

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S VC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Long Stratton

Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121045

Headteacher: Mr Tony Blake

Reporting inspector: Mr David Cann
20009

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th November 2001

Inspection number: 195022

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	8 – 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Swan Lane Long Stratton Norwich
Postcode:	NR15 2UY
Telephone number:	01508 530459
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lorraine Zima
Date of previous inspection:	21 st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20009 David Cann	Registered inspector	Geography History Modern languages	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
09334 Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23262 Philip Martin	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
25775 Viv Wilson	Team inspector	English Art Music Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other activities offered to pupils?
02866 Robert Battey	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's VC Middle School has 291 pupils on roll aged 8 to 12 years. It has a wide catchment area and pupils live in the village of Long Stratton and the surrounding countryside. They are drawn from a broadly average range of socio-economic backgrounds. Four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is currently in line with expectations. Currently, 30 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register, which is above the national average. Eight pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is average for a school of this size. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's VC Middle School has a caring environment in which pupils develop very good attitudes to learning and apply themselves willingly to their work. The headteacher provides the school with sensitive and energetic leadership. He is good at supporting his staff and is much respected by parents and pupils. The school offers pupils a wide range of learning activities which is effective in developing their interests and enthusiasm for discovery. By Year 6, pupils make sound progress in mathematics and science but, while their reading and speaking skills develop satisfactorily, their writing is below expectations. Pupils achieve similar levels in Year 7. The school represents satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and develop a willingness to learn and apply themselves.
- The school is a very well ordered community in which pupils feel safe and relate well to one another and to adults.
- Pupils' social development is very good and their moral and cultural development is good. Pupils respect one another's beliefs and values. They participate in a range of cultural activities such as music, drama and sport which help to develop good relationships in the school.
- The school offers pupils a wide range of learning opportunities across the curriculum to which pupils respond enthusiastically.
- Parents are very appreciative of what the school offers their children.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English writing by providing more structured teaching of skills.
- Management systems to facilitate the exchange and development of good practice in teaching.
- The use of assessment information to improve the planning of lessons and the setting of targets for pupils.
- The governors' role as critical friends of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997 and was judged to provide a good standard of education. Only one main area for improvement was identified: to improve teaching where weaknesses occurred. The school has made satisfactory progress in meeting this, but elements of good practice need further reinforcement. After the last inspection the school set up a comprehensive programme to maintain standards in all areas of its work. These are evident in pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and in the strong links which the school has with parents. The results in tests at Year 6 have improved in line with the national trend, but, nonetheless, they are below those achieved in similar schools. The school evaluates its achievements carefully and prior to the inspection had already identified the need to improve pupils' writing, extend the use of assessment and the governors' role in monitoring performance. The school currently provides a satisfactory quality of education and has the capacity to improve this.

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	C	C	D	E
Mathematics	D	B	D	E
Science	D	D	C	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

*Those schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Overall, attainment is in line with expectations in mathematics and science, but below expectations in English. Results in 2001 were below the national average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and a high proportion of pupils who took the tests in 2001 were on the special needs register. Current pupils in Years 6 and 7 attain the expected levels in mathematics and science. In English, pupils' attainment is in line with that expected in reading, speaking and listening, but below the levels expected in writing where progress is slow through the school. Over the last four years, results in these three subjects have improved at the same rate as that recorded in the rest of the country. Nonetheless, in comparison with the levels achieved by pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment is below average by Year 6. Pupils enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly average and the majority make steady progress by the time they leave. They achieve levels in religious education and art and design that are above expectations and in all other subjects achieve the levels expected for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school. They are well motivated, enthusiastic and keen to contribute.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and normally behave in a very co-operative and sensible manner.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities which they fulfil conscientiously.
Attendance	Good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in 64 lessons observed:	Years 4 – 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 and similar to that reported in the last inspection. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, which creates a very positive environment for learning. They plan effectively together to provide a consistent programme of learning in all classes. The expertise of individual teachers is well used for pupils in Year 7 in subjects like science and religious education. The school has implemented the national strategy for teaching numeracy with more success than that that for teaching literacy. Because of this, pupils are making sound progress in all aspects of mathematics, but not in the quality of their English writing. Teachers do not allocate enough time to demonstrating and

explaining the craft of writing nor do they give pupils opportunities to write at length. The marking of written work gives insufficient guidance to pupils as to what they have done well and what they need to improve, although in other subjects marking is more helpful.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils benefit from a number of stimulating learning experiences and a well balanced range of teaching and learning activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides satisfactory support for pupils which enables them to make steady progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school is very effective in helping pupils to develop a sense of responsibility to one another and is good at extending their moral and cultural understanding. Spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a caring and supportive environment in which pupils' personal development is promoted successfully. The procedures for monitoring academic progress are sound, but pupils are not yet regularly involved in assessing their own advances and understanding how they can improve their work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is very successful in promoting the positive environment for learning which the school enjoys. He is good at sharing his vision with senior management and staff and provides them with sensitive support. However, while management structures help to create co-ordinated teaching across year groups, they do not always promote the development of consistent practices throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily, but need to develop their role in providing a critical analysis of the school's performance and in shaping the school's developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance with increasing insight. However, it does not have a clear grasp of the priorities required to develop basic skills in literacy.
The strategic use of resources	The staffing, accommodation and resources in the school satisfactorily meet the needs of the curriculum and all pupils.

The school applies best value principles in setting its budgets.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twelve parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection and there were 101 questionnaires returned (35 per cent of those distributed) and analysed.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like school.• Behaviour is good.• Teaching is good.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.• Children make good progress.• The school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed concerns about the amount of work children have to do at home.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and consider that homework is well organised and appropriate in quantity and quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 and Year 7 is currently in line with national expectations in mathematics and science, but below expectations in English. In tests in 2001, pupils in Year 6 achieved results that were below the national average in English, mathematics and average in science. In the year group who took the Year 6 tests the number of pupils with special educational needs was well above the national average, which contributed to the lower than usual results. Over the last four years, results have been in line with the national average and have been improving. They have kept pace with the improving trend recorded in the rest of the country.
2. Records of pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 3 tests indicate that pupils make generally sound progress by the time they reach Year 6 and maintain this into Year 7. There has been a steady improvement in pupils' attainment on entry over the past four years, but pupils still join the school with skills in writing which are below expectations. Up to two years ago, pupils' overall attainment in literacy and numeracy was lower than average. The year groups had an above average number of pupils with special educational needs which was reflected in the records of what they achieved in Year 2 tests. However, in the past two years, pupils have entered the school with skills close to those expected for their age and the number of pupils with special educational needs is average.
3. In comparison with the levels achieved by pupils in similar schools, pupils' attainment in Year 6 is generally below average in English, mathematics and science. In 2001, results were well below average. Nonetheless, in comparing these pupils' results at Year 2, they make significant progress by Year 6 and continue to improve their attainment in Year 7. The school has set targets for 2002 which indicate an improvement in results in English and mathematics and are in line with the national average. The current attainment of pupils in English suggests that they will achieve appropriate levels in reading, but their attainment in writing will still be below the national average. In mathematics and science, pupils are attaining the expected levels. The attainment of boys has been below that of girls in English and the school is aiming to improve this by its use of texts and improved teaching. In all other subjects there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The attainment of higher attaining pupils was above average in English and mathematics in 2000, but was less strong in 2001. In science, however, higher attaining pupils have not achieved the expected levels, although results are improving. Teachers are making better use of assessment information and this is helping to raise expectations and attainment.
4. In Year 7, pupils' attainment is developed through teaching which is well organised and planned. Pupils are set for literacy and numeracy and this has a positive impact on raising attainment. Support for lower ability pupils is particularly good and promotes their confidence in both subjects. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving, but, overall, the standards in writing are still below expectations. Pupils' attainment is stimulated in subjects where there is good use of specialist teaching, as in science, art, history and religious education. The good relationships that exist between teacher and pupils in science have a particularly beneficial effect on pupils' learning and progress.
5. In literacy, pupils' attainments by the end of Years 6 and 7 are in line with those expected in speaking and listening and reading, but below average in writing. The school has identified the need to improve writing skills throughout the school. This is having a

positive impact, but there are still aspects that need development. The implementation of the literacy strategy is not consistently effective and variations in planning make it difficult to identify successful practice. There is not enough time for pupils to produce writing of high quality. Standards in speaking and listening are sound. Generally, pupils listen well and are often keen to contribute in discussions. Most pupils are articulate and talk confidently to each other and to adults. Teachers value pupils' responses, which helps them to feel secure when asking and answering questions. Standards in reading are average by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7 and most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their books and younger pupils regularly read to their parents at home. In addition, there are a short quiet reading sessions every day in class and pupils share texts reading in groups.

