory at the last inspection and lessons were over reliant on worksheets. There has been a significant improvement since that time. All of the teachers control their pupils very well. This is done without fuss and with quiet authority. As a result, the atmosphere in lessons is relaxed and businesslike. Lessons are carefully planned to provide both challenging work and a progressive programme for the pupils so that there are no repeats of work and no time is wasted. Relevant homework is set regularly. Teaching methods are good because teachers not only provide a high level of factual information, but also encourage pupils to think for themselves, analyse and interpret information and develop independent learning skills. Where learning support assistants are in the classroom, their support is very effective and there is good teamwork between teachers and assistants in planning and delivering the lesson. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not give sufficient attention to providing work to meet the needs of high attaining pupils. Pupils show very good attitudes to work in geography and behaviour in lessons is very good. There are very good relationships between pupils and with their teachers. This was clearly seen in a Year 8 lesson where both boys and girls and pupils of different ethnic groups worked happily and co-operatively together when discussing features of urban migration in Kenya.
- 145 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons, pupils are able to reflect on their environment and to appreciate the wonders of nature and of the world. This is seen, for example, in work done on earthquakes and volcanoes. A moral dimension is found in lessons and pupils are taught right from wrong. Pupils are also taught to listen to the views of others and to respect their views. A strong moral element is found in discussions about such topics as Third World development and how powerful commercial interests sometimes exploit people. There are good opportunities for social development through working together in pairs and groups. The in-built cultural element about people from other countries and their way of life provides good cultural development. Good procedures for assessment are in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These provide good data for assessing differences in progress between different groups of pupils and for setting targets both for the subject and for individuals. The leadership and management of the subject are good. There are clear and sensible priorities for development. Teaching has improved, standards have risen and the subject has made good progress since the last inspection.

## HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- Teachers plan and manage lessons well; their knowledge of history is good and this improves pupils' learning.
- Strong support is given to statemented pupils and they make very good progress.
- The use of a wide variety of writing tasks encourages pupils to relate well to many aspects of earlier societies.
- The quality of relationships and the positive attitudes shown by pupils to their learning.
- Visits are carefully planned and the experiences gained are well used in later work.
- Attractive corridor and classroom displays, as well as the use of artefacts, are a feature of the teaching that is valued by pupils.

### Areas for improvement:

- The setting and sharing of clear subject learning objectives.
- The use of information and communications technology to further enhance pupils learning.

146 By the age of 11 most pupils reach or exceed national expectations (which is Level 4 of the National Curriculum). Lower attaining pupils make particularly good progress, so that the standard they achieve is only just below national expectations. By Year 8, the standards achieved by most pupils are at the national expectations, with higher attainers producing work of a standard that is about a year in advance of their age. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress and by Year 8 they are achieving levels of work which are only just below national expectations.

147 Year 5 pupils come from several first schools and their experience of history has been very different, both in what they have studied and in how well they have achieved. They subsequently make good progress and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported. Work on the Aztecs seen in year 5 was variable in quality. In one class, pupils were over-dependent on information simply lifted from the computer. In a parallel class, however, pupils skilfully analysed the similarities and differences between Aztec society and modern Britain. By Year 6, pupils are producing a good range of work based on studies of Victorian England. Letters of protest about the working conditions for children in mines and factories include carefully selected examples of harsh treatment. Another class played a knowledge game before drafting diaries describing a Victorian child's day at the seaside. Statemented pupils in this same lesson were particularly good at understanding the differences between then and now and contributed well to class discussions. They were able to sort seaside postcards into date order accurately by examining details of costumes and street scenes. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good ability to understand life 150 years ago. They produced detailed and powerfully written public health reports describing conditions in the poorer parts of Victorian towns. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress.

148 Work in Years 7 and 8 extended the range of periods and societies studied. Displays of Year 7 work on the Romans ranged from detailed menus to tour guides of ancient Rome complete with details of architecture, entertainment and life-style. This work exhibited good use of word-processing and desktop publishing, most of

which had been done at home. In class, the defeat of King Harold at the battle of Hastings was enthusiastically analysed. Pupils remembered the sequence of events, but were less sure why accounts of Harold's death might differ. In Year 8, the quality of written work was variable. Although presentation was always good and literacy skills were evident, the work of lower attainers was often short or incomplete. These pupils limited their response to factual details, with few attempting to draw conclusions or make judgements.

