

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **KINSALE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Hellesdon, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120985

Headteacher: Michael Pond

Reporting inspector: Michael Miller  
17556

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 June 2001

Inspection number: 192056

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 deemed Primary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 to 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kinsale Avenue  
Hellesdon  
NORWICH

Postcode: Norfolk  
NR6 5SG

Telephone number: (01603) 425662

Fax number: (01603) 484323

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Audrey Pollard

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Miller 17556	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Brian Jones 9542	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, personal development and attendance. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Colin Henderson 23742	Team inspector	Science Geography Physical education	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. Assessment
Christine Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Mathematics Modern foreign languages Special educational needs	
Sonia Bosworth 30573	Team inspector	English History Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Barbara Darley 22518	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Kinsale Middle School has 260 pupils on roll, 133 boys and 127 girls, aged 8 to 12. It is smaller than most other middle schools. It is located in a suburban area on the northern outskirts of Norwich. The majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils live locally, but currently 36 per cent live outside the catchment area. Many parents of pupils with particular learning needs choose this school because of its expertise. A learning support centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is attached; it has places for 12 pupils but currently 18 use its facilities. There are 89 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Including the 18 pupils with specific Statements of Special Educational Need, this represents a larger number than normal, either locally or nationally. Consequently, the general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. Some 11 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is broadly average, although the figure is rising.

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

This is a good and effective school. It is particularly successful in its provision for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher provides very strong leadership with a firm focus on very high expectations. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and encourage learning. In comparison with schools in a similar setting, its national test results have been consistently well above average in science. The school provides good value for money.

<b>What the school does well</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs.</li><li>• A very good commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils.</li><li>• Standards are well above average in science for pupils aged 11.</li><li>• The leadership qualities of the headteacher.</li><li>• The quality of teaching, particularly in Years 6 and 7.</li><li>• The school's ethos and its approach to pastoral care, including provision for the pupils' personal development, which enables them to become responsible young people.</li><li>• Pupils' positive attitudes to learning.</li><li>• Parents' contribution to pupils' learning.</li></ul>



<b>What could be improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The role of curriculum co-ordinators in the monitoring of teaching and learning.</li><li>• Raising the overall consistency of teaching to the high quality levels found in Years 6 and 7.</li><li>• The fine-tuning of assessment procedures to support curriculum planning.</li><li>• Greater consistency in the setting of individual targets for pupils, which are related to school targets.</li><li>• Raising standards in art in Year 7.</li></ul>
The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.



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

The school was last inspected in February 1997. At that time, the quality of education provided by the school was found to be good. It still is, but the overall quality of teaching has improved. Pupils' achievement is good. There has been good improvement concerning all the key issues identified in the previous inspection. Teachers are now more consistent in the levels of challenge offered to pupils of all abilities. Standards in French have improved through the development of teachers' expertise. There is now sufficient time for French and religious education lessons to enable them to be taught in depth. Assessment procedures have improved, and there is now more consistency in English, mathematics and science. The partnership between headteacher, governors, staff and parents provides a good basis for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	D	D
Mathematics	B	C	C	C
Science	A	A	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band for free school meals, in this case, between 8 and 20 per cent. When results for the last three years to 2000 are compared, it can be seen that there was a decline in standards for English. This is set in the context of 8 per cent of the pupils taking the 2000 test having a statement of special educational need, mainly for language difficulties.

Overall, there is good achievement by pupils in both key stages. The school sets itself challenging targets based on high quality assessment data. The inspection evidence shows that for pupils aged 11 and 12, standards are well above average in science. They are above average in geography. They are in line with national expectations in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, history and physical education. In design and technology they are average by age 11 and above average by age 12. At the age of 11, they are in line with expectations for art and above for music, but by age 12 they are below for art and in line for music. In religious education, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the ages of 11 and 12.

In literacy, standards are average at age 11 and 12. Pupils make good progress from a low base line on entry. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing, because at the age of 11 they were lower than speaking, listening and reading in the 2000 tests. Speaking and listening are maintained at a high level. In numeracy, the good standard in use of number and mental calculations has been maintained. Pupils are developing skills in problem solving, which are used well in a wide range of mathematical calculations. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. Gifted and talented pupils, and those with special educational needs, are provided for effectively.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They are very eager to do well and to enhance their own reputations and that of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave in a good, orderly manner in lessons and at break times.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work very well together and increasingly take responsibilities in the life of the school. Pupils' personal development is very good and results in remarkably good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Good: outbreaks of illness during the spring of 2001 have reduced this year's attendance from the high level recorded in 1999/2000, but the rate is still good for a middle school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 8-11 years	aged 12 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The standard of teaching was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good or better in 74 per cent and very good or excellent in 41 per cent. The high quality of the teaching is one of the main reasons for the good progress pupils make and also contributes significantly to their very good attitudes. The 4 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching occurred mainly in Year 7 and did not involve the school's permanent teachers. In addition, some improvements are required in teachers' knowledge and understanding for the teaching of basic skills in art in Year 7 and in the evaluation of performance in physical education.

Teaching and learning in English, which includes literacy, and in mathematics, including the skills of numeracy, are good. Teaching and learning in science are very good and lead to high achievement. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 6 and 7 is particularly high. In Year 6, 95 per cent of the teaching was good or better with 82 per cent being very good or excellent. Good or better teaching occurred in 75 per cent of lessons in Year 7, with 52 per cent of the lessons taught by Year 7's permanent teachers being very good or excellent.

Particular strengths of the teaching include good class control, organisation and good subject knowledge. There is a good pace to lessons and expectations are clearly set, encouraging pupils to become self-motivated. Teachers have good techniques and strategies for asking questions. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and suitably challenge them. Monitoring of pupils' progress in lessons is good and teachers and learning support assistants support pupils with special educational needs effectively. Such pupils make very good progress and achieve very high standards for their abilities.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of interesting and stimulating experiences for learning for all pupils. There are good strategies for teaching literacy skills and very effective strategies in the teaching of numeracy and science.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is excellent. The school ensures equal opportunities through the high quality of teaching and support given to pupils. They make good progress towards their learning targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Very good opportunities for personal, social and moral development contribute well to the school's ethos. The school council is a strong feature. There is good scope for cultural and spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The strong caring ethos of the headteacher and staff provides a high standard of pastoral care. However, lack of funding has prevented the school from addressing two health and safety concerns. There are good procedures for assessment, especially in English, mathematics and science. There is some very effective use of assessment information to raise standards, although this is not yet consistent in all subjects.

Parents have a very good opinion of the school. Their active support makes a very good contribution to their children's learning. They value the way the headteacher and staff build their children's confidence. The annual reports to parents are informative and give detailed accounts of the pupils' learning and progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong leadership. This is effective in raising levels of achievement through a commitment to continued improvements in the quality of education. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Both set high standards and have high expectations, of both staff and pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fully meets its statutory responsibilities. They have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play an active partnership role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the collection and use of information to evaluate pupil performance and to set targets is a particular strength.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: the school is particularly effective in its use of resources to support the needs of the above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The school actively seeks to obtain best value for money and applies the principles of best value very well.

Overall, staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Staffing has improved for the specialist teaching of French. Provision in the Learning Support Centre is of high quality. However, long-term absences of staff, particularly in Year 7, have been a significant problem. Improvements, already noted in governors' long-term action planning, are required to the pupils' toilets and to the medical room facilities. Overall, library stocks are too low. Resources require improvement for art and design and for information and communication technology (also planned for by the governors).

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of the 31 per cent of parents who returned the completed questionnaires, and of the six who attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, were taken into account.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and the school has high expectations of its pupils.</li> <li>• The school is approachable and is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school helps the children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents would like to receive more information on their child's progress and the partnership between home and school strengthened.</li> <li>• They would like to see a greater range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully supports the positive views of parents. It finds that the school provides significantly more good quality information on pupils' progress than is statutorily required. However, there could be more effective use of homework diaries to provide information for parents about the work set for pupils. Inspectors also find that the school provides a good range of activities outside of lessons for the size and staffing of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The results of the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds showed that, overall, attainment in English fell below the national average and the average for similar schools. This was because, although the proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4<sup>1</sup> met the national average, the proportion achieving Level 5 was below average. However, the school improved on the 1999 percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above and exceeded its challenging target of 70 per cent. Test results over the last three years show that standards are in line with the national average. Although there was some variation from year to year, there was no significant difference overall between boys and girls. The school's realistic target for 2001, based on assessment information, is 75 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. The school is likely to achieve, or possibly exceed, its target.
2. Over the past three years English tests for 11-year-olds show that boys' performance is below average and girls' performance is above average. These standards are set in the context that most of the pupils on the special educational needs register are boys. Boys with statements of special educational need made up 8 per cent of the pupils taking part in 2000 tests. Pupils with special educational needs frequently attain well for their abilities in national tests.
3. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are at the national average at the age of 11 and meet national expectations at the age of 12. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Good teaching, supported by the school's effective implementation of its literacy strategy, is effectively developing pupils' literacy skills. Reading is developed successfully throughout the school. Standards are average at age 11. They are above average at the age of 12. Pupils use their reading for information skills effectively in Year 7 to support their work, for example to complete detailed individual topics in literacy. Speaking and listening skills have been maintained at the above average level reported in the last inspection. The school has focused on improving pupils' writing. This has led to some improvement, although it is not yet consistent throughout the school.
4. The results of the 2000 national tests in mathematics for 11-year-olds showed that attainment is at the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 or above, and the proportion achieving Level 5, met the national average. Test results over the last three years show standards have been improving in line with the national trend and are broadly average. They have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. The school achieved its challenging 2000 target of 70 per cent of pupils to attain Level 4 or above. The school has set a higher target for 2001 of 72 per cent, which it is likely to achieve. Inspection evidence confirms that standards meet the national average for 11-year-olds. They meet national expectations by the end of Year 7. The school has introduced its numeracy strategy very successfully. Good teaching, especially of pupils' mental skills, is promoting an enthusiastic approach and beginning to raise standards. Teachers make sure that pupils apply their numeracy skills in other subjects, especially in science. This supports and extends their mathematical knowledge and understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the age of 11, are expected to reach Level 4. If a pupil is attaining Level 5 then he or she is reaching a standard above that expected for a child of his or her age.

5. Standards in science are high. The results of the national tests for 11-year-olds over the last three years show that attainment has been consistently well above average nationally and the average of similar schools. Boys and girls attain equally high standards. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in 2000 was almost twice the national average. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are high and have improved considerably since the last inspection. Attainment is well above average at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 7. Enthusiastic, consistently high quality teaching encourages an interested and active approach. Teachers have high expectations. They use a very good range of interesting scientific activities to challenge pupils to apply and extend their scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. More-able pupils achieve very high standards, especially in applying their scientific ideas and knowledge to answer challenging questions.
6. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with standards expected nationally at the ages of 11 and 12. It is similar to the standard reported in the last inspection. Some pupils use their skills, especially in word-processing and handling data, to support work in other subjects, for example English and science. However, this is not consistently developed in all classes. Specialist teaching successfully challenges more-able pupils effectively to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding, for example in work on programing. The school is planning to improve the range of resources and provide more possibilities for pupils to apply and extend their skills.
7. Standards in religious education meet those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged 11 and 12. They have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the importance of the major Christian festivals, for example, are secure. By Years 6 and 7, pupils have studied other required faiths, such as Islam, in suitable depth. They are becoming increasingly familiar with concepts such as 'faith' and 'belief' in religious terms.
8. Standards meet national expectations at 11-years-old, and at the age of 12, in history and physical education. They are above expectations in geography. Attainment in music is above national expectations at age 11 and meets expectations at age 12. Attainment in art and design meets expectations at 11, but is below at age 12. Standards in design and technology meet expectations at 11 and are above expected standards at age 12. Attainment in French meets nationally expected levels for 12-year-olds. Standards overall have been maintained at the level reported in the last inspection.
9. Assessment information shows that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average nationally and the average of similar schools locally. Pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the school. Many make very good progress, especially in Years 6 and 7, promoted by consistently good, and often very good, teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. They benefit from very high quality support and make very good progress towards their learning targets. Many achieve good standards, confirmed by test results, in respect of their abilities. More-able pupils make good progress overall. They make very good progress where teachers have organised an appropriate range of learning activities to meet their differing needs. Their progress is unsatisfactory, for example, in art and design in Year 7, where the work does not require them to apply or extend their skills and knowledge. Teachers generally meet the needs of lower ability pupils by ensuring that learning activities are matched closely to their needs. They receive good support to ensure that they are fully included in all activities and they make good progress. The small number of pupils who are identified as gifted and talented are given effective individual support and guidance. They make good progress.

## Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They concentrate very well and stay on task. Their attitudes were satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. Attitudes were good or better in 85 per cent and very good or excellent in 50 per cent. Pupils are proud of their school and keenly committed to its success. A Year 6 pupil went to hospital to have her appendix removed 10 days before this year's national tests. When she found that she would not recover in time to return to school, she asked if she could take the tests at the hospital. She took her tests in the sister's office. She was determined not to let the school down. Pupils work hard to represent the school in sports and the arts. Parents and the community recognise their efforts. Some 150 people saw and admired the school's recent drama production of *Beauty and the Beast*.
11. Pupils behave in a good and orderly manner in lessons, breaks and at lunchtime. They respond well to the school's positive behaviour policy and are well aware of its rewards and sanctions. Pupils are courteous and welcoming towards visitors. They respect their school and keep it tidy. In a very few lessons, a small number of pupils showed some immature behaviour. However, they quickly returned to work with the rest of their class. There were three exclusions last year and two in the year to date. The school is free from oppressive behaviour and sexism. Bullying is rare. Pupils often resolve disagreements with a brief discussion in Circle Time<sup>2</sup> or use the recently introduced 'Bully Box'<sup>3</sup>.
12. Relationships at school are very good. Boys and girls work together very well in groups and pairs. For example, pupils co-operated very well in designing light switches and in carrying out scientific experiments. Year 6 pupils befriend the school's new Year 4 pupils when they come for their introductory visit in the summer term. Throughout the school, friendships spread across the year groups, who eat and play together at lunchtime. A Year 5 football team sometimes wins against Year 7. Pupils relate very well to their teachers and other adults. They take the adults' models of teamwork and friendship to develop caring relationships within the school. Just before the inspection, a party of Year 7 pupils took a long day trip to Boulogne, leaving at 4.30 am and returning to school some 18 hours later. A feature of the day was how well pupils got on with all the staff, irrespective of whether it was their own teacher or a teacher from a different class.
13. Pupils show very good initiative and responsibility. They take the increased opportunities that the school now gives them. Each class has two representatives on the school council. They put forward ideas and suggestions from other pupils in their class. One idea is to invite sponsorship for unusual sports such as girls' soccer and boys' netball to raise funds for playground improvements. Pupils in Year 7 accept whole-school responsibilities, which they carry out with maturity. They manage the seating and clearing away of cutlery at the end of lunch very smoothly. Pupils build their self-confidence, teamwork and leadership in a range of performing arts and sports. In the recent production of *Beauty and the Beast*, pupils worked backstage on a variety of functions. School teams have held the local schools' swimming cup for six of the past seven years. This season the Years 6 and 7 football teams are winners or runners up in several competitions. Cross-country runners achieve selection for the area and county teams.
14. Attendance is good. It was 95 per cent in 1999/2000. It increased in each of the previous two years. A slight fall in the current year is due to outbreaks of illness in January and

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<sup>2</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

<sup>3</sup> This is a 'letterbox' in the foyer of Kinsale Middle School where pupils may post any written comments or concerns they may have concerning bullying. They may do this anonymously if they wish. The headteacher and staff act very promptly concerning any issues that may be brought to their attention through this facility.

February 2001. At their peak, these affected almost 20 per cent of the pupils. Even so, the rate is slightly above the average for primary schools and above that for middle deemed primary schools. Pupils' punctuality is good, with most arriving in the playground well before registration time each morning. The school population is very stable. In fact, only one pupil left the school last year at a time other than the normal time of leaving. This contributes to the positive effects described in this section, and has a beneficial effect on learning in the school.

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

15. The quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory overall. Of the lessons observed, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 74 per cent were good or better and 41 per cent were judged very good or excellent. Teaching is generally consistent between each key stage, but the proportion of very good or excellent teaching is higher in Year 6 and Year 7. In Year 6, 95 per cent of the teaching was good or better with 82 per cent being at the higher levels. Good or better teaching occurred in 75 per cent of lessons in Year 7. Most of the 4 per cent unsatisfactory teaching was seen in this year and did not involve permanent members of the school's teaching staff. In contrast, 52 per cent of the lessons taught by Year 7's permanent teachers were very good or excellent. Whilst 97 per cent of the lessons seen in Years 4 and 5 were satisfactory or better, with 59 per cent being good or better, the percentage of very good teaching, at 15 per cent, is lower than in Years 6 and 7. However, planned improvements to staffing (see paragraph 57) have been approved by the governors in order to enable co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning in their subjects more effectively. This is an important development to enable the school to raise their overall good standards of teaching even further.
16. Learning is good in all year groups. As a result of the good teaching, pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and what their teachers have to offer. They show real interest and enthusiasm for their work and develop confidence in themselves as learners. The quality of learning was judged to be satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, good or better in 74 per cent and very good or excellent in 39 per cent. Pupils make the best progress in Year 6, where the learning was very good in 77 per cent of the lessons seen.
17. Overall, teaching and learning are very good in science. They are good in English, mathematics, religious education, design and technology, history, geography, modern foreign languages and music. They are satisfactory in information and communication technology, art and physical education. There are particular strengths in Year 7 science, where the teacher's professional knowledge of the subject is used very effectively to aid pupils' understanding. In art and music, the quality of teaching and learning is not as high in Year 7 as in Year 6. In music, this reflects the school's staffing difficulties with the long-term absence of the co-ordinator and subsequent problems providing the necessary specialist teaching. In art, pupils in Year 7 have again been taught by a number of teachers with varying understanding of the subject.
18. The teaching of the literacy and numeracy hours throughout the school is good. Teachers' planning is effective with clearly identified tasks. Pupils are clear as to what is being asked of them, because teachers are specific as to what they want the pupils to learn. Teachers also use plenary sessions effectively to enable pupils to review and reinforce what they have learnt, and to set the work in context for future lessons. Consequently, the progress made by pupils in literacy and numeracy is good in both key stages. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils in Year 7 also benefit from the extension of literacy and numeracy hour strategies into Key Stage 3, in advance of national initiatives. For example, a study of W.H. Auden's

poetry was used very effectively to develop the pupils' understanding as to how rhyme and blank verse can be used to adjust pace and speed in the reading of a poem. In mathematics, 'mental maths' strategies were used to sharpen pupils' thinking in the use of algebraic calculations, prior to some good work involving the plotting of graphs.

19. The headteacher has played a particularly active part in the monitoring of literacy. He has observed teaching and learning in all classes. The subject leader for literacy monitors planning and looks at pupils' work, but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor classroom practice. This is planned for the autumn term.
20. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teachers and support staff take very good account in their planning of the targets for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with higher prior attainment. Targets in individual education plans are clear and achievable. In numeracy and literacy lessons, pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment and particular needs. This ensures that tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities. Resources are chosen that are suitable to all pupils; for example, the texts chosen for the literacy hour have a balance of fiction and non-fiction and relate to the interests of boys and girls. Joint planning in year groups allows equal access and equality of expectation. Pupils have very skilled support from experienced and committed teachers and support staff. Sometimes they receive individual support or work in small groups outside the classroom and at other times have additional care and attention whilst working with the rest of the class in the classroom. Activities and the adult support, both in lessons and in withdrawal sessions, are very well matched to pupils' needs. Staff maintain very good records and there is regular, relevant and high quality sharing of information between all staff, who work together, as a team, impressively.
21. There are a number of features common to the good or better teaching seen during the inspection. First, there is good class control and management. Teachers have established good classroom routines and expectations, which allow prompt starts to lessons and a purposeful atmosphere for learning to be created.
22. Secondly, lesson planning and organisation allow the pace of lessons to be good. Not only do teachers make good use of lesson time, but pupils also become self-motivated. This facilitates good learning. Pupils sustain interest and concentration over extended periods of time and are also happy to continue their work at home. Pupils are equally good at working on their own, in groups or in taking part in whole-class discussions.
23. Thirdly, teachers have good personal and professional subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils recognise and appreciate that their teachers have much to offer them. This also extends to other areas of learning. For example, in a Year 7 class assembly, the teacher recounted his personal experience of being bitten by ants whilst undertaking research work in the United States. This not only supported science work on the behaviour of living things, but also pupils' understanding of social structures when comparing the co-operation of an ant colony with their own support for each other in school.
24. Fourthly, teachers set good expectations for lessons. The strategies and practice concerning lesson objectives, which have been developed through the literacy and numeracy hour, are well applied in other lessons. At the end of lessons, pupils discuss what they have learnt, share experiences and offer positive criticism of each other's work.
25. Fifthly, teachers adopt good approaches to questioning. This was a strong feature of many lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants alike use questions effectively to focus pupil thinking and encourage them to explain their reasoning. The open way in

which this strategy is used encourages pupils to express personal views. They are not afraid to be 'wrong', as they are encouraged to be positive and learn from mistakes. An excellent example of this occurred in a Year 6 information and communication technology lesson. Here pupils were being challenged to write a program to create a series of geometric shapes on screen. The posing of questions was used effectively to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, and establish the security of their learning.

26. Finally, there is good monitoring of whole-class and individual progress with good support for individual pupils. In this, teachers are well assisted by learning support staff. In most lessons, teachers and support assistants move freely around the class checking on pupil progress, giving well focused support to those with difficulties and asking additional questions to further challenge higher attainers. Thus learning is well consolidated.
27. The teaching and learning was less successful and occasionally unsatisfactory mainly in lessons taught by a temporary teacher, for example, in literacy and music in Year 7. Here learning objectives were not effectively shared and the pupils either did not understand the task or the teacher's specialist subject knowledge was inadequate. In a single Year 4 physical education lesson, there was insufficient focus on applying, extending or practising skills. In art in Year 7, there can be differences in teacher expectations and their knowledge of the subject. A general area for improvement lies in the use of homework diaries. Whilst homework is regularly set, and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning and progress, teachers are inconsistent in their approach to asking pupils to record this in 'diaries'. This was also a concern raised by parents as part of the communication structure between home and school.

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

28. The school's curriculum is good overall. It provides a good range of stimulating, interesting and relevant areas for learning for all pupils. It meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is proper provision for drugs awareness and sex education. It includes French and citizenship for pupils in Year 7, and the valuable element of personal, social and health education in all year groups. The school prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
29. Curriculum planning is good. In response to national initiatives, an extensive review of the curriculum has been successfully undertaken since the last inspection. The school has given high priority over the last three years to the introduction and implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These initiatives have been monitored well to ensure that they are having sufficient impact upon the standards of pupils' work. At present the school has a particular focus on the raising of standards in writing and pupils' mathematical calculations. The rest of the curriculum has also been reviewed, or is in the process of being reviewed, to take account of the National Curriculum requirements from September 2000. Subject policies have been rewritten satisfactorily. The medium term plans for each subject are combined for each year group of pupils to produce a curriculum description, which provides an effective overview. The process has been co-ordinated well and the headteacher has ensured that all areas of required learning are covered within each subject. Governors have a good understanding of the curriculum and have made useful, focused visits to help them to fulfil their role in curriculum development. The school has improved the depth of study for religious education since the last inspection and it now complies with the locally agreed syllabus. The skills, knowledge and understanding of each subject have been monitored well by subject co-ordinators to ensure that these are developed progressively. However, the art curriculum in Year 7 does not yet build sufficiently on achievements by Year 6 pupils.

The headteacher has observed classroom practice in literacy and numeracy lessons, and the mathematics and science co-ordinators have observed some teaching. Observations by the literacy co-ordinator are planned for the autumn term 2001. Nevertheless, not all curriculum co-ordinators have yet had regularly planned release time to monitor the impact of planning on classroom teaching. There is a satisfactory amount of time available for each subject. The time allocated for English and literacy at Key Stage 2 is below average, but the development of literacy skills, particularly in extended writing, is suitably planned into other curriculum areas. Homework is planned well and supports the curriculum.

30. The quality of weekly literacy plans and daily plans for other subjects is generally good, but there are variations of practice. Where planning is very good, teachers have clear and specific objectives of what pupils will achieve within a lesson. In some teachers' plans, the objective is too broad or relates mainly to the activity to be carried out rather than the learning outcome.
31. Since the school was last inspected the arrangements for the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Learning Support Centre, have improved and are now excellent. Pupils are treated as individuals and because teachers and support staff know their pupils very well, they make sure that their individual needs are met. The caring and supportive atmosphere in the school has a major impact upon pupils in lessons. They receive specific support in literacy and numeracy lessons, and carefully planned programmes support pupils with emotional and behavioural or physical needs very well. Teachers and support staff are involved in the preparation and review of individual education plans. There are currently 18 pupils with statements in the school<sup>4</sup>. There are suitable, individual and challenging activities for higher attaining pupils. A small number of pupils have been identified as having particular talents and the staff ensure that there are appropriate opportunities and programmes for them to ensure that their needs are met successfully.
32. The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Work related trips are organised to such places as the Tollhouse at Great Yarmouth, Ludham, the River Glaven, West Runton and the Salvation Army citadel. These enhance pupils' historical, geographical, scientific and religious education understanding. The residential trip to an activities centre at Kingswood for Years 4 and 7, the visit to the Dinosaur Park by the Learning Support Centre pupils and the Year 7 French visit to Boulogne also make important contributions to the personal and social development of pupils. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and includes choir, orchestra, hand chimes, recorders, computer club, drama for the school play and a hopscotch tournament. The range of sporting activities is wide and includes netball, football, cross-country running, athletics, swimming gala, a rounders tournament and cricket. Pupils play matches against local schools. Throughout the year there are suitable opportunities for pupils of all ages to attend clubs.
33. There are good links with Kinsale First School. Teachers have had a joint professional development day. They have shared their responses to the National Curriculum 2000 to ensure that areas of study are not repeated at the same level. Pupils have good induction procedures for transfer. Good links have been made with Hellesdon High School. The high school organises regular subject meetings with co-ordinators to discuss the curriculum. There are suitable transfer arrangements as Year 7 teachers meet with representatives from every high school department.

