

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL

Leighton Buzzard

LEA area: Bedfordshire]

Unique reference number: 109655

Headteacher: Mrs A Swaby

Reporting inspector: Margaret Jones
5028

Dates of inspection: 29.04.02 - 02.05.02

Inspection number: 193102

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 Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Brooklands Drive
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU7 3PF

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Bishop

Date of previous inspection: 21.10.96

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| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
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| 5028 | Margaret Jones | Registered inspector | | <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> |
| 9545 | Kevin Greatorex | Lay inspector | | <p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> |
| 11830 | Jonathan Banks | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages | |
| 19957 | Latimer Blaylock | Team inspector | Religious education | |
| 122008 | David Bray | Team inspector | Music | |
| 2330 | Malcolm Brice | Team inspector | English | |
| 224012 | Valerie Sabin | Team inspector | Physical education | |
| 10327 | Philip Garnham | Team inspector | Science | |
| 15479 | Christopher Land | Team inspector | Geography | |
| 12968 | Jon Parker | Team inspector | <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Design and technology</p> | |
| 20533 | David Rogers | Team inspector | Art and design | |
| 22038 | Hilary Spurrier | Team inspector | <p>History</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p> | How well are pupils taught? |

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------|--|
| 15640 | David Thompson | Team inspector | Mathematics | How good are the curricular and other opportunities? |
| 11832 | Graham Matthews | Team inspector | Special educational needs | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Situated to the east of the town of Leighton Buzzard, Brooklands is a middle school for pupils aged 9 to 13. There are 454 pupils on roll, with 32 more boys than girls. After a period of falling numbers, due to demographic trends, the roll rose a little last year. Two fifths of all pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). This is well above the national average. Most of these pupils have low levels of literacy. The proportion of pupils who have statements of educational needs (2%) is in line with national figures. Four pupils have physical disabilities. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage; none receives extra support for English as an additional language. There are twelve children from Traveller families on roll who receive additional support. Pupils' standards of attainment on entry to the school are average and nearly 20 per cent of pupils have reading ages above their chronological age. The social and economic backgrounds of pupils are varied. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, one in eight, is broadly average. However, the school serves a large, socially-deprived housing estate and many pupils come from families where income levels are low. One pupil in every three comes from a single parent family and the movement of pupils into and out of the school in the course of a year is high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in helping the great majority of pupils to become caring, tolerant and confident teenagers by the time they transfer to upper school. It is less effective in promoting high standards of attainment. When compared with similar schools, pupils have achieved less well in national tests than the majority. However, standards of work seen in lessons are satisfactory and pupils make steady progress. Pupils do well in science, religious education and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but has some significant shortcomings in too many lessons. In approximately one lesson in every eight the teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils make insufficient progress. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching have not been adequately developed. Senior managers have been slow to use data to plan objectives for the school. Financial resources are effectively managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Creates a safe and secure, caring community that provides equality of opportunity for all;
- Encourages positive attitudes and very good behaviour through the pastoral and discipline system;
- Promotes the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils;
- Provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs;
- Provides a wide range of good quality learning opportunities supplemented by very good extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport.

What could be improved

- Standards in the national test results at age 11 and achievement in music, personal and social education, art in Years 5 and 6, and history for older pupils;
- Unsatisfactory teaching, which occurs in a higher proportion of lessons than is acceptable;
- The use of data for assessment, planning and setting objectives;
- The quality of development planning and more frequent review of plans by senior managers, to check they have been implemented;
- The quality of reports to parents.

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 October 1996. There were only two key issues for action. These were: making the work match the ability of pupils, and this has improved; and compliance with all

statutory requirements, which the school now does except for performance management. The full implementation of performance management was made difficult by a series of staffing shortages. Results in national tests at age 11 have improved, particularly in science. This rise has followed the national trend. The quality of teaching is less effective than reported in 1996: there are now more unsatisfactory lessons. The issue of lack preparation for life in a culturally diverse society, mentioned in the previous report, has not been tackled. Progress since the previous inspection has been too slow overall.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | Compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | All schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | B | E | D | D |
| mathematics | C | D | D | D |
| science | D | C | C | C |
| All subjects | C | D | D | D |

| Key | |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| Average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

When the average point scores of pupils are compared with all schools their results are below the national average for English and mathematics, and in line with the national average for science. This is because fewer pupils than usual are attaining higher levels of 5+, particularly in mathematics. Performance in English and mathematics, compared with results in similar schools, indicates a measure of underachievement. However, this comparison is based on the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals. Because Brooklands serves an area with some social disadvantage and has a larger than average number of pupils with special educational needs, this national comparison represents the school unfavourably.

Despite the above comparison, results in all core subjects were close to the national average in 2001. The trend of improvement is broadly in line with the national trend. Test results have improved consistently over the past three years and the school has received an achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills (DFES). Standards for pupils by the end of Year 8 are in line with those usually seen.

For pupils currently in the school, the inspection found that standards were broadly satisfactory. There is little difference between the attainment of boys or girls. Pupils do well in physical education. In relation to their prior attainment, they achieve sound standards in English and mathematics and make good progress in science. There are weaknesses in history for older pupils and in music in all years. Standards in art in Years 5 and 6 are below average due to disruption in staffing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum in all years. They make sound progress in reading, writing, spelling and number work. Children from Traveller families are well integrated and make good progress when they are in school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very positive; pupils show great interest and sustain high levels of |

| | |
|--|--|
| | concentration. They enjoy coming to school and take pride in their work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good; virtually all pupils demonstrate high standards of behaviour with negligible levels of disruption. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good; pupils work co-operatively together and with adults. They demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding of others. There are many opportunities for older pupils to show initiative and take responsibility but fewer opportunities for younger pupils outside the classroom. |
| Attendance | In line with national average; negligible unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual in coming to school and are eager and ready to learn. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Years 5 – 6 | Years 7 – 8 |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Quality of teaching | Unsatisfactory | Satisfactory |

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory or better in eight lessons in every nine; very good or better in one lesson in seven, with two excellent lessons seen; and less than satisfactory in nearly one lesson in eight. Teaching was better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. There are shortcomings in the quality of teaching spread over several subjects and there are too many unsatisfactory lessons. In Years 7 and 8, the teaching of English and science is good and the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. Teaching in art is consistently good. The majority of teaching is good or better in geography, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education. Literacy and numeracy are well taught across the school. Strengths in teaching include setting clear objectives, a variety of activities, high expectations and good management of pupils. The main weaknesses include poor planning, ineffective use of time and undemanding activities for pupils. Homework is not used well to consolidate learning.. In several subjects, there is a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a broad range of subjects with good opportunities for all pupils to participate. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport. Good use is made of contributions from the community. The use of computers is increasing. There is too little time for design and technology for Years 7 and 8. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Very good. Pupils make good progress and in most lessons their needs are met well. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision is made for their social and moral development. Cultural development is satisfactory. However, the school does not do enough to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society and the provision of personal and social education is unsatisfactory. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Very good. Heads of Year and assistants effectively promote the welfare, health and safety of pupils in a caring and secure environment. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | Child- protection procedures are effective, and systems for monitoring and promoting attendance and good behaviour are very good. There is too little use made of assessment to plan the delivery of the curriculum. |
|--|--|

The school works effectively with most parents. It provides regular newsletters but the homework diary is not used consistently as a means of communication. Reports provide insufficient information on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy give a clear direction in establishing an inclusive, learning community. There is a shared commitment to raise standards. Co-ordination of provision for special educational needs is good. There is no system of line management through from subject areas to the management team. Senior managers have not put into place rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities and are highly supportive of the school. However, they are not sufficiently critical of the shortcomings in the leadership and management of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Unsatisfactory. There is little formal classroom observation and the quality of development planning to improve standards is weak. The school has been slow to use data to help with planning. The school has started to use help provided by the LEA. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. Spending on SEN is supplemented from the school's own budget. Accommodation is good and well maintained. Teachers are well qualified but the school has been experiencing a shortage of specialist staff which has affected standards. Learning resources are adequate and have been enhanced by new computers. The school gives careful consideration to value for money when securing goods and services. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Parents feel pupils make good progress • School helps children to become more mature • School provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work to be done at home • Better information about how their children are getting on • The school to work more closely with parents |

Inspection findings confirm parents' feelings both in things that the school does well and areas that parents would like improved. Homework is not monitored consistently. There is not enough information about progress in annual reports. However, opportunities are arranged for parents to discuss their child's progress annually and this is supplemented by good informal access.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

Standards on entry

- 1 In recent years, the attainment of pupils entering Brooklands Middle School in Year 5 has been broadly average. Results from national tests taken at the end of Year 2 in lower schools have been slightly above the national average, but there is evidence from the lower schools to indicate that progress slows after these tests are taken. Reading tests taken soon after entry into Year 5 show low scores for a third of pupils and a larger number of pupils than is usual have special educational needs. However, nearly a fifth of pupils have reading ages above their chronological age.

Performance in National tests

- 2 At the end of Year 6 in 2001, standards in national tests taken in English and mathematics were just one percentage point below the national average, while science results were in line with the national average. There was no significant girl/boy difference. Results in national tests have improved over the last three years in line with the improving national trend. Since 1999 results in English have improved by fifteen per cent, mathematics by eight per cent and science by twenty one per cent. The school has received an Achievement award from the DFES for the continued improvements in results.

Test performance when compared with other schools

- 3 In comparison with all schools, the average point score for pupils in English and mathematics is below average. This is due to fewer pupils than usual achieving the higher levels in national tests. Results for science are in line with the national average. When compared with schools in similar social circumstances, standards are below the national average in English and mathematics but it is in line with the national average in science. Similar schools are grouped according to the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals. Because Brooklands Middle School serves an area of some social disadvantage and has a larger than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the national comparison presents the school unfavourably.

Standards for pupils who are currently in the school

- 4 Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and reach sound standards by the end of Year 8. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or between the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Children from Traveller families have work specially prepared for them because many have low levels of literacy. They make good progress when they attend school. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress in ICT, physical education, religious education and English in Years 7 and 8. They make unsatisfactory progress in art and design, history and French. The summary below is based on standards observed in lessons during the inspection and on a scrutiny of pupils' work produced during the school year. Standards in subjects are described in greater detail in Part D of this report.
- 5 In English, standards are in line with those expected at the end of Years 6 and 8.

Pupils who enter the school with reading skills that are below average develop well and most are reading competently by the time they leave. Speaking and listening skills are sound, although some pupils do not speak with sufficient volume or clarity. Standards of writing are more accurate than usual, due to the school's emphasis on the learning and testing of spelling. Pupils with special educational needs are given sufficient support to ensure they make good progress.

- 6 In mathematics, standards of work seen in lessons is better than the results in the national test results would indicate. Pupils make steady progress in their understanding of mathematical topics. By the end of Year 6 they achieve standards in line with those normally seen. Pupils in the higher ability groups do very well and achieve standards better than average. Pupils continue to make sound progress across Years 7 and 8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in these years. They are well integrated into their classes and well supported.
- 7 In science, pupils attain the level expected by the end of Year 6. They acquire good knowledge of a range of scientific concepts but their skills of investigation are less well developed. By the end of Year 8, pupils make good progress and achieve above what is expected in relation to their prior attainment.
- 8 In other subjects, standards are above expectation in religious education and physical education for pupils in Years 7 and 8. In both subjects, pupils make good progress from average standards in Year 6. Standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects, apart from history in Years 7 and 8, art and design in Years 5 and 6 and music across the school, where standards are below average.
- 9 Attainment in the skills of literacy is sound overall. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers or to each other; this helps them to increase their understanding of the lessons. This is particularly the case in art, English, history and physical education. Speaking skills mostly match levels normally found and are sometimes better, as many pupils speak willingly in mathematics, religious education and science and answer questions confidently, such as in geography, with good recall of facts.
- 10 Basic reading skills are about average for many of the younger pupils but, although progress in reading is made, not all pupils fully extract meaning from their texts, especially if some deduction is required. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in reading.
- 11 Writing reaches a satisfactory standard. Emphasis throughout the school on accuracy of spelling makes a good contribution, as in English and French. Older and higher attaining pupils develop their writing in factual, persuasive and personal styles, including writing in poetical forms as opportunities arise. The quality of much written presentation is above the average, and computers are often used to help with writing or presentation. Some higher-attaining pupils have good desktop publishing skills.
- 12 Standards of numeracy are average. In mathematics lessons, Year 6 pupils cancel fractions but do not yet fully understand ratio. There are examples of the use and application of number in some other subjects. For example, pupils produce accurate speed graphs and measure precisely in science. They also interpret information well in geography by producing high quality charts and diagrams.
- 13 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the curriculum in all years. They make particularly good progress in reading, writing, spelling and number work. Pupils are keen to produce work that is legible and neat and they take

care with their handwriting and spelling. They develop confidence with their reading and participate fully in lessons where they work co-operatively with others in pairs or small groups.