- 149 Pupils with statements of educational need are able to demonstrate their understanding, but in ways that do not call for extended writing. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated good literacy skills, but there was little evidence of responses that evaluated evidence or used it selectively to support conclusions.
- 150 The best teaching combined very good subject knowledge, careful planning and good classroom management with the setting of challenging tasks. Thoughtful discussion was encouraged using searching questions that require pupils to explain their responses. The variety of approaches, particularly role-play interviews, games and use of selective video sequences, enlivened the pupils' learning. A wide range of written tasks was provided with pupils encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of social conditions in other times. Work with statemented pupils was particularly well planned and resourced.
- 151 Less successful lessons tended to lack pace and did not have clearly defined learning objectives. Learning opportunities were sometimes missed, particularly when teachers were too quick to provide solutions or failed to build on answers offered by pupils. The use of carefully selected materials increased the range of learning activities, but they sometimes needed to be modified to meet specific learning goals. Marking of work was regularly done. However, this would have been more effective if pupils were then set clear progress targets which related specifically to history.
- 152 A strength of the department is the organisation and use of visits. Work from Year 6 pupils arising from their meeting with Victorian 'Granny Thompson' at a Reading museum was particularly well developed and enthusiastically remembered. Other opportunities are created for Year 7 (where the French trip includes a visit to Bayeux) and Year 8 (study of a medieval castle).
- 153 There have been improvements since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, behaviour in classrooms and the quality and range of writing tasks. The provision for statemented pupils is particularly good and progress has been made to integrate ICT into the teaching of history. Access to computers is a problem, particularly for those pupils who are unable to use computers at home. Lessons, planning and marking is monitored but pupils are still often unaware of their strengths within the subject and what they did to do to improve further. Modern, colourful textbooks provide for a range of reading abilities. They are well supported by handouts, good quality videos and a growing stock of CD-ROMs. Some sharing of books is necessary when parallel lessons are being taught. Efficient liaison with the high school needs to be extended to first schools so that Year 5 pupils are able to enter the school with similar subject backgrounds.
- 154 The pupils respect each other's opinions and work well together. They are generally enthusiastic about history, especially those lessons that involve an element of practical work. The neatness of their books and care taken with display and project work is evidence of their positive attitudes to the subject and the school. Teachers make special provision for pupils who have recently joined the school and are still

developing skills in English. Generally, pupils for whom English is not their first language make good progress and make confident contributions to class discussions.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

### Strengths:

- All pupils have timetabled lessons.

### Areas for improvement:

- Planning to ensure that the full National Curriculum ICT requirements for all subjects are taught.
- Greater access to ICT facilities for all pupils.
- Monitoring and assessment procedures so that pupils' capability is developed systematically.
- Teaching, so that it effectively builds upon each pupil's prior experience and knowledge.
- Code of practice regarding the use of ICT and Internet access.

- 155 Statutory requirements are not met. By the time pupils are 11 and 13, standards are well below levels expected at these ages.
- 156 Lessons observed and previous work show standards to be below expectations, partly attributable to some pupils' low levels of prior experience. Overall, standards are well below expectations because pupils do not cover all of the required elements of the National Curriculum. In all years, pupils have negligible experience of using databases and of using computers for control. They cannot exchange ideas and information with others, using systems such as Email. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
- 157 Eleven year-old pupils are able to word process, albeit at a low level, with limited keyboard skills. Good planning and choice of topic leads to pupils being able to mix simple graphics with text, for example, to produce a party invitation. They can enter data into a spreadsheet. They cannot, however, change these data, for example, into the form of graphs, or to interpret what the data mean.
- 158 Thirteen year-old pupils can enter numeric data into a spreadsheet and know how to use simple formulae. They are able to alter the format of this work and understand terms such as column, row and cell, but they cannot change variables to examine different possible results. They can produce animated presentations, which is at a level appropriate to this age. They have too few opportunities to use ICT for obtaining and selecting information for particular purposes.
- 159 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Where there is additional adult support they achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. However, there are not enough special resources available for these pupils to make better progress.
- 160 The use of ICT in other departments is unsatisfactory. There are pockets of good practice; for example, in science, pupils in both key stages are able to capture data using sensors. In mathematics, Year 8 pupils produce graphs from equations and



are able to compare the effectiveness of ICT with other methods. Year 8 pupils in geography obtain information from a database and there is good usage to support the work of pupils in the special educational needs department. However, the limited access to workstations with appropriate software is an inhibiting factor in the development of ICT in other departments and staff have had insufficient training.