6. The teaching of numeracy is better organised than at the time of the last inspection and pupils' attainment is rising steadily. In most years in the school, pupils are taught in sets organised according to their ability. This is having a positive impact on achievements among both higher ability pupils and those on the special educational needs register. Pupils are encouraged to solve problems in their own way and to think hard, explaining the reasons for their answers. Pupils' mental arithmetic skills are improving and teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. There is satisfactory use of number skills in other subjects such as science and design and technology but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology.
7. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress and by Years 6 and 7 they have a sound understanding of the process of scientific investigation. Pupils start school with attainment that is similar to that of other pupils nationally. In carrying out investigations, they select equipment and record their results appropriately, incorporating necessary measurements. However, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged when asked to account for why certain things happen, for example, why electricity makes a bulb light up. This lack of challenge is a key contributor to the below average percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in national tests.
8. Pupils attain the standards expected in information and communication technology by the time they reach Years 6 and 7. In the previous inspection, standards were reported to be good, but national expectations have risen considerably since 1997. The school has recently improved resources by installing a computer suite, but few classrooms yet have computers to enable pupils to consolidate and develop their skills. Nonetheless teachers make good use of the suite and this has promoted satisfactory attainment among pupils with some strong features. Pupils create high quality desktop publishing with pupils in Years 6 and 7, planning and developing book reviews that include text, pictures, sound and animation in multimedia presentations. Pupils use spreadsheets proficiently, research subjects from the Internet and encyclopaedia and have experience of using control technology in science. However, pupils do not make enough use of email because facilities have not yet been fully put into place.
9. In religious education pupils, achieve standards that are above those expected for their ages. The quality of teaching is good and effectively develops pupils' knowledge and experiences. They have a good general knowledge about places of worship, holy books and places, festivals and celebrations. All are included in the work irrespective of their beliefs. Standards in art and design are also above average by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing a good range of skills and techniques. In all other subjects, pupils attain the levels expected of their age and progress at a satisfactory level. Overall, the standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. There is an appropriate emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Most pupils receive effective levels of support from teaching and support staff. However, there are instances where lower ability pupils struggle with over-demanding tasks in literacy lessons and thus do not progress as well as they might. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides effective support for pupils on a one to one basis and in groups. However, some pupils miss important parts of other learning when they are withdrawn, which naturally hinders their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils are happy and enjoy school and their attitudes both to school and their learning are very good. Pupils are well motivated, enthusiastic and keen to contribute in lessons and participate in a range of different tasks and activities. There are good levels of participation in the various clubs and out of school activities such as the sign language club. Parents value the good teaching and commitment of staff. They are particularly pleased that teachers encourage pupils to work hard and help them to become mature and responsible.
12. The standards of behaviour in and around the school are very good and have been well maintained since the last inspection. Parents comment very positively on the high standards set. They consider that pupils know what is expected and any problems or frictions are resolved sensitively. The school has an orderly atmosphere and pupils are well aware of the rules, which they have helped to devise. However, where lessons are not well managed pupils can cause some disruptions. Pupils value the merit reward system, which they feel acts as an incentive to improve and do better and to behave well. Pupils are very friendly, happy to talk about what they are doing and willing to show their work to visitors. Pupils report that the school is a happy and secure place with little bullying. If they have a problem they know who to go to and are confident that incidents would be dealt with properly. There were no incidents of oppressive behaviour during the inspection and a high degree of harmony exists between pupils. There have been no exclusions in the school.
13. Relationships in the school are usually good, both between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. There are occasions when boys and girls do not interact well and this results in some squabbling and disagreements. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness and ensure pupils do not feel excluded. The buddy system set up between Years 4 and 7 helps younger pupils to settle and promotes a sense of responsibility among older ones. Year 4 pupils generally feel the system works well, 'they are there if we need help'. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well integrated into school activities, including achieving their merit awards. There are frequent chances for pupils to work together in pairs. However, opportunities for mixed gender groupings are not always encouraged. Pupils normally co-operate well which creates a good working environment and has a positive impact on learning. Pupils were observed working well together on the computers and practising their skills in physical education lessons.
14. Pupils develop a good awareness of moral and social values through the personal, social and health education programme. They enjoy many opportunities to talk about important issues such as relationships and law and order, which helps them to share their views and feelings, values and beliefs. During one lesson, pupils were discussing how to become better listeners as a way of promoting positive relationships. The care and encouragement shown by pupils for those with medical problems or special educational needs is very good. The school promotes value and respect for each other, which is reinforced by the good role models of the staff.

15. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are successfully given tasks that they undertake independently, such as reading and following instructions, or undertaking their own research and investigations. This helps them to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their initiative. For instance, in a Year 7 'magic spelling' lesson, pupils adapted the methods presented to develop their own learning strategies. Pupils willingly undertake roles of responsibility around the school such as acting as class monitors or librarians. In Year 7, pupils have wider responsibilities as house captains and sports captains. The school council provides an opportunity for pupils to air their views and become involved in the decision-making processes of the school. Pupils are very enthusiastic and undertake their responsibilities seriously, debating issues in a mature manner and reporting back the results of these discussions to their classmates. They feel that the school council has definitely given them a voice and a number of changes have been implemented as a result of their discussions.
16. Attendance levels in the school are good and pupils are prompt into school in the mornings. Many of the absences are a result of parents taking their children on holiday in term time. Registers are kept correctly and the registration process offers an orderly start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, resulting in a sound quality of learning. The school has maintained a similar standard of teaching to that reported in the last inspection. There is a higher proportion of good and very good teaching, but that of unsatisfactory teaching remains similar. The quality of teaching is similar in each year group and all pupils benefit equally from the quality of education which the school offers.
18. Teachers generally have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and how they can be taught effectively. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when shaky subject knowledge was a feature of the small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, the teacher had a good understanding of the ways in which a basketball could be passed. His clear exposition and clear teaching points helped pupils to make good progress in the lesson.
19. Teachers plan effectively together. They base lessons on the nationally recommended guidelines for teaching subjects. The expertise of individual teachers is also used effectively in those subjects where they teach a subject to the whole year group. As a result, lessons build on what pupils have already been taught and all pupils in the same year group have similar experiences. The school has implemented the national strategy for teaching numeracy with more success than that that for teaching literacy. Because of this, pupils are making sound progress in all aspects of mathematics, but not in English where learning and progress in writing is unsatisfactory.
20. A feature of the unsatisfactory teaching reported in the previous inspection was that sometimes the content of the lesson was not clearly enough defined. There has been some improvement in this. Teachers now usually plan lessons with clear and relevant purposes and include activities that help pupils to attain these. This helps pupils to know what is expected of them during the lesson and provides a useful framework for their learning. The teacher generally matches work to what pupils already know so they have a good foundation for their learning. In a Year 4 English lesson, the teacher provided suitable work for different groups of pupils within the class. As a result, all pupils made good progress in analysing how the author used words to describe characters in the story of the 'Dancing Bear'. However, in a few lessons, this clarity is missing and in these cases there is not a close enough match between pupils' prior knowledge and the work

they are expected to do. This can also result in the teacher not expecting enough; for example, pupils were expected to count on in fives in a mathematics lesson at Year 5. Consequently, pupils did not make enough progress in this lesson.

21. A strength of teaching throughout the school is the good management of pupils. This stems from the good relationships between teachers and pupils. These foster positive attitudes and a willingness to learn. A teacher in a Year 5 science lesson dealt very effectively with a potentially disruptive pupil in a calm manner. This allowed other pupils to make progress, defused the situation and encouraged the pupil himself later to take a full part in the lesson. These positive attitudes were also a great asset when the teaching in Year 7 dealt with the sensitive issue of human reproduction placed in the context of a loving relationship. In a lesson of personal and social education, the teacher quickly established the ground rules for behaviour during a discussion about feelings and expressions. Consequently, pupils settled down and participated fully in the lesson and made good progress in learning how to consider others' feelings.
22. Teachers generally use resources and support staff satisfactorily. In science, they make effective use of pictures, flash cards and photocopied material to encourage all pupils to take part. The teacher provided a good range of examples in an English lesson planned to develop an understanding of writing reports about the area in which they live. This helped pupils to make good progress. Support for pupils with special educational needs ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Where it is good, teachers plan effectively to adapt work appropriately to meet the needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are skilful in supporting pupils, by repeating or rephrasing teachers' instructions and questions and providing effective encouragement. Most provide satisfactory guidance and support and pupils with special educational needs participate fully in the lesson and make good progress. In a few lessons, support is not satisfactory. Teachers make insufficient provision for the specific needs of these pupils and the teaching assistant's role is not effectively developed. They do not always adapt tasks to meet the identified targets in pupils' individual educational plans. In these lessons, progress of pupils with special educational needs is limited.
23. The school has made a satisfactory start in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy resulting in good teaching in each year group. The mental mathematics session at the beginning of lessons helps pupils to practise skills and often links well with the main part of the lesson. Teachers in Year 7 use a commercial scheme that has helped pupils to make good progress. There are sound links with other subjects. Pupils use numeracy skills in presenting their findings from geography surveys and in their science investigations.
24. The school has been less successful in using the National Literacy Strategy to raise standards in English. However, teaching is satisfactory and standards in speaking and listening and reading are sound. Teachers ask questions that require pupils to formulate their ideas and give them enough time to answer. This helps pupils to make good progress, for example, in a religious education lesson when discussing the feelings that the shepherds might have had on hearing of the birth of Jesus. However, writing is not taught well enough to raise standards to a satisfactory level at the end of Years 6 and 7. Although teachers require pupils to use writing in a range of subjects as well as in English, for example writing arguments for and against cloning, they do not give enough guidance on the process. Teachers do not expect high enough quality in pupils' writing, nor do they provide enough opportunities for extended writing.
25. The recent opening of the computer suite has had a positive impact on the use of information and communications technology in teaching. The quality of teaching is good.

Teachers help pupils to use CD-ROMs and the Internet when researching topics such as slavery in history, or databases with information about monarchs.