- 14 Targets set for national tests at age 11 for 2002 are virtually the same as those set for 2001. However, they are challenging when compared with the levels predicted by tests taken by pupils on entry to the school. In 2001, the school narrowly fell short of meeting its targets.
- 15 Less than a quarter of parents completed the questionnaire but the great majority who expressed an opinion indicated that they believe their children make good progress at the school. The inspection found that in most subjects pupils make steady progress and learn well. Exceptions were in history, where pupils are not given enough support to develop more advanced skills, and in French, where more- able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in Years 7 and 8.
- 16 In 1996 results in national tests at age 11 were in line with national averages in English and mathematics and they still are. Results in science were below average but they have improved and are now better than results in English and mathematics. The proportion gaining the higher levels is still below the national average in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 17 The very positive attitudes pupils have to school and their work, the very high standards of behaviour and the very good relationships throughout the school are major strengths. They have a positive effect on the quality of learning.
- 18 Virtually all pupils have positive attitudes to the school and their work, as they confirmed during discussions. They show great interest in what they are asked to do and apply themselves very well to their work. Pupils sustain high levels of concentration because most teachers plan tasks that motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing good work and are keen to share their results with others. The maturity of the pupils is demonstrated by the way they listen and respond to each other in the school council.
- 19 Behaviour is very good. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils show high standards of behaviour. This is well illustrated by the exemplary way that pupils move from morning registration to the hall for the daily assembly. They act in an extremely mature manner at break-times, playing in an extremely friendly manner. Pupils move around the corridors and locker areas in a very orderly manner and have a clear understanding of the standards expected of them. In lessons, behaviour is consistently very good and almost all pupils conform to the high expectations, even when not closely supervised. However, in a very few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, a small number of pupils display disruptive behaviour.
- 20 The number of exclusions continues to be high, demonstrating that any incidence of continuously unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property.
- 21 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils form very constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively together, demonstrating

that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others, as demonstrated by the applause during the assemblies. Virtually all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. They consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others. Minority groups are very well integrated.

- 22 Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. While it is very good for the older pupils, the number of opportunities for the younger pupils is more limited. Where the school continues to provide a wide range of opportunities for the older pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, the pupils demonstrate that the trust is well placed. Virtually all children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within the classroom. The meetings of the school council are very effective in promoting maturity and initiative. As pupils progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged. Older pupils act as monitors in a number of activities around the school. They act as buddies for the pupils in Year 5 when they start at the school. All pupils are involved in fund raising for charities.
- 23 Attendance continues to be broadly in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Virtually all pupils are punctual and many arrive early. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 24 The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6. It is satisfactory for Years 7 and 8, but it is inconsistent across the school as a whole. It was satisfactory or better in eight lessons in every nine; very good or better in one lesson in seven, with two excellent lessons seen. Twelve lessons were less than satisfactory, eleven unsatisfactory and one poor. The unsatisfactory teaching was spread across a number of different subject areas. Teachers possess good skills but there are too many unsatisfactory lessons, especially where teachers are working outside of their specialist subject area.
- 25 There is a close link between the quality of teaching and the quality of learning. Pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory overall. It is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. The very good attitudes pupils have towards learning have a positive impact on the progress they make. Attitudes and behaviour were good or better in just over three-quarters of the lessons seen. Where learning is good, the teacher harnesses pupils' enthusiasm and enables them to achieve. In the lessons where learning is unsatisfactory, pupils' interest is not captured and poor use of time restricts the learning.
- 26 The best lessons are planned thoroughly, with clear objectives which are shared with the pupils: lessons are carefully organised and the pupils' learning is managed appropriately. For example, in a well-structured, Year 8 mathematics lesson about polygons, good use was made of resources, and the skilful classroom management by the teacher ensured that the pupils were motivated and made very good progress.
- 27 The most effective teachers ensure that time is used well in their lessons and that pupils are motivated and challenged. Praise is used effectively to encourage pupils to achieve. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, for example, the teacher constantly challenged the pupils with analytical questions. She praised the pupils and managed

the class very well whilst maintaining the pace.

- 28 Many teachers manage learning very well. They capture the interest of pupils by using a wide range of different activities in one lesson. In a Year 6 French lesson about the days of the week, the variety of activities included choosing, questioning, memorising, matching up cards and moving around the room. This variety kept the pupils motivated and involved.
- 29 High expectations are another feature of the lessons where teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to be ambitious in their learning by being given both the confidence and the inspiration needed for success. In a Year 8 English lesson in which pupils were comparing sea poems by RS Thomas and John Keats, the teacher skilfully raised expectations and, through good questioning, made it possible for the pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils' work is regularly marked and encouraging comments tell pupils what they need to do to improve.
- 30 Behaviour in lessons is generally very good. Most teachers manage their classes well with a firm, calm and consistent approach. Minor misdemeanours are quickly and appropriately dealt with. Pupils sustain their interest even when they are given work that is pitched at too high or too low a level; for example, in a Year 5 history lesson on life in ancient Greece. The pupils were given a very long worksheet to read. Although many found this difficult, they sustained their effort and tried hard to succeed. All wanted to contribute to the plenary session, which was used effectively to review the learning
- 31 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good: teachers know the particular needs of individual pupils. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils with special educational needs can achieve. In physical education and religious education, for example, teachers plan carefully to involve and include pupils fully in the learning activity. However, not all teachers plan to meet pupils' needs in full. In a science lesson, for example, pupils who find drawing straight lines difficult spent far too much time trying to draw a chart to record the results of their work rather than spending this time on the learning activity, which they were keen to start.
- 32 Teachers seat pupils with special educational needs in the classroom so that whether the pupils are working in groups, pairs or individually, they have easy access to support from the teacher or teaching assistant. Pupils are also keen to help one another. Pupils are confident in the classroom and around the school, and teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils in how to think and to learn for themselves and not to rely on others to do the work for them. However, not all teachers provide teaching assistants with lesson planning in advance of the lesson. This limits the preparation which teaching assistants do to make their support for the pupil and the teacher as effective as possible. There are no guidelines available to inform teachers and teaching assistants on the best ways of working together to support pupils with special educational needs.
- 33 In unsatisfactory lessons inadequate planning leads to poor use of time and a slow pace of learning. This, in turn, leads to poor behaviour which further inhibits learning. In a Year 5 English lesson on persuasive writing, a lack of planning and structure as well as poor use of time resulted in little progress in learning. In some lessons, pupils are passive receivers of knowledge as lengthy introductions by the teachers prevent active involvement in the learning. In a Year 8 history lesson about the plague, for example, the teacher talked for the whole of the lesson and only a small number of

pupils were actively involved by asking or answering questions. Where the learning objectives for the lesson are not clear and the teacher's expectations are not high enough progress is not as good as it should be. This was the case in a Year 5 music lesson based on the Pachelbel canon in which pupils were allowed to record work of a poor quality. Low expectations were also a feature of a Year 6 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson in which much time was wasted and the task set was of an unacceptably low level.

- 34 Many lessons are taught by non-specialists who work hard to ensure that they know the subject and can teach it effectively. It does mean though that these teachers are often over-reliant on the textbook or worksheet. A lack of planning or structure in these lessons has a large impact on learning as the teacher does not have the depth of subject knowledge needed to ensure that progress is made. This was the situation in a Year 8 science lesson about electricity in which inadequate planning, poor structure and insufficient subject knowledge resulted in very little learning by the pupils. In some subjects; art, history and French, gifted and talented pupils are not sufficiently stretched or challenged.
- 35 A lack of variety of learning styles, coupled in some subjects with a limited range of resources, makes it harder for teachers to produce good lessons. ICT, for example, is not used well by the majority of teachers as a teaching or learning tool in their subject. The use of homework to support learning is inconsistent, and teachers do not insist that pupils make good use of their diaries to record the tasks set.
- 36 Teachers in all subject areas follow a common school policy to encourage pupils to read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding. Teachers in all subjects provide any new vocabulary, including technical terms, required for their lessons and there is a good focus on encouraging reading and ensuring that spellings are accurate, through learning and testing. To help pupils to write with confidence, teachers provide writing frames as models for writing and encourage pupils to plan, draft and revise their work. All staff have been involved in training for developing numeracy skills in their subject, but this has not yet been implemented across all subjects.
- 37 The development of teaching since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory as there has been an increase in the number of lessons that fall short of the standards required. Many of the areas of concern in this inspection were praised in the last report, for example, planning and the range of activities used to support learning, but the school has undergone a series of staffing shortages since then. A cohesive approach to teaching and learning is missing. There is also an absence of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, with the result that good practice is not shared, and areas of weakness are not tackled

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

- 38 Pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. The school meets the statutory requirements very effectively, including a daily collective act of worship.
- 39 The school's aim of providing a stable, caring environment, which is conducive to learning is reflected well by the curriculum. There is a broad range of courses for all pupils; all of the National Curriculum subjects are provided and this range is extended

to include religious education and PSHE. French is taught in all years, whereas in many schools it is not included during Years 5 and 6. This gives pupils a good start in learning a foreign language. Pupils also have lessons in information and communication technology (ICT), enabling them to develop computing skills for use in other subjects. The use of computers in a range of subjects is gradually increasing from a low base, and this has been helped by the recent installation of more computers. There is, however, too little time to cover the programme of study in design and technology in Years 7 and 8.

- 40 No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum and all pupils with special educational needs have access to the whole school curriculum and full range of extra-curricular activities. The school building has lifts and ramps to provide access to all teaching areas for those pupils who have a physical disability. The special educational needs co-ordinator organises support very well to ensure access to the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning.
- 41 There are satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The school has planned well how to implement the National Curriculum Strategy for promoting literacy across all years. The head of mathematics has worked with teachers of a few subjects, such as science and geography, on detailed planning to promote the use of number. This has resulted in the provision of good opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in these subjects. The school's leadership is aware that this initiative needs to be spread to other subjects and has plans to do so.
- 42 Opportunities provided for participation in extra-curricular activities are very good. Pupils value the wide range of activities and believe that there is something of interest for everyone. There is an excellent range of sport-based activities, such as gymnastics, rugby, netball, basketball, badminton, football, cricket and dance. Pupils' enthusiasm was demonstrated during the inspection week by large numbers turning up for athletics sessions despite poor weather.
- 43 There is also a good range of clubs to support other subjects. These include 'booster' sessions to improve achievement in English, mathematics and science, which are popular with pupils. There is an adequate range of music clubs, such as choir, folk music, recorder, guitar and singing, but some of these have small numbers attending. There are very frequent and popular clubs for developing computer skills and a design and technology group has recently won the area 'Robo Tech' competition for designing and building a robot. Pupils are encouraged to support clubs which match their own interests; for instance the 'Warhammer' club which was supervised by a teacher during the winter months. Music, dance and drama concerts are held most terms. A particular strength is the recent 'Out of this world' gymnastics and dance show, which involved pupils from all year groups and attracted 'sell-out' audiences over its two nights of performance. Pupils also benefit from the provision of a very comprehensive range of excursions and residential experiences, such as several history trips and the recent use of an adventure centre in Wales. Learning is also enriched by organised 'theme weeks' such as the 'health week' when all subjects adopt a health-related theme and there is a fun run at the end of the week.
- 44 There is very good access to the curriculum for all pupils. Every subject is available for every pupil, and teachers make strong efforts to include pupils with special needs, including Travellers, fully in their lessons. Provision of one-to-one support by learning assistants and use of aids, such as computers and enlarged scripts, enable pupils to access the curriculum when it would otherwise be impossible. Pupils also play their

part, respecting their peers who have special needs, and helping to support their learning. This reflects the school's aims and ethos very well.