161 Teaching and learning in the ICT lessons observed was satisfactory and in one was good. Questions are used well to establish pupils' prior knowledge and to extend their understanding. Pupils make good progress and are well motivated when work is well matched to their interests, as in a Year 6 lesson. Where teaching is structured to allow all pupils to work according to their prior experience, they learn well. However, this was not a feature of all lessons and planning is unsatisfactory as it does not take sufficient account of those pupils who could attain at higher levels. There are insufficient resources to enable all pupils to work at their own rate and develop independent study skills. Teaching time is lost because of an unsatisfactory system for saving and retrieving pupils' work. Pupils do not have printed copies of their work; therefore, teachers cannot make written comments to indicate how to improve in future. Pupils have good attitudes to work and co-operate very well when sharing workstations, where good quality discussions enable satisfactory progress to be made.

162 Management of this department is unsatisfactory overall. Recruitment has presented difficulties, although this situation has recently improved with the appointment of a head of department, who is aware of the priorities for the development of ICT. There have been improvements since the previous inspection, with the acquisition of new computer workstations and the creation of an ICT suite. However, the school has not taken enough action to ensure that pupils have appropriate access to all aspects of ICT and to enable its development within other subjects. Pupils have also identified the lack of access outside of lesson time. The school has not yet sought the appropriate permissions for pupils to access the Internet and the system for saving pupils' work does not ensure confidentiality. There is no evidence of any assessment system being in place or the use of assessment information to guide planning.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

Overall, the provision for modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory.

#### **Strengths:**

- The quality of planning.
- The effective use of classroom assistants.
- Teachers' use of French in lessons.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- The quality of teaching.
- Clear targets for improvement are not set to ensure that all pupils work at an appropriate level.
- Management procedures for planning, sharing and evaluating the work being done.

- 163 At the time of the last report, standards were 'in line with national expectations'. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards pupils attain are now below that expected nationally both at the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 8 when pupils leave the school. The majority of pupils do not achieve satisfactorily. Pupils start to study French in Year 5, which is two years before the National Curriculum requires them to. They gain little from the earlier start in terms of standards reached by Year 8. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys or across the different ethnic groups in the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve slightly better than other groups because of the basic nature of the work and because of the extra effective support they receive in some lessons.
- 164 By the end of Year 6, pupils answer questions about such topics as how to greet people in French, their families, animals and subjects in school. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher, to cassette tapes and to other pupils when they are speaking. In lessons most pupils are able to understand the teacher's instructions in French with occasional prompts in English. They are able to give short, simple responses to questions. Most written work is based on worksheets and pupils are able to copy or write single words and short phrases accurately. Only a few pupils are able to go beyond this and write short phrases or sentences from memory.
- 165 This work during Years 5 and 6 provides a weak base that is not satisfactorily extended by the end of Year 8. The low level speaking skills established previously show limited development. Pupils ask and reply to questions at this stage, but there is very limited evidence of pupils being able to carry out conversations with three or four exchanges or to vary their language to suit different situations. There is no reading programme for modern languages and pupils generally only read to find the answers to questions on worksheets or in textbooks. In their written work, pupils can copy answers from textbooks or worksheets accurately. There are few examples of pupils writing short paragraphs, about their homes and their families for example. The previous report indicated that written work was limited to mainly copying and structured tasks and this is still the case. Where extended writing is done, the level of accuracy with spelling, grammar and punctuation is low.
- 166 French makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected and there is an emphasis in grammar and punctuation in lessons. Pupils also have opportunities for speaking and asking questions. In some lessons, pupils use tables and graphs to find information and to present the results of surveys. This makes a contribution to numeracy development. There is satisfactory use of information and communication technology to edit and refine work and to produce some pictorial work.
- 167 The quality of teaching and the learning it promotes are unsatisfactory. Although teaching is good or very good in over a quarter of lessons, it is unsatisfactory in nearly one-third. There are some good features, which are common to all lessons. Teachers plan their work carefully so that there is a progressive course for pupils. Where there are support assistants in the classroom, teachers and assistants plan and work well together. This is one reason why pupils with special educational needs generally achieve better than others. Teachers make good use of spoken French in lessons, although pupils are not consistently encouraged to develop and practise their French.
- 168 Where teaching is unsatisfactory there are a number of factors which combine to make the teaching ineffective. Pupil control is not strong. Although there is no serious misbehaviour, many pupils are inattentive and 'mess about' in a minor way,

so that they are not paying attention and distract the attention of other pupils also. In these lessons the pace of the work is slow and the level of challenge in the work is unlikely to raise standards. Work is not tailored to the range of ability found in classes. This is clearly seen in pupils' written work where there is no consistent attempt to provide a range of writing experiences to encourage pupils to write at length, develop their own style or experiment with different styles of writing. In general, teaching styles do not encourage a high level of pupil activity. This applies also where teaching is otherwise satisfactory.