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<sup>4</sup> Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.



34. The school has developed good links with the community. During the inspection a local community police officer taught a very useful lesson, which contributed well to the citizenship programme in Year 7. This was one of a series of sessions. In Year 4, pupils have visited a number of local churches and Year 6 have had visitors to help them to understand Buddhist and Islamic religious practices. Year 4 has had a local farmer discuss his work and Year 6 had visits from the school nurse in their studies for health and sex education. Business links have been set up for Year 7.
35. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's aims clearly reflect values that help to create a caring and orderly community and a positive ethos. The school's personal and social education policy provides a very good framework for the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education within curriculum subjects.
36. Provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies and religious education are appropriately viewed as the context for recognising important issues. Assembly themes mainly reflect Christian characteristics and are planned well to incorporate aspects of other faiths, important people, celebrations and moral issues. There was a relevant and interesting story of Shackleton's exploration of the Antarctic in one class assembly, which helped pupils to understand faith in the leadership of others. A whole-class led assembly showed that pupils had studied Creation stories and thought about one in depth in order to present it to the lower school. A good example in a Year 7 class related to the activities of ants, particularly their co-operation, social patterns and responsibilities. Pupils were given valuable time to reflect upon this and their own personal contribution to school and society in general. However, although there are suitable prayers at each assembly, sometimes chances are missed for pupils to reflect upon what they have heard. The school's spiritual provision within other curriculum areas has improved since the last inspection. Pupils reflect in lessons upon the feelings of others when in difficult situations. Examples of this are shown in pupils' writing about being an evacuee during the war and a Roman legionary away from home. Pupils across the school have developed sensitivity in their poems, for example about night. Joy is reflected in musical activities, such as in the playing of music as pupils come into assembly. Fascination with small water creatures and the need to care for all animals formed part of a science lesson. A sense of wonderment is created in lessons, for example in the excitement of creating polygons on a computer screen.
37. Moral development is very good. Teachers encourage pupils of all ages to consider the principles of good behaviour and to draw up a list of class rules together. There is the opportunity in, for example Circle Time, for pupils to discuss problems which may have occurred outside of lesson times. This helps to sort out difficulties and encourages pupils to respect each other and to behave sensibly. Pupils understand the school rules and the consequences of breaking them. Teachers and other adults are good role models and are committed to valuing pupils' work, ideas and opinions. Moral issues are explored well in personal and social education time and in assemblies. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. The school council is a strong feature, involving pupils in the development of citizenship skills. The instigation of the 'Bully Box'<sup>5</sup> is providing a proper disincentive to bullying and pupils value it. Citizenship lessons in Year 7 provide a good moral background against which pupils make informed choices.
38. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The very good personal relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are strengths of the school. Pupils are confident working with different groups of pupils in mixed ability activities or in ability groups for such lessons as literacy and numeracy. In both key stages, pupils adapt well to working with different adults, for example classroom assistants or a different

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<sup>5</sup> See note for paragraph 11.

teacher for numeracy or French. Teachers value pupils and are sensitive to their needs. This is shown in the pupils' willingness to contribute to lessons and in the way they feel comfortable to give answers, even if not totally sure that they are correct. Pupils listen to each other's opinions. Pupils work together well as teams, particularly in gaining points for their house team each week. Pupils work very well together, both co-operatively and collaboratively, in most subjects. The residential visit to Kingswood Centre provides chances to live, work and play together and plays a useful and important part in the pupils' social development. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to take on a responsibility. There are monitors within each class. All Year 7 pupils are given an area of responsibility around the school, for example as House Captains, telephone or corridor monitors. Within lessons there are good opportunities for pupils to show independence and initiative. For example, a group of pupils in Year 5 were sent to the library for independent research. In a Year 7 science lesson, higher ability pupils were challenged to plan and develop their own investigation and to report back. During inspection week, a quarter of the school's pupils, from all year groups and supported by several staff, voluntarily attended an athletics practice during lunchtime, prior to a local area sports event. This represents very good commitment on the part of the pupils. They are concerned for others and are active in raising money for the NSPCC. Each class considers carefully what they will do to raise money.

39. The provision for cultural development is good. It has improved since the last inspection. Pupils read and write poems in a range of styles, enjoying the messages the poets convey. The oldest pupils study Shakespeare. Pupils have had additional help in writing from a visiting poet and author for two days. In history, the pupils are studying eras of the culture in Britain from Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Roman times in Year 4, Tudor times in Year 5, Britain between 1930s and 1953 in Year 6 and Medieval times in Year 7. Artwork in Year 6 is effectively linked to the World War II period, promoting different artistic styles. Year 5 have had the valuable experience of immersing themselves into the era by dressing up in Tudor costume for a day and taking part in many Tudor activities. Years 6 and 7 have a day devoted to their historical period when visitors help in their understanding. The school has taken positive steps to promote pupils' understanding of other cultures. In music, they listen to and appreciate cultural differences in the works studied. In the programme for assemblies, the school ensures that once each month the theme is related to celebrations in different faiths and famous people from different cultures. In religious education, there is study of beliefs in Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. In Year 7, pupils study Indian and African dance. Geography work includes a French cultural study in Year 7, Norwich as a community in Year 6 and a unit on India in Year 5. In history, the oldest pupils are beginning to have a clearer understanding of the life of the black peoples of America and Year 5 have made satisfactory studies of the Ancient Greeks. However, the study of artwork from other cultures is, as yet, underdeveloped.

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

40. The strong ethos created by the headteacher and staff provides for a high standard of pastoral care. The school cares very well for its pupils in respect of welfare, child protection, and health and safety. A team with appropriate expertise, consisting of the governors' premises committee, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the caretaker check one of the nine zones each month. They give a searching scrutiny to every part of the school premises within each year. They report their findings and action to the full governing body every term. The caretaker checks for minor concerns and corrects them himself. The school is clean and in good condition. However, lack of funding in the past means that two health and safety concerns remain. All four toilet areas for pupils are in urgent need of refurbishment. They do not conform to modern standards of hygiene. The sinks are at a very low level and they are positioned below

knee height for all but the youngest pupils. The drains beneath the sinks have only an open grating. The toilets become smelly in summer. The other concern is that the school has no adequate medical room. The sick bay is a bed in the corner of the corridor outside the secretary's office. These deficiencies contrast sharply with the school's very good arrangements for first aid. Most staff have basic first aid certificates and the deputy headteacher is an active member of a first aid service. A learning support assistant and the deputy headteacher have first aid at work certificates. The school notifies parents in the event of any injury. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection and has received full training. The school works closely with local agencies. It follows local procedures and has made them 'Kinsale friendly', ensuring that all members of staff are aware of current issues and requirements.

41. The school provides good monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development. It has significantly improved assessment since the previous report. Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are satisfactory overall.
42. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. They have improved since the last inspection. Teachers maintain detailed assessment records, especially in English, mathematics and science. They keep updated and accurate records of individual pupils' attainments, which are used effectively to inform annual reports and parental interviews. Some teachers use the information to guide teaching plans, although this is not consistently done in all subjects. Teachers pass their detailed assessment information on to the next class teacher and discuss particular issues. This enables pupils to maintain effective progress. Subject co-ordinators are not consistently informed about weaknesses, which may be highlighted in assessments and test results. This does not always allow them to evaluate rigorously the effectiveness of the subject teaching. All staff benefit from receiving regular, detailed test information and analysis from the headteacher, for example, in reading and mathematics. This is used carefully to track pupils' progress through the year. It highlights any individuals who have made particularly good progress or those who are not maintaining their earlier standards. This enables teachers to help pupils to improve. It also provides detailed information to parents and identifies areas for improvement in the pupil's annual report.
43. There is some excellent practice, particularly in Year 6, in which teachers use assessment information very effectively to inform and guide pupils' targets. Parents and pupils are involved in discussing these. They are kept informed about the progress in meeting them. Some of these targets reflect identifiable weaknesses in pupils' work and impact directly on standards of attainment. However, this is not done consistently throughout the school. In some other classes, too few targets for improvement are linked directly to pupils' standards or to the school's priority targets, for example writing. This means that teachers and pupils do not consistently focus on improving individual pupils' weaknesses and those identified in school improvement planning.
44. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Learning Support Centre, make very good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans, and in the development of their self-esteem and confidence. This is because of the very good teaching they receive and the suitability of their targets. The school makes very good use of assessment information for target setting on individual education plans and for the formation of groups. Pupils who need additional support are identified as soon as possible.
45. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. It is strong at the informal, individual level. Teachers know their pupils well. The headteacher is aware of pupils' needs, strengths and ambitions. He keeps a written record of Year 7

pupils' whole-school responsibilities. Teachers formally record pupils' successes in sport and the performing arts, and their election to the school council and as house captains.

46. The school provides good support for pupils' personal development. Each class elects two pupils as representatives for the school council. Pupils consult their classmates and put their ideas across clearly. Year 7 pupils supervise the agenda. Pupils elect boy and girl house captains for each of the school's six houses. All these offices give pupils the chance to develop their maturity and leadership qualities. There are similar opportunities in each of the school's successful sports teams. Pupils also build their teamwork in the hand chime team, which performs at a local community carol service. Every year pupils choose a charity to support. They take responsibility for working out fund-raising ideas and putting them into practice. The school makes effective use of Circle Time<sup>6</sup>. These sessions give pupils the chance to express concerns and to develop a closer understanding of one another. In Year 7, where a teacher is absent through illness, the two other teachers stay in touch with pupils in the class and support them well.
47. The good, clear policy for behaviour focuses on encouraging positive behaviour. Every pupil belongs to one of the six houses named after the Norfolk Broads. Good work, helpful and kind actions, sporting effort and music all win points for their house. Pupils are strongly motivated for their house to be the best. Short 'time-outs' when a pupil stays in the classroom at break or lunchtime are effective sanctions to deter inappropriate behaviour. The midday supervisors provide support at lunchtime. The school has good procedures to deter bullying. A recent and successful innovation is the 'Bully Box',<sup>7</sup> which pupils use to get help if they need it. Pupils are becoming increasingly sensitive to the difference between a temporary upset and a persistent problem.
48. The school has good procedures to promote attendance. Class teachers keep the registers meticulously and enter totals each day. They note reasons for absence as soon as possible. If parents do not explain an absence, the office staff contact them promptly. The school works hard to discourage family holidays in term time. It has improved its procedures to encourage punctuality by closing classroom doors promptly at morning registration time and entering latecomers in a 'late book'.
49. Teachers and support staff know pupils with special educational needs very well. Assessments of such pupils, or those with special talents, are carried out thoughtfully and staff are aware of pupils' targets and programmes. The support for pupils with any additional needs is very good. Relationships between these pupils and staff are very good so that learning takes place in a purposeful and motivating atmosphere. Staff work very well together to ensure that any information about pupils' work and progress is shared effectively. The school fully complies with the Code of Practice<sup>8</sup> and liaises very effectively with external agencies.