- 45 The PSHE programme does not include everything it should cover in sufficient depth, for example, education about sex and drugs. Although some teaching is good, resources and training are not adequate and the programme is not rigorously monitored to ensure consistently high- quality teaching. The school has appointed a member of staff to co-ordinate a new PSHE and citizenship programme.
- 46 There is good use made of contributions from the community to aid pupils' learning. The police liaison officer has close contact with the school; his recent organisation of a talk for Year 8 pupils by a reformed drug addict was regarded as very successful and provided a high level of interest and relevance. Upper school pupils are involved in providing reading support, and work experience pupils were assisting with physical education during the inspection. University students visit the school to deliver a talk and answer questions on university life. Links between the school council and a local motorcycle club have resulted in very successful fund raising for charity, and Year 8 pupils have raised money to provide a Christmas party for local pensioners. There are, however, insufficient co-ordinated opportunities for pupils to develop their learning related to the world of work.
- 47 The school has good links with lower and upper schools. There are liaison groups, with representatives from local schools, for every subject. The groups have worked well together on planning pupils' experience so that they make progress through their programmes of study in each school. A strong feature is the work of the mathematics group in producing 'progression ladders', which are displayed on classroom walls and help pupils to see how the different elements of mathematics fit together.
- 48 Since the last inspection, the broad range of learning opportunities has been extended to include better access to modern computers. The good range of extra-curricular activities commented upon in the previous report has been improved further, and the physical education staff continue to devote a considerable amount of their own time to sports activities, with strong benefits for pupils. In Years 7 and 8, there is now sufficient time for history, but not enough time for design and technology.

PROVISION MADE FOR PUPILS' SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- 49 Provision is good overall. Very good provision is made for the moral and social development of pupils, but pupils are not well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society.

Spiritual development

- 50 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and is better than is usually seen. Religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Activities often encourage pupils to question beliefs and values; for example, in Year 8 work on human rights, reflective self-assessment created an atmosphere, which fostered thinking about belief. Daily assemblies make a strong contribution to spiritual development: opportunities for reflection, uplifting moments such as singing hymns, and through presentations of medals and certificates to celebrate achievement in areas from chess to athletics. Several subjects and extra-curricular activities create opportunities for consideration of the deeper meanings of life. The residential visit to

France gives pupils pause to reflect on the horror of war. The spiritual dimension is developing in art, where technical comprehension of the work of Monet, Renoir and Van Gogh by Year 8 pupils led smoothly to talk of feelings and appreciation. However, some opportunities are missed because spiritual development is not systematically planned for in all schemes of work.

Moral development

- 51 Provision for moral development is very good. Strong moral aims and values permeate all aspects of school life. Teachers share this ethos and promote it in their teaching and through their good relationships with pupils. They set a good example and have high expectations of behaviour in lessons and around the school. Doing the right thing is rewarded in many ways: letters home, presentations in form time and assemblies, and achievement books to record individual successes. In physical education, pupils look after each other well. They learn the rules and stick to them. There are good opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibility, for example in the school council and the “buddy” system.

Social development

- 52 Provision for pupils’ social development is very good. The school promotes a strong sense of community. Pupils are encouraged to work and play together in harmony. For example, in physical education, they play collaboratively and competitively. The school is inclusive, promoting tolerance and respect for others. Pupils from all kinds of background (Travellers, pupils with disabilities, the few from ethnic minorities) are successfully integrated. There is a clear code of conduct, understood by pupils and parents and the home-school contract reinforces moral values. Parents are very pleased with the high expectations of conduct and behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to be tolerant and caring. In most subject areas, pupils learn to listen respectfully and sensitively to each other, to work collaboratively and share equipment. Some efforts have been made to help pupils to resolve tensions between themselves and others, for example through the “buddy” system where older pupils support younger ones and in “circle time” in PSHE lessons, when all pupils get the opportunity to express their opinions.

Cultural development

- 53 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good range of cultural experiences. There are visits to support the curriculum for pupils in all years. History provides a wide variety of enriching experiences through visits for different year groups to Warwick Castle, the Tower of London and Hampton Court. Visits to the theatre enliven learning in English and drama. Year 6 pupils visit Blue Peris in Wales for geography. Year 7 pupils stay in France for a week, improving their understanding of French culture and language. Pupils also learn about other cultures, for example, Arabic, Greek and Egyptian cultures in history. Discussion in art about the use of Aboriginal, African and South American art forms widens pupils’ understanding of other cultures. However, despite religious education’s positive contribution, the school does not do enough to prepare pupils for life in a culturally diverse society. This remains an area for development, as at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 54 The school provides high quality support and guidance and very effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in a warm, caring and secure environment. This atmosphere encourages pupils to develop as individuals with high aspirations. All staff show great concern for the wellbeing of pupils, and a range of measures exists to promote their development. Form teachers and other staff know the pupils well, are sensitive to the needs of pupils and consistently monitor well their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis. The school is proud of the quality of the support and guidance provided by the staff.
- 55 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. They are good in ICT, art and religious education. They are satisfactory in all other subjects apart from science, history and French. The school collects extensive data and the information is used to move pupils to more appropriate groupings. However, the use of assessment data to plan future learning is unsatisfactory in science, history, music, French, religious education and design and technology.
- 56 Very good links exist with partner schools. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are clearly identified before they attend Brooklands School. The transition of pupils to their upper school is also carefully planned for. Annual reviews of statements of special educational need are well organised but few opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in at least a part of their annual review meeting or for teaching assistants to provide a written report or to attend these meetings. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans which include specific and measurable targets. Teaching assistants know pupils' targets and keep a record of their work with pupils. However, where different teaching assistants work with a pupil during any one day, there is no formal documented system through which they can exchange information between each other or record any concerns which they may have.
- 57 The school continues to have effective systems to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact is made with parents in cases of unexplained absence. Attendance figures are properly aggregated apart from a very few instances of unjustified absence being allowed as authorised. Emerging patterns of absence are noted for follow up. There was little unauthorised absence recorded last year.
- 58 The headteacher and other staff provide very good role models in promoting aspects of social behaviour, such as courtesy, tolerance and respect for others. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are in place. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour have been made clear and are understood by all pupils. Rewards and sanctions are used effectively. The policy is consistently applied by all members of staff who were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention, maintaining good control. Pupils report that there is little incidence of bullying and that when it occurs it is dealt with swiftly, with a variety of methods such as the "help box" and the "buddy" system.
- 59 Child protection issues continue to be handled effectively. All members of staff are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety is promoted effectively in the school. Potential hazards are identified and remedial action taken as necessary. All staff members are safety conscious and watch for the security of the children. They work hard to create a secure environment in which the well being of pupils is promoted effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 60 Parents are very supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. Virtually all those responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school and make good progress. They believe that the school expects their children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. They also believe that the school helps children to become mature and responsible and they agree that there is an interesting range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. Inspection evidence confirms these positive opinions.
- 61 A few parents tend to disagree with the amount of work to be completed at home, and others do not feel that the school works closely with them. Several parents are concerned that they are not kept well informed about how their children are getting on. In all these areas, inspection evidence supports parents' concerns.
- 62 The school prospectus is detailed, clear and comprehensive, as is the governors' annual report to parents. They give parents a good overview of the school's values and its curriculum. The school only holds one parents' consultation meeting a year, but provides good informal access for discussion with teachers, which many parents use. The school acknowledges that the reports to parents are unsatisfactory and is changing them this year. The tick boxes used to identify what pupils know and can do are not specific enough. The same competencies cover all pupils in the school and do not cater for development as pupils move through the school. The description of progress is too general and does not consistently detail where the progress has been made. In addition, reports do not contain targets or areas for improvement.
- 63 There is a good level of attendance by parents of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs at annual review meetings. However, subject reports on the progress of all pupils with special educational needs do not, in most instances, identify what pupils have achieved but focus more on how hard pupils have worked.
- 64 The use of homework diaries is inconsistent. Their use is discretionary, leaving it up to the individual pupil whether it is used. In those cases where pupils choose not to use the diaries, parents are unable to monitor the amount of work to be undertaken at home and, hence contribute less to their children's learning. The homework diary is not used effectively as a means of communication between home and school.
- 65 Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically, in a wide range of activities. A small group of dedicated parents, grandparents and others, including ex-pupils, come into school to help with the work in the classroom and around the site. There are others who help to run and organise fund-raising events throughout the year, raising approximately £3000 each year. The school values highly the contribution made by parents, which materially enhances their children's learning and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 66 Leadership and management in the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and her deputy give clear direction in establishing a safe and well-ordered school community but there is a number of weak practices in the school.
- 67 The headteacher's leadership has ensured that the school's aims and values are

reflected in the inclusive nature of the school and the provision of equal opportunities for children with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, she has not given firm or determined enough leadership to implement a strategy to raise standards further and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. There is no rigorous programme of lesson observation, training, monitoring and evaluation, which would drive up standards and ensure more consistent teaching. Due to staffing problems, the headteacher and the deputy both act as subject heads. This gives them little time to fulfil their leadership roles. However, they do not delegate effectively either; for example, the assessment co-ordinator has been given insufficient time and support to complete the tasks allocated to her. The senior management team has been slow to use data to monitor and evaluate school performance and take effective action. Data is now being collated but little value-added data has yet been assembled or used. The use of new technology for management purposes is less than that usually seen because access to modern computers has only recently become available.

- 68 The provision for special educational needs is well led and organised by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The SENCO is not a member of the senior management team and there is no planned involvement of the SENCO to inform whole- school decision making. Due to the SENCO covering a maternity absence, there is now little time allocated for the work of co-ordinating special educational needs provision across the school. Teaching assistants have frequent meetings with the special educational needs co-ordinator and they are supported and encouraged to attend further training. However, they do not benefit from any systematic appraisal, which acknowledges the quality of their work and supports them in improving their skills in delivering effective support.
- 69 The quality of middle management is good. There is an excellent pastoral system with very effective heads of year and assistant heads of year, resulting in very good behaviour and attitudes by pupils. The leadership of the majority of subject areas is satisfactory and subjects such as science, art, geography, ICT, religious education and physical education are well led and managed. In most subjects there is a shared commitment to succeed and positive relationships. Weaknesses are centred on the lack of monitoring and support for teaching and the quality of development planning.
- 70 The structure of management is confused. Responsibility for several key aspects is unclear. For example, it is not clear who is responsible for the curriculum and should have ensured that work-related education was included. Membership of the wider management team appears to be arbitrary; not all subject areas are represented. There is no system to link members of the team to individual subjects to enable monitoring to take place. Senior and middle managers do not routinely observe the quality of teaching in their subject area. Therefore, development and support is weak because it is not sufficiently targeted, rigorous or based on relevant evidence. Performance management has not been properly understood or introduced fully. Its impact on standards has been minimal.
- 71 The quality of development planning, both at whole- school level and subject level is weak. Plans have far too many objectives, many of which are really tasks and activities not objectives. Many do not have clear success criteria, and costs are not included. Progress towards the achievement of plans is not frequently reviewed.
- 72 Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and they are highly supportive of the school. They have been instrumental in taking several successful strategic decisions, for example, the decision to refurbish the science laboratories and to appoint a new head of science that has led to rising standards, and the decision to create a new ICT

facility. However, the governing body is overly dependent on information and advice from the headteacher and formal presentations. They undertake little independent scrutiny or monitoring of the work of individual departments or of the results from the school. For instance, governors do not have first-hand knowledge of the quality of the provision made for pupils with special educational needs, and mostly rely on information provided to them by the SENCO. The governing body is not sufficiently robust or questioning in holding the school to account for its performance.