26. The quality of teaching is good in each year group in mathematics and religious education and for Year 7 in art. In all other subjects it is satisfactory for each year group, except in design and technology for Year 7 and in geography when too little teaching was seen to be able to make a judgement.
27. Teaching is generally good at including all pupils in learning. The setting of pupils in mathematics is carefully organised from year to year in order to provide the best support for the different range of abilities in each year group. The school is not managing inclusion well where pupils are withdrawn from the same lesson each week for individual and group work. There are also instances in literacy where tasks are not adapted to meet the needs of lower ability pupils and this affects their involvement and progress in lessons.

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

28. The range and quality of the curriculum is good for pupils in Key Stage 2 and in Year 7 as reported at the last inspection. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to the needs of all its pupils. It meets the requirements for each subject of the National Curriculum and for religious education. Several improvements have helped to maintain these standards. The content and planning for each subject have been revised in relation to national guidelines and French remains as an extra subject for pupils in Key Stage 2. The school's computer suite now allows for whole class teaching. This additional learning facility has improved opportunities for the development of information and communications technology skills. Implementation of the national numeracy strategy contributes positively to pupils' learning.
29. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the whole curriculum. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn spelling in ability groups and in Year 7 pupils are also taught in sets for English and mathematics. Additional musical instrument tuition is available and there is also a large choir. These arrangements enhance the school's musical provision. However, Year 6 pupils opting for choir practice miss most of their art lessons and can only practise these skills during lunch breaks. The school shop organised by parents to sell books and stationery also takes place during school hours. Although popular with pupils, it means interruption to lessons and loss of curriculum time. The time allocated to Year 4 pupils for art and for design and technology is less than that for other year groups. Residential trips to support study of the environment are undertaken in term time. Pupils unable to take part follow similar activities at school and experiences are shared later. Financial assistance is available, but applications are infrequently made.
30. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The requirements of the Code of Practice¹ regarding pupils with special educational needs are met and pupils have individual education plans that are reviewed termly. These plans are variable in their quality and effectiveness. Most pupils' plans include specific targets and helpful guidance for class teachers to plan tasks and support. This is not consistent and some targets and plans are insufficiently precise in detail to enable effective support to be provided. The special educational needs co-ordinator withdraws pupils for one-to-one and small group work. While the quality of this support is highly effective in most cases,

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

there is an over-reliance on published schemes for some individuals which does not link well to the pupil's specific needs. There is insufficient consideration given to pupils' access to the full curriculum when planning the timetable for withdrawal work. As a result, some pupils miss the same subject every week.

31. The school's extra curricular provision is very good. A wide variety of sports and music activities is enhanced by computer, art and drama clubs. The teaching of deaf signing is a particularly valuable opportunity to increase pupils' awareness of people with disabilities. The homework club offers good support for pupils wishing to participate and computer availability provides further motivation.
32. The school has very good links with the local community. These include visits from people to talk about their work, such as the local police constable and representatives from charity organisations. Visiting musicians, puppeteers and artists give interesting performances that stimulate pupils' imagination and promote new ideas. Trips to art galleries and interesting buildings, and choir performances at local day centres and the church, offer an interesting balance to classroom lessons.
33. Partnership with other schools on the campus is satisfactory. Pupils from the First school make several visits to familiarise themselves with Middle school arrangements. Effective liaison with the High School has led to good benefits for mathematics and French through sharing the same scheme of work.
34. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education through a recently revised programme of learning. This includes teaching about the dangers of alcohol, smoking and drugs, and sex education for older pupils. Good emphasis is placed on sharing thoughts and feelings during 'circle time'. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights. Topics for discussion, such as 'making choices' and 'good news', are suitably integrated into all subject areas and assembly times. The school places particular importance on responsibility for others, an issue well carried out through the 'buddy' system. Each Year 4 pupil is 'cared for' by their Year 7 buddy, who hears them read weekly and helps their integration into their new school.
35. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect of the curriculum is regarded as having high priority. Good provision is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes towards others in school.
36. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. During assembly, pupils have suitable moments for reflection and prayer. A poem by Brian Keenan offered an appropriate focus for recognising that personal choices affect other people too. Although there are opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness in many lessons, teachers do not sufficiently identify these possibilities in their planning or highlight them in lessons.
37. Provision for moral development is good. Well based on self-discipline, it helps pupils to have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils discuss desirable behaviour and, in this way, contribute to their own school rules, which are clearly displayed in classrooms. A visit by the community police constable very effectively related pupils' understanding to the wider context of public law and order. In considering the environment, pupils discuss wider moral issues of conservation and pollution. Pupils' high interest led them to ask some perceptive questions.
38. The school is successful in promoting very good social development. Individuals and groups take responsibility within their school in a variety of ways. They conscientiously

undertake school bank and library duties and help to keep the school environment tidy. Pupils' good awareness of problems in the wider world prompts charity fundraising initiatives. The School Council responds very responsibly to issues raised by their fellow pupils. It has recently achieved success in modifying playground rules to improve the quality of lunchtime play. The merit award system recognises and shares pupils' achievements in behaviour as well as work.

39. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their experience of art, drama, sport and music. They take part in a range of musical and art activities which enable them to develop an understanding of their own culture. They also develop an appreciation of beliefs and customs of other world cultures through work in religious education, history and geography. Study of colour and pattern leads to an awareness of traditional designs in Aborigine and Indian art. Visiting drama groups and musicians, together with pupils' visits to places of interest, all play an important role in enhancing pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment. Its provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance is very good and makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Parents speak very highly of the school. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers and their support staff know the pupils very well. They effectively monitor pupils' personal development and will act quickly when they see a need. Pupils are also involved in identifying their own personal development targets for improvement. There are sound systems in place to support the academic and personal development of pupils with special educational needs and they make satisfactory progress.
41. The school is focusing on the issues of inclusion to ensure all pupils enjoy the same quality of education. The school organises teaching in numeracy to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities by setting them in the most effective way in different year groups. In literacy, setting in Year 7 enables pupils to follow teaching designed to meet their particular needs. However, in some other classes, tasks are not always well adapted to meet the needs of less able pupils, which means they do not participate as fully as they should. In addition, some pupils are withdrawn from the same lessons each week for individual and group work. The school is aware of this and changes timings, but not frequently enough to minimise interruptions to their learning.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour and eliminating any oppressive behaviour are good. This is reflected in the good behaviour and orderly atmosphere in the school. The comprehensive policy on discipline and pastoral care provides clear guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour and dealing with any disruptive pupils or incidents of bullying. There is a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are involved in devising the rules and boundaries and know what is expected of them. They respond positively to the weekly achievement assembly where their successes both inside and outside school are recognised. Pupils are often highly competitive, enthusiastically accumulating both house points and merit badges.
43. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are sound. However, the fact that registers are kept in the classrooms means there is little cross checking of absences until later in the week. The school does not follow-up absences immediately if parents do not contact the school in the morning. Parents are regularly informed about their responsibilities regarding the need to ensure their children attend school regularly and promptly. They are encouraged not to take their children on holiday in term time.

Appropriate links have been established with the education welfare officer who gets involved in following up cases where necessary.

44. The school has very good systems in place for child protection and ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school has appropriate procedures and guidelines for child protection. The headteacher and his deputy are the staff with designated responsibilities for child protection and both are well aware of the processes involved. The headteacher has undertaken recent updating training, and other members of staff are similarly updated on changes to the legislation, receiving appropriate in-service training. All staff are qualified to provide first aid treatment. Well-established systems are in place to take care of pupils who have minor accidents or fall ill during the day and there are effective procedures to meet the medical needs of pupils.
45. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and appropriate procedures in place to address the issues of safety and security of pupils in and around the school. The deputy headteacher is the health and safety representative. Both he and the health and safety governor undertake regular health and safety checks and risk assessments, reporting back to the governing body. The governors undertake their responsibilities for health and safety conscientiously.
46. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Testing of pupils on entry to the school in Year 4 is used to plan appropriate work and to assist in the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. The school uses a range of tests and assessments in reading, spelling, writing and mathematics to track pupils' progress as they move through the school. These provide helpful data for monitoring overall performance and for the yearly reports to parents. They are well used to analyse trends in performance between year groups and the different achievements of boys and girls. Teachers' planning for science and mathematics reflects the information that is gained from the assessments and work is satisfactorily matched to the differing needs of pupils. Assessments have led to individual target setting, which, although only recently established, is helping pupils to understand their own learning and the small steps which must be taken to make improvement.
47. In English and most foundation subjects, however, assessment procedures are not yet consistently developed across the school. This results in insufficient use of information to guide teachers' planning of the curriculum. Teachers do not always evaluate and record the impact of their lessons on pupils' attainment in order to identify the learning targets for different groups in future lessons. This results in pupils making uneven progress and not achieving standards as high as they might. The school has appropriate procedures to recognise and provide for pupils with special educational needs. However, pupils do not receive a consistent level of support in some classes to help them achieve the targets set in their individual education plans. Teachers use test results and work with the special educational needs co-ordinator to decide where extra support is needed. However, they do not always record pupils' progress as they are taught in lessons to ensure tasks are properly matched to pupils' needs and to influence the setting of targets in the individual education plans.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school's partnership with parents continues to be very good and one of the strengths of the school.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is very comprehensive, although the school has identified this as an area for improvement. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to

parents. Regular contact with parents is maintained through the monthly newsletters, homework diaries or letters informing parents of activities and events. Curriculum information including details of projects and topics to be covered is circulated to parents at the beginning of the year.