- 169 A typical session of spoken French is dominated by question and answer exchanges between the teacher and individual pupils. While this is happening other pupils are not actively involved and sit and listen or become bored and do not pay full attention. This was seen, for example, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were practising asking about birthdays. Time was spent by the teacher going round the class asking when their birthdays were. Pupils gave short responses in return. There was no encouragement to work in pairs that would have given more involvement or of encouraging pupils to ask questions of each other. There are few lessons where pupils are actively involved in group work or role-plays. In general there is little use of music, poetry, group work or imaginative use of the overhead projector to encourage pupils to use, practise and experiment with the language.
- 170 Where teaching is very good, the teacher has excellent class control, which is achieved with quiet authority. As a result, the working atmosphere in lessons is relaxed and businesslike and pupils feel confident about contributing. The teacher has high expectations of pupils' work and sets challenging tasks at an appropriate level. This encourages pupils to be actively involved and contributes to raising standards.
- 171 The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. Where teaching is satisfactory or better, there is a strong moral element in lessons and pupils are taught right from wrong. There is good provision for social development through taking turns and occasionally working together. Pupils show respect for one another by not laughing or being rude when others make mistakes over pronunciation. School trips each year provide a strong social and cultural dimension. The study of people in another country adds to the cultural development of pupils. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, but little use is made of the data provided to assess how different groups of pupils progress or to set targets. Resources for the subject are good and several up-to-date textbooks are now used. The scheme of work should be reviewed to provide a better fit with the sequence of topics in the books.
- 172 The overall leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory in that the quality of teaching and standards have declined since the last inspection and the school's monitoring systems have not revealed or corrected this trend. The subject has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.

## MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is satisfactory.

### Strengths:

- The department's contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs who receive instrumental tuition make very good progress.

### Areas for improvement:

- Provision for the more able pupils.
- The use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning, particularly in the development of their performing and composing skills.
- Ensuring pupils understand the criteria against which they are being assessed and the levels at which they are working.
- Extend the range of extra-curricular activities to encourage more boys to take part.

173 The standard of pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations by the age of 11. This is an improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils in Year 5 can perform rhythmically simple parts accurately and maintain their own rhythm well against another when playing in two parts. The quality of singing is good. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and expression. Pupils can identify errors in performance and know how to improve their performing. In Year 6, pupils can perform 8-bar rhythms fluently and accurately. They maintain their own parts well when singing in four parts as in their performing of street cries. They show good understanding of musical elements, but tend not to use musical vocabulary when talking about music. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

174 By the end of Year 8 pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. This standard, which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection, is because pupils did not receive consistent music teaching in the autumn term. In Year 8, pupils can compose melodies which show good understanding of phrasing and feeling for a pulse. They can improvise melodic phrases within a given structure. They understand musical elements and technical vocabulary such as Italian terms for gradations of volume. However, their knowledge and understanding of compositional devices such as chords are limited. Both pupils with special educational needs and those pupils for whom English is not their first language make satisfactory progress in lessons.

175 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teaching of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory overall with some good teaching and in Years 7 and 8 it is satisfactory. Features of the good teaching include good planning which results in pupils developing their skills well through the integration of varied performing, listening and appraising activities. Good use of demonstration leads to pupils acquiring a clearer understanding of the work and develops successfully into activities led effectively by pupils such as the vocal warm-up activities in a Year 6 lesson. Teachers include activities involving pupils working together in pairs or in small groups which leads to pupils working co-operatively together in sharing instruments and when listening to performances. Teachers involve pupils in evaluating their work through effective questioning which results in pupils developing

their speaking skills and learning how to improve their work. However, learning objectives are not always clearly identified and shared with pupils so that they know what is to be learned by the end of the lesson. Higher attaining pupils and those receiving instrumental tuition are not always sufficiently well challenged. Consequently, these pupils do not always make sufficient progress by the end of a lesson. In some lessons a lack of pace results in pupils achieving less than they could. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils, and teachers generally manage pupils effectively so that pupils concentrate and behave well.