- 73 Financial planning and management are sound. The school has the services of a part-time bursar only once a month, but the school has acted positively on recommendations of a recent audit report. Effective steps are taken to ensure that best value is gained from contracts, and the school gives satisfactory value for money.
- 74 Spending on learning resources in the last year was very low, as spending had necessarily to be diverted to building works such as mending flat roofs and refurbishing toilets. This low level of capitation has affected standards in music, design and technology, French and history. Other subjects have sufficient equipment and books for class activities but often this is just basic texts and there is little to enliven or enrich the learning. The amount and quality of computers has been improved from a low base to a sound provision. Resources for supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. Learning resources are deployed effectively within subjects. Overall provision is just satisfactory.
- 75 Staffing provision is satisfactory. The great majority of staff are well qualified and experienced. Due to staff shortages, they are not always deployed in their specialist subject area. In a few subjects, this has adversely affected learning, such as in science for the high-attaining pupils, English, religious education and history. The school has worked hard and been innovative in trying to overcome its staffing difficulties by taking in graduate trainees and teachers from overseas. However, these teachers have not been developed and monitored with sufficient rigour.
- 76 Accommodation is good and well maintained. The school is light and airy, and most rooms and corridors are enhanced by interesting and high-quality display work. A positive feature is the cloakroom area for pupils, which means they do not have to carry their coats and bags with them all day. There is ample space in physical education for pupils to engage in a wide range of activities.
- 77 Progress since the previous report has been too slow overall. There were only two key issues for action in the previous report. One was about meeting all statutory requirements, which the school has done, apart from the implementation of performance management. The other was to make work set match the ability of the pupils. This does now happen for pupils of lower ability, but, in several subjects, higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Results have improved in line with the national trend, particularly in science, where decisive action has been taken by the headteacher to appoint a new subject head. The quality of teaching, which was judged to be good in the previous report, has declined. The issue of preparing pupils better for life in a culturally diverse society, mentioned in the 1996 report, has not been improved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78 To raise performance and the quality of learning further, senior managers, governors and staff should undertake the action listed below.

- (1) Raise standards in the national tests at age 11 and raise achievement in music, PSHE, art in Years 5 and 6, and history for older pupils by:
 - providing challenging tasks according to the learning needs of each pupil;
 - ensuring adequate resources and equipment in music;
 - rewriting schemes of work in PSHE and training teachers to deliver the subject;
 - safeguarding continuity of staffing for art; and
 - concentrating on developing higher order skills of analysis and causation in history.(Paras: 45, 112, 135, 162,)
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - introducing robust systems of lesson observation and evaluation;
 - increasing the skills of subject leaders and heads of year in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning;
 - implementing performance management with objectives which focus on pupil progress; and
 - planning professional development which meets the needs of teachers.(Paras: 33-37)
- (3) Make better use of data for assessment, planning and setting objectives at all levels by:
 - developing value added information and using it to set targets;
 - adapting teaching programmes in the light of assessment information; and
 - making more use of National Curriculum levels in the foundation subjects to measure pupils' progress.(Paras: 55, 106, 138, 154, 185)
- (4) Improve the quality of development planning at all levels by:
 - writing plans that are realistic and contain objectives not tasks;
 - setting clear success criteria for all plans;
 - adding costs to plans; and
 - instituting a system of reviewing progress towards implementation of plans.(Paras: 71, 86, 97, 108, 125, 140, 156, 162, 174)
- (5) Improve the quality of reports to parents by:
 - making more use of National Curriculum levels to indicate developing skills as pupils become older;
 - stating clearly in what areas progress has been made; and
 - outlining clear targets and areas for improvement.(Paras: 62)

• PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of lessons observed | 104 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 34 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 12 | 40 | 38 | 11 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2% | 12% | 39% | 35% | 11% | 1% | 0% |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y5 – Y8 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 454 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 54 |

| Special educational needs | Y5 – Y8 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 13 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 196 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 40 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 43 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 6.5 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 6.3 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 0.4 |
|---------------------------|-----|

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 70 | 56 | 126 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 48 | 50 | 63 |
| | Girls | 45 | 38 | 47 |
| | Total | 93 | 88 | 110 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 74 (69) | 70 (68) | 87 (91) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 46 | 51 | 56 |
| | Girls | 45 | 39 | 46 |
| | Total | 91 | 90 | 102 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 72 (65) | 71 (69) | 81 (81) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 4 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 2 |
| Pakistani | 1 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 440 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 5 |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | 15 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 18 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25.2 |

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 13 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 281 |

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 84.3 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 2 | 22.7 |
| Key Stage 3 | 24.7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|---------|
| Financial year ending March 2001 | |
| | £ |
| Total income | 1086698 |
| Total expenditure | 1099473 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2455 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 27953 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 15178 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 7 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 6 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 4 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 454 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 76 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 47 | 46 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 49 | 47 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 32 | 50 | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 29 | 46 | 16 | 5 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 38 | 49 | 5 | 1 | 7 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 38 | 39 | 17 | 4 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 47 | 42 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 51 | 42 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 33 | 39 | 20 | 5 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 33 | 50 | 9 | 3 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 42 | 51 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 54 | 7 | 0 | 3 |

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- A soundly planned and up- to- date curriculum which provides generally good coverage of National Curriculum requirements;
- Teaching of literacy skills is having a positive effect on learning;
- Strong teaching;
- Very good and demanding teacher-pupil relationships with positive attitudes shown by pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Increased monitoring and evaluation of teaching to assess the support needed to improve the quality of weaker lessons ;
- Greater opportunities for extended writing and the development of drama skills;
- More frequent use of computers to aid the development of written English;
- The moderation of assessment procedures to ensure greater consistency of best practice amongst all teachers, particularly over written feedback, target-setting and more active use of assessment information.

- 79 In 2001, results in national tests taken at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average. The results in the last three years indicate a drop followed by an improving trend, in line with the national upwards trend. Fewer pupils than usual gain the higher grades of Level 5 and above. There is little difference between the performance of boys and girls. There are no significant variations in attainment by pupils of different ethnicity.
- 80 Pupils currently enter the school with levels of attainment in English overall that are average for their age, but a significant number have weaknesses in some of the basic skills of reading and writing. During Years 5 and 6, most pupils produce levels of work that are in line for their age, although teacher's predictions suggest the balance of attainment in the current Year 6 might be slightly below average. In Years 7 and 8, most pupils' rate of learning increases. Overall, pupils are being helped in these years, by teaching that is often good, to make slightly better progress so that in Year 8, some are on track to achieve above- average standards.
- 81 The attainment of most pupils by the time they leave the school is close to the average level for their age, with the most successful lesson in Year 8 showing pupils taking responsibility for their own learning. This was seen in a lesson on the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, where pupils were given the opportunity to choose from a range of tasks. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and make good progress.
- 82 The levels of attainment across the three areas of English are broadly similar. Listening and speaking skills are satisfactory. Several pupils do not always speak with adequate volume or clarity. A significant number of pupils have basic reading skills that are below the scores expected for their ages but they develop soundly, with only a few pupils struggling with the more difficult aspects of understanding their

reading. Most pupils read with appropriate inflexion and intonation. Levels of attainment in writing are only a little below the other areas because of the generally accurate spelling which results from the school's emphasis on the learning and testing of spelling. Provision of vocabulary to help pupils with current work in lessons also helps to raise accuracy. Frameworks to encourage written expression are used effectively, such as in a Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing.

- 83 The quality of teaching is sound overall. There is some good and very good teaching in Years 7 and 8. Where lessons are most successful there is good preparation and clear presentation of the objectives for the lesson; for example, in a Year 8 lesson on seashells where pupils were carefully guided through the different stages of the task. The work set is suitably challenging, and teacher-pupil relationships that are good but demanding ensure that most pupils are helped to succeed. Teachers are enthusiastic and fully engage pupils in their lessons. Pupils develop their independence of organisation and learning so that they gain satisfaction and enjoyment from their work. Good efforts are made to include all pupils in the work of the lesson, and question- and -answer sessions are well conducted. Pupils are given helpful, oral feedback on their work in lessons with many of the comments being challenging yet encouraging, a feature being praise and rewards for good effort or work. Pupils' writing is marked regularly. Helpful written comments are made that give pupils advice about improving their work, but some comments are mainly short and critical and do not give pupils enough feedback for improvement. The National Curriculum assessment of pupils' work is soundly organised and internally moderated, with the teacher assessments being in line with the test results actually achieved.
- 84 In the sound lessons there are also good features, such as good planning and the clear setting out of objectives for the lesson, but there is less emphasis on pupils developing their own sense of responsibility for learning by themselves. Sometimes, the management of pupils is not so assured and takes up time that reduces the pace of progress in the lessons. In the occasional, unsatisfactory lesson, weakness in the management of pupils allows off-task behaviour that considerably lowers pace of work and levels of progress. Short- term targets, to help pupils achieve, are not sufficiently provided and this is an area that needs development. A few targets are set for pupils but these are too long- term and are often not sufficiently precise or challenging. There is appropriate use of homework by most teachers, especially for the older pupils, but this is inconsistent across the department.
- 85 Throughout the school, most pupils show interest in their lessons and commit themselves to work well. Those who answer questions or make inputs to discussion often show accurate recall from previous lessons, such as in a Year 7 lesson about scriptwriting, and have the confidence to share ideas and opinions. Pupils sometimes receive a sense of reward and enjoyment, such as when working on spelling in a Year 6 lesson. They work well together and co-operate willingly with their teachers and respond well. Overall, most pupils have good relationships with each other and with their teachers, and the standard of behaviour is good.
- 86 The leadership of English is currently the responsibility of the headteacher because of problems with staff recruitment. She is supported by a literacy co-ordinator, who is also a Head of Year. This situation currently makes a sound provision but is not ideal for the longer term. There are plans to improve standards in English, but time to deal with them is limited by the other responsibilities of the subject leadership. There are more non-specialists who teach English than usually seen. They work hard to ensure sound provision but their teaching is not regularly monitored or observed, and there

are inconsistencies in approaches and the implementation of policies.

- 87 Only a few opportunities to cover aspects of drama are covered within English lessons. Play-scripts are read and written in a few lessons and some role-play also features. Role-play is also used by at least one other subject, but drama overall is an undeveloped area of the curriculum.
- 88 Work in English does not currently provide all the opportunities it should for pupils' development in the use of information technology for word-processing and desktop publishing. The contribution that the work and approach of the English team makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good: texts are used well to provide planned coverage of work from other cultures. Resources are sound and well organised. Accommodation is good, and there is some good display featuring pupils' work.
- 89 Since the previous inspection, standards in English have continued to be about the national average up to Level 4 but below the national average at Level 5, and below standards in similar schools. Progress overall continues to be sound. Pupils continue to write in a variety of styles for a variety of purposes and accuracy of spelling appears to have improved. The quality of teaching has become more erratic since the last report, ranging from sound to very good, but with the occasional unsatisfactory lesson. The current situation affecting the leadership of the subject has lowered the impact of the department. Overall, progress since the last inspection in most relevant aspects has been sound.