50. Parents feel that there are very good links with the school and feel comfortable approaching the school with any issues. They appreciate the open door policy and the fact that the school encourages suggestions and takes any concerns they have seriously, handling them sensitively. Most parents reported that they are kept well informed about the progress their children are making. The parents' questionnaires identified a few comments about the amount of homework provided and a few parents expressed concerns relating to the range of activities offered after school. However, because many pupils are bussed to school each day these are not viable and are well compensated for by the large range of lunchtime activities provided. During the pre-inspection meeting, parents of pupils with special educational needs spoke highly of the support and help their children are receiving.
51. Parents have frequent opportunities to speak with staff, to ask questions or discuss any concerns they may have. The termly consultation evenings are well attended and the annual reports to parents are very detailed. The reports describe what has been covered, detailing the pupil's progress and attainment, and identifying targets for improvement. Pupils also identify their own targets for improvement. Parents are regularly consulted regarding important issues – an interim 'snapshot' report resulted from one of these consultation processes. Details concerning the numeracy and literacy strategies have been made clear to parents through workshop sessions. Teachers keep parents informed of the progress of their children with special educational needs by regular contacts. There are termly reviews of individual education plans. Parents of pupils with statements are formally invited by letter to attend the annual review, when all the involved outside agencies are asked to attend or provide their advice.
52. The significant contribution of parents to their children's learning is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Information books go home offering ideas that can be taken up at home and detailing ways parents can become involved in their child's education. The school warmly encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning by helping out in the school. A large number of adults are helping out by listening to reading, working with groups on the computers, running extra-curricular activities such as the cookery club and by providing assistance on school trips. Parents regularly listen to their children read at home and this contributes significantly to the progress which pupils make in reading.
53. The involvement of parents in the running of the bookshop and the parent-teachers association (PTA) makes a valuable contribution to the school. The PTA is very effectively run by a committed group of parents and staff, and successfully runs a large number of fund-raising and social events each year. The events are well attended and generate significant funds to help acquire additional resources for the school. These have included purchasing computers and the picnic benches, and parents are currently fund-raising to replace the school mini-bus.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher is very successful in promoting the positive environment for learning that the school enjoys. He works closely with staff and provides them with sensitive support. This has helped them to develop pupils' very good attitudes to work, their good behaviour and the very good relationships that exist. The headteacher is good at sharing his vision with senior management and staff. However, while management structures

help to create co-ordinated teaching across year groups they do not always promote the development of consistent practices throughout the school.

55. Responsibilities for curriculum management have been appropriately distributed in each subject area. However, there is no one with overall responsibility for overseeing the curriculum. The process by which year groups and curriculum groups implement school initiatives encourages discussion and helps staff to take ownership of these. However, the system does not give staff enough opportunities to exchange and compare good practice across the school, with the result that aspects of literacy and assessment are not consistently introduced in all year groups. Currently, however, there is an uneven development in the way that assessment information is being used to guide planning and to set targets for pupils. In addition, the way the literacy strategy is implemented varies from year group to year group with the result that it is not wholly understood and accepted by all teachers. The school has placed considerable time and money into staff development and this has introduced some valuable skills, as evinced in numeracy teaching and the development of personal and social education. The school has maintained a good breadth of education at a time when there has been much national emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills. Time is allocated to all co-ordinators to monitor their subjects on a rolling programme and this is maintaining curriculum development at a good pace. Nonetheless, in observing lessons, senior staff do not always encourage a rigorous analysis of teaching methods and effectiveness. The culture of self-evaluation and open professional dialogue still needs further development to ensure that good practice is shared across all years.
56. The headteacher and staff work together well to identify the school's development priorities. The development plan is carefully prioritised and clear targets, timings and costings are included. Subject action plans arise out of the staff consultations that take place and reflect targets in the overall development plan. Budget planning is properly linked to these objectives. While governors are kept informed they do not have an opportunity to interrogate the setting of priorities at a formative stage and thus make a sufficiently effective contribution.
57. Governors willingly support the school, but are not as questioning in their monitoring role to provide the school with the critical evaluation which it needs. There have been some shortages and changes in personnel which have reduced their impact and the school has a programme which includes extending recruitment. Governors keep themselves informed of events in the school and are undergoing training to improve their understanding of their role. They are becoming more active in monitoring the curriculum by taking on individual subject responsibilities. Governors have made observation visits which strengthen links with the staff and pupils. These provide valuable information where governors can fulfil such demands, but subjects are insufficiently monitored where governors cannot spare the time to visit regularly. With no curriculum committee, governors need to ensure that they monitor all curriculum developments in depth, especially where these are areas for priority development.
58. The management of special educational needs provision in the school is satisfactory. However, the amount of time which the co-ordinator spends in teaching restricts her capacity for monitoring the work of others. She does not have sufficient time to work alongside teachers and support staff to evaluate and advise on the provision they make. Most pupils are given a satisfactory level of support, but the precise needs of a minority are not fully met. Some of the records kept on pupils have insufficient information on their needs. There is sometimes insufficient detail and accuracy in the individual education plans to guide teaching and to reflect the meeting of the objectives stated for the pupils that have statements. The yearly report to parents provides satisfactory detail on the

implementation of the policy, but provides no statement on the provision of access for the disabled.

59. Day-to-day administration in the school is of high quality and finances are administered well. The school makes good use of its grants and applies this spending effectively. In purchasing goods and contracts, the school takes care to apply best value principles. The school makes good use of ICT to facilitate administration. The current operating surplus is commendably modest and the school takes advantage of all outside sources to supplement its plans such as the potential capital grant for new library facilities.
60. Teaching staff levels are adequate to meet pupils' needs and those of the curriculum. The induction process for newly qualified teachers is properly managed and the school has established effective systems for performance management.
61. Accommodation is adequate for the needs of the curriculum and the school makes good use of specialist areas such as the art, cookery and ICT suite. The library is used satisfactorily, but is not an area which encourages pupils to browse and linger over research tasks. Displays around the school are of a good quality and celebrate pupils' achievements in school and out. Resources are adequate and have been improved since the last inspection, but the introduction of computers into all classes is an important priority to extend pupils' skills further.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To maintain and improve the standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- raise pupils' attainment in writing by:
 - providing more time for writing activities;
 - presenting clearer instructions for developing skills;
 - linking the teaching of writing skills to other subject areas such as history, geography and information and communication technology;
(paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 10, 19, 24, 64-66, 69-70, 73)
- improve management systems to facilitate the exchange and development of good practice in teaching by:
 - ensuring that there is adequate exchange of ideas between year groups;
 - making maximum use of lesson observations in order to analyse the effectiveness of teaching;
(paragraphs 55, 74)
- extend the use of assessment information to improve the planning of lessons by:
 - ensuring tasks for lower ability pupils are defined to meet their needs;
 - identifying specific short term targets for pupils to work towards;
(paragraphs 46-47, 55, 74, 106)
- develop the governors' role as critical friends of the school especially in monitoring areas of curriculum development.
(paragraph 57)

63. In their action plan, governors should also include the following:

- to improve the use of management time in special educational needs to ensure the effective monitoring and training of all support staff;
- to refine the targets in individual educational plans and ensure they are fully used to guide teaching;
- to ensure that withdrawal sessions for pupils do not cause regular interruptions to their learning.
(paragraphs 10, 27, 30, 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

64

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

23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	9	23	28	4	0	0
Percentage	0	14	36	44	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y4– Y7

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

291

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

11

Special educational needs

Y4 – Y7

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

8

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

86

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

13

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

5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	50	38	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	31	45
	Girls	32	26	35
	Total	58	57	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (74)	65 (72)	91 (85)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	30	38
	Girls	33	29	32
	Total	57	59	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (83)	67 (83)	80 (86)
	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	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	290
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	24

Education support staff: Y4 – Y7

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	605,259
Total expenditure	587,679
Expenditure per pupil	2,114
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1,086
Balance carried forward to next year	16,494

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 34.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	291
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	42	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	51	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	65	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	57	10	4	4
The teaching is good.	51	45	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	55	9	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	25	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	11	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	60	33	1	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	45	3	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	42	11	1	13

These columns do not always total 100 due to rounding and the fact that not all parents respond to every question.

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

ENGLISH

64. In the last four years, pupils' results in tests at the age of 11 have been broadly in line with the national average in all years but 2001 when they were below average. However, results have been below the levels achieved in schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. Pupils who took the tests in 2001 entered the school with levels of attainment which were below average and many had special educational needs. They made sound progress by Year 6 and achieved better results than they had at Key Stage 1. Inspection evidence confirms that these pupils continue to attain standards below those expected in Year 7.
65. Current pupils in Year 6 are attaining the expected levels in reading and skills in speaking and listening are satisfactory. However, pupils' attainment in writing is still below expectations in Year 6 and throughout the school. Several factors contribute to this. The implementation of the literacy strategy is not consistently effective between year groups. Variations in literacy hour planning make it difficult for the school to identify and extend successful practice. There is not enough time allocated in lessons for pupils to produce writing of a sufficiently high quality.
66. The school's measures to improve standards include grouping pupils according to their ability. This is organised for spelling in Years 5 and 6 and for literacy in Year 7. Additional 'Magical Spelling' activities are taught to the lower ability group in Year 7, which are helping pupils to improve spelling. Analysis of test results has identified that boys underachieve to a greater extent than girls. This has led to a programme for raising boys' interest in writing and teachers use a wider range of fiction and non-fiction texts designed to appeal to boys. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, particularly when receiving extra support within a lesson. However, some pupils find it difficult to cope with writing demands when working independently at the same task as the rest of the class.
67. Speaking and listening skills are average by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement overall. Most pupils are articulate and talk confidently to each other and to adults. Teachers' valuing of pupils' responses helps them to feel secure when asking and answering questions. Pupils listen and co-operate well in their exchange of views during frequent opportunities for short discussion. They learn to present their ideas clearly in prepared talks to the class on topics of their choice, such as 'Lifeboats in Norfolk' or 'The Titanic'. This effectively allows pupils to gain confidence in speaking to larger groups and to evaluate positively each other's performances. In some lessons, however, teachers limit pupils' answers by asking few open-ended questions. As a result, pupils are not challenged sufficiently to extend their vocabulary to express their thoughts. In a minority of situations, where specific routines for taking turns to speak have not been established, pupils make little progress in speaking or listening to each other.
68. Standards in reading are average by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in improving their reading skills in a range of situations. These include a short quiet reading session every day and shared reading of the class texts. Less independent readers practise their reading in small groups with their teacher or another adult. This gives them opportunities to ask questions and learn new word meanings. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their books and younger pupils regularly read to their parents at home. Pupils discuss knowledgeably current popular fiction and