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 2 for paragraph 11

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2 for paragraph 11

<sup>8</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

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

50. Parents have a very good opinion of the school. They value the way the headteacher and staff build their children's confidence. At the pre-inspection meeting parents said the school helps their children 'to stand on their own two feet' and become responsible young people. Parents say it is an open school. Responding to the inspection questionnaire, 94 per cent of parents agree that the school is easy to approach with a question or a problem. However, 27 per cent of parents do not agree that the school works well with them. Some parents at the meeting said the school does not give them sufficient information about pupils' progress. The inspection team paid close regard to both issues, but it finds that the evidence does not support either of these concerns.
51. The school has very good links with parents. There are consultation meetings between class teachers and parents in the autumn and spring terms. The school gives parents the option of afternoons or evenings. With many parents seeing the same teacher, the time available is limited. The school arranges longer meetings when necessary. Class teachers and the headteacher make themselves available for informal meetings. Many parents come to the harvest festival, the carol service and the school drama production. The active parent teacher association raises money to fund extra activities and facilities to extend pupils' learning. The programme includes opportunities for pupils themselves to become involved with the local community. Pupils put forward ideas and run games and stalls at social events. The association organises frequent discos for pupils and these are very popular.
52. The school provides very good information for parents. It issues newsletters regularly, keeping parents in touch with events at school. The prospectus is clear and informative. The governors' annual report is attractive and written in an accessible and informal style. The annual reports to parents have a very good format. The back page has a full printout of what the class has studied in each subject. The two centre pages give detailed, individual accounts of the pupil's learning and progress. Teachers use the 'future action' section to set targets. There is also a space for the pupil's comments and pupils use this opportunity. Last year's reports did not show the authorised absence figure for the pupil. The school has undertaken to rectify this omission in future. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed and have good opportunities to discuss targets and reviews with the school. These are valued and appreciated.
53. Parents contribute very well to their children's learning. The impact of their involvement in the school is very good. When pupils begin at middle school, many parents are at work and their children are becoming more independent. Even so, parent volunteers regularly hear pupils read in class. Parents join teachers on trips to local sites of interest. Thirty parents (plus one grandparent) accompanied Year 7 on the recent visit to Boulogne. Parents share special skills or experiences. For example, a parent with computer expertise comes into school frequently. Another parent tells pupils about Islamic life and culture. Some parents say the communication of homework is sometimes unclear. The inspection team finds that setting of homework and the use of homework diaries vary across the classes. However, parents support the homework policy, which the school sets out plainly in the prospectus. A high proportion of pupils do their homework. Parents encourage their children to read independently at home. Many came in to buy extra books during the school's book week. Parents support extra-curricular sport and the arts. All these activities have a very positive effect on their children's learning.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The overall leadership and management of the school are good, with some very good features and significant strengths. The headteacher understands the school and the needs of its pupils very well. He has a clear insight as to the school's strengths and what is needed to ensure its continued improvement. His personal leadership qualities gain him the respect of pupils, staff, parents and governors alike. Consequently, there is a shared sense of purpose throughout the school, which is firmly based on the raising of standards and enabling pupil achievement. He is very well supported by a hard working and conscientious deputy headteacher, who also provides an excellent personal example as a classroom teacher. The senior management team set high standards and have high expectations of both staff and pupils alike. The teaching staff are well supported by the office administration, classroom assistants, lunchtime, dining room and caretaking personnel. Together, they make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school, its welcoming atmosphere and the school's 'team' approach to improving the quality of education provided.
55. The school is effective and has made good improvement on the key issues identified at the last inspection. Assessment procedures have improved and there is now some excellent practice in Year 6. Teachers have also worked hard on developing their strategies for asking pupils questions in order to challenge them and encourage independent thinking. Expertise in the teaching of French has improved and has resulted in the raising of standards in Year 7. There is now enough teaching time for both French and religious education to enable both subjects to be taught in appropriate depth. As a result of the school's self-review processes, action is promptly taken concerning any further priorities for improvement. For example, as a result of an analysis of the results of the 2000 national tests in English, standards in writing were identified as requiring improvement. This became an immediate target for the whole school and the inspection evidence confirms its effectiveness<sup>9</sup>.
56. A significant strength of the school is the headteacher's expertise in the collection of performance information. Its analysis is rigorously used to enable teachers to understand how their teaching can be improved in order to raise standards and achievement. Under his guidance, co-ordinators use this information effectively in the planning of their subjects. However, the expertise of individual co-ordinators in the interpretation of such performance information is more variable. The furthering of this skill is an area for development to enhance their 'middle management' experience.
57. Teaching is well monitored by senior management. The headteacher and governors have ensured that procedures for the implementation of the new statutory requirements for performance management are properly in place. Some co-ordinators have been involved in classroom observations of their subject. However, long-term staff absences and difficulties in obtaining temporary teachers have operated against this. The governors have consequently acted to enable the school to fulfil its responsibilities as from September 2001. A new teacher has been appointed whose role will include cover for co-ordinators. This is deliberate policy to allow the subject leaders to be released on a regular basis to fulfil better their management function and responsibilities.
58. Overall, the school's development planning is good and the action taken to meet the targets set is very good. For example, in the school's recognition of its urgent need to improve resources for information and communication technology (ICT) in order to raise standards. This is also reflected in its long-term financial planning, including the high

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<sup>9</sup> The results of the 2001 national tests for pupils aged 11 became available after the inspection but before the publication of this report. These show a significant improvement in standards of writing from 43 per cent attaining the expected level in 2000 to 82 per cent in 2001.

balance carried forward from the previous financial year, which has been reserved for these ICT improvements<sup>10</sup>. The expertise of the co-ordinator and two governors with professional ICT experience has been very effectively harnessed in putting together the school's planning as part of the 'National Grid for Learning' initiative. This partnership approach to planning also involves the pupils, for example, in the proposals to improve the playground equipment and environment.

59. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. There are named governors for curriculum areas, such as literacy and numeracy. The governors, both individually and collectively, have a very firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play an active role in shaping its direction. Again, a key word here is 'partnership'. They are well informed and senior management freely provides them with all the information required to carry out their duties. There is a planned programme of 'Governors' Days' to enable them to gain first hand experience of everyday life in the classroom. The governors bring to the school a good range of personal and professional expertise, especially in the fields of education and finance.
60. There is a governor for pupils with special educational needs and an able deputy, who is a member of the school's staff. Special educational needs matters are discussed regularly at governing body meetings. The deputy headteacher very ably assists the special educational needs co-ordinator. Together they manage the Learning Support Centre and main school provision in an exemplary manner. Any additional funding for special educational needs is spent very prudently and the school uses money from the general budget effectively to supplement such costs. Money has been very well spent on the provision and training of support staff.
61. The school has a high commitment to equality of access for all and takes positive steps to promote this. For example, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and exceptional. Through the monitoring of teachers' plans and observation of literacy and numeracy lessons, the headteacher also ensures that pupils of high ability receive appropriate teaching. The school analyses data in terms of boys and girls and ensures that suitable targets of improvement are set.
62. Staffing is satisfactory overall. The teaching staff have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience. They have good expertise in teaching French. This is an improvement as the previous report identified French as a weakness. The school has increased the number of classroom assistants and improved the way it uses them. The very good skills of the teacher and the assistant in the Learning Support Centre enable pupils with special educational needs to make very good progress. Two teachers have been absent through illness for long periods during the past year and this has restricted the learning of their classes. The school provides a very good environment for training new teachers. This aspect of the school's work is well managed by the deputy headteacher.
63. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Good features include a large playing field, a music room, a pottery kiln and changing rooms for physical education. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance the appearance of corridors and classrooms, and extend pupils' learning. Although the school has a large playing field, the playground is small and becomes cramped when the field is wet. All four of the pupils' toilet areas require updating, as mentioned in the 'Care' section of this report. There are no cloakrooms for pupils, who have to hang their coats in the corridors. This can cause untidiness and delay.

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<sup>10</sup> See Financial Information table in Part C: School Data and Indicators.

64. The school has satisfactory resources. It has recently improved its stock of French books. Funding from the National Grid for Learning, and budgeted money carried forward from the school's previous financial year, will increase the number of computers to a good level. The parent teacher association has contributed £1,500 for control technology. This is the most recent example of several areas in which parents have added to resources for pupils' learning. The school has recently discarded some outdated books and there is at present a shortage of both fiction and non-fiction. The school is also short of artefacts for use in art and multi-cultural education.
65. Although the school has experienced recent difficulties in obtaining accurate financial summaries from the local authority, its own systems for financial planning are very good. The quality of monitoring and control and the information provided through the finance committee are very good. Together, they provide a good basis on which informed decisions about spending can be taken. This is also well supported by the school's office staff in their friendly and efficient handling of administration systems. A new finance policy is currently being drafted as part of a regular programme of review. Self-evaluation of its standards in financial management is being properly undertaken following Ofsted and Audit Commission guidelines. The school applies the principles of best value very well and provides good value for money.



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

**66. In order to further improve the quality of education, raise standards of achievement and continue to build on the good improvement since the last inspection, the governing body, with the headteacher and staff, should work together to: -**

- (1) strengthen and develop the management role and monitoring responsibilities of the subject co-ordinators by: -
  - organising regular opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor teaching and learning through classroom observation of their subjects;
  - sharing good practice to raise the quality of the satisfactory and good teaching to the higher levels found in Years 6 and 7.
  - developing their expertise in the use and interpretation of the high quality performance information collected by the school;(See paragraphs: 15, 29, 43, 56-57, 81, 99, 104, 108, 114, 119, 126, 147)
- (2) further improve the school's good assessment procedures by: -
  - ensuring consistently good use of assessment information by all teachers to guide teaching plans;
  - establishing a greater consistency in the use of assessment information for setting individual targets for pupils related to school targets;
  - enabling the assessment co-ordinator to more rigorously monitor the use of assessment information;(See paragraphs: 42-43, 56-57, 80, 119, 126, 147, 150)
- (3) raise standards in art at Key Stage 3 by: -
  - providing training for teachers to improve their specialist knowledge and understanding of the subject;
  - providing further guidance for teachers on the use and purpose of pupil sketchbooks;
  - improving the quality of specialist resources for art, including reference books.(See paragraphs: 8-9, 17, 27, 29, 100-104)

**67. In addition to the key issues above, the governors should consider the following areas for development and improvement for inclusion in their action plan: -**

- alongside the proposed developments for information and communication technology, further develop the library as a resources centre to support independent research for pupils, particularly in Year 7;  
(See paragraphs: 64, 81, 104, 150)
- improve the school's toilet facilities for pupils, and its medical room facilities;  
(See paragraphs: 40, 73)
- make more effective use of homework diaries to provide information for parents about the work set for pupils.  
(See paragraphs: 27, 53)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4	37	32	23	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y4 - 6	Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	185	75
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y4 - 6	Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	64	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	36	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	36
	Girls	32	28	36
	Total	56	53	72
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School <sup>11</sup>	76 (71)	71 (65)	96 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	21	25	31
	Girls	31	27	32
	Total	52	52	63
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	69 (76)	69 (69)	84 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

<sup>11</sup> The school's national test results for 2001, which became available after the inspection was completed, but before the publication of this report, show the following percentages for pupils reaching Level 4 or above:-  
English 89 per cent; Mathematics 76 per cent; Science 98 per cent

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	259
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***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	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	28.9

#### **Education support staff: Y4 – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	557,429
Total expenditure	526,768
Expenditure per pupil	2,042
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,108
Balance carried forward to next year	56,769

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

**Questionnaire return rate 30.7%**

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	80

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	53	6	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	64	11	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	69	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	34	55	9	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	54	20	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	50	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	48	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	50	24	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	54	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	51	12	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	53	21	9	6

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Parents particularly emphasised how the school enabled its pupils to become mature, responsible young people. They stressed that the school prepared their children well for the next stage of education. They see the school as a consistently friendly and inviting place, with high expectations. However, there was agreement that contact between home and school could be improved through the more consistent use of homework diaries.

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

### **ENGLISH**

68. The results of 2000 national tests, at the age of 11, show that although the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above is close to the national average, below average numbers gained the higher Level 5. Consequently, the school's overall performance, taking into account the pupils' points score<sup>12</sup>, was below average. Standards are above the average in reading, but below in writing. Teacher assessments at the age of 11 show that standards for speaking and listening are above average. These standards are set in the context of 8 per cent of the pupils who took the 2000 test having a statement of special educational needs, mainly for language difficulties. All these pupils were boys. Many parents of pupils with particular learning needs choose this school.
69. At the age of 11 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in tests and assessments was broadly average, but below that of pupils in similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was below average and that of similar schools. Over the last three years boys' and girls' performance was close to the average. Boys' performance was below and girls above average. Most of the 27.9 per cent of pupils currently on the school's special educational needs register are boys.
70. The school has responded positively to its previous inspection report. The skills of reading for information are now built on effectively from year to year, with good development and use of library skills. Standards have been maintained until 2000 when they dipped, owing to fewer pupils' achieving the expected Level 4 or above in writing<sup>13</sup>.
71. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing. It is taking advice from literacy consultants and developing effective strategies in all year groups. Inspection evidence shows that these strategies are already raising standards. Pupils enter Year 4 with below average standards. Inspection findings are that by the age of 11, and in Year 7, attainment is at least average in all areas of English and literacy. A greater number of pupils are likely to attain at the higher level at the age of 11 in 2001. Progress in all aspects of English is good in both key stages. All pupils on the special educational needs register either have high quality teaching in small groups in the Learning Support Centre or work in class with good adult support. Excellent monitoring of these pupils' achievements and setting of relevant work for the next stage of literacy development ensure that pupils make very good progress overall.
72. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening in Years 4 to 6 and by the age of 11 pupils' skills are above average. Teachers plan times for pupils to listen carefully, such as in assemblies, to stories, to each other and in talking about their work. Pupils are able to debate issues and to discuss the work they have done. They are encouraged and respond well. For example, in collaborative work they readily share ideas and listen to each other's point of view. When responding to teachers' carefully phrased questions they use specific vocabulary. Pupils understand the idea of 'audience' and use appropriate pitch and intonation when speaking aloud. Pupils from the Learning Support Centre use speaking and listening to put ideas together before writing, such as in the

<sup>12</sup> The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 2, the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in English, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, Level 2 = 15 points and so on. Therefore, the average points score in English is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. The average points score for Level 4, the nationally expected level for pupils aged 11, at the end of Key Stage 2, is 27.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 9 for paragraph 55 and footnote 11 for Key Stage 2 attainment table in Part C: School Data and Indicators.

formulation of questions or ideas for lines in a one-minute play. Year 4 pupils read plays in their English lessons and drama work extends pupils' improvised speech.