Literacy

- 90 Attainment in the skills of literacy is average overall. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers or each other, and this helps them to increase their understanding of the lessons. This is particularly the case in art, English, history and physical education. Speaking skills mostly match levels normally found and are sometimes better, as many pupils speak willingly in mathematics, religious education and science, and answer questions confidently, such as in geography, with good recall of facts. A few contributions are not sufficiently clear or of adequate volume, and they are not always challenged by the teachers to ensure clear communication is achieved. Basic reading skills are about average for many of the younger pupils. Progress in reading is made, but not all pupils fully extract meaning from their texts, especially if deduction is required. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in reading. Writing is average, and emphasis throughout the school on accuracy of spelling makes a good contribution as in English and French. Older and higher-attaining pupils develop skills of writing in factual, persuasive and personal styles, including writing in poetical forms as opportunities arise. Across subjects, the quality of much written presentation is above the average and computers are used as often as is normally seen to help with writing or presentation, some higher-attaining pupils having good desktop-publishing skills.
- 91 Work on the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully planned and all teachers have clear schemes of work. The curriculum provides a range of well-organised materials used to meet statutory requirements. A good range of types of reading and writing is covered for stimulus and in practice, with poetry being both read and written, but although literacy lessons help, more opportunities need to be given across both key stages for pupils to practise more extended writing. To help with accuracy in writing, vocabulary is given at the beginning of work in English, and key words and technical terms are given at the beginning of lessons in several subjects.

The improvement of pupils' reading skills is strongly encouraged by the use of a good range of books, as well as by the maintenance of reading logs. Overall, support for improving literacy has been well planned and its impact is successful.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils exhibit very good attitudes and behaviour;
- Use of computers has improved since the last inspection;
- Some teachers demonstrate high quality teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Results in Year 6 national tests are too low;
- Pupils have too little involvement in knowing how well they are doing or what they have to do to improve;
- Development planning to raise achievement is not focused well enough, with too little rigour on improving the overall quality of teaching.

92 Results in Year 6 national tests are below average in comparison with all schools nationally. They are also below average when compared with schools where pupils have a similar background to those at Brooklands. Too few pupils achieve the higher Level 5 and above. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Results have improved since the last inspection but only in line with improvements nationally.

93 The standard of work seen in lessons and in samples of pupils' work is average. Standards are higher than in the national tests. High-attaining pupils in Year 6 progress from simplifying fractions to carrying out calculations using ratio, demonstrating standards better than typically seen nationally. Year 6 pupils in lower-attaining groups produce work which is only just below average, such as when they find all the factors of a given number. By Year 8, the highest-performing pupils can identify the properties of 2-dimensional shapes and calculate the sum of the interior angles representing above-average attainment. Lower attainers progress from using co-ordinates to plotting algebraic expressions using a graph. Overall, pupils enter the school with average standards and maintain these throughout their four years, showing sound achievement.

94 Teaching is satisfactory and leads to sound learning. Teaching and learning were at least sound in the majority of lessons observed. About a third of lessons were very good and 1 in 10 lessons was unsatisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented effectively by most teachers. They make learning intentions clear to pupils and use a good range of teaching methods and resources to ensure that the intentions are achieved. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, the teacher used individual whiteboards, overhead projector transparencies, worksheets and a range of carefully prepared shapes to provide pupils with a variety of activities. This generated high levels of interest and enthusiasm, leading to very effective learning of the properties of polygons. Most teachers command good respect, have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and challenge minor examples of inappropriate behaviour quickly and effectively. They make good use of questioning skills to involve large numbers of pupils in the lesson and strongly emphasise the need for pupils to explain how they arrived at their solutions. This has a positive effect on pupils' understanding of their mathematics. Teachers often use marking of pupils' work to identify misunderstandings and help pupils overcome them. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher referred to pupils' poor performance on a ratio question in a previous test paper then worked hard with the pupils to improve their understanding.

- 95 When teaching is weaker, a teacher-led presentation is too long, and pupils lose their concentration, or a teacher's movement around the classroom fails to notice incorrect work. A few teachers lack confidence in their mathematical knowledge and rely too much on using a textbook rather than a wider range of activities. Teachers sometimes do not explain the level of challenge of their learning intentions and fail to summarise how well pupils' learning has met the intentions. This leads to pupils being unsure of what they have achieved and being unable to take pride in their achievement.
- 96 Pupils have very good attitudes to their lessons. They are keen, interested and often express enjoyment in their mathematics. They mostly behave very well, listening carefully and working hard throughout each lesson. They collaborate very effectively, often discussing their work in pairs or small groups, with a positive effect on their learning. A particular strength is the way in which pupils respect their peers who have special educational needs, and help to support their learning.
- 97 Leadership of mathematics is sound. The subject co-ordinator is a hardworking and enthusiastic mathematician. She is dedicated to raising standards and is involved in a variety of county projects for improving achievement. This includes support for gifted and talented students; the department has successfully introduced mathematics 'master-classes' for Year 7 and 8 pupils. However, she is also the school's deputy headteacher and this limits the time spent on developing mathematics. The subject development plan contains some appropriate strategies, such as increasing the use of computers, which is only average at present, and continuing to implement the National Numeracy Strategy, but there is too little emphasis on other key strategies. For instance, there is no rigorous approach to improving the quality of teaching through lesson observation and feedback. Although assessment information is used to set targets for pupils' future attainment there is too little involvement of pupils in seeing their own achievement building towards their target, or being informed about what they have to do to improve. Teachers are keen to do their best for pupils but there are too few meetings to develop a partnership approach to developing teaching, learning and achievement.
- 98 Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Standards of work seen remain similar to the national picture and the quality of teaching remains sound. Pupils continue to display positive attitudes and behaviour. Teaching rooms are still enhanced by excellent displays, and the provision of computers has improved.

Numeracy

- 99 Standards of numeracy are average. In mathematics lessons, Year 6 pupils cancel fractions but do not yet fully understand ratio. There are examples of the use and application of number in some other subjects. Pupils produce accurate speed graphs and measure precisely in science. They convert minutes into seconds when timing runs in physical education. Pupils interpret information well in geography by producing high-quality charts and diagrams. The National Numeracy Strategy has yet to be extended to cover all subjects in the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards continue to improve;
- Teachers are committed to raising standards;
- Lessons are usually well planned and teaching is good;
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment data;
- The lack of specialist science teachers;
- The challenge and questioning of the most able pupils.

- 100 Standards in science on entry to the school in Year 5 are average. Standards of attainment as measured by national testing at the end of Year 6 are average and in line with results from similar schools. This represents a significant improvement over the past three years. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 5 and 6 and develop their knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts well. By the end of Year 8 standards are good. Pupils attain standards in line with what is expected for their age. Scientific investigative skills are less well developed, especially for younger pupils.
- 101 Work seen in lessons and pupils' written work demonstrate an increasing grasp of key scientific concepts; for example, their precise descriptions of conflicting forces and how to use a Newton meter accurately in a Year 5 lesson. In Year 8, pupils explain clearly the gravitational forces that are associated with planetary movement. Less evident is the ability of the most-able pupils to synthesise information and explain observations using scientific knowledge in unfamiliar situations.
- 102 Progress is good in Years 7 and 8. This is a consequence of a high proportion of good lessons with good teaching. Expectations are high, most pupils are challenged to test, review and present their ideas, and time is used effectively. Where progress is slow it is due to unsatisfactory teaching. In these lessons, time is wasted through poor and confused planning. Teachers lack specialist subject knowledge to question pupils effectively and redirect them to secure understanding. This slows progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science.
- 103 In most lessons, even the few that are unsatisfactory, pupils' attitudes to science are good. They are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to participate and learn. Behaviour is very good and most pupils take a pride in their work.
- 104 Teaching overall is good. Pupils' behaviour is managed well, expectations are clear and lessons are well planned. For example, in a Year 8 lesson carefully prepared use was made of real life examples of electrical currents to clarify and consolidate pupils' knowledge, ensuring good understanding of series and parallel circuits.
- 105 The small number of unsatisfactory lessons lacked clear learning expectations for pupils, resulting in confused understanding. In one Year 8 lesson, due to a lack of planning and unsuitable schemes of work, work was repetitive and inappropriate for the age group. Some pupils were confused; others lacked interest as they completed a low level activity on electrical circuits from a previous year.

- 106 Most marking is very good. Detailed comment is recorded in books to help pupils gauge their strengths and weaknesses and correct misconceptions. The use of assessment information, however, is inconsistent. Science investigative work is not fully moderated. Data is therefore not used effectively to inform pupil's progress, set targets for improvement and help plan the curriculum.
- 107 The subject is managed well. Although not a specialist science teacher, the co-ordinator, who has been in post for just a year, is very effective. He has focused on the subject's improvement and has had a positive effect on standards. Appropriate policies are in place and good health and safety priorities are followed. The technical support is excellent and makes a significant contribution to the efficient organisation of the subject, including the creation of opportunities for pupils to learn through practical science.
- 108 However, planning is inadequate with schemes of work needing updating. Advice to non-specialist teachers lacks sufficient detail to enable teachers to plan a diverse and rich experience. Therefore, some activities fail to interest, stimulate and challenge all pupils fully, especially the most gifted and able. Opportunities are missed to excite pupils about science in the culturally diverse world around them and their immediate environment. Information and communication technology resources are beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainment and progress. For example, good individual research is work being completed on the solar system. Teaching in the science area has benefited from refurbished laboratories which have improved the climate for learning.
- 109 Since the previous inspection standards of attainment in Year 6 have improved and the subject, despite going through significant staffing changes, has continued to improve. The subject has the capacity to improve further.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Good standards are attained in a range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional media in Years 7 and 8;
- Teaching develops pupils' imagination and visual responses well, particularly in Years 7 and 8;
- The work of famous artists and of other cultures is effectively used to develop pupils' understanding;
- Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well.

Areas for improvement

- Raising standards in Years 5 and 6;
- A more systematic approach to homework as a spur to improving independent learning;
- The use of ICT as part of the taught courses and as a method of research;
- A programme of extra-curricular opportunities;
- Strategies for extending the learning of gifted and talented pupils.

- 110 Standards in Years 5 and 6 are generally below those expected and those achieved in previous years, due largely to staffing issues beyond the school's control. There have

been four different teachers in the past four years. In the autumn term 2001, an unqualified teacher taught pupils in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the same term, pupils in Years 7 and 8 received no art education. The new head of department was appointed in January 2002 and began to work with pupils in Years 7 and 8. Because of time-tabling arrangements involving other practical areas of the curriculum, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were not able to resume art education with the new subject specialist until the beginning of the summer term. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 had acquired a range of art competencies during their years in the school and were more quickly and effectively re-engaged in art. Staffing changes and the lack of an art specialist for two consecutive terms has had a far greater adverse impact on standards of attainment in Years 5 and 6. Additionally, no work samples for Years 5 and 6 were available to provide evidence of progress over time. The only evidence on which to base judgements consists of work done in the three weeks prior to the inspection. It is this situation which the new art specialist, in post for one term, is trying hard to improve.