authors, particularly those related to magic. These include well-remembered details of C. S. Lewis' 'Narnia' stories heard at the First school and the 'Harry Potter' books. One Year 4 pupil recognises that J. Murphy's 'Worst Witch' stories have much in common with this work. Another pupil considers whether the quests are equally successful in R. L. Stine's 'Goosebumps' series. The more fluent readers read expressively with appropriate attention to dialogue and punctuation. They competently describe the plot and characters of fiction work, but are not able to name any poets or genres of poetry. For instance, one pupil, reading Edward Lear's 'The Jumblies' did not recognise this as a 'nonsense' poem. Most pupils have satisfactory basic library skills and know how to locate topics and books by category. This helps their independent topic writing. A small number of less able readers in all years concentrate on recognising words rather than interpreting sense, resulting in inexpressive intonation. They use letter sounds successfully to read the beginnings of words, such as the first syllables of 'foreign' and 'exaggerate', but they lack strategies for working out the rest. Although pupils are able to correct some of their own mistakes, others go unrecognised. Misreading of 'constantly' for 'casually' and 'attacks' for 'acted' are corrected only after prompting.

69. Pupils' standards in writing are below average throughout the school. Standards on entry to the school vary from year to year, but most pupils begin Year 4 with below average standards in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress when additional support is effectively focused on their particular needs. However, when they are working at the same task as the rest of the class they struggle to keep up with the speed of writing demanded. Pupils' achievements in spelling and handwriting are satisfactory and they are regularly taught and practised. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities for writing in subjects like history and religious education. However, these activities are not often well linked to developing pupils' literacy skills. Activities are carried out as 'free writing' and as homework tasks and teachers do not spend enough time demonstrating and explaining the craft of writing. In some classes, opportunities for pupils to write at length are limited. Successful learning was seen in Year 6 lessons where pupils accurately identified some tabloid strategies for gaining instant impact, such as alliteration and single syllable words. Opportunities for pupils to develop imaginative writing are less successful, although there is some interesting use of vocabulary and use of punctuation for dramatic effect. For example, Year 6 pupils emphasise the pointlessness of war. Lines from their poems include *'The trenches became our homes, Diseases, rats, dirt. We came out and fired like headless chickens'*. However, pupils could not name any war poets.
70. In Year 7 a few pupils show an understanding of alliteration in their work on the class text about slavery, 'Underground to Canada'. Relevant examples are *'squalid and sinister'* and *'sticky with sweat'*. Some sensitive descriptions of an arduous journey include *'The sun poured down rays of strength sapping light'* and *'Their caved in cheeks sucked the smile from their mouth'*. However, there are few examples of this standard of writing and none shows a really creative use of words. There is little difference between the work of average pupils and those of higher ability. Pupils spend a great deal of time completing grammar exercises to practise a suitable range of writing strategies out of context. This, together with over- long introductions to lessons, means that pupils do not have enough time to use what they have learned in their personal writing. The main writing focus is frequently squeezed into the last few minutes of a lesson, leaving no time for developing any depth of ideas. Consequently, pupils do not make satisfactory progress in improving the quality or the quantity of their writing.
71. Pupils have adequate opportunities to use ICT for recording their ideas, although computers are not yet available in classrooms for pupils to use them for word-processing. Pupils successfully download information for their individual topic research. By Year 6

and in Year 7, pupils have a good command of computer skills to enable them to present and organise their work well.

72. Teaching was good or better in just over half the lessons observed. In two lessons it was unsatisfactory. Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good and these encourage very good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. Where teaching is good, teachers' clear explanations ensure that pupils understand and concentrate well on their tasks. Good opportunities to share ideas encourage pupils to co-operate well in pairs or small groups. In good lessons, teachers ask progressively probing questions. These prompt pupils to refine their thinking and clarify their answers. The end of a lesson is used well to summarise pupils' understanding. This helps teacher and pupils to assess how much has been achieved.
73. Where teaching is less effective teachers do not always use time efficiently. There is a tendency for the first part of the lesson to take too long and this limits pupils' opportunities to participate. This means that pupils learn to listen well, but do not have enough time to develop their own thoughts and writing skills. Teachers do not always ask pupils questions that challenge their thinking. Some teachers accept standards of writing that are too low for pupils' ability, particularly those of above average pupils. Pupils are not always given precise guidance as to how they can improve their writing. Marking is often too brief to be constructive and little emphasis is placed on pupils' targets for improvement. Although they select targets from the class list, pupils cannot explain how their writing could be better. Lesson plans include the appropriate elements of the literacy hour, but the precise purpose of learning activities is not always clear. Teachers do not always use time efficiently and there is a tendency for the first part of the lesson to take too long. Teachers' frequent over control of this aspect limits pupils' opportunities to participate.
74. The impact of the subject co-ordinator on the development of literacy has been limited. Although new resources have been introduced, the school's literacy hour planning does not effectively address the need to improve writing standards. Assessment is at an early stage of development and is not directly related to pupils' writing targets. Analysis of test results has not been extended sufficiently to identify how writing can be improved. Elements of good practice identified and discussed by the curriculum group do not effectively reach other members of staff. The library co-ordinator has worked hard to increase the selection of books in the library corridor and to enhance its capacity as a working area until the proposed new library is provided.

MATHEMATICS

75. Pupils in Year 6 and Year 7 currently attain the standards expected for their ages. In the Year 6 national tests in 2001, results were below average, but they were above average in 2000. In comparison with the results attained in similar schools, pupils' results were below average in 2000 and well below average in 2001. In the year group who took their tests in 2001, the number of pupils with special educational needs was well above average. Several pupils had problems in understanding the test due to their reading difficulties. The same pupils, now in Year 7, have been given extra support to understand the written aspect of their work and they are now achieving at the expected levels. Standards in Year 7 are further supported by the use of a good commercial scheme of work which links into the material employed in the local high school. Teaching is good overall and this is having a positive impact on raising standards across the school. Test results indicate that the number of pupils achieving high standards (Level 5) in 2000 was well above average, although below average in 2001. The trend in results since the last inspection has been upward in spite of the weaker results in 2001.

76. There is no marked difference in the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are soundly supported and make satisfactory progress. The satisfactory support they receive within lessons enables them to be fully included in classes, working alongside their fellow pupils.
77. By the age of 11, pupils work out calculations in their heads quickly and accurately. They have a sound knowledge of fractions, are developing their measuring skills, and use and interpret a range of diagrams and charts with confidence. For example, pupils in Year 6 quickly and accurately completed mental calculations involving money problems. The teacher helped pupils to define and compare methods when she asked them to describe how they had done their calculations. She noted them down on the blackboard to aid their understanding. In the main part of the lesson, pupils were asked to find the perimeters and areas of compound shapes and rectangles. The teacher extended pupils' learning by evaluating and supporting their work across the whole class. Pupils successfully calculated the areas and perimeters of their given shapes with most learning to use formulae to complete the task. A very good plenary session completed this very well taught lesson. Here the teacher challenged all the class to calculate the area of a wall when given the measurements of the wall and the area of a window within the wall. The pupils responded very well to this challenge.
78. Pupils build on their sound progress at Key Stage 2 to achieve satisfactory levels by the age of 12. They develop their security in checking results and making sensible estimates. Samples of work show pupils have opportunities to lay out the ways they make their calculations. They achieve the expected standards in applying their mathematical knowledge to problems and to handling and interpreting data. For example, pupils in a Year 7 lesson were well challenged to apply their knowledge of the number of degrees in a straight line and in a circle. They successfully expressed and recorded the number of degrees in a turn, the angle of the turn and the direction of the turn, with good degrees of accuracy. Pupils benefit from the system of setting pupils by ability in Year 7. Teaching provides very good support to pupils with special educational needs and there is also an appropriate challenge in the work set for higher attaining pupils..
79. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. Pupils are encouraged to solve problems in their own way and to think hard, explaining the reasons for their answers. In Year 4, teachers questioned pupils closely to determine their understanding of fractions. Pupils had to decide if shapes, both regular and irregular, were divided up into equal or unequal parts. By naming the fractions into which the shapes were divided they were given a chance to demonstrate their level of understanding. In the sessions observed, pupils improved their accuracy and their achievements were noted to provide a valuable basis for planning subsequent teaching.
80. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy. The three-part structure is soundly established and planning is good. The use of clear questions at the end of lessons and of homework to assess what pupils have understood is a strong feature of teaching. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils and effectively involve them in evaluating their progress towards these. Teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it appropriately to explain their work. Pupils show very good attitudes. They enjoy the subject. They concentrate well and demonstrate high levels of motivation and enthusiasm. Pupils work at a good rate, complete tasks with a good level of understanding and present them well. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology are being extended, but they are still unsatisfactory. This is because computers are not available in the classrooms to support learning and the tasks pupils carry out in the computer suite are currently directed towards language activities. Pupils use mathematics successfully to help learning in other subjects. For example, pupils are involved in numerical work when drawing graphs

and taking accurate temperature readings in science. They use their skills of measurement effectively in design and technology, for example, when measuring the shape and size of elements in temple constructions.