73. In Year 7, the good progress in speaking and listening skills continues. Pupils work collaboratively, with expectations that they will adapt their speech to the activity and in their class presentations. Pupils help the group by putting ideas forward and coming to agreement by consensus. This was seen in a higher ability science group organising a particular investigation of water beasts. Pupils appreciate that there are different modes of speech for informal and formal situations. They have presented a production, *Beauty and the Beast*. They appreciate how the structure and organisation of scenes contribute to dramatic effect.
74. Standards in reading are average in Years 4 to 6 and the progress made by pupils in reading is good. Teachers introduce pupils to a wide range of books and authors in the literacy hour. As a consequence, pupils develop a love of reading. They begin to build up a bank of favourite authors. Most pupils were fluent readers and, on the whole, read with expression. Most used context cues or letter sounds well to word-build unknown words. Pupils were generally able to discuss main characters and the plot, and make predictions about what might happen next in stories. Pupils with special educational needs, who were withdrawn to the Learning Support Centre for literacy, made particularly good progress in comparison with other pupils. This was mainly because of the focused activities on reading carried out in small groups. Consequently, they often read aloud as fluently as average ability pupils, but from simpler texts. Pupils in a Year 4 class activity read from *Bill's New Frock* by Anne Fine. By lively questioning and interaction with the teacher, the pupils were able to pick out the underlying messages in the passage that Bill was treated differently as a 'girl' than he was as a boy. Pupils analyse style very well and compare the way books are written. Older pupils use reading as an effective tool when finding information for subjects. By the age of 11 pupils of average ability can use the library well to find information and have developed the ability to use content, index and glossary. They have also developed the strategies of skimming and scanning for information. Teachers keep satisfactory records to monitor pupils' reading progress. They also use reading diaries, which provide a record of the books that are read and a homework guide for reading.
75. Standards of reading are above average in Year 7 and pupils make good progress. Pupils continue to read with fluency and expression. They have developed strategies to work out the meaning of unknown vocabulary and tackle quite challenging words confidently. Most pupils choose books by reading the blurb on the back of novels or from recommendations of other pupils. They explain confidently the context of the stories read and the likely development of the plot. Pupils in a Year 7 lesson read a newspaper article aloud with good intonation. The teacher encouraged pupils to understand the meaning of unknown words by reading around them to explore the context. Pupils were able to discuss the features of the particular style of writing and pick out the emotive language expressed. In a spelling lesson, pupils were able to develop an understanding of vocabulary as they made up a range of words beginning with the same prefix. They found out what they meant; for example, 'consider, conspire, contemplate'. Teachers continue to ensure that pupils use their reading skills well in other subjects by encouraging them to use the library reference system to obtain information.
76. Overall, standards in writing are average in Years 4 to 6. Pupils make good progress across the key stage from a lower entry level. Pupils take a pride in and practise their handwriting skills. By the age of 11 the majority write in a legible, well-formed, cursive style. The school has placed an emphasis on spelling and during the inspection all English lessons, additional to the literacy hour, were devoted to the teaching of spelling. Pupils generally spell polysyllabic words accurately and are beginning to use complex

grammatical and punctuation skills effectively by Year 6. Pupils in Year 4 have a wide range of starting points. Some pupils with special educational needs are in the early stages of developing sentences, but succeed by the end of the year in writing simple stories. Other pupils in that year group are beginning to draft and redraft non-fiction texts, stories and poems. Teachers guide pupils to write in a variety of styles. Subsequently, by Year 6, pupils write well for particular purposes, such as letter writing, persuasive argument, reporting, explanation and information. They have written poems in different styles and have had a 'poet in residence' for two days. Consequently, they choose words sensitively and for effect. They make good use of simile, alliteration, metaphor, personification and onomatopoeia.

77. In Year 7, pupils make good progress and standards are average in writing. They use words well to create images in poetry and stories. They develop the skills of biographical and autobiographical writing. They use the style and conventions of journalism well by writing a report, for example, as an extension to their studies of *Macbeth*. Their poetry and other writing show a well-chosen vocabulary for specific effect. For example, in one pupil's emotive poem about an island the word 'tranquil' is used. Pupils make good comparisons of films and stories. They review poetry, including Shakespeare, write interesting book reviews, witness statements and old fables in a modern setting. For example, pupils write innovative diaries, such as 'Bottom's Bad Day', connected to work on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. All pupils conduct personal research and produce folders of information, with good layout in terms of contents, index, chapters, bibliography and glossary. Work produced by pupils of higher ability is detailed, well presented, mature in style, with vocabulary choices that are adventurous, imaginative and precisely used.
78. Teaching and learning are good overall and can be very good, particularly in Years 6 and 7. Where lessons are good or better, teachers plan effectively for the week. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high but realistic expectations of pupils, and lessons have sufficient pace. They have very good relationships with pupils and encourage them to participate by good questioning techniques and challenge. Marking is generally good and exceptionally so in Years 6 and 7, where pupils have extensive guidance about developments that would improve their work. Teachers use the plenary session of the lesson well to reinforce and consolidate the learning outcome. Teachers maintain good levels of discipline and use encouraging praise to motivate pupils. As a result, pupils behave well, work collaboratively with others and concentrate very well on their tasks. Teachers expect pupils to listen carefully and work quietly. This enhances the quality of learning and results in pupils making good progress. Homework supports class work well. However, some pupils in the earlier years can, at times, be less productive in their work than their potential indicates. The only unsatisfactory teaching was seen from a temporary teacher in Year 7. Here, there was an over-concentration on behaviour management and instruction. Pupils were unclear as to the tasks to be carried out or the objective of the lesson.
79. The school has planned effectively for the National Literacy Strategy and the development of literacy across the curriculum. For example, pupils use their reading skills well to support work in history. Through personal, social and health education, citizenship, contributions to class assemblies and school productions, they develop speaking and listening skills in interesting ways. English is used well to promote pupils' cultural understanding in the study of famous authors, including Shakespeare. Word-processing and computers are used to support work in English, particularly in drafting work, and in media studies; for example, pupils produce a newspaper front page. The other curriculum areas provide a focus for extended writing, which is not possible within the literacy hour. Pupils write explanations, information, notes and reported texts in such subjects as geography and science. Stories, persuasive writing, diaries and expressive



writing based on people in historical periods, for example as an evacuee in World War II, have developed as an important input into literacy.

80. Tests of pupils' reading and spelling ability are carried out twice each year. The headteacher undertakes extensive analysis of the data from national and school tests. This is done by individual, class, year group and whole school as well as by gender. Teachers assess pupils' writing and very good moderation procedures are carried out to agree levels of attainment. As a result of this analysis, the school has properly identified the development of writing as a priority. Improvement in standards is already beginning to take effect<sup>14</sup> and the school has suitable plans for continued improvement. Pupils are set termly literacy targets. However, there is no specific strategy yet to link the targets pupils set themselves to this area of high priority. Although the weekly literacy plans are very detailed and effective, sometimes the learning objective for the lesson is too broad. Teachers can be inconsistent in the way they use evaluations of lessons to develop future lesson plans.
81. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the subject co-ordinator. She has reviewed the literacy policy well and has, with the headteacher, monitored termly planning. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom, although this is planned for the future. However, the headteacher has monitored literacy teaching and learning. Although the library area has been improved since the last inspection, there are still not enough relevant books, particularly for Year 7 pupils, to carry out personal projects and research. The range of fiction books in the reading area and in classrooms is adequate.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. At the age of 11, pupils' attainment is average overall, but approximately one quarter of the pupils attain at an above average level. A similar proportion of pupils with special educational needs achieve at a lower level than average, but achieve well for their abilities. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection and to the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000. These results were average when compared with schools nationally and locally, with around a quarter of the pupils attaining at an above average level. Standards are maintained in Year 7 so that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is average overall. Pupils who attained at a higher level in 2000 National Curriculum tests continue to achieve well. This shows good progress and achievement for a significant number of pupils who enter the school with lower than average attainment in mathematics.
83. All pupils achieve well. Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs work extremely hard and achieve very well because of the high quality of the teaching and support they receive. Staff are sensitive to their needs and set them appropriate tasks. They encourage them to concentrate and gain confidence. The adult support they receive helps them to gain skills and to take part in lessons more confidently. Adults check whether pupils have understood the tasks, often glancing at pupils' work without being obvious. They make a mental note of the fact if pupils' responses show that they do not understand fully what is being discussed. Higher attaining pupils, and those who have special talents in mathematics, are well challenged. This is because teachers have high expectations. They also make sure that pupils achieve in line with their capabilities, and sometimes above what is expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
84. In Year 4, the teaching of basic skills is effective and based well upon the National Numeracy Strategy. For example, games are used well in fast moving mental

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<sup>14</sup> See also footnote 13 (for paragraph 70).

mathematics sessions. Teachers show a good sense of fun whilst offering pupils challenging tasks, such as adding 3 to a number and checking whether it matches one of the odd numbers on their Bingo sheet. In another group, pupils have to concentrate hard on what is being said to ensure that they come in with the right number, or miss one out, when it is their turn to join in the game. Teachers focus pupils' attention well on identifying the basic question and finding the relevant information in a problem. With good support, they find appropriate strategies to tackle the problems. Pupils become increasingly accurate in calculating temperatures on a thermometer as they reinforce their understanding of positive and negative numbers.

85. Pupils in Year 5 develop their problem solving skills further when they check their estimates of the capacity of six containers. They select the most appropriate vessel for filling the containers and concentrate very well to ensure that they have an exact measure in the jugs. Pupils add and subtract confidently to calculate the water put in and demonstrate that their 'guesses' were very close to their actual results. Pupils know the rules for division with odd and even numbers and when a pupil encounters a problem, the teacher is quick to support with clear explanations until the pupil explains, with relief and pleasure, "Ah! I know how to do it now!"
86. By the time they are 11, pupils use more complex operations of division and multiplication, with three-digit numbers. They use their knowledge of the value of each digit to multiply and divide whole numbers by 10 or 100. Pupils work confidently with decimals and fractions and can work out percentages and averages. They are developing sound strategies for doing calculations and when to use particular operations to solve quite complex problems. Teachers question pupils very skilfully and sensitively, taking great care to give them every opportunity to respond correctly and to achieve success. This gives pupils more confidence in their own mathematical ability and encourages them to try and work hard. Pupils are given tasks that match their abilities well. Lower attaining pupils have support and encouragement from the teacher when they complete exercises about the reflection of shapes. More-able pupils are given greater challenge when they try to reflect shapes on a given axis. Higher attaining pupils reflect coordinates and shapes on to different quadrants. The very challenging 'warm up' to the lesson shows that pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do. Pupils have to work out instructions for moving a shape to another quadrant and most do it well. Higher attaining pupils work quickly and accurately on extensions of this task.
87. In Year 7, teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Their good knowledge of the subject ensures that pupils continue to extend their skills in mental calculations, and in explaining their strategies for tackling problems. Pupils watch demonstrations by other pupils carefully and listen well to explanations of the best way to solve problems. Higher attaining pupils calculate equation tables to create or generate graphs and, at the end of the lesson, explain very clearly what they show. In another group, pupils show a good understanding of triangles and angles, which some use effectively when matching parallel lines. The teacher's intuitive assessment shows that the majority of pupils need further reinforcement of this new work.
88. Progress is good. For example in mental number sessions, pupils in Year 4 recognise missing numbers in a sequence, and add or subtract positive and negative numbers to 12. Year 5 pupils multiply by 4, halve and double numbers very quickly, and by Year 6 pupils divide two- and three-digit numbers to obtain a given number. Year 7 pupils solve algebraic problems. The careful way in which the mathematics curriculum is structured and the thoughtful planning by teachers makes sure that pupils build on their previous learning and develop their skills securely.

89. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They listen carefully to their teachers, respond confidently in mental number sessions and get on very well with independent tasks. Pupils enjoy mathematics and this has a positive effect on their learning. They try hard to complete the work they have been given. Pupils work co-operatively, for example sharing materials and when solving problems. They are not afraid to have a go and learn positively from their mistakes.
90. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and is frequently very good. Teachers have very high expectations in terms of work and the quality of presentation. They set pupils challenging tasks. At the same time they provide a secure atmosphere in classrooms where pupils feel supported and not afraid of making mistakes. Teachers encourage pupils to find different ways of solving problems and they value any contributions made by individuals. The work is carefully planned to take account of the different needs of pupils. There is a good emphasis on the application of skills, which has a positive effect on pupils' ability to think mathematically. The marking of pupils' work is good and effective use is made of evaluative and useful comments to help pupils know how they can improve.
91. The co-ordinator for mathematics is knowledgeable and works hard to support colleagues. There is a strong commitment to improvement in standards. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very effectively and standards of pupils' work are evaluated regularly. The arrangements for grouping of pupils ensure that they have work that is matched well to their abilities. The progress of individual pupils is tracked through the school, targets are set and weaknesses recognised. There has been regular monitoring of teaching and learning. Numeracy is used well in other subjects and helps pupils develop their mathematical skills. For example, in geography, pupils use coordinates to work out distances and directions. In science, they measure fluids in millilitres and calculate weights. They construct graphs of their results on the computer so that they can compare results. In design and technology, pupils measure what dimensions of materials they need to make things. Understanding of dates in history and religious education helps pupils to understand four-digit numbers more clearly. Information and communication technology is used widely for work on data handling and work on symmetrical patterns in art is linked well with a study of Islam in religious education. Calculations of time, distance and comparison of money was used extensively on the trip to France.

## SCIENCE

92. Attainment is well above the national average for 11-year-olds and is well above nationally expected standards at the end of Year 7. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. Since 1998, the results of the national tests for 11-year-olds show that standards have been maintained at a level that is well above the national average. They are well above the average of similar schools. Both girls and boys attain equally high standards. In the 2000 tests, the proportion of pupils (59 per cent) who achieved higher than the nationally expected level was almost double the national average.
93. Inspection evidence confirms these high standards. The consistently high quality teaching encourages pupils to develop an interested and enthusiastic approach. This is supported very effectively by a well-planned and detailed curriculum, which includes a very good range of practical investigative activities. It enables pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding to build very successfully on prior learning. When teachers cover topics that have been introduced earlier in the school, for example 'the Human Body' or 'Forces', they ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge are reinforced then extended. They then challenge pupils effectively to apply their scientific knowledge in investigations.