- 111 In Year 5, inspired by the flower paintings of Georgia O'Keefe, pupils are working enthusiastically at developing their observation and recording skills in pencil and colour. Pupils in Year 6 are appropriately challenged with a design and construction problem requiring imagination, individuality and modification. Pupils in both years are demonstrating hard work and perseverance in response to high teacher expectations.
- 112 In Years 7 and 8, standards are good overall, particularly in work that seeks to develop pupils' imagination and personal expression. This progress is particularly evident when an artist or culture is used as a starting point. Through clear instruction and good demonstration, pupils in Year 7 gain a good depth of understanding of the painting conventions of famous artists. Experimental colour work, inspired by the water painting styles of Renoir, Van Gogh and Monet, is particularly successful. Pupils are clearly pleased with their own achievements and their success with new techniques. Responses to the theme 'Imaginary Journey', inspired by the culture and imagery of Brazil, has resulted in some highly imaginative and skilfully-drawn work in Year 8 which is being extended through printmaking. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, well supported and make good progress across Years 5 to 8. Pupils who are gifted at art are not given sufficient scope to develop their talent.
- 113 Teaching is of consistently good quality, on occasions very good. The collective start to each lesson and the very effective use of demonstrations quickly engage pupils' interest and help to sharpen the focus for the lesson. Pupils are encouraged and expected to discuss and offer opinions on the work of famous artists. On occasions, these meaningful exchanges are led effectively by the teacher into an exploration of feelings and appreciation. These opportunities should be further developed. Lessons are well planned, with sequenced events and increasing challenge. The one-hour lesson is well managed; lesson aims and objectives are always clearly set.
- 114 In the main, learning progresses at good pace, although on occasions this could be more demanding. There is a high level of interaction between the teacher and pupils and frequent feedback so that pupils know what improvements can be made. Helpful comments support feedback in the sketchbooks, and target setting is now in place in all year groups. Many pupils in Years 7 and 8 are already aware of the benefits of targets in their attempts to improve standards further. Homework is not set with sufficient frequency. It is not recognised as a valuable aid to the improvement of research skills and the further development of ideas. A more structured approach to the setting of homework would provide pupils with increased opportunities to develop line and tonal skills. It could also make a valuable contribution to the development of independent learning skills for all pupils. Whilst ICT appears in the revised schemes

of work, its current absence from the taught courses in all year groups deprives pupils of their entitlement to this medium as an exciting and innovative creative process. At present, there are no opportunities for pupils to further extend their knowledge and understanding in art through extra-curricular activities.

- 115 Pupils work generally with enthusiasm. This is more marked in Years 7 and 8 than in the earlier years. They are well behaved, attentive to teaching and quick to settle. Many demonstrate concentration and perseverance in a spacious and well-maintained art room that has been developed into an attractive, stimulating work environment. These, together with good teaching, are factors that enable pupils in Years 7 and 8 to work with an increasing level of independence. In these ways, art and design is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- 116 There is only one art teacher in the school and she has only been in post for a little over one term. However, she is managing the subject very effectively, using her experience, enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. Planning and the organisation of resources are very well ordered. Through dialogue and documentation, leadership demonstrates a clear educational direction for the subject after a prolonged period of difficulty. No support strategies are yet in place to extend the learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils in art.
- 117 Since the previous report, standards have not been maintained because of circumstances beyond the school's control. Attainment no longer remains above expectations in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' progress is no longer good in all years. However, the quality of teaching remains good, and an effective manager, with a clear vision for progress, is already making a significant impact on learning outcomes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their material specialisms;
- The range of activities provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6;
- The use of work booklets in Years 5 and 6, which provide pupils with a good introduction to designing and making;
- Pupils' attitudes within the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Providing more time for design and technology in Years 7 and 8 so ideas can be developed;
- Improving resources;
- Broadening approaches to designing and making as pupils progress through the school.

- 118 Towards the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment matches that normally seen at this age. Across Years 5 and 6, pupils make good progress in developing their designing and making skills. They use a range of stiff and flexible sheet materials, electrical and mechanical components, food and textiles. Pupils develop and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways. For example, pupils in Year 6, designing and making steady hand games, plan what they have to do and suggest a suitable sequence of actions to follow, using simple outline sketches to record their ideas. Their work booklets demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the tools and

techniques required to make their products. In Year 5, pupils who design and make models of Tudor houses, research and investigate how the houses were constructed before planning how to make their own scale models. In Year 6, pupils designing and making adventure playgrounds, sketch outline ideas for their designs. However, they have insufficient understanding of the materials available from which they can make their designs and their sketches lack detail of how they could be manufactured. In Year 5 in textiles, pupils learn how to use basic stitching techniques that they then apply when designing their appliqué pictures.

- 119 Pupils use a good range of materials with increasing confidence. For example, in Year 6, they demonstrate a good understanding of mechanical and electrical components to complete successful working models of their steady hand games and moving displays. Pupils use computers to support their learning; for example in Year 5, to produce a cover for their quiz box, and in Year 6, to learn how computers can be used to control events, such as traffic light procedures. Pupils with special educational needs make good use of their work books and make good progress in Years 5 and 6.
- 120 Towards the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment just matches that normally seen at this age. Across years 7 and 8, pupils continue to make sound progress overall, consolidating and extending their designing and making skills in resistant materials and mechanical and electronic components, and, in a more limited way, in food and textiles. For example, in Year 7, in resistant materials pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of a range of three-dimensional graphic techniques.
- 121 In Year 8, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the working characteristics and applications of a range of modern materials, including new 'smart' materials. At present, pupils' opportunity to further develop their skills in food and textiles is limited, and this is restricting progress in these areas. In Year 8, in textiles, pupils learn how to use a good range of decorative techniques including tie-dye, stencilling and fabric painting in order to make cushions. The recent purchase of a computerised sewing machine and vinyl cutter has introduced pupils to the use of computer-aided design and manufacture to produce badges and logos for textile products and self-adhesive vinyl shapes and lettering for resistant material products. Pupils with special educational needs integrate well into the mixed ability groups in these years and make sound progress in developing their designing and making skills.
- 122 Overall, teaching is sound. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of their material specialisms. For example, in resistant materials, the teacher assembled a wide range of modern materials and demonstrated them in detail to the Year 8 group. In textiles in this year, the teacher had prepared a range of tie-dye samples to share with pupils and demonstrated clearly how each of the effects had been produced. Individual projects have been well planned to make good use of the time available. Teachers provide good, individual help and support to pupils within lessons, for example by highlighting key words to confirm their meaning and correct spelling on the large computer monitor
- 123 However, as pupils progress towards the end of Year 8, teaching, in resistant materials, is over-reliant on the work booklet approach and this restricts the opportunity for pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to engage in broader and more challenging activities. For example, pupils learning about modern materials in Year 8 were not given the opportunity to experiment with the materials at firsthand so as to discover for themselves how they could be used and applied to design and make products. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not engage pupils

sufficiently in dialogue to confirm their knowledge and understanding of the work being undertaken.

- 124 Pupils respond well and show a good level of interest in the subject. Standards of behaviour are nearly always good. Pupils listen well, but there are few opportunities in lessons for pupils to engage in group or class discussions. Currently, the projects in resistant materials provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn how to work more independently when designing and making.
- 125 The management of the subject by the two post-holders is sound, but it does not provide a fully co-ordinated experience for pupils as they progress through the school. The time allocation in Years 7 and 8 is too limited for pupils to explore and develop different aspects of the subject in depth. A number of appropriate development plan priorities are in place. However, the criteria for measuring the success of these plans and the costs of implementation are unclear. The low level of capitation is currently restricting the range and the quality of work that can be undertaken. For example, in resistant materials, pupils only have access to a limited range of consumable materials when designing and making. The department has achieved a number of recent successes in regional competitions; for example winning two prizes in the Robo Tech Challenge at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.
- 126 Since the previous report, the department has made satisfactory progress and standards remain similar to those normally seen. Teaching was reported as good and very good, but is now judged to be satisfactory overall. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its impact upon learning require strengthening within the department.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils like geography and work well. They take a pride in their work and presentation;
- The subject is well led with good curricular planning;
- Fieldwork is a strong and integral part of the subject in all years;
- Pupils have a good grasp of basic geographical skills.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to develop target setting and assessment to help pupils learn;
- Develop differentiated materials for different ability groups, including more geographical enquiry for gifted and talented pupils;
- Develop pupils' geographical understanding of the local area.

- 127 The standards achieved in geography at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 are as would be expected. Pupils in all years make good progress in most lessons and satisfactory progress in all others. Their use of geographical skills is a strength. In Year 5, pupils describe where people live in St Lucia, and many give good reasons for the location of settlements on the island. In Year 6, pupils describe the physical processes found in river valleys; their good use of maps and annotated diagrams helping with these tasks. In Year 7, pupils describe how the Maasai in Kenya live in an extreme environment. In Year 8, pupils draw on the knowledge they have learned to help describe and explain the action of waves on coastlines. Here, pupils talk confidently

about the differences between constructive and destructive waves, displaying good oral skills. Written work is well presented, with maps and diagrams of good quality. However, although there are examples of extended writing in assessed work, further opportunities should be taken to expand extended writing and independent enquiry

- 128 In nearly all the lessons observed, teaching was good, in a few lessons it was satisfactory. The head of geography is well qualified and has a depth of knowledge and expertise. This expertise is passed on well to pupils and also proves very helpful to the non-specialist teachers of the subject. Oral work is helped by the good use of questioning techniques to elicit from pupils what they already know. In particular, teachers are patient in encouraging participation by more reticent pupils. Lessons are planned and managed well, and in the most effective lessons, a strong structure and enthusiastic teaching stimulates interest. These lessons start with aims written on the board. This give a positive focus to the lesson, especially when reinforced and consolidated at the end. Lessons are taught as a whole class, with some elements of individual work. However, the opportunities for more group work and independent learning in class are too limited. To this end, ICT resources are beginning to show the potential to be very useful. Pupils of different abilities are managed well. Sometimes more appropriate work is made available for the less able. This is good for these pupils, but extension work for the more able needs to be targeted more rigorously.
- 129 Work is always marked well and pupils are beginning to be informed of their National Curriculum levels at key assessments. Target setting is not fully in place, although it is beginning to be used to motivate and inform pupils. Fieldwork is a strength in all years and gives pupils ample opportunity to study geography in a practical way in different parts of the country; for example, Blue Peris in North Wales, and Burwell in Cambridgeshire. It is popular with pupils and the benefits can be seen in their work. Teachers give freely of their own time to organise and manage fieldwork.
- 130 Pupils are punctual, settle down quickly into lessons and are interested in their work. They are responsible and respond well to their teachers. Pupils are always courteous, helpful and show respect. They work hard and co-operate well with each other. Levels of concentration are good even with low-attaining pupils. Classroom assistants support pupils with special educational needs effectively. These pupils learn to write clearly and accurately and listen well.
- 131 The recently appointed head of department provides good leadership, shows a clear sense of direction, and is making good progress in developing and planning the subject. He promotes good standards and is effective in communicating with non-specialist staff. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out on an informal basis but there is no formal, robust system in place. Assessment procedures are good and are being further developed to accurately track individual pupil's progress. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Schemes of work show logical progression and are regularly monitored. Departmental resources and accommodation are satisfactory. There is good liaison with the ICT department and ICT is present throughout the geography curriculum and sometimes seen in pupils' work. It is intended that its profile will expand with the recent provision of new facilities.
- 132 Since the previous inspection, the good progress noted has been maintained. Pupils now have a greater understanding of what they have written and do not just copy from textbooks. However, pupils still have insufficient knowledge of their own locality and more-able pupils still need to be challenged and stretched.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lively and enthusiastic teaching;
- Pupils have positive attitudes;
- A detailed and coherent scheme of work;
- The range of trips and visits to places of historical interest.

Areas for improvement

- The use of assessment to inform learning;
- Differentiation to ensure that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged;
- The development of the skills of causation, source evaluation and historical interpretation;
- The range of resources including the use of ICT.