81. Teachers have developed satisfactory procedures to assess pupils' competence as they progress. The findings are used to influence groupings of pupils. A good analysis of test results is helping teachers' awareness of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are assessing pupils' understanding in lessons and this is being more widely used in planning subsequent teaching and learning. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The mathematics curriculum has been reviewed under the good leadership of the subject co-ordinator, with good levels of help from the local authority numeracy adviser. Standards are now rising more consistently and tasks are better adapted to meet pupils' abilities.

SCIENCE

82. By the time pupils are 11, their attainment reaches the expected level. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels. When they leave school at the end of Year 7, their attainment matches that expected from pupils of that age. Inspection findings confirm the results of National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds in 2001. The majority reach the expected level with a below average percentage reaching higher levels. Standards of attainment are below the average for schools with similar intakes, due mainly to the lower than average proportion achieving Level 5. There has been no significant difference between the results of boys and girls in tests and none was evident in lesson observations. Standards of attainment were noted to be similar at the time of the previous inspection, when most pupils reached the expected levels.
83. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is similar to that of pupils in Year 4 nationally. They make satisfactory progress resulting from the sound quality of teaching they receive. Pupils have a sound understanding of the process of scientific investigation. Year 4 pupils ask and answer questions and record their findings appropriately, for example, when comparing similarities and differences in the lengths of the same bones in different people. Older pupils in Year 5 know the differences between solids, liquids and gases and examine the processes that change one to another. Year 6 pupils successfully design investigations to find out the effect of changing the components in an electrical circuit. They select appropriate equipment when carrying out these investigations and record their results well, taking relevant measurements. For example, pupils measured the brightness of light bulbs by finding out how many layers of tracing paper the light penetrated. However, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged when asked to account for why certain things happen, for example why electricity makes a bulb light up. This is a key factor in the below average percentage of pupils reaching higher levels.
84. Pupils continue to make sound progress in Year 7. This is due to sound teaching and positive attitudes to the subject and good behaviour, leading to a satisfactory quality of learning. Pupils learn that cells are the building blocks of most living things and that different types of cells are organised into different tissues. They make effective use of a range of scientific equipment, including microscopes, to further their studies. Pupils make sound progress in finding out about the people and events that have increased scientific knowledge. They consider ethical issues and put forward arguments for and against cloning. Their examination of the link between cancer and cell growth and the different types of therapy in the treatment of cancer makes a useful contribution to health education.
85. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make similar progress. They make sound use of their literacy skills in science when writing reports and descriptions.

Pupils make relevant measurements, for example, of bone length or changes in temperature and construct charts and graphs to display this information. They sometimes use information and communication technology when doing so. Year 7 pupils use computer animation to increase their understanding of how a sperm cell penetrates an ovum.

86. The quality of teaching is sound and results in a satisfactory quality of learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well in lessons. Teachers foster this enthusiasm so that learning is enhanced. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher revised what pupils knew about the skeleton and led them well into a lesson about comparing the lengths of the same bones in different people. This helped them to focus on the task in hand and remember information useful in the lesson. The teacher's questioning was also effective in helping her to gauge pupils' level of understanding as well as encouraging them to formulate their ideas and apply their knowledge to the task in hand. Teachers plan investigations, but these are sometimes over-directed and do not give pupils enough chance to ask questions or devise ways of finding answers. Year 5 pupils followed a step-by-step 'investigation' into condensation and, although they recorded the results effectively, did not make enough progress in scientific enquiry. However, a Year 6 teacher's good understanding of these processes enabled her to lead pupils well in an investigation into electrical circuits. As a result, they deepened their understanding of how to set up a fair test by changing only the variable they were testing. However, in some cases the teacher shows a lack of understanding, teaching, for example, that a bucket of air weighs about the same as pieces of paper. Teachers keep work marked, but sometimes there is a lack of rigour in marking, which coupled with insecure subject knowledge leads to unsatisfactory progress for the class concerned.
87. In Year 7, the teacher has a good relationship with pupils and this is a key factor in her success in teaching about human reproduction. As a result, pupils made good progress in learning the names and functions of the different parts of the reproductive system in men and women, and in the mechanics of fertilisation. This was firmly placed in the context of a loving relationship.
88. Effective planning means that pupils build on the work they have done before and that those in different classes in the same year group are taught equally effectively. Teachers record pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work, but, as yet, insufficient use of these records is made in setting targets for individuals.

ART AND DESIGN

89. Standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 6 and in Year 7. Evidence from work displayed around the school amplifies the judgements of lessons observed. These standards are similar to those reported during the last inspection and pupils continue to progress well. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing a good range of skills and techniques.
90. In Year 4, pupils examine symbols in Aboriginal art reproductions to use in their 'playground journey' plans. They enjoy the experience of smudging and mixing colours as they discover the blending properties of pastels. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the diversity of pattern. Their sketchbooks show diligent homework preparation for a lesson about colours, shapes and motifs in patterns. An interesting collection of prints and postcards of artists' work allows pupils to investigate contrasting themes. Their colourful designs in watercolour and coloured pencil show well-observed characteristics of Matisse and Mondrian. Pupils in the same year group are totally absorbed in a similar activity, but none is able to name any famous artists. Older pupils concentrate on recording observations of natural objects and achieve high quality results. Year 6 pupils proudly

display their sensitive line drawings of dried maize cobs. Very closely observed pattern and form is evident in the knobbly corn globules and wildly swirling lines of dried leaves. Pupils learn to use the digital camera to expand and manipulate their photo-portraits, with very successful and interesting results.

91. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was satisfactory overall. However, work on display and in portfolios shows plentiful evidence of stimulating teaching with pupils pursuing a variety of activities and using different media. Pupils have an increasingly confident approach to using colour and form. Skills such as drawing from observation and creating textures with pencil, paint and collage have been efficiently taught and thoroughly practised. The achievement of two pupils in winning first and second prizes in the Sainsbury art competition supports this. Each year group has a three-dimensional focus to their work. Pupils' lively textile representations of Bayeux Tapestry images contrast with spindly sculptures in the style of Giacometti, and chunky, colourful picture tiles. The more knowledgeable teachers skilfully focus on the particular attributes of an artist's work or suggest techniques for specific effects. This helps pupils to deepen their understanding. Less confident teachers offer more limited input and, although pupils are happy to experiment, the aim of lessons is not always clear. Pupils' enjoyment of their work is evident in their deep concentration and interesting descriptions of the effects they are seeking.
92. The very competent subject co-ordinator is well respected for her expertise and the quality of advice on curriculum content and techniques. The school is now moving towards a more coherent scheme of work and evolving a suitable means of assessment to support the next stage of learning. Some pupils do not have enough time to develop their interests fully. In Year 4, art alternates with design technology and in Year 6, choir members miss part of their weekly art lesson. Resources in Year 6, although adequate, are not easily accessible because of the very cramped space available for a practical lesson.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6 and Year 7. Lessons observed during the inspection only took place in Years 4 to 6. Further evidence was obtained from discussions with pupils and staff and a scrutiny of work. The standards achieved currently are the same as those reported at the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given a good range of opportunities to study the subject and, as a result, boys and girls progress at a satisfactory rate.
94. Pupils achieve good results in making their models, but their skills in designing and evaluating are not so well developed. In a very well taught lesson in Year 6, pupils made a close analysis of how to make a model with concealed moving parts. The teacher gave a very good explanation of how these worked, illustrating the principles from a range of finished models. Pupils decided how to create their own and were helped by being given a well prepared worksheet. In the lesson they learned to clarify their ideas by considering how this should apply to the finished product. However, prior to Year 6, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use labelled sketches to communicate their design details and to demonstrate an awareness of constraints. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils made musical instruments, but were encountering problems in finding ways of joining the string board to the sound box to produce a strong construction. As they had not previously evaluated how this could be done with drawings and models, most tried unsuccessfully to glue the string board to the sound box. The teacher discussed this aspect of construction with pupils, but did not give them enough time to work it out for themselves. There are often insufficient opportunities for pupils to consider construction problems at the planning stage. As a result, pupils do not examine and disassemble previous examples and

prepare to overcome problems prior to the 'making' stage. Samples of finished work across the school show this problem, where constructions are weak as a result of insufficient time spent in planning.