- 176 Opportunities for pupils to receive instrumental lessons and participate in extra-curricular activities are good, but are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection. This is because the range of opportunities is narrower as guitar and drum kit lessons are no longer available and last term the department was unable to offer a wide range of activities without a second permanent music teacher. Opportunities for pupils to play in a recorder group, the orchestra and the choir provide good extension activities for the higher attaining pupils and the enthusiastic, but involve mainly girls. The choir is also invited to perform locally by contributing to church services, the 'Women's World Day of Prayer' and Windsor Music festival. Pupils with special educational needs who show a particular flair for music are positively encouraged to learn an instrument, to sing in a choir and to take part in assemblies and productions such as *'My Fair Lady'*.
- 177 The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The new head of department, who at the time of the inspection had only been in post for two weeks, is enthusiastic and has clear ideas for developing and moving the department forward.
- 178 Schemes of work are in place to support teaching and learning, but include limited opportunities for pupils in Years 7 and 8 to access popular styles and to use music technology which are now requirements of the National Curriculum. At the moment the department does not have sufficient or adequate keyboards or computers with music sequencing software to meet this statutory requirement. There has been little improvement in this area since the time of the last inspection. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. However, assessment criteria are too general to enable pupils to understand clearly what they have to do to achieve a particular mark, grade or level. The music accommodation is unsatisfactory because of the lack of small spaces for group performing and composing activities and for pupils receiving instrumental lessons. However, this is under review at present. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is very good.

### Strengths:

- Pupils make good progress and reach standards that are better than those expected nationally.
- Teaching is very good.
- There is an excellent range of activities for pupils to participate in outside of lessons.
- Nearly all pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn.
- The department is very well led and managed.

### Areas for improvement:

- The department's written development plan is not as helpful as it could be.
- Teachers do not always effectively manage the behaviour of a small number of boys in Years 5 and 6.

179 Standards of work seen in lessons in Years 5 and 6 are better than the standard expected nationally because in most lessons teaching is good or better. In a gymnastics lesson, pupils were able to create a movement sequence that was fluent and showed good control. In dance they were able to count a beat and move to a rhythmic sound piece. However, girls reach a higher standard than boys because they were more willing to apply themselves to their work.

180 Standards of work seen in Years 7 and 8 are well above the national expectation in health related exercise because this programme is carefully planned and taught well. Standards are above the national expectation in girls' dance and boys' hockey. This is because pupils benefit from the very good opportunities provided in these activities in Years 5 and 6 by specialist teachers. Over the four years, pupils make very good progress in terms of acquiring physical skills in a wide range of activities. They also develop effective planning skills and perceptive evaluative skills because teachers build opportunities for this into their lessons.

181 Teaching is very good overall because specialist teachers teach nearly all lessons. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan for a crisp start with appropriate warm up activities. The main part of lessons provides good opportunities for pupils to develop and practice their physical and intellectual skills. Teachers are very good at assessing how well pupils are doing and providing advice on how they can do even better. Each lesson concludes with a cool down.

182 In the best lessons, teachers make good use of questioning to help pupils recall earlier learning and to check their level of understanding. This questioning and the opportunities provided for pupils to discuss their work during the lesson and at the end ensure that the department contributes to the development of pupils' literacy skills. In a very few lessons, questioning and explanations go on too long and some pupils who find it difficult to concentrate become restless. In the best lessons, potential behavioural problems are dealt with quietly and effectively. In a very few lessons, teachers spend too much time dealing with poor behaviour and this slows the pace of work for other pupils. In lessons where pupils do not do as well as they could it is because there is not enough emphasis on achieving quality to their movements.

183 Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to learn, but do not take enough account in their planning for pupils whose home language is not English. Many pupils are enthusiastic and work hard, particularly

when teaching is good and makes demands of them. When teaching is very good both boys and girls work equally well, but any weaknesses in teaching, particularly in managing pupils with behavioural difficulties, results in boys' attitudes deteriorating. Relationships between pupils are always very good and even when they are not working as hard as they might they still get on well with each other.

- 184 The head of department is knowledgeable and hardworking. He provides very good leadership in the way he always seeks ways to improve the experiences provided for pupils. Although there are still some lessons taken by non-specialist, these are very few and less than at the time of the previous inspection. Curriculum planning, an issue at the time of the previous inspection, is now exemplary and is sufficiently detailed to provide very effective support to other teachers, particularly any non-specialists in the team. There is a very good process for development planning, but the plan itself is not sufficiently explicit in terms of how what it does will contribute to raising standards. The success criteria in the plan are not helpful in terms of evaluation.
- 185 There is a very broad and commendable range of activities provided in lessons, despite somewhat limited facilities. The variety and quality of extra curricular activities are excellent and include rowing at the local boys' school and kabadi, a game originating from the Indian sub-continent. All pupils are welcomed to join in these extra curricular activities and participation rates are high. Good use is made of local facilities and clubs to help pupils realise that sport is not a school-based activity but an activity for life. Facilities for showering and changing in the school are poor, but are to be improved as part of a new building programme, soon to start.
- 186 Parents support their children by transporting them to and from various activities and give of their time and expertise to help where it is needed and where they have skills. The department appreciates and values this help.