- 133 By the end of Year 6, standards achieved in history are in line with those normally seen. Written work for pupils in Year 5 was less good than that normally seen but this is balanced by good oral work; for example, pupils could describe the structure of Egyptian society. In Year 6, pupils write detailed accounts about life and work in Victorian times
- 134 The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 8 are generally below average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is in line with the standard normally reached by pupils of this age but their standard in the skills of historical interpretation, enquiry and causation were below those normally seen. The work in their books largely consists of factual notes or the short answers to questions from worksheets.
- 135 Pupils in all year groups are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding but have too few opportunities to evaluate and explain different interpretations of the past. Pupils find it particularly difficult to explain the reasons for an event; for example, pupils in Year 8 could write about the impact of the dissolution of the monasteries on different groups of people but could not explain or prioritise the reasons for the dissolution. More-able pupils are not given challenging tasks to enable them to reach the higher levels of the National Curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across all years.
- 136 Teaching in history is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, pupils' participation is maximised through skilled questioning, which encourages independent thinking, and written accounts which demonstrate a good understanding of events in the past. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were encouraged to produce accounts of a Viking raid which captured the feelings of fear and included detail about the Viking way of life. Praise is used well to encourage participation, and the contributions of pupils of all abilities are valued. Pupils' interest is captured with dramatic introductions and the use of visual aids. In a Year 7 lesson on medieval medicine, pupils were asked to choose cures for different diseases and their interest was captured by the vivid explanations given by the teacher. In many lessons, learning is effectively reviewed at the end of the lesson with pupils eager to share what they have learnt. In a Year 5 lesson on life in Athens and Sparta, every pupil was determined to contribute to the plenary session.
- 137 In the less effective lessons, pupils are given too little ownership of their learning. Learning objectives are not shared with the pupils, and lengthy introductions by the teacher, restrict opportunities for the development of historical skills. Too many of the

tasks set lack challenge and there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on life in Ancient Greece, pupils were given a lengthy worksheet to read which was too difficult for many of them and from which it was hard to find the information needed for the task. Much of the teaching in history is undertaken by non-specialists who work hard to ensure that they understand the topics they are teaching but they tend to be over-reliant on the worksheets provided. Teaching styles are somewhat restricted and often limit the scope of the learning. Homework is not used well. It is not set regularly and it is often not written into homework diaries.

- 138 The use of assessment in history is unsatisfactory. Work is often acknowledged but not marked, and guidance for future improvement is rarely given. Termly multiple-choice tests have been introduced to test the acquisition of knowledge, but do not measure progress in understanding or the ability to interpret historical evidence. The termly essay questions lack structure, and responses are often restricted to the lower National Curriculum levels. Target setting is not yet in place but is planned, following liaison with other schools in the area.
- 139 Pupils are eager to learn in most lessons and, when given the chance to work independently, respond well. Pupils in Year 5 had produced some very good models of Egyptian sarcophagi, and those in Year 7 had undertaken useful work on castles. Pupils' behaviour in history lessons is usually very good. They want to do well, work hard and please their teachers. Pupils have good oral skills. They are keen to answer and read out their work in an expressive way. They are usually good listeners, both to the teacher and to each other. The scope of their written work is restricted through insufficient guidance on the purpose, nature and style of the writing required. The enthusiasm pupils show for the subject is enhanced by the extensive programme of trips and visits available to each year group.
- 140 The department benefits from enthusiastic management. The new head of history has produced a detailed scheme of work and a bank of supporting material. The department has a development plan but progress through it is not prioritised or costed. The head of history is not yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the subject and his capacity to effect change is restricted by a lack of resources. The department has few textbooks and lacks access to TV/video and ICT.
- 141 Progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. Many of the areas for improvement are still in need of development, namely opportunities for extended writing, the use of historical sources and the use of extension for the more able. The quality of marking and the use of ICT have declined. The use of dramatic narrative to make history more interesting has improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The investment in ICT over the last two years, which provides access to good quality resources;
- Planning and teaching of the taught ICT units of work;
- Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the software;
- Pupils' attitudes within the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Increasing access to ICT for the teaching of other subjects;
- Providing pupils with more opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability within subjects.

- 142 Towards the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment broadly matches that normally seen at this age. Across Years 5 and 6, pupils follow a well-planned course in ICT and they make good progress throughout the two years. They learn a very good range of basic skills, including word-processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, and databases. They use the computer to control real life situations and undertake research using CDs and the Internet. For example, in Year 5, pupils become familiar with the use of spreadsheets by entering numbers and simple formulae into a spreadsheet and use the data to calculate totals. They apply this learning to set up an order form for pencil case equipment to a set budget using a prepared table. In Year 6, they build upon these basic skills and create their own spreadsheets to model a party, and experiment by changing quantities and prices to fit changes in budget and numbers catered for. Pupils with special educational needs are usually supported well by teachers and learning support assistants and make good progress overall. However, a lack of support materials inhibits progress, particularly when assistance is not available.
- 143 ICT units of work have been planned to directly support pupils' learning within subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils learn different ways in which computers can be used to create sequences of instructions to make things happen. They programme the computers to control a drawing process and draw a variety of repeated and rotated geometrical shapes to support on-going work in mathematics. Later in Year 6, pupils learn how to programme the computer to control 'mimics' of real-life situations. They create accurate instructions to control a zebra crossing and a set of traffic lights, to support on-going work in design and technology. In Year 5, pupils learn how to use the Internet by searching the web for pictures of their hobbies. In Year 6, they develop these research skills using CDs and the Internet to find information to complete a science booklet. Pupils produce a variety of well-presented, desktop-published booklets for use by Year 5 pupils. The opportunity, however, for pupils to use and apply these skills within subjects is very limited at present.
- 144 Towards the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment remains broadly similar to that normally seen at this age. Across Years 7 and 8, pupils build upon and develop their basic skills, and recent progress, particularly since the introduction of the second ICT room, has been good. For example, in Year 7, pupils consolidate and extend their skills in a group task to produce a newspaper. They word-process well-presented letters of application and use a range of ICT software to develop and refine news stories, combining text, graphics and photographs into their publication. In a further unit of work, pupils learn how to use computers to make multimedia presentations using PowerPoint software, based on a hobby or interest. They prepare well-constructed presentations and use digital photography to incorporate images into their work. Pupils in Year 8 extend their use of the Internet, using the context of the Volvo Ocean Race, to learn how the computer can be used to obtain up-to-date weather reports and to make weather forecasts. Pupils construct short, accurate reports by interpreting the data available, developing their understanding of weather to support work in geography. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make generally good progress in these years. However, as in Years 5 and 6, support materials are not yet available to help those pupils who experience difficulties remembering the software functions, although the teacher is working to provide these.

- 145 Teaching overall is good. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge and understanding of the software in use. They set relevant and appropriately challenging activities, based on well-planned and progressive units of work for all years. Pupils access a good range of modern software applications. For example, in Year 6, the software used by pupils learning how to programme traffic light sequences enables them to view their flow-charts and an actual street scene at the same time. The large-screen projector now available in one of the rooms is particularly effective for whole-class demonstrations at the beginning of lessons, and for discussion at the end. In a Year 7 group working on multimedia presentations, the teacher provided the opportunity for pupils to share their work with the whole class. This provided an excellent opportunity for pupils to learn how to both comment fairly on the work of others and to take others' views into account. Teachers provide good, individual help and support in lessons. Where teaching is less effective, support materials are unavailable, and pupils are too reliant on their teachers to know how to proceed.
- 146 Teaching staff are beginning to make use of the new ICT suite to support pupils' learning in their subjects. For example, in science in Year 8, pupils investigate the NASA website to collect relevant data for their projects on planets. In French in Year 8, pupils word-process letters to the upper school and, in English, pupils use a variety of software to present their projects on whales
- 147 Pupils' response to ICT is good. They settle down quickly to lessons, access the software efficiently and show a good level of interest in the tasks set. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are good. Pupils use the computers carefully and responsibly, both in lessons and at lunchtimes. ICT provides good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their initiative, and the large majority proceed well with the work set. A minority find this more difficult and need to be reminded to focus on the task set.
- 148 The head of department is providing clear leadership to ensure the delivery of the taught ICT curriculum within the school. The ICT facilities are very well managed and fully used. The school is now well placed to make good use of the National Grid for Learning Initiative, and the additional hardware and training this has provided, to ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to develop and apply their ICT skills within subjects.
- 149 Since the previous report, the department has continued to make good progress. The recently-appointed head of department has built upon the established work of the previous post-holder to ensure that pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern languages is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils' attitudes towards learning French are positive;
- Classroom management is generally good;
- Behaviour and relationships are good;
- The residential visit to France has many benefits.

Areas for improvement:

- Pupils do not speak French routinely;
- Teaching is not consistently satisfactory, so activities do not always engage the pupils' interest;
- Pupils need to have clear targets and know more precisely how to improve;
- The management of the department is weak.

- 150 Pupils begin learning French in Year 5, two years before they have to. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly in line with what is usually seen. The emphasis is mostly on listening and speaking and there is a wide range of attainment. A few high attaining pupils are fluent and confident. Most pupils understand the basic language covered reasonably well, but need support when speaking. Low-attaining pupils understand the basics but speak hesitantly.
- 151 By the end of Year 8, pupils have received approximately as much time as recommended overall. Attainment is broadly in line with what is usually seen. Listening and reading levels are satisfactory; speaking is adequate in answer to direct questions, but there is not enough dialogue and very little routine speaking. Able pupils produce some accurate writing, including extended passages. Middle-ability pupils communicate satisfactorily but make spelling mistakes. Pupils of lower ability find it difficult to construct sentences without support. Most pupils achieve reasonably, although not all the more able are fully stretched and a few pupils lose motivation and momentum. Boys' achievement is significantly lower than girls; girls speak French more confidently. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they receive support. The few pupils from ethnic minorities are well integrated and make steady progress.
- 152 Teaching is satisfactory overall. Most lessons across the school are satisfactory; there are several good and occasional very good features but also a few unsatisfactory aspects. The best lessons are well planned, with a good variety of activities, which engage pupils in the learning and help them to gain confidence in speaking. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, varied activities and attractive materials motivated the pupils to join in enthusiastically and improve their speaking about school subjects. There are some examples of computers being used effectively to improve learning; for example, to help Year 8 pupils to re-draft letters. Classroom management is generally good. The teacher insists pupils listen silently and promotes good relationships with a firm and calm but approachable manner. In these lessons, pupils enjoy learning, apply themselves well to the tasks and develop their language skills well. Homework is set and marked regularly. It builds on work in lessons but there are few comments to help pupils to do better.
- 153 Where teaching is unsatisfactory, pupils are taken through a series of tasks but are not clear what they are working towards and how to improve. In some cases, pupils do not understand all the teacher says, and so lose touch. In a Year 5 lesson talking about brothers and sisters, activities were not interesting enough to engage pupils actively and there were not enough visual or other prompts to help pupils to understand. Not enough time is devoted to intensive speaking practice, helping pupils to develop conversations and speak French routinely in class.
- 154 Assessment in the subject has not been sufficiently developed to give a clear picture of pupils' progress. Pupils are not clear what level they are at and what to aim for next. This is reflected in reports home to parents which do not give a clear judgement on pupils' progress, sufficient guidance about how to improve or what targets to aim for.

- 155 Attitudes and behaviour are generally positive. Many join in willingly and are keen to learn. Most pupils are co-operative and behave well even when tasks are not interesting. Relationships are good except in a few lessons where there is some animosity and low motivation. This happens mostly when pupils either do not understand or are not actively included in the learning.
- 156 The annual residential visit to Normandy benefits pupils' language learning and their cultural and spiritual awareness. The French department does not receive enough money to provide more than the basic texts and to buy varied, stimulating materials and readers. Although information and communication technology is sometimes used, provision and training needs to be further developed to enable all pupils to use computers more often. The French department lacks a strong lead to give clear direction and management; development planning is not used in a rigorous way to improve the subject. For example, information about pupils' attainment and progress is not systematically collected and analysed to spot trends and take action to set targets to improve language skills. There is insufficient sharing of good practice and monitoring of the quality of teaching, and performance management has not been carried out.
- 157 There has not been enough progress since the previous inspection, most strikingly in standards, the quality of teaching and the use of assessment.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Lessons are inclusive, and positive relationships are maintained throughout lessons;
- Planning is detailed and there is a wish to improve;
- Careful thought has been given to how the National Curriculum levels can be expressed in pupil-friendly language.

Areas for development

- Setting higher aspirations for attainment;
- Developing skills more effectively between Year 5 and Year 8;
- Raising teachers' expectations;
- Resources (including ICT) are of poor quality.