95. In the three lessons observed, teaching was very good, good and satisfactory. Teachers motivate pupils very effectively and encourage them to work on their ideas independently. In some instances, pupils work in small groups and this promotes a good level of discussion and pupils are successful in collaborating on projects. Pupils enjoy the subject and work sensibly and safely together. Where teaching is very effective, planning is of a high order and pupils are stimulated to make rapid progress in their learning. However, teaching is less effective when it does not place sufficient emphasis on the design process. Pupils are encouraged to become involved in making which maintains their enthusiasm, but the important stages of evaluation are not always properly developed. Teaching is good when it links pupils' learning to other subjects. In Year 6, pupils extend their study of Greek architecture into making temples. In Year 5, pupils follow a programme of making musical instruments which links into their study of music and science and this helps them develop knowledge in both subjects which is. However, there is no information and communication technology software available to help teach the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

96. The last time the school was inspected, standards by the end of Years 6 and 7 were broadly average and these have been maintained. During the inspection only one lesson took place which could be observed and judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and from discussions with pupils and teachers.
97. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an outline knowledge of their own locality and places across the world. They identify and name places on a map of East Anglia and Europe with accuracy. They understand how settlements have grown up over time and know how people can damage and improve their environment. They have carried out studies of pollution in the immediate locality, achieving satisfactory standards in the accuracy and insight of their observations. They have mapped areas around the school and use maps and diagrams confidently in explaining where to find places. Pupils' work is very well supported by the residential and day visits that the school organises. In this way, pupils learn about rivers both from their visit to Derbyshire and in looking at the local Norfolk landscape. They make good use of their visit to Holt Hall to create plans of the grounds and to study water conservation and purification. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of appropriate terms with which to express their ideas at both Years 6 and 7. Pupils distinguish accurately between human and physical geography and interpret different maps with information on them. By the end of Year 7, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. They carry out studies of their local environment, the movement of population and examine a microclimate within the school grounds. They extend this to discussing the purposes of geography and have a sound understanding of how to map and create records of their findings. Pupils demonstrate a keen interest in the subject and appreciate how it is important to helping them preserve their future.
98. Given the levels of pupils' attainment, the quality of teaching and learning is clearly at a satisfactory level, although it is not possible to judge teaching based on the one lesson seen. Pupils benefit from a range of first-hand activities that enable them to observe and understand elements of the subject very well. In visiting Holt Hall in Year 5, pupils have looked at the amount of water used and how it is piped around the estate. They continue these studies in school when they examine the importance of a fresh water supply to a settlement in Zambia. Teaching is good at making the issues relevant to pupils by linking their work to their own experience. Pupils have a good understanding of how much water

they use in their homes and how they can conserve resources. They compare their own situation to the experience of schoolchildren in Zambia and also appreciate the potential hazards of water borne diseases. Pupils have a sound understanding of the climate in Zambia and its effect on farming and people's way of life. They are in contact with pupils in a school in Zambia and this helps them to relate personally with the challenges experienced in Africa and the differences between their way of life and life in the UK. Teachers are aware of the need to include all pupils in class activities. Where possible, pupils with special educational needs are supported in class and this helps them to participate in both discussion and written work. To compensate for those who do not go on the residential trips, pupils carry out similar tasks to extend their studies in school.

HISTORY

99. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected by Years 6 and 7. Attainment was broadly in line at the last inspection and this standard has been maintained. Pupils have an interest in and knowledge of the subject, and record their work competently. They take a keen interest in aspects of the past, such as the life of the Ancient Greeks and the conditions of slaves in 19th century America. Three lessons were observed and the quality of learning is clearly effective, although no judgement is possible on the overall quality of teaching from such a small sample.
100. By Year 6, pupils have a sound factual knowledge of different periods and are introduced to the skills of interpretation and research. They build up these skills in a well managed programme of study which helps pupils to understand and present history with insight and sensitivity. The quality of learning continues well into Year 7. Pupils in Year 4 take an enthusiastic interest in their study of the early invaders of Britain. They understand basic differences between the life and culture of Celts and Romans. They respond well to descriptions of Britain and the impact of the Roman invasion. They develop a clear understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources of evidence. They discuss what they can learn from archaeology and the value of illustrations in mosaics and on pottery. In subsequent years, pupils learn how to evaluate the reliability of evidence with increasing insight. They consider pictures and first hand accounts in Tudor England. In Year 6, they examine pictures of ruins and contemporary illustrations to help them deduce domestic life in Ancient Greece. In Year 7, they compare the accounts of conditions for slaves on different plantations and the reasons why accounts may be biased. Pupils understand that there was criticism of slavery in the 19th Century and that attitudes have changed enormously over the years. They demonstrate a strong appreciation of how knowledge and information have changed and thus they have an insight into the way people behaved in the past. They know that while the Greeks had a well developed set of beliefs and culture they lacked the mechanical skills which have changed modern society. They extend their skills in interpreting and recording history as they find it and use their literacy skills in a variety of writing activities. Pupils learn to take notes from lectures and visits and then subsequently to write up full accounts from them. They write personal and imaginative descriptions of life in Greece, the Crimean War and in Victorian England. They make good use of information and communication technology skills to research for information from the Internet and computer-based encyclopaedias.
101. Teaching is effective and covers all the required elements of the syllabus. The scheme of work is being adapted to the nationally recommended curriculum and sets out appropriate topics and guidance. Pupils are helped to obtain a good insight into the lives of people in the periods studied by appropriate use of resources and a well organised programme of visits. They visit Roman remains in Year 4, look at Tudor architecture at Holt Hall in Year 5 and in Year 6 they participate in a Victorian day and also examine a variety of historical elements in London. Teachers make good use of material from video and sound recordings as well as using a range of written sources to help pupils develop their

research skills. In the lessons observed, teachers organised good quality discussions and developed pupils' thinking with a range of questioning. They encouraged pupils to work together to make their observations, ask questions and try to reach a consensus on the possible historical answers. Teachers assess pupils' progress and are encouraging them to evaluate their own progress. This is helped by the use of new curriculum guidelines and by sharing objectives with pupils to which all refer at the end of lessons to consider how they are doing.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils attain the standards expected from pupils of their age by the time they reach Years 6 and 7. In the previous inspection, standards were reported to be good, but national expectations have risen considerably since 1997. The school has recently improved the resources for pupils' learning with the installation of the computer suite and teachers make good use of this. However, few classrooms have computers to enable pupils to consolidate and develop their skills on a regular basis in class activities.
103. There are some strong features in pupils' achievements, for example, in the high quality desktop publishing work that they create. Pupils make simulated web pages on a variety of subjects linked to history, geography, the environment and drug misuse. Throughout the school, pupils develop good skills when combining text and pictures into readable and informative documents. Year 4 pupils have also measured the temperature of cooling water using sensors linked to computers. Year 5 pupils find information from databases, using complex search techniques such as asking questions like 'How many birds are less than 15 centimetres in length and lay more than 10 eggs?' Pupils in Year 6 plan and develop informative book reviews by creating interlinked pages that include text, pictures, sound and animation in multimedia presentations. Pupils usefully analyse what is effective about these pages and what could be improved. They use the results of these evaluations to develop proficiency in the use of spreadsheets. However, pupils do not make enough use of email to communicate their ideas because email facilities have not yet been fully put into place.
104. Year 7 pupils produce good quality 'leaflets' outlining the dangers of alcohol abuse. They find information from a range of sources, for example CD-ROMs and the Internet, when doing so. This is a good example of how technology is effectively used in teaching other subjects, in this case, health education. Some Year 7 pupils have used sensors to carry out soil investigations on a residential trip measuring humidity and acidity.
105. The quality of teaching is sound for all age groups, with some good elements. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach lessons that reflect this. In Year 7, teachers help pupils to develop their typing skills. This is not only a useful skill in itself, but helps pupils to work more efficiently during other lessons. A Year 6 teacher has a good understanding of the program that pupils are using to create multimedia presentations. He offers useful guidance when pupils encounter difficulties and to those pupils who are capable of developing their work a little further. This enhances pupils' learning and they make good progress in the lesson. Another strong feature of these lessons is the way that teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own and each other's work. Pupils look at other pupils' pages and decide whether they are readable, interesting and easy to find their way around. The teachers' approach helps to capitalise on and extend pupils' interest and enthusiasm resulting in good learning. In Year 4, the teacher allowed pupils to effectively explore certain aspects of a drawing program. He gave them good opportunities to find out for themselves using a well-designed worksheet to guide, but not constrain their work. As a result of the sound teaching, the quality of learning for all pupils is similar across year groups and covers all the elements of the subject.

106. A key factor in pupils' progress is the satisfactory accommodation provided by the dedicated computer suite. This allows two pupils to work on one computer and, in some cases, individually. However, there are not enough computers in classrooms to allow work to be fully developed in other subjects. Teachers have forged sound links with other subjects, for example, in researching the slave trade in history or when creating graphs and charts in science. The school is developing useful systems for finding and recording pupils' achievements. These include a good degree of self-evaluation. However, these systems are underused in planning further work.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

107. By the end of Year 7, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. The levels of their achievements have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils receive teaching in Years 5 and 6 and make satisfactory progress over the two years of work.
108. In Year 7, pupils listen to instructions in French and understand satisfactorily. They respond with appropriate replies to greetings and questions about themselves. They are developing confidence in reading and writing simple phrases and understand the importance of accents. Their spelling is of a good standard and pupils recognise that in reading not all letters are pronounced. Pupils know the importance of gender in French and are learning to indicate accurately whether nouns are masculine or feminine. Pupils have a good level of comprehension in listening to tapes of native speakers. They are also importantly developing their capacity to guess and infer meaning without having a total understanding of every word spoken. In Year 5, pupils know numbers up to 30 accurately and with the aid of prompts they indicate dates with a satisfactory knowledge and pronunciation of days of the week and months of the year. They understand and respond to greetings and simple questions about themselves. Pupils are keen to learn and participate in exchanges with enthusiasm. In Year 6, pupils are confident with numbers up to 100. They ask and reply to questions about their ages, where they live and how many brothers and sister they have. They have satisfactory standards of pronunciation and are keen to take part in individual and group activities. In learning new vocabulary, pupils are enthusiastic to talk about themselves and their pets. They copy words accurately, but rely on written prompts too much which causes some errors in pronunciation. There is a tendency to read French words in an English accent rather than listening and developing accurate French sounds.
109. Teaching is satisfactory and follows an appropriate programme that introduces pupils to a progressively wider range of subjects. The teachers in Years 5 and 6 are not specialists in foreign languages and are achieving a creditable level of competence which stimulates pupils' learning. In practising phrases and new vocabulary, teachers use models well and encourage pupils to gain confidence in speaking. They do not always insist on everyone repeating phrases to extend the level of participation. The use of recorded material is limited and there is not always enough emphasis on developing really accurate pronunciation and intonation. In Year 7, pupils benefit from the teacher's good accent to improve their pronunciation and there is wider use of taped material to guide them. However, lessons are conducted at a tremendous pace which does not help pupils consolidate their learning. Pupils are very responsive in all classes and teachers harness their enthusiasm well. Teachers use resources well like books, flash cards and illustrations to hold pupils' interest in learning new vocabulary in French. The school makes good use of its annual trip to France to motivate pupils' learning and they make good progress towards practising their learning in a real context. Systems of assessment are simple but being used effectively in Year 7 to monitor pupils' progress and plan their learning programme.