Pupils achieve very high standards in relation to their ability. They make very good progress in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively by good support staff and the use of learning resources, which are matched closely to their needs. More-able pupils are challenged to extend their skills and knowledge by applying their ideas and scientific understanding to solve problems. They achieve very high standards, especially in the development and use of their scientific investigative skills.

94. Most Year 4 pupils know what a 'habitat' is and they accurately locate different ones around the school site. They carry out a detailed investigation to see if earthworms prefer dry or damp soil. Pupils use their knowledge and their literacy skills effectively to produce a detailed booklet. This accurately describes worm habitats, food and the structure of the worm's body. This knowledge and understanding is extended very successfully in Year 5 when pupils study food chains. They apply their knowledge of habitats to work out the links in a specific food chain. For example, many accurately identify the links between the soil, earthworms, birds and other animals, which make up the chains in a complicated food-web. Most confidently describe the web, using correct terminology such as 'producers', 'consumers', 'herbivores' and 'carnivores'. Year 4 pupils know the different parts of a plant, for example the roots and the stem. They are beginning to show good understanding of a 'fair test'. For example, this was clearly seen when they investigated the coolest place in the classroom to study the effects of temperature on plant growth. Pupils knew that they must ensure that the thermometer had started at the same temperature each time otherwise it was not accurate.
95. Year 6 pupils applied their knowledge and skills very successfully when challenged to design an experiment to test the ideal environments for encouraging and preventing the growth of micro-organisms on food. They used their understanding of fair testing to ensure that they tried different methods systematically. Pupils worked enthusiastically in groups to discuss and develop a broad range of interesting ideas. For example, they used water and vinegar to create different 'moist' conditions, and squeezed the juice out of a tomato to make it 'dry'. They recorded their results in a variety of different ways, including drawings, written description and tables of results. All groups met the teacher's high expectations for quality work. They took pride in the way in which they presented their investigation. Many included an effective evaluation of their test and indicated how they could have improved its effectiveness. Many Year 6 pupils have an above average knowledge of scientific facts and famous scientists. For example, one more-able pupil described what Louis Pasteur did and explained the term 'pasteurisation'. Other Year 6 pupils spoke accurately about the work of Lister and Jennings.
96. Year 7 pupils continue to develop their scientific knowledge and skills very successfully and maintain the high standards. For example, they worked in groups to plan and carry out an investigation into how changes in the environment could affect the behaviour of the *daphnia* or 'water-flea'. Pupils showed a very good understanding of how to carry out a scientific investigation. As a group, they agreed on the question they would try to answer. These included "how do water-fleas react to different coloured light?" and "would the shadow of a predator effect their behaviour?" Pupils then decided what method they would use to try to answer their question. They also agreed what factors must remain the same in order to ensure that the test was fair. For example, they realised that the position of the bottle containing the fleas, vertical or horizontal, was an important factor in determining how the fleas could react. They made a prediction and then tested it. The quality and range of ideas were very good. Pupils' approach to finding out an answer to their prediction was very diligent and conscientious. They recorded their results accurately. Then they discussed them in detail as a group to prepare for their presentation to the rest of the class. Each pupil contributed to the class feedback session. They confidently described an aspect of the investigation and answered

questions about their results. Many knew that, although they had not found a definite answer to their original question, this in itself increased their scientific knowledge. For example, although a small number of *daphnia* moved away from the shadow of a predatory fish, the number was not big enough to be significant. Pupils achieved and maintained very high standards.

97. The most important factor in promoting pupils' achievement is the consistently high quality teaching. It was never less than good in all of the six lessons observed. Teaching was very good or excellent in Years 6 and 7. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is used very effectively to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example, in their use of such specific scientific terms as 'adaptation' and 'control group'. Teachers are enthusiastic in their approach and this promotes a very positive attitude by pupils. Teachers plan interesting and well-organised activities, which stimulate pupils' interest and scientific thinking. For example, they made good use of temperature sensors and computers to log the results when investigating the energy content of different foods. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in the way in which they use their knowledge and skills and in the quality of their presentation. This promotes high standards.
98. Teachers use questions very effectively to challenge pupils to apply their scientific knowledge or to extend their initial answers. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on micro-organisms, the teacher encouraged a pupil to think more carefully about exactly where he would place his tomato in a cupboard. By very effective questioning, the pupil developed his initial answer. He realised that "as hot air rises, the tomato will be affected differently if I placed it on the top shelf". He then changed his initial prediction after considering the likely impact of a higher temperature and moist air on the growth of micro-organisms on the tomato. This raised the standard of the work achieved. Teachers maintain a brisk pace to lessons. They set clear targets over what they expect pupils to achieve in the lesson. They use regular reminders to ensure that pupils keep on task and sustain their concentration. Teachers organise their lessons very efficiently and use a good range of resources to focus pupils' attention and stimulate their ideas. This was evident in interesting practical activities, which were observed in each year group. Pupils were interested and often fascinated by what they observed; for example, the movement of water-fleas or the rapid growth of mould.
99. The subject is managed very effectively by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. He has promoted a positive attitude to the subject by staff and pupils throughout the school. He has used national subject guidance successfully to ensure that all required topics are covered and build effectively on pupils' prior learning. The co-ordinator monitors the curriculum planning to check on how pupils' skills are developed. Samples of pupils' work are monitored annually to check on standards of achievement. The subject co-ordinator has monitored and evaluated some teaching, although this is not fully established. He has enhanced the range of opportunities for pupils' learning. For example, he challenged some of the more-able pupils to represent the school at the annual Science Olympiad held at the University of East Anglia.

## ART AND DESIGN

100. Overall, standards in art are average and pupil achievement is satisfactory. The standards seen during the last inspection have been maintained in Years 4 to 6. Pupils achieve levels of attainment in line with national expectations by the age of 11. However, in Year 7 standards have declined since the last inspection and pupils' work is now below expectations for this age group. Staffing difficulties in Year 7 have meant that pupils have been taught by several teachers and expectations have been too low. This has resulted in limited development of pupils' knowledge and artwork skills in this year group. There are also marked differences in the quality of pupils' work between the year groups and in

different classes. The main differences lie in teachers' expectations and their knowledge and understanding of the subject.

101. In Years 5 and 6, a consistent feature of pupils' work is its attention to detail through careful observation and the good development of ideas. Pupils gather information, collect pictures and make preliminary sketches to fuel their imagination, and explore different ideas and approaches. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils drew effectively from homework, which involved making sketches of facial expressions. They used this knowledge to look carefully at their faces in a mirror and draw several portraits showing contrasting emotions. There is a strong focus on pupils evaluating their own work and comparing it with that of other artists. The following Year 6 piece is a good example of this: *"I based my picture on an army man during the war. I am very pleased with my picture and the way it turned out. I did my picture in the style of Picasso because that is what we are studying in art. I liked the way Picasso shows emotions in characters by painting their eyes at different angles, well, I did that on my character to show fear. I also stuck to a very few colours much like Picasso would have done. My picture took a long time to complete so I had to get a friend to help me but it was worth it."*
102. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and pupils' attitudes to art are good. However, there are differences between the key stages. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 4 to 6 is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are given good support by teachers and support staff in lessons. Where teaching is most effective there is good specialist knowledge of materials and techniques. Coupled with good teaching strategies this ensures that pupils' key artwork skills are well developed. Where this occurs, pupils show good levels of self-motivation and this contributes to successful learning during the lesson. In Year 6, good guidance on construction techniques, linked to their design and technology work, helps pupils learn how to achieve a good quality finish when making three-dimensional containers for 'a wish'. In the best teaching, pupils are asked questions which not only enable the teacher to properly assess their understanding of a task but also help pupils think through artistic problems and construction challenges. As a result, pupils develop good self-critical and analytical skills, which help them understand how well they are learning. This is also underpinned in Year 6 by some very helpful teacher comments and suggestions in sketchbooks, which successfully extends pupils' learning.
103. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in Year 7 because of inconsistencies in teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding of the subject. This has resulted in pupils making insufficient progress over the course of the year. However, an effective lesson, taken by a permanent teacher covering an absence, ensured some good skills development. Thorough preparation by the teacher, and good basic teaching skills, helped pupils to successfully explore and extend their awareness of the significance of facial features in masks and sculptures from a range of cultures. Pupils used their observation skills well and selected visual information carefully in the development of their own sketchwork. During this lesson, pupils achieved standards above those seen in previous work.
104. There have been changes to the curriculum effective from September 2000 and the co-ordinator is new to the role. As a result, the subject is starting to see some effective and energetic leadership. The co-ordinator has successfully drawn up an overall plan of how the curriculum fits together, showing how knowledge and skills are developed over time. The co-ordinator is planning further guidance on the purpose of sketchbooks and the display of pupils' artwork. She is aware of the need for staff training on the use of materials and techniques in order to raise standards and achieve greater consistency. However, the co-ordinator does not have the non-teaching time to work alongside other teachers, monitor the quality of teaching or use samples of work to assess standards.

More work is also required in identifying and challenging more-able pupils. Although there is planned use of information and communication technology in art, this is limited by the quality of the school's computer hardware and software. There are not enough reference books and artefacts in the school to help teachers and pupils in researching projects.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards seen during the last inspection have been maintained throughout the school. Pupils aged 11 in Year 6 achieve levels of attainment in line with national expectations. Those aged 12 in Year 7 attain above average standards. Staffing difficulties in Year 7 have not affected this subject, because it has been taught by two of the school's permanent teachers. There are significant strengths in planning and organisation, which assist teachers in preparing thoroughly for lessons, ensuring appropriate standards and learning over time.
106. Pupils demonstrate good skills and knowledge of techniques and materials through a range of well-designed projects. Their approach to the subject is good. Throughout the school they take care and pride in presentation, and pay careful attention to the finished quality of their work. For example, working models of carnival floats demonstrate effective use of mechanisms, good construction techniques and careful decoration. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in planning and evaluating their work. There are significant strengths in food technology projects in Year 7. Pupils skilfully plan and evaluate every step in the project, which culminates in making pizzas for a formal lunch with invited guests. Nothing is left to chance and pupils maturely take full responsibility for planning and organising all aspects of the meal. In the lesson involving making the pizzas, standards were above expectations with pupils clearly focused on the task and responding well to the challenge. The finished pizzas and salads looked very appetising and professional. The proof was definitely in the tasting the following lunchtime when very little was left uneaten.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Effective learning is promoted through well planned and delivered lessons, which have a strong focus on ensuring pupils are clear about what is expected of them. In lessons, teachers provide good support and carefully monitor how pupils are getting on. They provide good quality advice, ensuring a clear focus on designing for a purpose and producing a well-finished object. In the Year 7 pizza preparation lesson, the teacher demonstrated very good specialist knowledge of materials and techniques. This coupled with high quality teaching skills, very effective pupil management and efficient organisation, ensured achievement of high standards and a very positive response from pupils. A significant factor was the quality of teamwork, co-operation and collaboration amongst the groups of pupils. The teacher's very clear expectations ensured pupils worked safely, maturely and very efficiently. The atmosphere was that of a very well run and organised commercial fast food restaurant. This was due to the teacher courageously standing aside at pertinent moments, thus ensuring pupils had full responsibility.
108. The subject benefits from very effective leadership that drives all development. The co-ordinator has ensured the necessary changes to the school's policy and guidance to staff to implement national changes to the curriculum. The strength of the planning and assessment is responsible for promoting good teaching and learning. However, there is not enough focus on identifying and challenging more-able pupils to ensure they produce work of a significantly higher standard and complexity. The co-ordinator has had time to work alongside teachers and monitor the quality of teaching in the past, but this is currently an under-developed aspect of the role.

## GEOGRAPHY

109. Attainment is above the standards expected nationally of 11-year-olds and by the end of Year 7. It has improved since the last inspection. More-able pupils are challenged more consistently to apply and extend their skills, knowledge and understanding. A high number of pupils are achieving above expected levels, especially in their use of mapping skills and in their knowledge and understanding of contrasting places and physical processes. Pupils are achieving high standards promoted by good quality teaching, particularly in Years 6 and 7. The school has organised an interesting curriculum, which provides good coverage of most required aspects and is supported by a good range of resources. This is supported through effective use of a good range of visits to encourage pupils to apply and extend their skills and knowledge. For example, a study of the River Glaven and a visit to West Runton allow pupils to apply their fieldwork skills successfully. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. Good quality teaching and support staff support them very effectively. Teachers ensure that learning resources are closely matched to pupils' learning needs.
110. Year 4 pupils develop their map-work skills soundly. They use a map of the local area to develop their knowledge of symbols and how to use a mapping key. This is built on successfully when pupils use a larger map of Norfolk to prepare for a visit to the village of Horsham St. Faith. Most locate a place on the map accurately by using four-figure references. They use the key successfully to identify symbols, for example those for a railway station and church. Some more-able pupils identify the symbol for a river and locate and name the Norfolk Broads. Year 6 pupils extend these skills very successfully by using a map and an aerial photograph of the valley of the River Glaven. They use their observational and mapping skills very effectively to identify and correctly name specific river features, for example 'meander' and 'tributary'. A more-able pupil locates where the tributary meets the main river. He shows a good understanding of geographical terminology by describing it as the 'confluence' of the two rivers. All pupils confidently use four-figure map coordinates. More-able pupils show an increasing competence in locating places accurately using six-figure references. Year 6 pupils show good atlas skills to build up their knowledge of the main physical and human features of countries in the United Kingdom, Europe and the other continents.
111. Years 4 and 5 pupils have a good understanding of how their lives differ from those of people living in Antarctica or in an Indian village. They know that their weather is very different from the weather in this country, especially in the range of temperatures. Many understand how this makes people's lives very different from their own; for example, in the importance of drinking water. Older pupils develop a good understanding of contrasting places. Year 7 pupils have a good factual knowledge about France. They know the main cities and physical features. Through the effective use of climate-graphs, many know that the range of climate from the English Channel coast to the Mediterranean is greater than that in England. Their knowledge is extended effectively through the study of Tunisia. Many have a good understanding of the main features of the Sahara Desert and the effects of increasing 'desertification'. Some more-able pupils use their literacy skills successfully to give a detailed written account of how the desert is spreading. Most Year 7 pupils build on the good achievements earlier in the school by extending their mapping skills successfully. They have a good understanding of latitude and longitude and use it well to locate countries accurately on a world map. They know that contours are used to show height on a map. They draw accurate contour maps to show mapping features, such as a hill or steep slope. However, Year 7 pupils' knowledge and skills in investigating environmental issues are not developed enough.