- 158 Pupils in Year 6 do slightly less well than expected for their age. Most are working towards Level 4 of the National Curriculum, whereas most would be expected to be securely at this level. Pupils have some sense of ensemble and are developing vocal skills. These skills are not developed sufficiently and pupils are not able to compose pieces of sufficient length, complexity or sophistication. For example, taped examples showed Year 6 pupils writing new words to well known tunes. This was done at a level that could have been achieved by younger pupils and did not stretch them sufficiently.
- 159 By the time they reach Year 8, pupils have made progress but are still behind what would normally be expected for their age. They find notes on keyboards and play melodies quite securely. However, their technique is often under developed (for example using alternate fingers on two hands rather than secure use of four fingers and thumb). They are not able to play chords and melody independently and their

level of understanding is below average. Most are working towards National Curriculum Level 5 and very few are near to Level 6. Progress made by pupils with special educational needs is sound. No gifted or talented pupils were identified in the course of the inspection. Pupils receiving extra instrumental tuition do not seem to have this during school time.

- 160 Teaching is sound overall. A positive relationship is maintained, and planning is careful and thorough. Good use is made of pupil-friendly descriptions about attainment (in order to bring greater clarity to the National Curriculum levels). Small 'whiteboards' are used well to get quick feedback about what pupils know and understand. The range of teaching styles is too narrow and needs to be extended. Tasks are too often general and pupils have too long to work on something without being given a specific time limit or being asked to play back their work. This results in a slow pace in learning and progress not being as rapid as it needs to be. In one Year 5 lesson, progress was consequently unsatisfactory. Expectations are not high enough for what pupils can achieve by the time they leave the school. Skills are not consistently developed between Year 5 and Year 8. Pupils are willing to learn and they apply themselves well in lessons. Although pupils respond well in lessons they are not given a sufficiently clear understanding of what they might achieve and clear guidance on how to do this.
- 161 Attitudes and behaviour are positive. The majority of pupils concentrate well and behaviour is always good. There is sometimes a low level of talking at the start of lessons, although this is often about the topic being described by the teacher. Some pupils drift off task during more extended periods of working in small groups. This is because the task lacks sufficient focus and pupils have too long to work in an unstructured way.
- 162 Resources in music are poor. There are insufficient good quality keyboards and the range of tuned and untuned percussion is poor, producing an unsatisfactory sound quality. Pianos are old and produce a poor sound. ICT resources are inadequate and do not allow the pupils to meet the expectations for the National Curriculum. Practice rooms are in urgent need of decoration. All these factors have a negative effect on the quality of the work produced by the pupils. Many of these factors have been identified in the subject development plan. This plan does not make sufficient reference to when tasks will be completed or what the realistic cost implications are.
- 163 There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Music is often used to make an effective contribution to school assemblies and to the life of the school in concerts and performances.
- 164 Improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Improvements have been planned in singing and there has been some professional development for teachers. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection week to comment on the quality of singing and the impact that these improvements may have made. A range of songbooks has been purchased and provision has been improved for singing resource materials.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Strong leadership and management;
- Committed teachers with very good subject knowledge;
- An inclusive curriculum through which boys and girls of all abilities can learn;
- Pupils who enjoy physical education are eager to improve and work co-operatively;
- A very wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs;
- Excellent facilities and resources which are used efficiently and effectively.

Areas for improvement

- Increase the range of teaching strategies to encourage evaluation, problem-solving and independent learning;
- Establish an assessment recording system with a National Curriculum focus to enable more specific report writing.

- 165 Standards of attainment towards the end of Year 6 are in line with age-related expectations, and a significant number of pupils are above them. In Years 7 and 8, the standard of attainment is consistently good. Throughout the school a high proportion of pupils demonstrate good levels of skill in athletics and striking and fielding games. In athletics in Year 5, pupils work in small groups to develop an understanding of running at different speeds. They understand the need to run more slowly over longer periods of time and distance and most choose the appropriate pace for the length of run. Pacing is further developed in Year 7 and used to sustain their running over 800 metres and improve personal targets.
- 166 Pupils are also learning sound basic techniques in throwing and jumping events. In Year 6, they throw a cricket ball using the correct stance and they know the safety rules. In Year 7 they shot-putt using correct technique and equipment, and co-ordinate different combinations of jumps in preparation for the triple jump.
- 167 In striking and fielding games in Years 5 and 6, pupils learn a range of bowling and fielding skills and how to strike a ball being bowled at them. In Year 6, they bowl accurately, with change of speed and level, and understand when to use them. In Years 7 and 8, they extend all these skills and use them confidently in games of rounders and mini-games of cricket.
- 168 Boys and girls of all abilities are well integrated into the lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities are given sensitive and appropriate support which enables them to make good progress. Several individuals benefit from having an adult to support them throughout the lesson whilst others thrive when working in supportive peer groups. High-attaining pupils develop well by being grouped carefully to work with other high achievers,
- 169 Physical education is taught well and this enables pupils to learn and make good progress. Pupils are appropriately challenged and are achieving in line with their potential.
- 170 Teachers create a positive learning environment – one of challenge, support and praise and pupils respond with energy, enthusiasm and an eagerness to do well. Tasks are usually clearly defined and instructions clear. Teachers' knowledge and

understanding of the subject is very good and enables learning to take place in a structured and progressive manner. Teachers use clear demonstrations by a teacher or pupil to coach skills, and this is effectively reinforced through question and answer. Although a well-established number of teaching strategies is already in place, the broadening of this range would further extend learning. There is insufficient use of strategies to encourage pupils' evaluation of their own and others' work. The development of problem-solving activities which would enhance and extend independent learning is too limited.

- 171 Boys and girls of all abilities are fully involved in lessons and their individual needs are catered for in a variety of ways including using differentiated equipment, sensitive grouping or individual help. This supportive environment encourages everyone to learn and make progress.
- 172 Ongoing assessment in lessons is good; for example, teachers work with individuals to improve a specific skill or technique. Knowledge, skill and understanding are developed through individual or group assessment on a daily basis. However, there is no formal recording system with a National Curriculum focus. This would provide a clearer picture of pupils' attainment and progress and could also be used as tangible evidence to support more focused report writing.
- 173 Pupils enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and work co-operatively and collaboratively with their peers. Their attitude to the subject, and their behaviour in lessons, is very good. During instructions and demonstrations they listen attentively so they understand the tasks. Then they concentrate and involve themselves, both physically and intellectually, in the activities, so learning takes place. They enjoy their PE lessons and are well motivated to learn and raise their levels of achievement.
- 174 The subject leadership is strong and sensitive. Good relationships exist within the department and a shared commitment to high standards means that planning of schemes of work and lessons is progressive and detailed. Staff operate effectively as a team. The maintenance and development of effective teaching and learning is the focus of regular team teaching between different combinations of staff; however, specific monitoring of teaching is in its very early stages. A development plan is in place but the large number of objectives and the lack of prioritisation means that it loses its focus. The organisation and management of systems is good. Documentation is of a high quality and very comprehensive. Facilities, staff and resources are well deployed. Facilities for the department are excellent and resources for lessons are plentiful and in good condition.
- 175 All members of the PE department give unstintingly of their time to provide a very full and varied extra-curricular programme of physical activities and a very successful gym and dance performance. The clubs operate before school, during the lunch-hours, and after school, and all pupils are welcome to attend, regardless of ability. Participation levels are good. There are some links with local community sports clubs and pupils are encouraged to join them.
- 176 The physical education department has made good progress since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 8 have risen to become consistently good. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in lessons are now judged to be very good.
- 177 The physical education department is efficient and effective. It offers all pupils a wide range of sporting and aesthetic opportunities and achieves good standards.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths

- The department is well led: schemes of work are effectively planned;
- Learning in religious education (RE) about Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural awareness and their spiritual and moral development;
- Relationships in the classroom are good, and this makes a platform for challenging learning;
- Good teaching employs a range of learning styles for pupils;
- Pupils have good opportunities for learning from religion, reflecting on religious and spiritual questions.

Areas for improvement

- Making the quality of tasks set more consistent;
- Developing the current useful approaches to RE assessment so that teachers can assess pupils' work with criteria that refer to clear gains in understanding of religions;
- Resources, including textbooks, are not adequate at present, and should be improved.

178 There is no specific evidence from lower schools of pupils' prior attainment in RE. Most pupils across the whole age range are achieving the standards expected by the Agreed Syllabus, and some, particularly higher-achieving pupils in Years 7 and 8, are working above the expectations of the RE syllabus.

179 Standards in RE are satisfactory in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are beginning to understand and describe some religious beliefs and teachings and to link their own experience and values to some of the ideas from religions which they encounter. For example, many pupils explain some symbols of religions, and recall outlines and sequences to religious stories about Christmas, Divali or the apostle Paul. Stories are often linked to pupils' own experience; for example, a focus on friendship was illustrated from the story of Ruth and Naomi from the Bible. They take opportunities to express attitudes of tolerance and respect in RE. Standards are not so high where the focus is too general: pupils need to be able to connect their religious learning with the local and contemporary, without too much overburdening of content.

180 Standards are good in Years 7 and 8. Continuity in learning between Year 6 and Year 7 is very good, reflecting the strength of a middle school. By the time they leave the school, most pupils in Year 8 attain at or above the levels expected by the syllabus. Many pupils relate their learning about Christianity to moral questions about family life. More-able pupils are able to use arguments and reflections of their own to offer answers to spiritual and religious questions about topics such as God, community, worship or commitment. Work on topics such as God and gender, depicting one's own life as a journey, or considering the idea of 'deep knowledge', is done best where pupils have very clear and carefully-designed tasks that enable pupils of all abilities to express their own ideas. A few lower-attaining pupils progress at too slow a rate because they lack a clear structure and stimulus to achieve their potential in RE. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

181 RE makes a good contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills, particularly with

regard to speaking and listening: discussion work is a strength of the programme in Years 7 and 8. The range of writing tasks set is good, including writing a parable, devising questions of their own to consider, and writing about applying human rights to new situations. The use of ICT in RE is an area for further development: presently, a few pupils are encouraged to use computing skills for homework. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are sound with regard to those expected by the Agreed Syllabus, and several pupils have reached a very good standard.

- 182 All of the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, and a quarter of lessons were good. In Years 5 and 6, where non-specialist teachers take more RE lessons, there is an emphasis on factual learning, stories and answering questions. In Year 8, better teaching was seen which included good use of discussion, paired work, group work and a range of affective and creative tasks. This teaching provokes interested and thoughtful responses from pupils, promoting high standards of learning. More effective teaching emphasised depth rather than coverage; for example, the syllabus suggests learning about Hindu worship in the home, not the whole history of Hindu traditions. Teachers' awareness of the special needs of pupils is usually high, and provision of sensitive and effective individual support within mixed ability classes was observed.
- 183 Pupils' responses to the teaching are generally good. Many value the opportunities for discussion and debate that RE presents, and find the range of religions studied stimulating.
- 184 Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good because patient and consistent teaching tackles any bad behaviour, and sets expectations that work in RE will be taken seriously. The pace of learning activity is well judged. Pupils are expected to show respect for each other and for different religions, and, where learning tasks set make pupils think about spiritual and religious questions for themselves, good work results. Many pupils often contribute their own experiences and thoughts, and find the classroom atmosphere set by the teacher affirming. This leads to them taking up many opportunities for reflective and thoughtful work, and contributes to good standards, particularly for older pupils.
- 185 Assessment is based on the Agreed Syllabus, and uses thought-provoking questions and self-assessment alongside teachers' marking of work. This is effective in helping pupils to move on, but greater clarity in testing whether pupils can meet the criteria of the syllabus could result from the careful use of level descriptors. Time for RE is barely adequate, and so homework, including finishing work off, has an important place. It is set regularly.
- 186 Resources for learning are well used, but slender: further books and stimulus materials are needed, especially where half sets of textbooks leave all pupils sharing. There is barely enough curricular time, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Opportunities for staff professional development have been slight: training on the latest RE assessment practice is needed.
- 187 The work of the RE department is well managed by the subject leader, and this has led to good progress in RE since the Previous inspection.