MUSIC

110. Standards in music are similar to those expected nationally in Years 6 and 7. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in singing and in awareness of rhythm patterns. In these aspects of the music curriculum, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with higher ability and those with a particular interest have instrumental tuition from visiting music teachers. This enables these pupils to progress at a faster rate. However, composition skills could not be judged during the inspection either at Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3.
111. Pupils hear music in assembly and many learn to play the recorder at a lunchtime club. Visiting musicians offer good opportunities for pupils to watch and listen to music being played live. These presentations have included brass and woodwind performers and the drummer from Status Quo. The large choir is limited to pupils in Years 6 and 7, who are presently practising carols for the Christmas concert and services.
112. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils understand that a pentatonic scale has five notes and correctly define 'pitch' and 'rhythm'. They compose and recall a short, simple melody on tuned percussion instruments. Pupils' enjoyment is evident as they work co-operatively in pairs, sharing their efforts amicably. However, pupils' incorrect hold of the beaters indicates a lack of familiarity with playing chime bars and mini-glockenspiels. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing tunefully with or without accompaniment. Most pupils sing a range of traditional and modern songs with correct rhythm and clear diction.. By singing and analysing 'Where have all the flowers gone?' and a Billy Bragg song, also with a war theme, Year 6 pupils understand how messages can be conveyed through lyrics and music. For example, they observe how structure and emphasis can be achieved by repetition of certain lines in a song.
113. Pupils in Year 7 concentrate very well and make good progress in understanding the difference between pulse and rhythm. They clap a steady rhythm against an opposing beat with different notes accented each time. Pupils of all abilities improve their technique in response to the teacher's relaxed and encouraging manner. Good opportunities for practice led to a good level of achievement during the lesson observed and promoted very careful listening. Although music is played in assembly, no reference is made to it and pupils are not familiar with the names of any famous composers.
114. Opportunities for instrumental learning are good. Peripatetic music teachers give lessons in guitar, brass, woodwind and strings. Pupils learning these instruments make up the school orchestra. Together with the choir, they perform at school concerts and informally at other venues locally.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The newly introduced music scheme gives confidence to teachers without particular musical expertise. Teachers' good management skills and harmonious relationships with pupils contribute to pupils' satisfactory involvement in lessons. Where good subject knowledge is evident, enthusiasm is successfully shared and pupils persist in striving for improvement. Where a teacher lacks strategies to encourage pupils to listen, they make slower progress in developing musical understanding.
116. The subject co-ordinator influences teaching informally and, although competent, does not at present teach music because of other timetable commitments. The very recently introduced published scheme is said to be promoting more practical music making in school. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory overview of learning, but is not sufficiently familiar with the content of the scheme to foresee how certain aspects, such as listening to differing musical styles, are to be developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. By the time pupils are 11 years of age, they reach standards that are in line with those expected. Those leaving school at the end of Year 7 achieve standards expected from pupils of that age. These are similar to the judgements made at the last inspection.
118. Year 6 pupils generally demonstrate sound control and co-ordination when combining movements into simple sequences on gymnastics apparatus. However, in a Year 6 class, the quality and range of movement was limited and unimaginative. Younger pupils show satisfactory control when passing a basketball. Year 7 pupils showed good development of these skills as they increased the range and accuracy and incorporated them effectively into practice games. At the end of Year 6, most pupils are able to swim at least 25 metres. They continue in Year 7 and learn a number of water survival strategies. Pupils have opportunities to take part in outdoor activities such as orienteering in Year 6 and canoeing in Year 7.
119. The quality of teaching and learning is sound, although there are shortcomings. Teachers plan lessons across each year group that help pupils in the same age classes to learn at a similar rate. In some cases, teachers display a good knowledge and understanding of gymnastics and provide sound opportunities for pupils to develop games and gymnastics skills. In Year 6, the teacher soundly encouraged pupils to develop and practise sequences of movement on the gymnastics apparatus. The teacher managed the pupils well so that much of the time was spent in physical activity rather than on organisational issues. In this case, the teacher made it clear that she was looking for balance, control and originality in movement. This enhanced pupils' quality of learning as they tried hard to include these aspects in their sequences. In a few lessons, pupils were given the opportunity to evaluate how well they had reached these aims. In Year 7, teaching was conducted at a brisk pace to develop pupils' passing skills. Pupils observed each other and this then led on to games in which they had good opportunities to practise the skills. However, often there was insufficient time for pupils to consider their progress and comment on one another's performances. Teaching is unsatisfactory where there is too little attention to pupils' safety. Some lessons took place with pupils unsuitably dressed for the equipment they were using, for example thick-soled trainers on apparatus. In a number of cases, pupils' long hair was not tied back, a few pupils were wearing watches and jewellery, and footwear was not securely laced. In two lessons, pupils were unnecessarily divided into groups for boys and girls, but generally teachers ensure all pupils participate on an equal basis regardless of gender or ability.
120. The subject co-ordinator has planned where each of the units from the nationally suggested guidelines should be taught. He has led a group looking at the implications of this, but has not yet the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching or to share good practice. Consequently, there are pockets of unsatisfactory aspects of teaching that the school has not yet identified. However, there are firm plans to carry out this exercise in the near future. There is a good range of sporting activities outside normal lesson times. These include athletics, basketball, cross-country running and football clubs. Teams take part in fixtures with other local schools. There are visits from people with particular skills in sports such as rugby and cricket. These activities make positive contributions to pupils' physical education experiences and social development. The accommodation for physical education is good and there is an adequate range of games equipment. However, the range of gymnastics equipment is limited and does not allow teachers to provide an exciting and challenging enough range of activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. By Years 6 and 7, pupils achieve standards that are above the expectations for their ages. Standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection where pupils' attainment was also above average. Teaching covers all the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
122. The quality of teaching is predominantly good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned to take account of the pupils' knowledge and experiences. The pupils develop a good appreciation of the central beliefs and traditions of major world faiths, such as Christianity and Islam and Hinduism. They recognise the significance of religious faith in the lives of individuals and groups and are developing an appreciation of the symbolic significance of signs and ceremonies. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils showed a satisfactory appreciation of the relevance of the offerings of gifts to God when Hindus practise puja (a Hindu rite of worship and offering). Their understanding was helped with the teacher having a good range of artefacts and pictures illustrating the act of worship. He discussed with them the significance of these. The pupils responded with very good levels of interest to this teaching. Pupils demonstrate a good general knowledge about places of worship, holy books and places, festivals and celebrations. There is good inclusion, irrespective of the beliefs of the pupils in religious education lessons.
123. The pupils take pride in presenting their work and they enjoy the variety of approaches teachers encourage them to use. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their growing experiences amongst themselves and then to write about their findings. An example was seen in a very good lesson in Year 4. Here pupils, after listening to the carol 'While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night', listened carefully to a story which was very well read and explained by the teacher. They discussed their ideas and perceptions of how the shepherds would feel and respond when the angel of the Lord appeared. Arising from this discussion, they carefully expressed their ideas in writing, showing a good understanding of the feeling of the shepherds. They took good care to present their writing in well structured sentences, with correct punctuation and a good standard of handwriting. Pupils are usually given a good range of opportunities to use their written skills in religious education lessons.
124. Links with other subjects are well developed by teachers. These enable pupils to understand religious concepts and symbolism. These links were seen in two Year 6 lessons. In one lesson the teacher led a discussion very well about how an artist uses symbols in a picture to evoke feelings. In studying the picture 'Light of the World' by Holman Hunt, they showed a clear understanding of how the artist used aspects of the painting to get people to understand his beliefs about Christianity. In answer to the teacher's question 'Where do you put all your feelings?', they responded, 'In your heart'. A contrasting approach in another good Year 6 lesson on a similar theme, 'How do people express their faiths through the arts?', showed pupils creating a very effective dramatic presentation. They developed a script around a range of chosen topics from stories in the Bible, such as 'Noah's Ark', 'Mary and Joseph at the Stable' and 'The Good Samaritan'.
125. Across the school, pupils are given a good range of opportunities to think for themselves. Pupils show very good levels of interest, enthusiasm and motivation towards religious education. Their discussions are of a high standard, with a well applied knowledge. They carefully consider their written responses. The opportunities for pupils to research the subject for themselves is sometimes limited by too few books being available and with insufficient use of information and communication technology.