112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is very good in Years 6 and 7 and contributes significantly to high standards of attainment. Teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiastic approach encourage pupils to become actively involved in their learning. The use of a well-planned curriculum, supported by a good range of visits to local places of geographical interest, enables pupils to build successfully on prior skills and knowledge. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and use it effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the teacher used her good geographical knowledge of the local area to promote pupils' understanding of the reasons for the original settlement in Norwich. She then used questions successfully to enable pupils to think of other reasons for settling in an area. The teacher extended pupils' knowledge by challenging them to think of other types of settlement and place them into order of size. This enabled pupils to gain a greater understanding of the range of settlement and the possible reasons for their development. It also enhanced their knowledge and use of specific geographical terms, such as 'conurbation'.
113. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work, to which the pupils readily respond. Pupils enjoy becoming actively involved and take responsibility for developing their learning. Their enthusiastic response and keenness to achieve what they have been asked to complete promote high standards. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used a very good range of photographic and mapping resources to challenge pupils to complete as many tasks as possible in the time available. The teacher prepared additional resources for the more-able pupils to ensure that "everybody will always have something to do!" All pupils settled enthusiastically and worked very effectively in their groups to complete a significant amount of detailed and accurate work. The teacher used regular reminders of the time target to ensure that the pace of the activity was maintained. Very effective use was made of the support staff to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were fully involved. They all achieved some good work.
114. The subject is managed effectively, which contributes to raising standards. The co-ordinator provides good direction to the development of the subject within the school. She has used national subject guidance to make appropriate changes in the curriculum topics. These have improved the coverage and development of skills and knowledge. They have also improved the range of methods by which pupils record their work, which was a weakness reported in the last inspection. The co-ordinator monitors samples of pupils' work, although has not evaluated the quality of teaching. She has introduced some aspects of information and communication technology (ICT), for example CD-ROMs, to support pupils' research skills. However, ICT is not yet sufficiently developed within geography.

## **HISTORY**

115. Standards in history have been maintained since the last inspection. They are in line with those normally expected by the age of 11, in Year 6, and age 12, in Year 7. Pupils in all year groups achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are given good additional support in class and tasks are suitably adapted to their literacy ability. They are generally well motivated by the content of the lessons and make satisfactory progress. Their attainment is good in relation to their ability.
116. By the age of 11 pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the history topics they have studied. They know that history can be divided up into different periods and identify similarities and differences between the periods studied. They give reasons for and effects of the main events studied. They have a good understanding of chronology. In Year 4, there are appropriate links with literacy, for example, in lessons

researching aspects of Roman life. Writing and research are well organised through the use of key questions so that the pupils direct their reading and writing appropriately. In Year 5, pupils use textbooks, primary source writing and photographs of Henry VIII to analyse with skill and understanding what each source could tell them. Year 6 study the World War II years in depth. Written tasks include some good work on the evaluation of propaganda and personal reflections on what life would be like in the air-raid shelters or as evacuees. Pupils demonstrate a sound factual knowledge and understanding of the reasons for the war and the social and economic changes that occurred in family life from 1930-53.

117. In Year 7, pupils develop a good understanding of the history and culture of the black peoples of America, with a particular focus on the slave trade. They empathise well with the difficulties that slaves would have had to bear and communicate them in diary form. A scrutiny of their work shows a good use of time-lines and personal research in all of the eras studied. Pupils use a good variety of ways to communicate findings, appropriate to the task. For example, through tables, maps and letters regarding the motive and events of the peasants' revolt in Medieval times. Their work from maps of Britain, and the world, and aerial photographs, links well with geographical mapping skills. Literacy skills are extended and practised in the wide variety of written tasks, such as in stories of the era studied, personal diaries, explanations, newspaper articles, writing from reference work or personal interpretation of various historical resources. Map coordinates, graphs and tables suitably reinforce work in mathematics.
118. Teaching and learning are good overall. The teachers' level of knowledge and understanding is good and enables them to present history in a lively and imaginative way whilst ensuring that the curriculum is properly covered. It is effectively planned across the year groups so that it ensures equality of access and challenge for all pupils according to their ability. Teachers ensure that history is both relevant and exciting by taking pupils on visits whenever possible. For example, they take pupils to the Tollhouse Gaol for a Roman topic. Teachers organise stimulating theme days for each of the Years 5 to 7, when pupils re-enact aspects of the era, for example Year 5 dress up as Tudors, or take part in activities related to the historical period being studied, such as 'Bertie's Blitz'. Aspects of the good teaching seen include clear explanations, good interaction with the pupils, brisk pace, the ability to extend pupils' suggestions and ideas and the provision of appropriate resources. Teachers have good organisation and management skills. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They respond positively showing increasing responsibility as they mature. Towards the upper end of the school pupils are motivated to find out for themselves. They do the research conscientiously, quickly and quietly, organising themselves and often working collaboratively. Pupils use computers for research, but at the moment the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. With the support of learning assistants, pupils with statements of special education need and lower ability pupils can access and work upon material at suitable levels of literacy skills. Lesson planning now takes account of those pupils of high ability, who are given extra challenges to extend their historical thinking.
119. The school has responded positively to the issues raised at the last inspection. Clear leadership and guidance by the subject co-ordinator have resulted in the development of well structured planning. This has taken into account the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000. The headteacher ensures that there is full coverage of the school's history curriculum. The subject co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and medium term planning well, to ensure that there is sufficient depth of study and that historical skills are taught progressively. Although classroom observations of teaching and learning have been made in the past, the co-ordinator has not recently had time to monitor classroom practice effectively enough. Assessments are made at the end of each unit of work, but

are recorded by individual teachers in various ways. The school has plans to develop assessment sheets that will provide more consistent information across the whole school and will better inform future lesson planning. Resources for history are adequate.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Overall, and in spite of resourcing difficulties, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school is currently experiencing significant difficulties with its equipment, which is unsatisfactory for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). The main network is antiquated and unreliable, with software which requires updating. A number of the second-hand computers in the classrooms and library do not meet expected, multimedia specifications. Although a satisfactory range of learning experiences is properly planned for the pupils throughout all year groups, the teaching of ICT can often be affected when systems break down. A number of pupils also commented on these problems and on the contrast in quality between the computers they have at home and those at school.
121. However, the governors and senior management have been prudent in their recognition of the problem and in budgeting for improvement. As part of the school's very good development planning for the subject, and its bid for National Grid for Learning funding, a new network, connected to the Internet, should be installed for the start of the 2001/02 academic year. All pupils will then have the regular, timetabled ICT lessons they currently lack. Under the present circumstances, the co-ordinator has worked hard to provide pupils with the specialist teaching demanded by the National Curriculum. Inspection evidence from lessons, and samples of pupil work, show that all subjects, with the exception of modern foreign languages and physical education, make some contribution to ICT through normal classroom work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the Learning Support Centre is particularly effective.
122. Standards of work seen for pupils aged 11 in Year 6, and those aged 12 in Year 7, are average. Their achievement is satisfactory. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is also satisfactory.
123. By Year 6, for example, pupils show a sound familiarity with the range of programs available. They understand how to use program menus and icons to control events on-screen. Keyboard and mouse are used properly in combination. They can describe and explain what they are doing with confidence. In one specialist lesson, there was very good achievement by a range of pupils from those with special educational needs to the gifted and talented. Here, all pupils made very good progress in writing a short program of commands to create a series of geometric shapes on the screen. The excitement, pride and sharing of their success also made a very good contribution to their spiritual and social development. In Year 7, there is sound use of word-processing to support literacy. For example, pupils make appropriate choices of fonts, colour and special effects to enhance their work. Proper attention is paid to layout, headings and paragraphing in its presentation.
124. In other subjects, pupils develop their information and communication technology skills effectively. For example, particularly good use is made of ICT in science for recording purposes, to log data and in the use of sensors. In mathematics, pupils make sound use of spreadsheets to produce graphs. In design and technology, there is sound and developing work involving the use of systems to control events, such as traffic lights. In history and religious education, there is sound use of CD-ROMs for individual and pair research work. In geography, there is good use of data collection, use of databases and digital photographs from fieldwork trips.

125. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory at both key stages and pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. There was some excellent specialist teaching seen from the co-ordinator in Year 6, which resulted in very good learning and progress for the pupils involved. This led to some significant levels of challenge being offered to the pupils through questions, which focused them on thinking through problems for themselves. The teacher's personal subject knowledge and expertise underpinned the learning and pupils recognised that she had a great deal to offer them. She explains targets for the lesson clearly and checks pupils' understanding. Working relationships between this teacher, support assistant and the pupils are also excellent and encourage pupils to become self-motivated. However, learning in the lesson was affected because, the network started to fail towards the end of the lesson. Work could not be printed off or saved to disk because the system overloaded.
126. The co-ordinator's leadership of the subject is very good. Two governors with professional ICT experience and expertise ably support her. Together, they have developed a practical and achievable schedule for the development of the subject, and the school is determined to ensure improvement. A programme of staff training has been identified and two teachers have already achieved additional qualifications in computing. New procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are being developed. However, the tracking and recording of the pupils' use of computers by class teachers are variable. There is some good practice, but overall improvement is required to more effectively inform the co-ordinator's monitoring of the subject.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - FRENCH**

127. By the time they leave the school at the age of 12, pupils attain the expected standards in French. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and achieve a satisfactory level of competency in all aspects of the language. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress for their abilities.
128. Higher attaining pupils make good gains because teachers reinforce new learning very effectively through repeated questions. The teacher is very quick to recognise any difficulties. Demonstrations of the correct use of new words and phrases are more effective because the teacher encourages pupils to participate. Some lack confidence in giving directions in French, but others help them to become more fluent by quickly supplying more expansive phrases to help their friends. When working in pairs, pupils show that they understand their task and they are able to give more extended, accurate instructions because they are more relaxed. The teacher's skilful questioning enables pupils to extend their knowledge of French grammar, but without an undue emphasis or concentration on, for example, getting the gender right. Helping pupils to relax and concentrate on speaking lines with rhythm helps them to increase their knowledge of irregular verbs. Learning becomes fun as they listen carefully when the teacher corrects their pronunciation of words, or checks successfully on their recall of when, or when not, to sound the 's' at the end of a word. Pupils insert words correctly into spaces in their homework exercise and read out the sentences with an acceptable accent. They write conversations in their books and achieve a good dialogue with sensible use of several questions and answers.
129. Lower attaining pupils increase their comprehension skills because the teacher uses 'quick fire' questions very effectively to encourage them to think quickly and attempt an answer. However, the questions are selected carefully so that no one should fail. Pupils build up their skills in giving directions on a street map because the teacher encourages them to use clues for left and right and makes it fun when someone makes an error, so that there is no sense of failure. The teacher builds up pupils' confidence effectively by showing them they have been using irregular verbs in conversation. The written work

given to pupils is well matched to their abilities. Pupils have a good knowledge of days, months and numbers. They count to 100 in 10s and know that there are 50 francs in £5.00. Pupils name animals they see in pictures and show that they have acquired a valuable, relevant vocabulary. There is a good balance of French and English in all lessons, but explanations and instructions are given in English to ensure that all understand.

130. Pupils like French and are eager to do well. They listen attentively, concentrating well. Pupils are well motivated because the teachers' high expectations are clear. Pupils in the lower attaining group watch so carefully that they are not 'tricked' by the teacher's false clues when they are moving around the room to match words to places. They enjoy the challenge so much that they ask, "Can we do it again?"
131. The quality of teaching is good and often very good although, because of unavoidable changes in staff over the year, it has not been possible to maintain the same high level of consistency in all three groups. Teachers plan work for their groups well and organise several different activities in the lessons, which enable pupils to practise their French and improve their listening skills. Resources are used well. For example, the previous weekend's visit to France is reinforced very well by the video of Boulogne. This reinforces the words used to describe the places they saw. Simple labelling of places is extended to answering questions with a simple sentence. For instance, "Is this a hotel?" followed by, "No, it is a bank". Pupils recognise incorrect statements and respond very appropriately.
132. Pupils confirm that they used French words and phrases when on their trip to Boulogne. "I asked for cherries and I got cherries", exclaims one pupil in an excited voice. Pupils improve their understanding of French customs, language and money following their visit. The high quality display and booklet prepared for the visit demonstrate the precision of teachers' planning and organisation of the visit and how every opportunity for learning is maximised.
133. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements to the quality of the curriculum, which is now good and has good guidelines for teachers. The co-ordinator has ensured that more time is now given to the study of French so that pupils are able to build on their skills consistently, and in sufficient depth. The subject is now well established and there is a good foundation for the teaching and learning of French in the school. All the issues raised at the last inspection have been resolved.

## MUSIC

134. Standards for pupils aged 11, in Year 6, are above average. Their achievement is good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were average. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is also good.
135. Throughout Years 4 to 6, the curriculum is well balanced and planned to enable the development of the key skills involved in composing, performing, listening and appraising. This grounding is well established in Year 4 where, for example, pupils develop improvised sequences of rhythmic ideas using 'clap, slap and (vocal) click' sounds using groups of beats up to seven. There is good co-ordination in class performance. By Year 5, pupils are very familiar with a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, including keyboards. They explore and experiment with sounds with confidence, for example when composing a military march. Scores are well recorded, using symbol notation, and are properly referred to in practice and performance. This leads to good co-operation and control in performance with pupils following their 'conductor' well. They are positive in their comments concerning each other's work in

class reviews of learning at the end of lessons. By Year 6 these critical and analytical skills are well developed and confirm the high standard of listening skills. This also enables pupils to develop and create effective 'mood', for example, in their compositions to represent 'Rain Forest' sounds. Through the work scrutiny, there is also sound evidence for research work on, for example, classical pieces such as *Carmen* and *Swan Lake*.

136. Standards and achievement for pupils aged 12, in Year 7, are satisfactory overall. However, pupils appear to have reached a plateau in their learning, hence the apparent decline between key stages. Whilst the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have been retained from Year 6, further progress has been restricted. This is largely caused by the long-term absence of the music co-ordinator with a consequent lack of specialist teaching for this particular year group. The staffing difficulty has meant that the pupils have mainly been taught music by a series of non-specialist temporary teachers.
137. Little singing was heard during the inspection. In assemblies, the quality of hymn singing was variable. Again, there was a lack of specialist direction. Pupils sing in unison and in tune, but the actual volume of sound can be weak. However, opportunities for quality instrumental teaching by visiting specialists are good. The progress made by older pupils who are new to brass instruments is particularly impressive and their new skills are used to good effect in lessons. Pupils from all year groups play in the school orchestra, using keyboard, recorders and strings. When the orchestra rehearsed and played in assembly, the quality of performance was very good and confirmed the standard of instrumental tuition. Members of the orchestra also take responsibility for their own learning in rehearsals in the absence of the music co-ordinator. Levels of maturity and co-operation here are high, with a pupil on keyboard acting as 'director of music'.
138. Teaching, learning and pupils' attitudes to the subject are all good overall in Years 4 to 6. Some very good teaching and learning are to be seen with the older pupils in Year 6. Since the last inspection, the previous co-ordinator undertook significant in-service training with staff. Non-specialist teachers have consequently become much more confident about the teaching of music. Learning is good because lessons are well organised and managed. There are good levels of co-operation and trust between teachers, pupils and learning support assistants. Teachers share objectives clearly with the pupils at the start of lessons and evaluate learning well when they review performances at the end. Pupils therefore understand how they need to develop their personal skills in order to make progress. Group work is effectively monitored and assessed, confidence building is good and the time available in lessons used effectively.
139. Overall, the inspection evidence shows that the music teaching provided for Year 7, during the current school year, has been satisfactory and that pupil learning and attitudes are also satisfactory. However, some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Year 7 from a temporary non-specialist teacher, with some consequent unsatisfactory learning. The lesson was inadequately prepared and relied too much on a video. Teaching time was not managed as effectively as in other year groups. In spite of this, when they were finally allowed access to instruments to create a soundtrack to a science fiction video clip, the pupils' approach was positive, sensible and confirmed their standards were in line with expectations for Year 7.
140. The co-ordinator's absence means that the management of the subject in Year 7 requires some improvement to ensure that standards are raised to the levels achieved by Year 6. This is a concern that is actively shared by the headteacher, who is working hard to ensure that the pupils get a fair deal. The contribution of the subject to information and communication technology is limited by the current lack of hardware and software.

Resources are mainly satisfactory, but the school requires more keyboards to improve its collection of tuned instruments.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

141. Attainment is broadly in line with the standards expected nationally of 11-year-olds and at the end of Year 7. Standards are similar to those reported at the last inspection, particularly in the development of pupils' games skills. Attainment in gymnastics is lower, caused mainly by the long-term absence of the subject co-ordinator, who had a particular interest and expertise in this aspect. Standards in swimming in Years 4, 5 and 6 are above nationally expected levels. Pupils benefit from using the facilities of the adjoining high school regularly and from the very good subject knowledge of the instructor. Pupils who are less confident in the water have extra weekly sessions and standards are improving. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress overall in developing their skills and knowledge. They make good improvement when good teaching enables them to systematically practise their skills and then apply them successfully in a competitive group activity. Pupils have enthusiastic and positive attitudes to physical activities. They are keen to participate and improve their skills. This contributes to the standard of performance.
142. Year 4 pupils use a sound range of travelling, jumping and rolling movements when developing a gymnastic sequence on the floor and on the apparatus. Many show good control, for example, when travelling up an inclined bench. Most are unable to sustain this level of control when jumping from the apparatus and landing on the mat. Most complete travelling and rolling movements successfully, although they do not co-ordinate and link the different movements together effectively. Pupils' gymnastic skills are built on soundly in Year 7. Most show a good range of movements when linking their sequence together, for example, when moving on to and off the bench. However, many are unable to control their landings when jumping from the bench. This restricts the quality of their performance. Some pupils are aware of the need to improve their control, although they do not evaluate their sequences effectively. This does not enable them to identify weaknesses in their own performances and those of others and limits the standards attained.
143. Pupils' games and athletic skills are developed soundly. Teachers use a good range of resources to enable pupils to practise and extend throwing and catching skills. Most Year 6 pupils catch confidently with two hands showing the correct technique to receive short throws. These are extended successfully in Year 7 when pupils adjust hand technique and body position to receive both high and low throws. They improve their fielding skills through the effective practice of specific skills; for example, the 'long barrier' technique in cricket and rounders. Striking skills are not so consistently well developed. A small number of pupils hit the ball confidently, either with a cricket or rounders bat. Most do not have sufficient control or use the correct technique to strike the ball consistently. Throwing skills in athletics are soundly developed. Year 5 pupils throw the ball effectively for distance. A few are beginning to use the correct technique to show the difference between 'putting' and 'throwing' in preparation for athletic events. Most Year 6 pupils have a sound technique for making a standing jump. They use their arms effectively to enable them to achieve more power and spring. Many extend this technique and successfully complete a running jump.
144. Year 5 pupils achieve above average standards in swimming. Most pupils are competent and confident swimmers. They demonstrate good technique in both front and back crawl strokes and show sound fitness levels in completing several widths of the pool. Most of the small number of pupils who have yet to achieve their first attainment certificate show increasing water confidence. They are beginning to develop an effective leg-stroke

technique. The school makes good use of attainment certificates to recognise achievement. Pupils are keen to be seen to succeed and they work hard to try to achieve the next award.

145. Teaching and learning are sound overall. Teaching was sound in five out of the eight lessons observed. It was very good in two lessons and unsatisfactory in one lesson. The quality of teaching enables pupils' skills to be soundly developed, although not consistently extended in all lessons. Teachers manage their classes successfully to encourage an enthusiastic approach by their pupils. Where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, and plan detailed and clearly structured lessons. These enable pupils to practise their skills and then use them effectively in both co-operative and competitive group activities. The teacher ensures that the lesson pace is brisk and that all pupils extend their skills as much as possible. For example, in a Year 6 games lesson, the teacher made very effective use of timed targets to ensure that pupils made full use of the time to practise their skills. The organised activities successfully allowed pupils to develop their individual skills, such as throwing and catching with a partner. Pupils remained interested and were kept fully involved by frequent changes of the practice, for example changing the distance and direction. The teacher had high expectations of pupils, shown by the way he challenged them to organise themselves into a group activity, which allowed them to apply these skills. They responded very positively and all groups ensured that every member had equal chances to bat, bowl and field. Such high expectations and good organisation promote very good development of pupils' skills.
146. Teachers do not consistently ask pupils to evaluate their own performance or that of others. They do not effectively involve pupils in identifying which skills and techniques are in need of further improvement. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used demonstrations by pupils successfully to show the range of different movements being used in the gymnastic sequence. Praise was suitably used to reward achievement. The teacher did not require pupils to identify which parts of the sequence were good and which movements could be improved. This did not enable them to evaluate how they could raise the standard of their work, and consequently limited attainment. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not organise the lesson efficiently to enable pupils to have sufficient time to practise their athletic skills. Too much time was taken up in explaining what was required and in ensuring that pupils went to their correct positions on the track. This left very little time for pupils to apply their baton-changing skills and little was achieved.
147. The school provides a sound range of sports clubs and extra-curricular activities, which contributes to standards of attainment. Competitive matches are arranged with other local schools in football, netball, cricket, athletics and cross-country. Standards in dance are promoted by some pupils developing their performing skills in the recent school musical production. The development of the subject has been affected by the long-term absence of the subject co-ordinator. The temporary co-ordinator, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, has managed the subject soundly, for example by reviewing the curriculum. This has ensured a good balance between the different required aspects. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment have been established, although information is not consistently used to modify teaching plans. The development of procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and identify areas for improvement has been limited.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

148. Overall, standards for pupils aged 11 in Year 6, and those aged 12 in Year 7, are firmly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents some improvement since the last inspection when they were judged as 'at or just below' expectations. Pupil achievement and the progress made by pupils with special educational needs are good. Standards improve as pupils progress from Year 4. However, whilst, for example, they show a sound knowledge of the Hindu creation story their skills of interpretation and reflection are less well developed. Although they know both the Christian and Hindu stories, few identify any similarities or differences. However, their understanding of symbolism is starting to develop satisfactorily. Discussion with pupils shows they know key facts about major Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. By Year 6, pupils have a good background knowledge of Islam. They know, for example, about Muslim prayers, the use of prayer mats and the importance of facing Mecca. They can explain the importance of these, for example, in the way they reflect respect for Allah. Pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with concepts of faith and belief and, in one lesson, there were good levels of discussion about the Hadith (the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad '*pbuh*'<sup>15</sup>). In Year 7, this was extended in a sound exercise which related some of these sayings to the Five Pillars of Islam. The scrutiny of work also confirmed the older pupils' sensible and mature approach, for example, in developing their own 'Creed for Today'. Here, they were not afraid to write about important events in their lives, even those which might be deemed painful. This reflects the school's open, pastoral approach and the subject's very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
149. Teaching and learning are good at both key stages. They can be very good when the teaching shows a balanced approach to learning *from* the teachings of religion as well as learning facts and information *about* religion. Good use is also made of personal experience. For example, in a Year 7 class the teacher was able to explain some aspects of Muslim culture from the time when she lived in an Islamic country. Teachers are also prepared to share uncertainties; for example, in the grey area of interpretation of faith and belief. Learning is made interesting and relevant and, consequently, pupils' attitudes to religious education are good. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is also good and they are well supported by learning support assistants. The school takes the concept that all pupils should have equal access to learning very seriously. Support staff play a very valuable role in this. There is a good focus on discussion with open, questioning approaches. This allows and encourages pupils to express and share their own opinions. Some teachers write clear summary notes of points made by pupils on the board. However, sometimes the results of such discussions are lost as the pupils do not necessarily record the key points or those arising from their personal contributions. Overall, teachers take an open, practical and challenging approach to the subject. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils were encouraged to shake hands with each other in exploring the Muslim concept of 'forgiveness'. Pupils' awareness, as to how such a physical action cancels anger and resentment, was consequently raised.
150. The subject is very well led and managed by the headteacher as co-ordinator. The curriculum for religious education and the time available to teach it were issues at the last inspection. A great deal of work has been done in matching the school's scheme of work to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There has been good improvement and there is now enough curriculum time for the subject to be taught in appropriate depth. Assessment opportunities are satisfactorily built in to the teachers' planning, in line with locally agreed syllabus requirements. However, not all teachers keep sufficient records of

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<sup>15</sup> '*pbuh*' is an abbreviation of the Arabic logo-type or symbol composed of the words "salla-llahu alaihi wa alihi wa sallam" – peace and blessings of Allah upon him and his family. They are used in Islam, after the Prophet's name is mentioned or written, as a sign of respect.

pupils' attainment and progress in their markbooks, and some improvement is required in this respect. At present, the subject's use of information and communication technology is limited and library stocks require development to properly support independent learning and research, particularly for the older pupils. The school makes good use of its contacts with the local faith community, particularly Christian denominations. However, there are fewer opportunities locally for contacts with other faiths. Some interesting extended writing work arose from a visit by a Buddhist to Year 6. Again, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was effectively fostered through reflection on issues of excess and moderation. Contacts with parents are also encouraged and a Muslim parent is shortly to visit the school to support current work on Islam.